

"BREAKING THE CYCLE":
THE CONCEPT OF MOVEMENT IN THE
WORK OF HANNAH ARENDT

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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"BREAKING THE CYCLE":
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by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis argues that the development and overall thrust of Hannah Arendt's social and political theory was significantly informed by her comprehension of and reactions to movement. I attempt to show that particular forms of movement were prized by Arendt and used as justification for her criticism and advocacy of certain ways of directing our lives. With the exception of the first chapter's analysis of *The Human Condition*--one of her later works which sets out most explicitly her analysis and appraisal of movement--the thesis proceeds chronologically from Arendt's PhD thesis, *Love and Saint Augustine*, through to *The Life of the Mind*, a work which was uncompleted at the time of her death. Thematically, the thesis addresses Arendt's political works, looking at her ideal of political action and the trends of the modern age that pose a threat to it, and her theoretical and philosophical works, exploring Arendt's later interest in the relationship between thought and action and the relationship between activities of the mind and activities of the world.

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...if it is the insertion of man that breaks up the indifferent flow of everlasting change by giving it an aim, namely, himself, the being who fights it, and if through that insertion the indifferent time stream is articulated into what is behind him, the past, what is ahead of him, the future, and himself, the fighting present, then it follows that man's presence causes the stream of time to deflect from whatever its original direction or (assuming a cyclical movement) ultimate non-direction may have been. The deflection seems inevitable because it is not just a passive object that is inserted into the stream, to be tossed about by its waves that go sweeping over his head, but a fighter who defends his own presence and thus defines what otherwise might be indifferent to him as "his" antagonists: the past, which he can fight with the help of the future; the future, which he fights supported by the past.

Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*

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INTRODUCTION

Arendt and Sociology, Sociology and Arendt

At first glance, Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) is an improbable subject of an MA thesis in sociology. Not only was Arendt a vocal critic of the major manifestations of sociology that prevailed during her life time--Weberianism, neo-evolutionism, structural functionalism alike--she also spent much of her professional life seeking to show that sociology's object, the "social" realm, was deeply suspect. According to Arendt, the emergence of the "social" in the nineteenth century, and its entrenchment in the twentieth, had increasingly displaced the "public" realm of authentic political life. "Social" relations in the modern world were those of the mass man, the individual who saw himself, and correspondingly behaved, as part of an aggregate. In contrast to the actor within the "public" space beloved and theorised by "republicans" since Machiavelli's day¹, an actor who seeks to initiate novel projects within the constraints laid down by his peers, the mass individual is a conformist: a prisoner of either bourgeois convention or of the terror of totalitarian states that demand discipline rather than freedom, and inculcate ideology rather than cultivate the "dialogue of the mind." Moreover, sociology, as a

"science," has actually contributed to the existence of this social realm by the very theories (of law-like determination) and methods (the ideal-type) which it has employed to make sense of human beings under modern conditions. For sociology, what is "interesting" is what is typical, what can be revealed as patterned behaviour by survey methods, and statistical analysis, which imply not human plurality but standardization. For Marxism as a theory of praxis she had a more healthy respect, but Marxism too had only helped to deepen the contemporary malaise and eviscerate the ideal of citizenship. For Marx, man's prime faculty was labour, not the capacity for political action; indeed the goal of Marxism was the obliteration of the political ("public") realm, since it was conceived as an arena of class oppression.

However, there are important reasons for considering Arendt from the perspective of sociology. She has much to teach us about a number of issues vital to modernity: the decline of the public sphere and subsequent development of a "social" realm, totalitarianism, the fragility of the human artifact, the nature of social evil, and--the issue that will concern me most directly in this thesis--"movement." Arendt both adopts a metaphorical style and analyzes the metaphors embedded in depictions of the modern age. In addition, her metaphors predominantly refer to types of movement. What is more important, Arendt grounds her diagnoses of the human condition and the modern age in her perception and *valuation* of various kinds of

movement. In this thesis, I will be suggesting that movement provides the fundamental organizing structure of Arendt's narrative of modernity, and furnishes the key legitimating principle of her political project.

The thesis proceeds along the following lines. Chapter 1 deals primarily with Arendt's *The Human Condition*, presenting the rudimentary capacities and limits of human beings living on an "earth" and in a "world." Arendt's metaphorical style will be examined, looking at the metaphors of movement within the natural and human world, the movements of labour, work, and action. Although such a procedure departs from strict chronology--*The Human Condition*, first published in 1958, was one of her later books--it has an exegetical logic: of all her works, *The Human Condition* is most explicit in its analysis and appraisal of movement. It thus sensitizes the interpreter to the antecedents and developments of the concept that most concerns me here. Chapter 2 examines the significance of Christianity for Arendt's perception of movement. During antiquity, Arendt argued, the regular, circular movement of the heavens were imposed upon the chaotic movements of nature and the social and political world. Christianity represented a rupture with this conception. The birth of Christ, because it claimed to represent a wholly "novel" occurrence in the world, denoted the movement of rectilinearity--as opposed to the circular motion of nature or the movement of unilinearity that precludes the novelty of unpredictable

beginnings--and suggested for the first time the idea of a divine rectilinear history for the whole of humankind. However, the new beginnings enacted by Christians were individual, private, inner-worldly beginnings, thereby leaving the secular, public world turning endlessly in cyclical motion. This cycle was itself finally broken in the modern age, but linearity arose, according to Arendt, in both constructive rectilinear and destructive unilinear forms. Chapter 3 concentrates primarily on the destructive unilinear movement of "process" represented by the political form of totalitarianism and the idea of historical inevitability. The distinction between movement and stability is also drawn out more fully together with its relationship to citizenship and politics. Chapter 4 puts forward Arendt's alternative to "process," political action, best characterized by the American and French Revolutions. Revolution, marking the first authentic and "new" manmade beginning--and breaking with the original meaning of the term--now assumed the form of a constructive rectilinear metaphor for the secular world and simultaneously emphasized the political act of foundation or beginning. Foundation and rectilinearity are linked, moreover, to the durability of the body politic: the novel, undetermined movement of political action refers back to the act of foundation and reaches forward rectilinearly into the future to maintain the continual, stable, and sempiternal existence of the *res publica*. In chapter 5, I switch from Arendt's political theory to the philosophical speculations she

developed in her last major work *The Life of the Mind*. My analysis is prefaced by an account of Arendt's interpretation of the Eichmann trial, for it was this trial--and the "thoughtlessness" it exposed--which prompted her reflections on the relationship between thought and action, and thought and evil. Finally, I will offer a conclusion that summarizes and draws together the narrative of movement that pervades and underpins Arendt's work.

CHAPTER 1

Movement and the *Vita Activa*

1.1 Arendt and Metaphor

As her critics have frequently pointed out, Arendt relies on metaphors in telling her story of the modern Fall of Man. The uncontrollable process of an atomic chain-reaction, 'natural' in a sense, but also 'unnatural', since it would never have occurred without human action, lurks metaphorically behind those other quasi-natural and unstoppable processes in terms of which she portrays totalitarian terror, economic development (the 'life process of mankind'), and the degeneration of revolutions. It would be a mistake to suppose, however, that what she is doing is merely arbitrary, and that she is imposing the metaphor of 'process' on the real world. Her method is rather to meditate upon and bring into the light of consciousness a metaphor that is deeply embedded in modern thinking and that strongly influences the way we experience the world. Like a literary critic drawing attention to the images implicit in a poem, she reflects upon modern modes of experience and the images in which they are cast.

Margaret Canovan, *Hannah Arendt: A Reinterpretation of Her Political Thought*.

The Human Condition, often considered the culmination of Hannah Arendt's political thought,¹ offers a strikingly original way of understanding social and political theory and the social and political world it seeks to disclose. Assuredly, a *metaphorical* style of reading political and economic forms of organization and their theoretical counterparts is hardly new in itself. What makes Arendt's writing novel is her manner of drawing upon

metaphors largely in terms of movement and motion. Moreover, as Canovan shows, Arendt elicits her metaphors from the language of both the acting public and the theorists of capitalist society. Arendt does not choose these metaphors “arbitrarily,” but uses them intentionally to illuminate the images that are “deeply embedded in modern thinking and... strongly [influence] the way we experience the world.”² By contrast, Arendt believed that Marx was not speaking metaphorically, but literally, when he spoke of the “life process of society.”³ However, while Canovan identifies the *intentional* use of metaphor in Arendt, she does not recognize its *selective* adoption. Canovan notes the metaphor of “process” dominating Arendt’s explanation of the modern age, relating to two fundamental human experiences: our physical, factual subjection to nature and our ability to act, to begin things anew, unleashing the unpredictable into an equally unpredictable world. But this uncritical explanation of Arendt’s metaphorical style does not delve into the underlying significance of metaphors of movement.

Interestingly, Arendt herself only explicitly acknowledges these metaphors for what they are in the concluding chapter, “Ideology and Terror,”⁴ of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, her political manifesto *On Revolution*, and *The Life of the Mind*. In these cases, and implicitly throughout her other works, she, first, notes the movements that have influenced and informed modern developments (for instance, the “labour

movement") and, secondly, claims that movement *in itself* has been idealised and actually embodied in these modern developments. For example, in "Ideology and Terror" she argues "When the Nazis talked about the law of nature or when the Bolsheviks talk about the law of history, neither nature nor history is any longer the stabilizing source of authority for the actions of mortal men; they are movements in themselves."⁵ Not only, then, have particular metaphors of movement been adopted, but the actualization of these modern developments has become, according to Arendt, movement itself. Before examining this in more detail, however, let us look at how Arendt constructs the *vita activa*, the triad that composes the activities of human existence.

1.2 Movement and the Human Condition

Social and political theory has historically performed two general functions. It has operated on an analytical level, explaining and characterizing the actions of people and their relation to a systemic whole. Secondly, it has been prescriptive, endorsing certain manners of acting and certain social and political orders while denigrating others. By informing us of our current circumstances and suggesting alternative or ideal forms of action, such theories seek to provide us with the means of taking control of the course of our lives. The very ability intentionally to alter and direct action relies upon a

prior notion of the self-conscious and reflective character of humans, a quality that has been said to distinguish us from animals and nature. So that, with the realization that humans are more than mere animals, that we can be free-thinking, self-determined beings, comes particular ways of looking at the way we, as opposed to non-human creatures and things, may direct and define our existence.

What it means to be human, then,—beyond any isolated notions of freedom, action, order—can itself become an ideal. Most social and political theories concentrate upon the clarification of ideals and some have sought methods for their realization. As such, social and political theory can be viewed as attempts to reckon with the movements of nature by imposing “human” rhythms and patterns of movement against, beside, or in time with the flux of the world. Another fundamental distinction found in social and political thought is that between stability and change. This differentiation lies at the base of all political organization, setting the stability of the polity against the fleeting character of human action. Arendt claims that, to counteract the instability of human action, “bodies politic have always been designed for permanence and their laws understood as limitations imposed upon movement.”⁶ In a world where human actions are ever-changing and unpredictable, politics aims at the stabilization of human movement by imposing laws and regulations. Political bodies are also “designed for

permanence”: by limiting the possibilities of human action through positive laws—by preventing individuals from encroaching upon each other and from posing a threat to the state—political bodies maintain their existence and thereby prove their durability, their relative sense of permanence. Positive laws, as Arendt explains in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, back up the permanence of the polity because they stand outside individual actions, straddle particular generations and can sometimes even extend beyond the borders of specific states. Bodies politic, acting as the guarantor of positive law, provide the stability necessary to regulate the unpredictable actions of men. (Likewise, both Machiavelli’s *Prince* and *Discourses* for example, concern themselves with the same issues of the maintenance and durability of government.)

The sphere of politics, then, is meant to provide a durable world, a world which Arendt directly opposes to the evanescent character of nature and the life process. “Life is a process that everywhere uses up durability, wears it down, makes it disappear, until eventually dead matter, the result of small, single, cyclical, life processes, returns into the over-all gigantic circle of nature herself, where no beginning and no end exist and where all natural things swing in changeless, deathless repetition.”⁷ All natural things are exchangeable because they are, in the end, a matter of consumption and the continuation of the life process.

Arendt claims that human beings are neither radically autonomous nor completely without the possibility of self-determined mobility. While there are definite conditions which confront humans, people also possess the potential for freedom, choice, and action. The *vita activa*--the three fundamental activities of labour, work, and action given to humanity on earth⁸--constitutes the capabilities humans have for shaping the earth and modifying their circumstances. Arendt outlines "life itself, natality and mortality, worldliness, plurality, and the earth"⁹ as conditions humans encounter. Anything which engages with human beings becomes a condition of existence: the physical body and its abilities, earthly matter, products of work, and worldly beliefs and ideas. Humans are conditioned both by their bodies and by the world's creations and works fashioned by previous generations. This is the human *condition*, and Arendt distinguishes it from the concept of a human *nature*. To speak of a human nature implies an exhaustive understanding or indubitable knowledge of human beings and their quintessential characteristics. However, such knowledge is impossible precisely because human beings do not create themselves: only a God, she argues, could possibly know the nature of our being.¹⁰ The human *condition* refers to the setting or circumstances within which humans labour, work, and act rather than defining any essential human trait.

The plausibility of a human *nature* diminishes further when it is

understood that human beings are, more than anything else, plural beings. This condition of plurality sets humans apart from animals and only manifests itself within a “political” context, that is, within the public sphere. Arendt argues that “men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world.”¹¹ In other words, people are not homogenous, unchanging creatures that intrinsically harbour a single trait or set of traits, uniform nature, or general will. People are, rather, diverse, creative, inquisitive, and they initiate action. Human plurality only manifests itself in the public sphere where human beings on equal grounds listen to and acknowledge the viewpoints of others. Only by acting in the public sphere does human plurality become evident, and only because we are plural beings are we capable of action.

While the public sphere provides the necessary space for action and for human plurality, the private sphere provides the space for satisfying the biological requirements that tie us to the earth. Part of the human condition, Arendt argues, is our physical, biological relation to the earth: we are fundamentally human beings that must continually nourish and provide for our material bodies. The burden of this life process is carried by the private sphere of the household or family and is characterized by the persistent battle with the necessities of our organic condition. By restricting women from the public sphere and procuring slaves, the private sphere of the Greek household managed to free the men of these households from personally

labouring for their necessities of life. As long as we remain upon the earth, bodily needs arise requiring us to labour repetitively. While labour is cyclically repetitive, it extends our lives in a rectilinear fashion from birth until death. In the end, the life process is something that all people must inevitably deal with in one way or another—how it is dealt with depends upon social and political organization. If one is unable to move beyond the compulsive nature of the life process, if one is unable to emerge from the private into the public realm, then, according to Arendt, one will never have the possibility to develop or express a unique identity. People that remain bound to their organic requirements are, like any other animal species, deprived of the potential space and freedom for plural interaction.

By arguing that people “live on the *earth*” and “inhabit the *world*,” Arendt distinguishes between *earth* and *world* in terms of the functions of the *vita activa*. The *earth* refers to the raw, physical material of our planet that human beings consume for the perpetuation of life. Members of *homo sapiens* are tied to this natural earth and are required to labour continually for mere physical existence. *Labour*, then, is the initial activity of the *vita activa* and is exercised in our battle for human survival. Labour is repetitive because it is tied to never-ending needs and was traditionally performed, Arendt claims, not for its own sake but, rather, for the sake of providing another set of conditions for involvement in the public sphere. The products of labour

are not durable and must be continually, cyclically produced. They are created to be consumed--and consumed with the urgent necessity of the life-process. The *earth*, then, is the general condition of all organic life and can be equated with nature.

Arendt models her understanding of nature and the human's biological relationship with nature upon the Greek understanding of the cosmos: the universe is eternal, nature is cyclical with ever-recurring life, and the gods are immortal. In the Greek view, human beings are marked as biological creatures that suffer a mortal existence inherent in each individual's rectilinear progression from birth until death. Therefore mortality became the emblematic constituent of human life, setting it apart from god-like existence. In order to continue the rectilinear pattern of the life process, in order to maintain one's existence over a stretch of time, individuals must continually produce and consume things, such as food and clothing, in accordance with material necessity. But in order to extend their influence beyond the limits of physical existence in the world, beyond birth and death, people must create objects and partake in events which serve to outlast their finite time on earth. Mortal humans, according to the Greek model, find themselves living upon an "earth" on which they must construct a "world." The Greeks, hoping to emulate the gods, strove for immortality by seeking to leave behind works, deeds, and words which might attain

immortal existence in the world of things. Through stories and objects, individuals can potentially exist across generations and throughout time, thereby approaching the immortality of the gods. By creating such works, humans demonstrate their ascendance over animals, which are unable to develop the individuality needed to rise above the uniformity of their species.

The *world*, therefore, consists of the things we produce out of our flight from or overcoming of the necessities of our biological ties to the *earth*. By freeing itself from the earth's requirements, the world allows a common space within which human beings construct conditions which are artificial, not natural. Products of the *vita activa*, the products of *work*, have independent standing and the ability to endure beyond the life of the creator. Whereas labour, through the consumption of its product, returns its matter to the earth, work removes material from the earth. Examples of enduring works are architecture, the tools with which we labour, ideas as written in books, and works of art. Ideas or concepts cannot be considered works unless they have been written down or transformed into some objective shape. Such endurance, in turn, requires an objectifiable medium. The products of work transcend individual lives and condition the lives of the newborn, providing some sense of continuity between generations and providing the material with which we construct our history. Work is not repetitive and cyclical like

labour but provides durable objects within which we may map a rectilinear story of human existence. The *world*, then, is a space for differentiation and durability.

Whereas the private sphere constitutes the realm in which humans confront biological necessity—where humans toil continuously to satisfy the requirements of the life process—the public sphere provides the space for plurality and the opportunity to disclose identity and reality. The Greek *polis*, Arendt's archetypal model of the public sphere, was possible because a certain number of men violently enslaved others to take care of their necessities. Freedom could only be attained in the public sphere of the *polis* at the cost of enslaving the labour power of others: without the freedom from bodily, earthly needs people cannot act or achieve plurality; political life, the *bios politikos*, was only realizable once one had overcome the necessity of the household by such acts of violence. The political life of the *polis* was the realm of freedom—*politics for the Greeks was freedom*--and this allowed men a space within which they could act and speak freely, openly, in the illumination of plurality. The *polis* was a spatial rupture in the human condition of necessity. Further, freedom entailed equality: "to be free meant to be free from the inequality present in rulership and to move in a sphere where neither rule nor being ruled existed."¹² To free oneself from the rule of necessity required courage because one could no longer submerge oneself in

one's own life, survival, and personal anonymity. Instead, one had to bear the burden of participation--and the risk of failure--in a plural arena.

The public realm, thus, provides the condition for worldly things, deeds, and acts to occur, for durability, where people prove their lives to be separate from necessity and unexchangeably human. In it individuals in plural discourse articulate their own identities and reveal a common reality. Arendt took up this Greek distinction because she believed that the private and public spheres were separate and ought to remain that way, that they were distinctive realms with different purposes. But the advent of the modern age, she argued, has blurred the distinction between the public and the private and has given rise to a new phenomenon she calls the "social." The appearance of the "social," a separate and distinct sphere, denotes the alienation of the world, loss of meaning, erosion of the public sphere, and the reduction of politics to administration. While the ancient world knew only two realms, the private and public, in regard to which they drew fundamental distinctions, the dawn of the modern age altered this relationship radically. Initially, the nation-state resembled a large parental body within an even larger private sphere: the state's administration became a bureaucratic body which saw its role as "housekeeper." The new political realm lost the values of freedom and action, and became a routinized and methodically regulated machine reducing the public to a body of family members. The modern age

drove a wedge between freedom and the political so that society's understanding of politics has become "compatible with freedom only because and insofar as it guarantees a possible freedom from politics."¹³

Like the private sphere, the social sphere is characterized by labour and biological necessity and requires, or assumes, that its people behave as a homogenous, unified assembly. "To have a society of laborers, it is of course not necessary that every member actually be a laborer or worker... but only that all members consider whatever they do primarily as a way to sustain their own lives and those of their families."¹⁴ Politics in the modern world is the politics of "the people" so that idiosyncrasy, difference, and plurality become understood as detrimental to political action or political stability. Arendt argues,

Hence, the general will is the articulation of a general interest, the interest of the people or the nation as a whole, and because this interest or will is general, its very existence hinges on its being opposed to each interest or will in particular... the oneness of the nation is guaranteed in so far as each citizen carries within himself the common enemy as well as the general interest which the common enemy brings into existence; *for the common enemy is the particular interest or the particular will of each man.*¹⁵

The social, then, not only homogenizes people, but denies people their individual political identity. For the Greeks, to be human meant to reveal your individuality in a public space where each person acknowledges the plurality of others but also constructs a reality through difference. The rise of

the social in the modern age closes down the space in which political identity is revealed and alienates people from themselves by reducing them to the common process of biological necessity, labour, or historical inevitability.

To sum up: humans are conditioned by the setting within which they find themselves; yet, they actively modify the circumstances within which they have been born. This active manipulation of conditions Arendt calls the *vita activa* and is constituted by the three fundamental modes of human activity: labour, work, and action. Thus far, I have dealt with the first two. Labour, the repetitive toil people engage in for their subsistence, is properly located within the private sphere but, with the advent of modernity, has come to characterize the trans-private world of "society." The things we have physically created, that have the ability to endure through time, differentiate human beings from other animals, and that set up our world, are the products of work. For Arendt, the transformation towards a labouring society in the age of modernity has done more than erode the public sphere and transform politics into an administrative body; it has also diminished the private realm by depriving people of "home." Privacy is important as a refuge when retreating from the public realm. However, neither labour nor the private realm is good or worthwhile in itself. For Arendt, the key characteristic of human beings is their plurality. The private sphere and labour are insufficient because they are isolating and solitary: they do not

allow people to act upon their plurality. Plurality can only become manifest in a political setting which is free.

In terms of movement, natural movement--circular, repetitive movement--would be the only movement of human life if it were not for the construction of a human artifice. Only because of this human world, Arendt argues, can the birth and death of individuals have any meaning whatsoever. By acting, individuals set themselves apart from each other, proving their uniqueness, and creating the conditions whereby birth and death hold significance. Equally, it is only because of the human artifice that nature can be understood as the process of growth and decay: "only if we consider nature's products, this tree or this dog, as individual things, thereby already moving them from their 'natural' surroundings and putting them into our world, do they begin to grow and decay."¹⁶ By distinguishing birth and death from the "changeless, deathless repetition" of nature, the never-ending, circular movement of nature is dislodged and can be viewed or rewritten as a single rectilinear movement--the movement from birth until death.¹⁷ Life is now understood as following a "strictly linear movement whose very motion nevertheless is driven by the motor of biological life which man shares with other living things and which forever retains the cyclical movement of nature."¹⁸

The life process, discriminated in these two ways, is represented as two

differing forms of movement. The life process in itself, nature outside of the context of a human world, is a cyclical, repetitive movement that goes nowhere and has no beginning or end. The process has no purpose other than its own self-perpetuation, other than maintaining its own movement, and can, as such, be seen as effectively having no purpose (purposes are constructs of the human world). The idea of a fixed, purposeless, eternally rotating, circular movement is Arendt's basic, fundamental understanding of her term *process*. (When Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, in their characterization of the culture industry, state "The machine rotates on the same spot,"¹⁹ they allude to the same movement invoked by Arendt to illustrate her basic idea of process.)

This fundamental idea of *process* undergoes alteration when understood from the vantage point of the human artifice. By taking on a rectilinear character from the beginning, which is birth, to the end, which is death, the circular process of biological provision feeds human purposes and activities, feeds the active cultivation of an individual's life story. The life process of human, worldly life--Arendt's second meaning for the movement of the life process--moves in a repetitive, cyclical fashion but, at the same time, moves forward in a rectilinear manner like the movement of a cyclist, where repetitive pedalling returns to the original starting point of each revolution but moves the cyclist forward. The life process of human beings,

as opposed to the monotonous, meaningless, rotation of nature, has a purpose.

Labour is the single activity which provides for human necessity, for the life process of individuals, and is characterized, like the life process of nature, as repetitive and cyclical. The products of labour have no worldly permanence but are consumed almost as soon as they have been produced. Individual lives, which are the only real "products" of labour,²⁰ are the sole things that take on the appearance of rectilinearity and appear this way only in the light of a shared, public world. If humans were only labourers, if our lives were wholly caught up with the movement of the life process, our lives would play out according to the "law of mortality, which is the most certain and the only reliable law of a life spent between birth and death."²¹ This is so, because the movement of labour in itself, when divorced from its relation to the remainder of the *vita activa*, is a *necessary* movement that "is born of a great urgency and motivated by a more powerful drive than anything else, because life itself depends on it."²² Arendt's use of "law" in this sense, in opposition to positive laws, relates purely to movement. The "law of mortality" is a necessary motion which moves in a predetermined and inescapable direction. Ultimately, Arendt's explanation of the process movement of life or nature is of this undeviating, inexorable law of movement, moving in a predefined, circular way.

Arendt, we have seen, regards the defining feature of the modern age as the infiltration of labour into the public sphere, where private labour takes on a social character. When labour enters the public sphere, the individual character of labour--labour performed for a single person's needs and survival--transforms itself into the labour for humankind: "only when man no longer acts as an individual, concerned only with his survival, but as a 'member of the species,'... can the collective life process of a 'socialized mankind' follow its own 'necessity.'" ²³ This public ascension of labour generates a corresponding alteration in movement: "The admission of labour to public stature, far from eliminating its character as a process... has, on the contrary, liberated this process from its circular, monotonous recurrence and transformed it into a swiftly progressing development whose results have in a few centuries totally changed the whole inhabited world."²⁴ For the individual, the process movement of labour is repetitive and circular, but yields the rectilinear movement of human life from birth until death. The process movement of public labour, while still based upon the circularity of labour, alters the linear portion of the motion: the process movement of private labour is a *conservative* stabilizing movement "where the human body... concentrates upon nothing but its own being alive,"²⁵ but the movement of the labour process when it enters the public realm transforms itself into a "swiftly progressing development." Whereas the process

movement of labour in the private sphere produces and perpetuates public lives that move in a rectilinear fashion *between fixed parameters*--between the births and deaths of individuals and between the beginnings and ends of actions sequences--the process movement of labour in the public sphere moves in a *unilinear* manner *progressively forward, in a single straight line, into infinity without end*. The difference between rectilinear and unilinear movement is a subtle but vital one for Arendt's philosophical position. They are both movements that occur in straight lines. However, unilinear is only one line defined in terms of a single direction that, because it moves in a single direction, precludes any possibility of new beginnings.²⁶ On the contrary, rectilinear movement is defined specifically by Arendt as the movement of *new beginnings* that are unrestrained by unilinearity, by each straight movement being reduced to an overarching and exterior, unilinear logic or process.²⁷ The socialization of labour, then, is the metamorphosis of an activity that has no meaning other than self-preservation into an activity with purpose outside of itself and which will sacrifice its very defining principle, self-preservation, in aid of a single new-found purpose, in aid of a unilinear logic.

So when Arendt states, "What all these theories in the various sciences--economics, history, biology, geology--have in common is the concept of process,"²⁸ she does not mean the process of nature as fixed

rotation or the conservative, individual, labour process of circular repetition working to preserve the rectilinear movement of an individual's life. The process movement of a labour ideology that has entered the public sphere has become primarily a single-goal or single-purpose driven, unilinear movement. A unilinear movement that, because it is based on the unending struggle of life transformed into the limitless goal of progress or historical inevitability, becomes itself unending: "the notion of an infinite progress implicitly 'denies every goal and admits ends only as means to outwit itself.'" ²⁹ Arendt argues that "The inexhaustibility of [the] labor force corresponds exactly to the deathlessness of the species, whose life process as a whole is also not interrupted by the individual births and deaths of its members."³⁰ The unilinear "progression" this labour process generates is not conservative and is not defined by fixed parameters but moves outward endlessly according to the principle of infinite growth. While this movement, at its base, requires the circular repetitive movement of collectivized individuals, it has become, most importantly, the outward unilinearity of "progression."

When labour steps onto the stage of the public arena, it alters or replaces work and action, the two activities of the *vita activa* which are properly related to the public world. Work has the potential to be, like labour, circular in character. However, this circularity is not "repetitive," argues

Arendt, but rather what she calls a procedure of "multiplication." Work is predicated upon an idea or model which is separate from its product and lends itself "to an infinite continuation of fabrication."³¹ But this "infinite continuation" is different from the movement of repetition: a craftsman does not make multiple works because the activity of work requires it, because there is anything necessary in the work itself that needs multiplication; "the process is repeated for reasons outside itself and is unlike the compulsory repetition inherent in laboring, where one must eat in order to labor and one must labor in order to eat."³² Labour, then, is coincident with its movement, cyclical repetition; the activity of work, the movement of work, is separate and distinct from its product. While labour is understood as an unending, continuous process, the fabrication process is always carried out in a number of separate and disconnected steps.³³ On the other hand, the motives to labour "come and go, and though they reappear again and again at regular intervals, they never remain for any length of time. Multiplication, in distinction from mere repetition, multiplies something that already possesses a relatively stable, relatively permanent existence in the world."³⁴ While labour's repetitive activity is seen as constant and never-ending within an individual life-span, its motivating force is disrupted and segmented. And while work's activity of multiplication is understood to be separated and disjointed, that which gives work the potential for multiplication, the idea or

model, can be permanent and enduring.

Multiplication is not inherent to the activity of work, but is separate from it and occurs for reasons outside of fabrication itself. In the modern age, the primary reason for the multiplication of work arises because utilitarianism—developing out of labour’s infiltration into the public sphere—is the dominant ideological principle of modern society. The modern age’s interest in labour arose because labour, not work or action, exemplified the movement of the unending process, evident since the seventeenth century, of growing wealth and property accumulation; attention, Arendt argues, “was naturally drawn to the phenomenon of a progressing process itself.”³⁵ Within the activity of work, the end defines the utility of everything needed for the production of the object. The product of work never attains the status of an “end in itself” because it is a use object and therefore a means to some other end.³⁶ Arendt continues, “The trouble with the utility standard inherent in the very activity of fabrication is that the relationship between means and end on which it relies is very much like a chain whose every end can serve again as a means in some other context. In other words, in a strictly utilitarian world, all ends are bound to be of short duration and to be transformed into means for some further ends.”³⁷ This is what Arendt calls “the philosophy of *homo faber* par excellence,” and is caught up within the problematic distinction between utility, what she call the “in order to,” and meaning,

what she calls the "for the sake of." "The perplexity of utilitarianism is that it gets caught in the unending chain of means and ends without ever arriving at some principle which could justify the category of means and end, that is, of utility itself. The 'in order to' has become the content of the 'for the sake of'; in other words, utility established as meaning generates meaninglessness."³⁸ The meaning of utility does not lie within any particular thing or goal, in any particular *end*, but rather its meaning lies in the process of utility itself which has no meaning other than its particular movement, its particular process. And to say that it is meaningless is only to say that its meaning is characterized by a "vacuous" movement.

But is movement vacuous and meaningless in itself? Does movement merely mediate between things or objects, having no objective significance of its own? Arendt seems to argue in some passages that only things or objects hold meaning: "Without a world between men and nature, there is eternal movement, but no objectivity."³⁹ Meaning seems to be characteristic of things, not of flux, transiency, or motion. "Meaning, on the contrary, must be permanent and lose nothing of its character, whether it is achieved or, rather, found by man or fails man and is missed by him."⁴⁰ Meaning is found in that which has permanence, in things and not their movements, for movements are nothing without the things which make them noticeable. However, Arendt cannot be saying that movement as a whole is vacuous and

meaningless, but rather only particular types of movement. Movements are meaningful to the extent that, paradoxically, they promote or facilitate the creation of stabilizing and durable things through human action. And the chief kind of durable, public thing created by action is the polis, the republic. The “thing” which Arendt believes meaningful is the political realm, and this political realm will only retain its vitality and existence if action stabilizes this realm—that is, maintains its existence—and makes it permanent.

1.3 Action and Movement

Action, the paramount human activity for Arendt, enables such fundamental human qualities as identity and a “common sense.” The necessary condition of action is an arena where plurality can be exercised and be disclosed. The key is freedom: “for action and politics, among all the capabilities and potentialities of human life, are the only things of which we could not even conceive without at least assuming that freedom exists.”⁴¹ Arendt argues that the fundamental goal of politics is freedom. However, this is not the freedom of possessive individualism, but rather a freedom that pervades a plural group of people that have surpassed their initial earthly necessities. Freedom and action, in the end, collapse into one: “Men are free—as distinguished from their possessing the gift for freedom—as long as they act, neither before nor after; for to *be* free and to act are the same.”⁴²

Action is the only human activity whose unique place of habitation is the public sphere, the sphere where individuals come together to establish their plurality and confirm a common reality. When one acts, one brings something new into the world. Acting sets something into motion as does every new birth. Action is an unfolding which occurs within plural interaction. Human natality, the fact that we are born as new actors into the world, provides us with the possibility for generating worldly change within a political sphere. Each novel act, each event, is a beginning and is given primacy by Arendt amongst all the activities of the *vita activa*. The novel is given a higher status than the ordinary because the ordinary is the regular and continual struggle against necessity; life can only take on significance once one steps beyond monotonous provision and enters the realm of the political. Bringing about the novel in the political realm, through acting and speaking, is the very essence of freedom and the determining motion in the revelation of individual identity. Identity is fluid and continually alters within plural discourse. However, one does not enter the political realm of action with a pre-formed identity that then undergoes alteration. Identity, like reality, is only formed within plural interaction. Identity emerges and affirms itself within a public realm of discussion and persuasion, collaboration and debate.

In other words, Arendt does not think of this process of acting and

speaking as one where each person is sovereign and self-determined. Rather, action is the outcome of a plural mixing or interaction of people who are free and equal. To say that people who enter such an opening of freedom are equal is to say that they are no longer subject to the inequalities of necessity. Each individual acts in a setting of free and equal discourse as an actor and not an author. It is of the very essence of plural discourse that actions are not determined by any one person but unfold in the context of a multitude of voices sharing in dialogue.

Just as action and speech reveal individual identities, the political realm also creates a shared space or reality. Action is part of worldliness and always creates an opening or space which sets individuals apart from one another and, at the same time, posits their reality. "Reality... is first of all characterized by 'standing still and remaining' the same long enough to become an *object* for acknowledgement and recognition by a *subject*."⁴³ This world of action provides both an objective and subjective reality. The objective "in-between" provides a reality of objects and worldly or earthly matters—speaking and acting are often directly related to the physical matters of our existence. The subjective "in-between" does not concern physical, tangible objects (yet always coexists with the objective reality), but rather is the relation of words and deeds to each other, the relations *between* people. The subjective "in-between" exists between agents and is made manifest through

their speech and action. This space, that works both to separate and unite human beings, confirms within each person a shared reality through the plurality of differing perspectives. The common “in-between” serves a double function: firstly, it discloses reality through the obvious plurality of individual perspectives, yet, secondly, this reality becomes a backdrop whereby individuals may further differentiate their identities.

For Arendt, to be political is to be human, to be human is to be political. The political realm of action is marked by courage and glory, outstanding achievements and excellence, novelty and freedom, uniqueness and individuality, the formation of human identity and the disclosure of reality. To partake in action is to be human—to be deprived of or to rescind one’s participation in public action is to be less than human because private life is lived in solitary confinement away from the world of plural men.⁴⁴ The private sphere is necessary insofar as it provides both the physical conditions of, and a stark contrast to, the public sphere. While Arendt appreciates that everyone cannot act all the time, her political project revolves around re-introducing the freeing and empowering activity of action to the labour-minded modern age.

Action is a highly idealised form of human activity, an activity without which we would not be human, and, as such, assumes its own modality of movement: “To act, in its most general sense, means to take an initiative, to

begin (as in the Greek word *archein*, 'to begin,' 'to lead,' and eventually 'to rule,' indicates), to set something into motion (which is the original meaning of the Latin *agere*)."⁴⁵ Action, as a movement, is characterized by its indeterminateness and is wholly caught up with its impulse, its originating thrust, its beginning. Action does not embody a "type" or "form" of movement, but is a movement played out in terms of being *not* any particular type of movement. It is important to realize, on the other hand, that action can only be understood rectilinearly because it is a new beginning: the novelty of beginning breaks the circularity of necessity, stretching out from its beginning in an undetermined rectilinear direction. Arendt notes that the verb "to act" is historically linked to two different words for action which correspond to its two parts, "the beginning made by a single person and the achievement in which many join by 'bearing' and 'finishing' the enterprise."⁴⁶ She remarks that it was the second meaning which became dominant as the meaning for action in general, while the first took on a specialized meaning in political language. The first meaning, as ruling and leading, came to mean "to rule" and dropped its relation to leading. Therefore, "the dependence of the beginner and leader upon others for help and the dependence of his followers upon him for an occasion to act themselves, split into two altogether different functions: the function of giving commands, which became the prerogative of the ruler, and the

function of executing them, which became the duty of his subjects.”⁴⁷

Action, moreover, is not confined to a single beginning, but finds itself implicated in the actions and reactions of others: “action, though it may proceed from nowhere, so to speak, acts into a medium where every reaction becomes a chain reaction and where every process is the cause of new processes. Since action acts upon beings who are capable of their own actions, reaction, apart from being a response, is always a new action that strikes out on its own and affects others. Thus action and reaction among men never move in a closed circle and can never be reliably confined to two partners.”⁴⁸ Arendt continues, calling this the “boundless” quality of action, stating that actions cut across boundaries and force open all limitations. Action, as a non-typical, non-specific movement, is neither circular or repetitive nor is it determined unilinearity, for Arendt sees both circular and unilinear movement as relentless, predetermined, law-defining movement. It is precisely the human activity of leaving the safety of the self-preserving, stabilizing movement of the life process and the artificial stability of the unilinear movement of law-like ideology, that makes the undefined rectilinear movement of action courageous and admirable. Action is a movement that is unpredictable and undetermined. This is precisely what separates humanity from nature; humans are capable of disrupting processes and beginning things freshly with no pre-determined rhythm.

Both of the above depictions of action offered by Arendt, as beginning and finishing, refer to singular instances of the complete action: the point of initiative and the point of completion. However Arendt also maintains that, "the specific meaning of each deed, can lie only in the performance itself and neither in its motivation or achievement."⁴⁹ The dynamic movement of action has the appearance of rectilinearity only after the action processes have been completed. This rectilinearity is derived from the fact that actions, like individual human lives, can be depicted as having beginnings and ends. "That every individual life between birth and death can eventually be told as a story with beginning and end is the prepolitical and prehistorical condition of history, the great story without beginning and end."⁵⁰ Arendt speaks of actions in terms of events, a term which implies the backward glance of the historian or storyteller attempting to comprehend the meaning of actions. "The light that illuminates processes of action, and therefore all historical processes, appears only at their end, frequently when all the participants are dead. Action reveals itself fully only to the storyteller, that is, to the backward glance of the historian, who indeed always knows better what it was all about than the participants. All accounts told by the actors themselves, though they may in rare cases give an entirely trustworthy statement of intentions, aims, and motives, become mere useful source material in the historian's hands and can never match his story in significance and truthfulness."⁵¹ Again, it is

evident that “meaning” for Arendt can never be grasped in terms of movement or motion but must be grasped in something which has stabilized and situated itself concretely onto a written page, into a stable work. To uncover meaning from action, Arendt stabilizes its ever-changing movement through the task of storytelling, through the concretization and arrest of the motion inherent in action. The action, through this objectification, reveals its full meaning.

It is indubitable that Arendt views all the activities of the *vita activa* in relation to forms of movement. However, this is not the same as saying that these forms of movement are *meaningful* to Arendt: for her, meaning is a product of the “world” as distinct from the “earth.” The movement Arendt refers to and poses human action against is the movement of nature, the initial, fundamental process movement. Distinctively *human* activities, on the other hand, are understood as arising in contradistinction to the movements of nature, to the movement of process, and this is precisely what makes them human. But, as Canovan points out, “It would be a mistake to suppose, however, that what she is doing is merely arbitrary, and that she is imposing the metaphor of ‘process’ on the real world.” In other words, Arendt’s use of movement when she refers to the human world is metaphorical, because, as I have already shown, meaning for Arendt is only found in stable, solid things and not their fleeting movements. To

understand the world we must look at concrete works and events. But, and this is important, Arendt's explanation of the movement of nature or the process movement of labour is *not* used metaphorically, but is used as an explanation of their true nature, because they are not worldly and therefore do not have any meaning other than their quasi-meaning as movement. In the realm of nature, movement is the only way nature can be understood because there is nothing durable enough for it to be endowed with meaning.

The reality and reliability of the human world rest primarily on the fact that we are surrounded by things more permanent than the activity by which they were produced, and potentially even more permanent than the lives of their authors. Human life, in so far as it is world-building, is engaged in a constant process of reification, and the degree of worldliness of produced things, which altogether form the human artifice, depends upon their greater or lesser permanence in the world itself.⁵²

What is meaningful and important to Arendt has some level of permanence or durability; meaning requires the absence of, or arrest of, the ever-changing transiency of movement. However, what Arendt does, on occasion, is substitute one particular form of movement for movement itself, for movement in general. When, for example, she states in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* that, "In the interpretation of totalitarianism, all laws have become laws of movement"⁵³ or when she states that "Terror is the realization of the law of movement,"⁵⁴ she does not mean movement in general but the particular movement of the labour process in the public

sphere. And when Arendt argues in *The Human Condition* that, "without a world between men and nature, there is eternal movement, but no objectivity,"⁵⁵ she means the eternal movement of circular repetition as characterizing the process movement of an unworldly nature. Consequently, action becomes the only form of "movement" with meaning, even though it is only the *initiation* of a "movement," only a *beginning* characterized by its absence from any particular or predetermined form of movement (recall that Arendt's predetermined movements are the three forms of the process movement: first, the movement of nature as eternal, circular rotation fixed to a single spot; second, the movement of the life process whose purpose, self-preservation, is maintained by the circular, repetitive movement of labour that, at the same time, carries an individual forward, rectilinearly, from birth to death; and, third, the movement of labour upon entering the public sphere primarily understood as a swiftly progressing unilinear development). But because action is not any particular type of movement, action cannot be understood, for Arendt, in terms of movement. It must be objectified by the storyteller or historian into the concrete event where it is recognized and endowed with its full meaning, with its sense of permanence or durability. Arendt's analysis collapses, in the end, into the fundamental distinction between transiency and stability, where stability endows meaning and where movement is meaningless. But this, I believe, is incoherent since Arendt's

analysis of the *vita activa* is itself predicated on forms of movement.

I have entitled this thesis, "Breaking the Cycle." This expression was not coined by myself, but by Arendt—in *On Revolution*⁵⁶—in response to the novelty of both the birth of Christ and the French and American Revolutions. The idea of a completely new occurrence was, she argues, unthinkable before Christ because the pre-Christian world maintained a cyclical time construct: novelty, according to Arendt, requires a rectilinear time construct. Consequently, the Christian response to the absolute novelty of Christ is critically important to Arendt's understanding of movement and world change. As the first wholly novel event, the birth of Christ "constitutes the origin of revolution" (revolution, we will see later, was the event that broke the cycle of the secular or social and political world).⁵⁷ We will also see later, in *The Life of the Mind*, that a theory of the will was not developed until the rise of Christianity when, according to Arendt, St. Augustine became the first philosopher to speak of this faculty. The following chapter will look at Arendt's first major work, her PhD thesis, *Love and Saint Augustine*, by addressing the importance of beginning and novelty found in Augustine's work.

CHAPTER 2

Novelty and the Birth of Christ

*Das Firmament blaut ewig, und die Erde
Wird lange fest steh'n und aufblüh'n im Lenz.
Du, aber, Mensch, wie lang lebst denn du?
Nicht hundert Jahre dafst du dich ergötzen
An all dem morschen Tande dieser Erde!*

The firmament is ever blue, and the earth
Will long stand fast and bloom in spring.
But you, Man, how long do you live?
Not a hundred years are you permitted to delight
In all the decaying pleasures of this earth.

Gustav Mahler, *Das Lied von der Erde*.¹

Arendt's mapping of movement often confronted the aimless and chaotic quality of human experience. Nature, first understood as a concoction of haphazard movements, was later interpreted as endless cyclical rotation when it was noticed that the heavens revolved in a regular, law-like pattern. The circular movement of the heavens equally characterized the experience of labour: the repetitive, continual toil necessary for the perpetuation of the life process. Meaningless, chaotic movement became understood as rhythmic, cyclical pattern and was found to be operative and useful for human survival,

necessary for the satisfaction of human needs. However we have seen that for Arendt, cyclical movement, though functional, is itself “meaningless” in virtue of its necessity, and is equated with interminable and perpetual motion: “Every cyclical movement is a necessary movement by definition.”² By simply labouring repetitively and cyclically, members of the human species reproduce the movement of nature--sustain their “metabolism with nature” (Marx)--and remain *animal laborans*, bound by animalistic, organic needs.

Yet, for all its regularity, monotony, and insignificance, the life process produces and perpetuates a life marked by a definite beginning and end. But the rectilinear movement of this life cannot appear so unless it erects and displays itself in a human artifice: circular, repetitive movement remains this way until something, as Arendt says, “breaks the cycle.” Novelty breaks the cosmological cycle because it breaks the rhythm of regular pattern, it breaks the “eternal recurrence of the same,” and requires for its comprehension a “rectilinear time concept.” The stories of human lives and the history of humankind are impossible without human action. Action, something that breaks the form of eternal rotation, discloses--through speech and deed--the uniqueness of the agent. Actions are “events,” novel occurrences constitutive of the public sphere. To act is “to set something into motion”³ by means of initiative and is viewed as a beginning. Action, Arendt’s key social ideal, is

the definitive property of human beings, i.e. the property that distinguishes them from other animal species, and the world of nature more generally.

The fact of natality (that it is our birth and not our death that defines us as human), so important to Arendt's idea of political action, enables action's spontaneity and novelty. It was in her PhD thesis, *Love and Saint Augustine*, first published in 1929, that Arendt first developed the idea of natality; she extracted the concept from Augustine's phrase, "that a beginning be made man was created." That we can think of the beginning inherent in every person, the beginning of action implied in every person's birth, is the result of the unworldly beginning implied in the birth of Christ. The result was a new concept of history that saw time starting afresh from, what Arendt calls, a "transmundane beginning." This transmundane beginning was the birth of Christ and it ruptured the natural, cyclical movement of the pre-Christian world. At this point, the idea of a common humanity was devised, and devised with a common rectilinear history originating out of the act of creation. The birth of Christ was an historical event that had an immensely important impact upon the world and upon Arendt's analyses of the world. Arendt first confronts seriously the significance of Christianity in *Love and Saint Augustine*. The results of that investigation influenced her thinking throughout the rest of her life.

* * * * *

By tracing the disparate strands of Saint Augustine's concept of love, Arendt's PhD thesis, *Love and Saint Augustine*, evaluates the significance of neighbourly love: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." More specifically, Arendt questions how the authentic Christian individual, whose truth and reality emanate out of an unworldly relation to God, "can be at all interested in his neighbor."⁴ Augustine offers only one *definition* of love as "craving" which conflicts, Arendt shows, with the "well-ordered" love of an individual toward his neighbour. Her project is to understand how these two seemingly incongruous understandings of love come to cohere in the Christian social pursuit of neighbourly love; to show that "alienation from the world and its desires by means of faith does not simply cancel out the togetherness of men."⁵

Augustine sees love as "a kind of craving." Love craves something previously known or given and this something is outside itself. This exterior thing determines love by defining its aim. An object is loved separately from, or outside of its relation to, other things; it is loved *for its own sake*, in and of itself. The object of craving is a "good" because of the happiness that arises from loving it. As a motion, love is seen as both a forward movement toward particular unrealized goals and, by retrieving from memory the happiness of

past loves, the backward movement of memory providing the context for individuals to choose what goods to love. While the active pursuit of love is onward, it is predicated by the referential movement of memory. The goal of love as craving is possession where, upon this realization, we find happiness and our love ceases. The very fact that things are desired at all points to a situation of human dependence upon exterior things.⁶

Whereas happiness arises out of the possession of goods, fear of loss is understood as evil. The difficulty, Arendt proceeds to explain, is that according to Augustine our loving rarely leads to possession. Most of the objects we crave are “temporal,” lacking the durability necessary to prevent the fear of loss. Food, for example, is a temporal good which quickly perishes. We do consume food before it perishes, but it cannot always be stored for future use and we cannot guarantee its future availability without our continual labour.⁷ Consequently, the “temporal” character of food prevents us from attaining the happiness of its *secure* possession. Happiness arises, then, not only from the possession of goods but by preventing the fear of their future loss. Human beings are dependent upon an outside world that is not even dependable itself. However, Arendt argues that the “enormous importance of security... is due to the condition of man and not to the objects he desires.”⁸ In other words, temporal goods are not the root of the problem but humanity itself whose condition is temporal; humans are mortal beings

whose "life on earth is a living death."⁹ Augustine maintains that while every person's desires and aversions differ, everyone wishes to *live* such that happiness is found in life itself and not in its particular goods. But love of life can never be happy because life will never be possessed, because of the fear of inevitable death. A truly happy life is one that does not fear death because it lasts forever.

Because the true nature of life is caught in a dialectical relation with death and because life is the foremost good, love's ultimate goal is freedom from the fear of death. Death marks the loss of life and therefore all particular goods, signifying a general rule of love, a general fact of the human condition: love as craving can never end in durable possession because we only hold things temporarily; self-direction and self-definition are always only partial and momentary. "Only a present without a future is immutable and utterly unthreatened. In such a present lies the calm of possession."¹⁰ This possession, for Augustine, is not defined by what is possessed or who possesses but by the non-temporal concept of eternity. Eternity indicates a self-determined existence lived in a "present without a future"; it is the happy security of a present free of future fear, free of impending loss. Earthly life, on the contrary, is characterized by mutability, impermanence, and is, as Arendt cites Augustine, what never "stands still."¹¹ The eternal, the permanent, is what reveals itself as forever present, without past or future, rooted in the

still calm of rest.

Love's aim, as previously stated, is defined by what it craves. According to Augustine, love can be defined in two different ways: love as *cupiditas* and love as *caritas*.¹² Put simply, *cupiditas* is love of the world and the things in it and *caritas* is love of God, Being, or the eternal. Whether we choose *caritas* or *cupiditas* we choose where we want to live, in the city of God, *civitas Dei*, or in the earthly city, *civitas terrena*. *Cupiditas* is mundane and loves "the wrong object," whereas *caritas*, the "right love," is transcendent. But God is not the criterion for deciding whether *cupiditas* or *caritas* is the right or wrong love, and neither is the self. The criterion of worthy love is "the self who will be *eternal*," it is "the eternity that lies ahead."¹³

Love ought to turn its desire to what will last forever, to what will assure it an everlasting life, because a love that craves earthly things (and therefore their inherent temporality) will never be satisfied: "Whatever can be taken away from a lasting enjoyment for its own sake cannot possibly be the proper object of desire."¹⁴ Because all temporal goods disappoint, authentic love rejects all particular goods in favour of the security of an absolute future, in favour of *caritas*. Arendt argues, "Thus, Augustine proceeds to strip the world and all temporal things of their value and to make them relative. All worldly goods are changeable (*mutabilia*). Since they will not last, they do not really exist. They cannot be relied upon."¹⁵ What makes

life and worldly goods changeable is their temporal reference to the past and the future; they change out of a past and into a future. It is this quality that prevents them from being durably possessed and, what is more important, from having a meaning and even existence. Yet because humans register time within a consciousness composed of memory and expectation, human life is saved from getting lost within meaningless relativity. Memory preserves the past in the present and expectation equally projects its future goals from this present, the present Augustine calls the "Now."¹⁶ This Now ties together the past and future within a conscious "space" making time meaningful: without the space of the Now, time could not be rendered at all and life would be perpetual, indistinguishable motion. "For a fleeting moment (the temporal Now) it is as though time stands still, and it is this Now that becomes Augustine's model of eternity for which he uses Neoplatonic metaphors--the *nunc stans* or *stans aeternitatis*."¹⁷

There are correct and incorrect love objects. These love objects are determined via the themes of eternity vs. mortality, the permanent vs. the impermanent, which weave themselves throughout Arendt's thesis. The world is continually caught within processes of change, is caught up in the movement from the past and into the future defined by the ultimate beginning and end: birth and death. Life is fleeting, unstable, and unreliable. By contrast, the object of *caritas* is not subject to inconstancy but exists

independently in a state of rest. The eternal is the very absence of movement, the absence of the movement that so characterizes the world's objects and desires. It transpires that at the very root of Augustine's philosophy, there are preconceptions and valuations that hinge upon notions of movement. What defines his writing and his types of love, Arendt argues, is "a deep dissatisfaction with what the world can give its lovers."¹⁸ Things of the world, e.g., a work of art, can provide some level of endurance and can provide the medium through which people attain some level of permanence. But to love, through *cupiditas*, worldly things does nothing to rescue the deteriorating nature of life, since "No earthly goods can lend support to life's instability."¹⁹

Arendt is interested in the concept of love in Augustine's work because love, defined as craving, signifies human dependence upon things exterior to us. This existence would not be so terrible if the world's objects upon which we depend were themselves reliable. But the things at our disposal cannot even be depended upon to secure our existence. Human beings are not self-sufficient, but isolated--from the world and from God. Augustine sees isolation and lack of self-sufficiency as the only "essential nature" humans could have, because humans "always [desire] to belong to something outside [themselves]."²⁰ Yet by living in the *civitas terrena*, by loving through *cupiditas*, humans become estranged from themselves by living for and

through those things external to us. "By desiring and depending on things 'outside myself,' that is, on the very things I am not, I lose the unity that holds me together by virtue of which I can say 'I am.'" ²¹ The process of becoming part of the world and its history Augustine calls "dispersion," and is comforting because it distracts from the fear of loss. On the other hand, dispersion also means the loss of the self to this world by "desiring and depending....on the very things that I am not." And it is this self that is the only link between a dependent humanity and its God. By turning away from the world and withdrawing into the self, individuals "become a question to themselves" because, within the self, one comes to realize "that this self is even more impenetrable than the 'hidden works of nature.'" ²² The consequent of becoming lost within ourselves, of not knowing who we are, is a turning to God for guidance about ourselves. "Self-discovery and discovery of God coincide, because by withdrawing into myself I have ceased to belong to the world. This is the reason that God then comes to my help."²³ The self is then the necessary element leading us toward the *civitas Dei* and away from the dependence and insecurity of the world.

Even the timeless present of the Now is only of our consciousness and does not provide the stability necessary to alter the conditions of our material bodies. Fearless eternity exists as a good only beyond our world, in the city of God, and cannot grant us an immortality of this world. This eternity we crave

is life as *Being*, the transcendent essence of life that is permanent and everlasting, the source of all life or God. By loving *Being*, human essence as opposed to human existence, we love our selves. Consequently, *caritas* tries to step beyond human existence, attempts to transcend our earthly lives, by anticipating the eternal. But because this eternity, extraneous to the mortal world, is craved, it takes on a temporal character, can be reached only in the future, and, as a result, loses the timeless nature of eternity. While this may be a contradiction,²⁴ it is what provides Augustine with the explanation for the ground of eternal life: that the eternity exterior to humanity and its world is related to human love and its craving.

The project of striving for eternity, of transcending our earthly lives, "can be actualized only in the form of a radical negation of the present."²⁵ Love of the self, for Augustine, means disdain of the worldly self, of the self that is temporal and will die. *Caritas* also leads to a forgetting of the self: "Craving the world, he forgets his self and forgets the world; discovering that he cannot find his self except in the craving for God, he forgets his self."²⁶ This move Augustine calls the "transit," and denotes complete self-oblivion by obliterating the social and historical context of the individual. The *transition* from temporality to eternity destroys the historical roots of individuals so they may exist in a pure state of love, so they may exist "extended" and "straining forward" to the absolute future that is God. Yet

temporality and the world cannot be ignored by the lover of *caritas*. The correct attitude to the world, Augustine believes, is use in contrast to the enjoyment attained from the world by the lovers of *cupiditas*.²⁷ *Caritas* uses things only as they are useful for attaining the final good of God. As a result, “the world loses its independent meaningfulness and thus ceases to tempt man.”²⁸

Both *caritas* and *cupiditas* forget the self, but, whereas *cupiditas* forgets by leaving the self for the external world, *caritas* forgets by escaping into the self from the world. In other words, *caritas* does not efface the self altogether but only forgets so that it may reward the self (the Being or essence of the self) with the eternity of an afterlife. *Caritas* frees the individual from fear because it attaches its love to eternity—something that is not subject to deterioration or loss. Death, the ultimate fear of humanity on earth, becomes meaningless and “His own self, not as it is but as it will be, [becomes] self-sufficient.”²⁹ The potential freedom of *caritas* on earth is love as craving and effectively mediates between the desiring individual and the desired freedom—eternity.

The lover of *caritas* cannot remain forever “straining forward” while still existing upon the earth. The return to the world is necessary (beyond the necessity of providing for our material needs) because of the Christian command to “love thy neighbor as thyself”—even if this seems inconsistent with love as *caritas*. Arendt argues, “Obviously there is no answer to this

question [why we should have any worldly relation to our neighbour] in this conceptual framework [love as *caritas*] except the divine commandment itself, which appears here like a *deus ex machina*.”³⁰ However, the expected absolute future provides individuals with the means for regulating the love of the world: by striving for eternity, we gain “a point of reference that lies, in principle, outside the world itself, and which therefore can now serve as regulator of all things inside the world as well as of the relationships by which they are interconnected.”³¹ The result is an ordering of love that prescribes what things ought to be loved above others. This “point of reference” is what teaches us to use the world’s things rather than enjoy them, to use them for the sake of our “higher good”—the eternal or God. The impersonal, impartial form of judgement that arises cannot, on the other hand, be understood in terms of love as craving. The absence of desire produces a “well-ordered” love and is a sign of fearlessness and indifference. Neighbours are loved not in their individuality but because they are human and, too, can aid the goal of future striven eternity. This, Arendt argues, destroys the meaning of neighbourly love because it uses them like any other object, preventing neighbours from being loved for their own sake. How, then, does Augustine rescue the significance of the neighbour?

Arendt notes that Augustine’s striving for happiness, for the absolute future, has forgotten his earlier tenet that all notions of happiness arise out of

the past. Memory, therefore, provides the content of expectation; it is only by recalling the past into the present that the future is projected out of the Now. The eternity we desire can only be conceptualized from an original experience of the eternal, from the transmundane memory of our creation. "Straining forward" is actually the attempt to return, to reach backwards, to God. Arendt tells us to define our existence from *whence* we came rather than by *whither* we go; let birth, *natality*, determine our existence, not death, *mortality*.³² Transmundane recollection "clearly shows that desire is not free-floating, arising, as it were, from nowhere."³³ The significance of neighbourly love is reinstated because, rather than existing as mere material for a future goal, love reminds us of our origin—God our creator. "Every particular act of love receives its meaning, its *raison d'être*, in this act of referring back to the original beginning, because this source, in which reasons are sempiternal (*rationes sempiternae*), contains the ultimate and imperishable 'reason' for all perishable manifestations of existence."³⁴

By comprehending existence from the standpoint of natality, existence becomes more bearable and something we should be grateful for. "This will to *be* under all circumstances is the hallmark of man's attachment to the transmundane source of his existence."³⁵ While human existence is defined by being "always in motion"—as opposed to the still permanence of the Creator—it manages, despite this movement, to hold some meaning by

"relating back to its origin."³⁶ What Augustine calls the "stigma of all created things"³⁷--their temporality and perishability--is a movement that arose out of its origin in the non-movement of God. But the origin of humanity does not represent the origin of movement as such, it represents the introduction of a new, properly called novel, movement in the universe.

...man was created into time, but time itself was created simultaneously with the world, namely, together with motion and change. Not only is time unthinkable without the existence of "some creature by virtue of whose movement time could pass," but movement is unthinkable without the notion of passing time. Moreover, the beginning that was created with man prevented time and the created universe as a whole from turning eternally in cycles about itself in a purposeless way and without anything new ever happening. Hence, it was for the sake of *novitas*, in a sense, that man was created. Since man can know, be conscious of, and remember his "beginning" or his origin, he is able to act as a beginner and enact the story of mankind.³⁸

"Human" movement creates a rupture in the "purposeless" movement of the universe--never-ending cyclical movement--by imposing a rectilinear movement between birth and death. Each rectilinear movement is meaningful to the extent that it is new and individual and because its oriented purpose can collapse the past and future within the present, the Now, where movement may approach or imitate the non-movement of eternity. Such an imitation of eternity Augustine calls sempiternity--the "moving image of eternity"--and calls its process "sempiternal Becoming."³⁹ Only through contemplating "the absolute present of eternity," where the past and future become exchangeable, does movement attain meaning and

import. "Only man, but no other mortal being, lives toward his ultimate origin while living toward the final boundary of death. Since he can concentrate through remembrance and anticipation his entire life into the present, man can participate in eternity and thus be 'happy' even in this life."⁴⁰

Caritas marks itself as an authentic *choice* because where it is natural to love and embrace the world, it takes the will of choice to turn one's love to the Creator. This choice is predicated, however, upon the more fundamental choice God made to love his creatures. The "choice out of the world"⁴¹ is the overt recognition of our dependence upon God and our place, as creatures, within the overarching relationship of God to the universe. By choosing to love what lies beyond our world, individuals admit their insecure knowledge of what they are and their want of God's grace to show them their Being. To accept, rather than choose, *cupiditas*, is to covet the world and believe that a person's will and 'know-how' is sufficient for establishing truth and reality. The ease with which humanity accepts this earthly existence is the consequent of letting "habit" dictate our actions.⁴² The "force of habit," the rule of *cupiditas*, is the identification of today and every tomorrow with a particular yesterday. Habit causes us to cling to a singular past, a past that is of mortal making, and by that denies its origin in, and dependence upon, God. As the "law of sin," habit perpetuates the original sin of Adam, the particular

past of *cupiditas*.

To counter the force of habit, Augustine proposes the “conscience” of God that directs us away from habit in an inescapable way. Conscience gives human beings a direct link to God and commands “Thou shalt not covet.” Rather, one must reject the historical, material world for the eternity of Being. While God had previously only related to His creation through the remembered past and anticipated future, here God confronts humans in the present of their existence as “the Creator who makes demands on the creature.”⁴³ As the divine command, God relates to concrete, temporal creatures instructing them by Law. “God is no longer understood as the Supreme Being, which as eternity presents the eternal law simultaneously in all its several parts, but as the ever-present authority that man keeps confronting on his way through life.”⁴⁴ God presents himself to us in the world. While we may have the will to follow the divine law, we do not have the power to do so and thus we are left in need of the grace of God. “This turn is no longer a simple relation to God, but a direct plea for his help. God’s function is changed from that of a Creator to a giver and helper.”⁴⁵ Only those who are humble, willing their lives through the law, find the power of God’s grace.

The world remains empty and meaningless to the lover of *caritas*, but now he is accompanied by God who is in him. “In self-denial, man acts ‘as

God' toward himself. He loves himself as God loves him, hating everything he has made in himself, and loving himself only as far as he is God's creation. What he loves in himself is exclusively God's goodness, the Creator."⁴⁶ By loving the world as God's creation, the individual loves his neighbour as a creation of God. Equally he loves himself as a created being. "The prerequisite of the right comprehension of my neighbor is the right comprehension of myself."⁴⁷ Neighbourly love is impartial love: we love neighbours purely because they are exemplary of creation, not because they are good or evil, Christian or non-Christian. We love the eternal being or essence of our neighbour for the sake of the eternal, not the mortal neighbour for his own sake. By loving our neighbour we love our eternal source, not the neighbour. Yet to love one's neighbour already means that the lover is isolated and has cut all worldly ties. Lovers are provided with the context for how to love their neighbours. On the other hand, Arendt argues that Augustine has yet to explain the neighbour's role in relation to the lover or how the lover reinstates worldly interactions with neighbours from the standpoint of love as *caritas* that is, we have seen, transcendent and unworldly.

The import of neighbourly love lies in the faith that neighbours hold between each other. As neighbours believing together, they comprise a "community of faith" bound by "a specific possibility" and demanding complete and undivided cooperation.⁴⁸ While this faith is each of theirs

individually, it is, equally, theirs in common. Individuals are related to each other in common on the grounds of, what Arendt calls, a “twofold origin.”⁴⁹ In terms of the *community* of faith, individuals are linked historically to the death of Christ who redeemed himself not for individuals but for all of humankind as lived on earth. Secondly, individuals are “rooted” to each other through their genealogical origin in Adam. This kinship descending from Adam is of “situation” because of their share in the fate of mortality, in original sin. These two sources of community, Christ and Adam, reveal, consecutively, the “equality of all people before God” and the human situation of “mutual interdependence.”⁵⁰

These two sources represent the two cities: the *civitas terrena*, grounded in Adam, which all are born into and the *civitas Dei*, by which Christ provided the necessary salvation for its realization. The *civitas terrena* is based historically and biologically in Adam and establishes indirectly, by generation, the equality of humankind. Here the notion of the being of man concerns the nature of the entire human race. The dependence on the origin of our creation, on the other hand, is, again, historical. The historical presence of Christ provides humans with their link to God. Neighbourly love arising out of these historical contexts provides concrete equality along with demanding social obligations. The neighbour relates to the lover in two possible ways: first, a neighbour who has already devoted himself to *caritas* is

the lover's partner and shares with him in the grace of God; and, second, a neighbour is someone devoted to *cupiditas* and reminds the lover of the existence he would continue to live were it not for God's grace.⁵¹ As long as the world exists it is relevant to the believer as something to be overcome. Yet this "conquest" of the world is only possible to the faithful acting in concert, such that absolute solitude, as long as we remain part of the world, becomes impossible.

Neighbourly love derived from the source of Adam is dependent love. I love my neighbour because he shares the common fear of death, the common fate of mortality. "Only in Christianity is death viewed as 'the wages of sin' (Saint Paul) rather than an event of nature and as the peril common to all."⁵² Death, understood more poignantly here as the "eternal death which is the punishment of sin," continues forever in a world dominated by *cupiditas*. The introduction of Christ, however, removes the communal fear of death, transforming it into an individual fear and therefore freeing the individual for future salvation. "Death can now mean salvation for the good."⁵³ The love of neighbour emanating from the knowledge of Christ is mutual and acted out as the imitation of our Creator's love for His creation. The danger of losing the eternal after death is something all individuals face. Therefore, this is not love of the species because of its plight as a species, but love of every individual in the isolation of their relation to the Eternal, to God: "the

human race as such is not in danger, but every individual is.”⁵⁴

While the lover of *caritas* loves the individual neighbour because of his equally essential relation to God, the lover does not love the neighbour *for his own sake*: I love my neighbour because the source of Christ tells me my duty is to help my neighbour to love the correct object, to help my neighbours toward *caritas*. In other words, I love him objectively for his relation to the Eternal and only because it yields a direct relation between me and God. “We are commanded to love our neighbour... only because in so doing we love Christ. This indirectness breaks up social relations by turning them into provisional ones.”⁵⁵ Love of neighbour is only important for attaining the eternity that lies beyond the transient nature of our world.

The origin in Adam and the origin in Christ serve, together, to define neighbourly love through *caritas*: My very descent from Adam provides me with the context for interacting with my neighbours. Yet these individuals do not properly become my “neighbours” until I, having returned from my isolating inquiry into myself and by that into God, obtain the reference point outside the world for seeing each neighbour in their own isolated reference to God. In my eyes, each individual neighbour loses his social and historical particularity and becomes one of many individuals who join me in pursuit of the eternal. It is this very detachment from our social and historical locus that frees us from the transience of our restless existence and enables future

salvation through Christ.

Love and Saint Augustine proved to be a vital part of Arendt's later thought. It provided her with a sense of how a rectilinear account of history emerged. Such an account was consistent with her own emphasis on spontaneity and novelty. The birth of Christ was a moment which symbolized an entirely new event in the world; an event that exploded movement as circular recurrence. Christianity reworked the movement of human life; it transformed the unending recurrence of individual lives into a collective humanity descending from a common origin in both God and Adam. However, this reinterpretation only altered a portion of the human understanding of time: cyclical, law-like movement continued to define the political, social, and natural orders regardless of the rectilinearity of private, individual life-spans. Rectilinearity, and therefore "meaning," could only be possessed or experienced by individual Christians enacting private beginnings, who turned from the world into their private selves to learn of humanity's beginning in God.

Not until the modern age do we find the circular movement of the secular realm conceptualized in rectilinear terms. The discovery of the New World followed by a reinvigorated exploration of the remainder of the earth, the rapidly growing individual accumulation of wealth, the equally rapid growing accumulation of knowledge in the sciences, the discovery in

America that poverty is not necessary or naturally allotted according to a predestined social order, and the infiltration of labour into the public sphere provided the historical conditions for breaking the cycle of the secular world. But by recognizing the immense possibilities of human action, by realizing that the social and political order and its change were not regular and predestined but amenable to alteration, even control, by human effort, people lost sight of the immense responsibilities that accompany human action. In other words, not all forms of linear movement and fresh beginnings are constructive and honourable; in fact, some may be disastrous, destroying the potential freedom of action. The idea of an unending, forward-driven process operating according to a law-like logic of movement (the idea of *unilinear* movement), rather than founding and establishing a political situation that stabilizes and comes to rest in the manifestation of a body politic, lurked behind the Nazi and Stalinist regimes of the twentieth century. The following chapter looks at Arendt's analysis of totalitarian rule, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, by probing the arguments behind Arendt's claim that totalitarianism is indeed a "movement" and only secondarily a party and a state.

CHAPTER 3

Totalitarianism and the Movement of Process

When the Nazis talked about the law of nature or when the Bolsheviks talked about the law of history, neither nature nor history is any longer the stabilizing source of authority for the actions of mortal men; they are movements in themselves.

Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*

The *Origins of Totalitarianism*, first published in 1951, marked a major shift in Hannah Arendt's interests. The world of politics now took centre stage in her thinking, as she reflected on the shattering experience of fascism and Stalinism. Yet into this political world Arendt took many insights from her reading of Augustine including the importance of beginning, the concept of natality, and particular understandings of the world and of freedom. Greatly influenced by issues of time and space, *Love and Saint Augustine* prepared Arendt to look at the world of politics in a highly idiosyncratic way. What has been found in *The Human Condition*, and what I will come to show in Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* and *On Revolution*, is Arendt's interest in the historical construction of time concepts and her interest in the artificial movement of politics as opposed to the regular

movement of nature. That Arendt looked at politics, and the modern world more generally, in terms of movement may have originated in her work on Augustine, who saw temporality as man's fundamental existential condition.

Hannah Arendt shows us in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* that the totalitarian form of government is altogether different from previous political systems that have operated during the last two thousand years. The rise of totalitarian movements created a rupture in the history of political organization; a rupture which developed, she argues, in the wake of "the crisis of our century"¹—the disintegration of the European nation-state. This crisis became more apparent and the degeneration more assured when totalitarian governments become fully established. The unprecedented change in governmental form lies in the difference between the constitutions of the declining nation-state and the evolving totalitarian *movement*: a change in the status between the *transient* character of human actions and the *stabilizing* effects of the state and its law. Totalitarian movements radically alter this opposition by breaking down the ever-changing actions of men into the monolithic behaviour of an homogenous mass and destroying government stability in favour of an ideological principle of unending imperialist expansion and the inevitable movement of evolutionary progress. Totalitarian government sacrifices the plurality of humans for abstract laws of movement; laws no longer serve to stabilize the

unpredictability of heterogenous men, for the mass man acts wholly in accordance with the inexorable motion of "History."

The European nation-state, as it had developed since the French Revolution, was a product of the relation between a people's national consciousness and a particular territory which this people could call its own. The two components of the nation-state, nationality and state, interrupted the migration of peoples and fixed them according to their newly conceptualized common social origin.² Arendt points out that while nationalism was fairly new, the state's existence had been born of centuries of government aimed at establishing the security of a people and acting as the custodian of law. By operating according to "positive laws" (laws claiming to be "eternal" and which supposedly stand outside individual actions and particular generations and extend beyond the borders of specific states), nation-states created the space required for the freedom of actions and thoughts. Nation-states, acting as guarantors of positive law, provided the stability necessary to regulate the unpredictable actions of men. The degeneration of the nation-state began when the notion of nationality overtook the concept of the state as lawgiver and protector of all its inhabitants. Nationalism redefined citizenship in terms of a person's biological birth and supported "common" political rights for only those people that satisfied a given line of descent.

Arendt argues that individuals, by virtue of their birth into the world,

are spontaneous and unpredictable and have the capability of initiating things anew. Positive laws have important consequences for the novelty of human actions because they “hedge in each new beginning and at the same time assure its freedom of movement, the potentiality of something entirely new and unpredictable... they guarantee the preexistence of a world, the reality of some continuity which transcends the individual life span of each generation, absorbs all new origins and is nourished by them.”³ Positive laws stabilize the potential political difficulties of diverse and unforeseeable actions by instructing people about what they ought not to do. By not telling people what to do, such laws also allow for the freedom of decision. Arendt sees these laws as “fences,” providing the necessary space between people for action. Actions require “freedom of movement;” positive laws—like fences—create boundaries to prevent any radically free sense of action but leave individuals the greatest possible room for movement. Positive laws claim to derive their authority from “Nature or Divinity” linking individuals to an eternal, over-arching moral code that stretches across generations and the differing origins of people. And they sustain the context of a continuous, changing world by “absorbing all new origins” and being “nourished by them.” With the advent of nationalism, the ability of positive laws to “absorb new origins” became increasingly difficult and the plight of Jews, in particular, became increasingly precarious.

The Jews had attained, at the peak of the nation-state's development in the nineteenth century, equality of rights in their status as citizens.⁴ However, by the time the Nazis took control of Germany, they were considered only second-class citizens and later would be denied any political rights at all. Arendt points out that "of all European peoples, the Jews had been the only one without a state of their own;"⁵ they were "without a government, without a country, and without a language."⁶ The fact that they were a "rootless" people, the only truly "European" people, in a period of intensified nationalism meant that, because of their stateless condition, they were subject to the whim of state systems which recognised only legitimate nationals. Arendt outlines the many roles Jews played within the nation-state and the special privileges that some attained working as financiers for the bourgeois class. This particular set of Jews were afforded a higher status than the ordinary citizen. The remaining Jews, on the other hand, were disadvantaged greatly as their rights gradually eroded in the face of the nationalist onslaught.

At the same time as the nation-state began its decline, Imperialism intensified. The special status Jews lost their dominant position as financiers of the state because they were not "imperialistically minded."⁷ Yet individual Jews, later seen as representative of Jews in general, held positions as middlemen and financial advisors. Ironically, while they became "representative" Jews, the dismantling of the Jewish business community

into singular businesses isolated them entirely from their fellow Jews. Viewed as non-national, rootless people and as superfluous wealth holders, the Jews became the victims of a growing antisemitism. "To be uprooted means to have no place in the world, recognized and guaranteed by others; to be superfluous means not to belong to a world at all."⁸

The connection of Imperialism to the nation-state furthered the nation-state's destruction. States are delineated by boundaries which separate them from other states and define, for example, spheres of governance and economic activity. Imperialism, on the other hand, whose ultimate principle is never-ending political expansion, is based upon the idea of continual centrifugal movement that, respecting no limits, believes expansion to be an end in itself.⁹ What is odd about this entirely new political ideal¹⁰ is that it is not political in essence, but rather originates from the economic developments of a growing capitalist world. Expansion suited the world of business and industry because, Arendt argues, "the productivity of man... is, indeed, unlimited."¹¹ Imperialism developed as a reaction to the political limitations on economic growth: as businesses exhausted the material potential within single states they pushed governments toward imperialist expansion in the hopes of procuring the resources of other countries. The natural tendency of economic production is towards unlimited growth, unlimited movement, that has to be released from the bonds of the nation-

state.

In imperialist politics, the home country is important only as the base or origin of rule over acquired territory; won nations merely signal the ability and necessity to move further and acquire more and as such are not valued in themselves. Each singular victory merely signifies the inevitable success of expansion and the necessity to move quickly on; each victory signifies an increase in power and the inescapable desire to attain greater power. Capital begets capital; power begets power. Arendt argues, "not the naive delusion of a limitless growth of property, but the realization that power accumulation was the only guarantee for the stability of so-called economic laws, made progress irresistible."¹² The combination of economic growth with political expansion unleashed the "political emancipation of the bourgeoisie" and discovered "the true principle of perpetual motion" that, at least theoretically, was "unable to stop and to stabilize."¹³ Arendt remarks: "the philosophical correlative of the inherent instability of a community founded on power is the image of an endless process of history which, in order to be consistent with the constant growth of power, inexorably catches up with individuals, peoples, and finally all mankind."¹⁴ The ultimate result of inexorable economic progress through political expansion is not simply the tangible acquisition of territory and capital, but instead a "logical" process, a type of motion, which defines every action and everyone that enters into its path in

terms of a natural, necessary movement: "once [the mass man] has entered the maelstrom of an unending process of expansion, he will, as it were, cease to be what he was and obey the laws of the process, identify himself with anonymous forces that he is supposed to serve in order to keep the whole process in motion; he will think of himself as mere function, and eventually consider such functionality, such an incarnation of the dynamic trend, his highest possible achievement."¹⁵ This logical process, understood as a *law* of movement, interprets all actions in terms of the eventual direction of the movement and sacrifices all individual interests for the sake of the movement of imperialism. When understood in the light of mutually competitive imperialism, the only logical outcome of this movement is the eventual survival of a single victorious empire at the expense of destroying a varying political world. The only logical conclusion to such a movement is the destruction of mankind: a catastrophe which sacrifices both those people in its path and sacrifices the spontaneous, unpredictable nature of humanity in those who carry forward such a movement.

How, then, did totalitarian movements tie territory-bound nationalism to this ever-expanding imperialism? As the concept of "nation" overtook that of the "state," nationality became defined in terms of blood-lines and the national soul. The divorce of national feeling from particular territories and particular political and cultural achievements intensified to the point that

groups became hostile to the very notion of a state. Such hostility grew in the most part out of a people who, seeing the state-designated nationalism of Western nations, developed nationalistic principles despite their lack of common territory.¹⁶ Arendt refers to this development (arising from the rootlessness of "the oppressed peoples of Austria-Hungary, Czarist Russia, or the Balkan countries") as "tribal nationalism."¹⁷ Tribal nationalism, in its extreme form, became manifest in the pan-movements of the Germans and Slavs and adopted racial theories of divine chosenness. As chosen peoples, the pan-movements aspired to dominate those who were not equal nationals; all other peoples were *ipso facto* inferior and would eventually come to ruin. It is not surprising that antisemitism developed out of the pan-movements, considering the Jews' own claim to chosenness that had persisted for more than two thousand years. The Jews also presented to the pan-movements an example of a people who, even though rootless and without a state, had built a strong national identity. The Jewish heritage, envied by the pan-Germans and pan-Slavs, was obvious competition; the only way to prove the movement's ideology of chosenness was to stamp out all competing ideologies, to destroy all other races.

These racial ideologies, like the economic ideology that animated imperialism, relied upon a reading of history as inevitable process. The process of racial domination emanated from a belief in chosenness and the

claim "to know the hidden truth about otherwise incomprehensible facts" as befits a universal theory.¹⁸ The future of these chosen peoples is the preordained outcome of a natural progression of history. All occurrences or events are seen in the light of this eventual realization and are integrated into such a history no matter how contradictory they may seem. The hidden truth in a universal theory of racial or imperialistic domination is the truth of a particular type of motion or movement. The movement of capital, like the movement of power, like the movement of a chosen people, are all unavoidable and predetermined, they are future-verified, and map a unilinear pattern of movement.¹⁹ The common logic of movement allowed pan-nationalist ideologies to weave together the political force of totalitarianism.

By linking an antisemitic ideology with an imperialist ideology, Arendt offers an explanation for the rise of the Nazi totalitarian movement. Totalitarian movements, of which Nazism and Stalinism are exemplary, are to be understood rightly as "movements" in their opposition to the security and stability of the "state." In opposition to parties, movements offer a political dynamism free of state ties, class interests, and party policies. In fact, totalitarian governments dismantled key features of the class system by destroying the common horizontal interests that tie people to classes. And because one's class position tended to determine one's political affiliations,

the collapse of a conspicuous class system meant the collapse of political parties. What remained were masses of atomized individuals, isolated from each other, unpolitical and asocial, but who comprised the material means for fulfilling the movement of totalitarianism. By refraining from declaring any fixed or specific political policy, totalitarian regimes were able to prevent the masses from developing political views dependent upon tangible goals. The only thing left to pin the masses' isolated individualism upon was the abstract ideal of political movement. Their absolute loyalty to these laws of movement was carried out in an unemotional and automatic way, as their contribution to the unavoidable process. Membership in the party at least assured a confident involvement in Universal World History or the Law of Nature.

Totalitarian movements introduce a political system that is the very embodiment, and vindication of, transiency and motion. Operating by abstract laws of movement (i.e. the law of Nature; the law of History), totalitarianism stifles the incalculable and spontaneous character of humans, stabilizing people into a predictable and homogenous mass. Actively practicing the idea of expansion for expansion's sake, totalitarianism takes imperialism one step farther by dissolving any notion of a stable home, any ties to a stable state or territory, for the logic of a law of movement. Totalitarians do not respect borders and consider the whole earth their

eventual domain. Grounded in the concept of an ideology and the practice of terror, totalitarianism destroys all positive laws in favour of a suprahuman law of movement. These suprahuman laws are established only when human beings become the actual principle of the law, when "mankind itself [becomes] the embodiment of the law."²⁰

As opposed to the stabilizing purpose of positive laws, the totalitarian notion of laws of Nature or History evokes pure laws of *movement* disrupting the political interaction of transiency and stability. Totalitarian "stability," so-called, is nothing other than, first, the complete homogeneity and loyalty of the masses and, second, the sense of security that the mass man gains from the singular direction of the law of nature/history. However, while the movement of the *law* of nature (not to be confused with the movement of nature which is cyclical) can be considered stable in terms of its overall unilinear direction, when considered in the present tense, "between past and future," such a movement only means the unending restlessness of a political movement based on unceasing expansion. And the law of nature can only mean the continual striving for power that exists purely as the incentive to push for increasingly more power. "If it is the law of nature to eliminate everything that is harmful and unfit to live, it would mean the end of nature itself if new categories of the harmful and unfit-to-live could not be found... In other words, the law of killing by which totalitarian movements

seize and exercise power would remain a law of the movement even if they ever succeeded in making all of humanity subject to their rule.”²¹ Terror assures the free movement of nature and history and becomes the realization of the acting law of movement by preventing human opposition and spontaneous action: totalitarianism “destroys the one essential prerequisite of all freedom which is simply the capacity of motion which cannot exist without space.”²² In the destruction of this space, a space initially sustained by the nation-state’s positive laws, totalitarianism gains the life force of its movement, the driving force of its law of motion. It substitutes the freedom of motion of individual actions for the bondage of a single motion carried through by the automatic behaviour of an atomized mass. “Terror is the realization of the law of movement; its chief aim is to make possible for the force of nature or of history to race freely through mankind, unhindered by any spontaneous human action. As such, terror seeks to ‘stabilize’ men in order to liberate the forces of nature or history.”²³

Whereas Arendt shows terror to be the realization of the totalitarian law of movement, she claims the logic of such a movement to yield an “ideology.” An ideology has a specific meaning for Arendt; it is something which claims to “possess either the key to history, or the solution of all the ‘riddles of the universe,’ or the intimate knowledge of the hidden universal laws which are supposed to rule nature and man.”²⁴ Ideologies, purporting to

hold this “key of history,” always understand by this “key” a single, solitary idea. The “ideology” is the logic of a sole idea in an ever-extending history, the logic of *the* sole idea of History, and, as such, explains or predetermines the explanation of future events as generated by this key: “ideologies have the tendency to explain not what is, but what becomes, what is born and passes away. They are in all cases concerned solely with the element of motion, that is, with history in the customary sense of the word.”²⁵ History is the explanation of the stream or current of events which is “the unfolding of a process... in constant change.”²⁶ Ideologies follow the same logic of progression in which all individual actions and interests become a part of the eternal movement of “process.” All happenings are interpreted as the only possible logical outcome of the singular idea of History. Such a logic ensures that nothing new or extraordinary occurs because all occurrences are the inevitable outcome of this singular idea.

This monolithic, self-generating logic grounds itself in an idea and sets before it a path that cannot be seen as anything other than the natural, unavoidable result of its claim. In totalitarianism, the inherent movement of the ideology overtakes the content of the idea: “what distinguished these new totalitarian ideologists from their predecessors was that it was no longer primarily the ‘idea’ of the ideology—the struggle of classes and the exploitation of the workers or the struggle of the races and the care for Germanic peoples—

which appealed to them, but the logical process which could be developed from it.”²⁷ Totalitarianism destroys all content for the logic of the movement of process; totalitarianism’s ultimate, most profound, and radically new principle of politics is movement. Politics becomes the movement of a logical deduction safeguarded by total terror; terror and ideology “correspond to each other and need each other in order to set the terror-ruled movement in motion and keep it moving.”²⁸

For Arendt, the political action required to found a body politic and preserve its founding principles ought to stabilize the transiency of political life. In contrast, laws of movement, seen as definitive of totalitarian regimes, perpetuate a progressing, unstoppable movement that does not serve as a means for any particular end—for example, a free and stable body politic—but sees movement as an end in itself. Totalitarian regimes utilize the principles of the life-process to inculcate a necessary and inescapable law of movement into the hearts and minds of an homogenized mass. Beginning with a single premise (understood as the sole key to History or the universe), unfolding necessarily in a predestined direction, totalitarian movements irresistibly drive forward unilinearly without end because they know no other reality than the very motion of their principle’s logic. Totalitarianism is a form of rule based essentially on movement, on a type of movement characterized by the invasion of politics by the driving force of necessity. While the “process”

is grounded in the attributes of circular movement--necessity, irresistibility, regularity, never-ending change--it unfolds into an unending chain of unilinear, infinite progression. Adopting only the *character* of circular movement, "process" manifests itself unilinearly like a horse wearing blinkers, blinded by the light of an oncoming train, racing toward inevitable collision and death.

CHAPTER 4

Revolution, Novelty, and the Permanent Body Politic

Earlier I showed how Arendt interpreted the birth of Christ as a momentous event: an event which challenged the pre-Christian notion of regular, natural movement. And I have just shown in the previous chapter how Arendt's first major political study led her to evaluate totalitarianism in terms of movement: the movement of unilinear process. Revolution, our subject now, marks an utterly new beginning, comparable to the birth of Christ, but this time the beginning refers to the social and political world. In addition to rupturing the cyclical recurrence of the secular world, revolutions employ the novelty of political action in the service of establishing and maintaining a new body politic. In other words, political action, here, does not just manifest the freedom inherent in each individual's ability to begin things anew, but builds and maintains structures and institutions to guarantee and perpetuate this freedom. Political action builds a lasting public realm. This chapter will deal with the importance of foundation for Arendt's valuation of movement and how she conceptualizes the movement of a

“permanent” body politic.

According to Arendt, two major phenomena have shaped the political landscape of the twentieth century: war and revolution.¹ War has always been a part of politics; but revolution, a categorically distinct form of violent political conflict, only developed in the modern age. While “the aim of revolution was, and always has been, freedom,” war was fought primarily for reasons of “conquest, expansion, defence of vested interests, conservation of power in view of the rise of new and threatening powers, or support of a given power equilibrium.”² However, there are four reasons for thinking that war is moving towards its eclipse. First, the technological potential of “total war” has caused a “perversion in the relationship between state and army” where the conventional military distinction between soldiers and civilians has disappeared and confounded the army’s duty to protect its country’s citizens.³ Second, “wars have become politically... a matter of life and death” such that it is commonly accepted that any government or state defeated in war will perish.⁴ Third, war is becoming less a matter of physical battle than of deterring an impending battle, a battle that has grown impossible through the development of nuclear weaponry.⁵ And, finally, “the interrelationship of war and revolution... has steadily grown, and... the emphasis in the relationship has shifted more and more from war to revolution.”⁶

While wars tend to bring about revolutions and revolutions tend to

precipitate wars, neither war nor revolution have any bearing on politics unless their violence is utilized toward the foundation or reestablishment of a political realm: "only where change occurs in the sense of a new beginning, where violence is used to constitute an altogether different form of government, to bring about the formation of a new body politic, where the liberation from oppression aims at least at the constitution of freedom can we speak of revolution."⁷ For Arendt, the hypothetical, violent, and speechless situation of a "state of nature" constructed by seventeenth-century theorists, dramatized the *beginning* needed to move from prepolitical conflict to politics: it implied "the existence of a beginning that is separated from everything following it as though by an unbridgeable chasm."⁸ It was typical in the seventeenth century (a time of many wars and, significantly, the time when revolutions began to appear) for the idea of new beginnings and founding contracts to be contrasted with a "state of nature" because "revolutions are the only political events which confront us directly and inevitably with the problem of beginning."⁹ This beginning ruptures the continuum of time and history by inserting an event marked by violence and claiming to represent something entirely new.

Revolutions, as opposed to wars, are important to Arendt because they suggest the new and unprecedented and are the political counterpart to the principle of natality. In so being, they alter radically the natural movement of

the world by inserting a truly human movement, the artificial movement of politics. Revolutions “are not mere changes,” they are not modelled upon “Plato’s... quasi-natural transformation of one form of government into another, or... Polybius’s... appointed recurring cycle into which human affairs are bound by reason of their always being driven to extremes.”¹⁰ For “mere change” is natural, inevitable, predetermined, and cyclical. As we saw in Arendt’s reading of Saint Augustine, it was the development of Christianity that broke late antiquity’s cyclical understanding of time by deriving a new conception of temporal movement from the birth of Christ. Time ruptured by the novelty of an unparalleled event was represented by rectilinear movement, for the unprecedented can only arise from a rectilinear conception of time: “It is obvious that only under the conditions of a rectilinear time concept are such phenomena as novelty, uniqueness of events, and the like conceivable at all.”¹¹

However, for Christianity the secular world continued to revolve without meaning. Only individual Christians “in possession of an everlasting life, could break through this cycle of everlasting change.”¹² In other words, a rectilinear conception of time only arises for the Christian who has rejected the world and turned to God, his ultimate origin and beginning: “Since man can know, be conscious of, and remember his origin, he is able to act as a beginner and enact the [rectilinear] story of mankind.”¹³ Revolution,

on the other hand, breaks the cycle of endless, meaningless change in the social and political world: "the modern concept of revolution, inextricably bound up with the notion that the course of history suddenly begins anew, that an entirely new story, a story never known or told before, is about to unfold, was unknown prior to the two great revolutions at the end of the eighteenth century."¹⁴ Novelty, then, the introduction of entirely unprecedented phenomenon into an inchoate world, breaks the endless cyclical movement of interchangeable events and rearranges the conceptions of history, nature, and time rectilinearly. It is precisely the idea of rectilinear movement which is capable of imputing differentiation and meaning, significance and purpose, to an otherwise meaningless, cyclical world.

As the novelty of Christ broke the cosmological cycle of the natural world order, the novelty of the New World--of an America that had "discovered the means to abolish that abject misery of sheer want,"--broke the natural cycle of the social order and unleashed, what Arendt calls, the "social question." Traced back to Aristotle, the social question recognized "the connection between wealth and government in any given country" and prompted the insight that "forms of government are interconnected with the distribution of wealth, the suspicion that political power may simply follow economic power, and, finally, the conclusion that interest may be the moving force in all political strife."¹⁵ But until Europe got word of American

abundance, all the social question did was *recognize* these connections because “the ancient cycle of sempiternal recurrences had been based upon an assumedly ‘natural’ distinction of rich and poor”¹⁶ that could change and alter but only in accordance with the natural, predestined law of circular historical change. What the influence of New World prosperity did, was to “[break] this cycle once and for all” by showing that poverty was not natural and eternal but accidental and subject to the manipulation of men. Perhaps “life on earth [is] blessed with abundance instead of being cursed with scarcity”¹⁷ and perhaps scarcity is not the natural outcome of society but a concerted effort on the part of the rich to maintain its position at the expense of the poor. These new perceptions fuelled a revolutionary spirit that fought to liberate the masses from their social situation. Consequently, it was to the detriment of most revolutions that “it appeared to revolutionary men more important to change the fabric of society... than to change the structure of the political realm.”¹⁸

The defining characteristic of revolution is that it has freedom as its goal or purpose. However, Arendt notes that modern revolutions are quite clearly caught up in the pursuit of both freedom *and* liberation and these aspirations are not identical: “it may be a truism to say that liberation and freedom are not the same; that liberation may be the condition of freedom but by no means leads automatically to it; that the notion of liberty implied in

liberation can only be negative, and hence, that even the intention of liberating is not identical with the desire for freedom."¹⁹ Liberation, as Arendt notes, is primarily a notion of negative freedom--generally understood as freedom *from* interference or oppressive restraint--enabling individuals to exercise particular activities or pursue a particular mode of life. Negative freedom is, she explains, "freedom of movement," what Blackstone called "the power of locomotion" and considered "the most important of all civil rights."²⁰ Where the social question and the possible liberation of the oppressed were concerned, the obstruction of personal preference became extended to suggest the suppression of intrinsic and essential freedoms, "rights" that the wealthy deny the poor: "not 'life, liberty, and property' as such, but their being inalienable rights of man, was the result of revolution."²¹ But this "right" of freedom for Arendt is not political freedom *per se*, and therefore not the freedom that she claims to be the distinctive aim of revolutions. Freedom the "right" is "the more or less free range of non-political activities which a given body politic will permit and guarantee to those who constitute it."²² The freedom of liberation is a private freedom, not a public one, and therefore is not the political freedom Arendt prizes and wants protected, because "the desire to be free from oppression, could have been fulfilled under monarchical... rulership" but not the desire to be free to engage as equals in public discussion.²³

Political freedom, envisaged as public participation and achieved only within an artificially constructed political space, first arose in the Greek *polis* where "citizens lived together under conditions of no-rule, without a division between rulers and ruled."²⁴ Freedom needs a created space where individuals meet on equal terms as citizens, freely to initiate words and deeds that "could appear and be real only when others saw them, judged them, remembered them." The political form of "no-rule," or isonomy, characteristic of the *polis* is entirely different from democracy which rules by majority and thereby overrules the minority's political freedom, the freedom that requires active involvement in public not private life. Isonomy guaranteed freedom *and* demanded equality, making the two coexistent and mutually supporting: "hence, equality, which we... frequently see as a danger to freedom, was originally almost identical with it."²⁵ Equality consisted of,

those who form a body of peers. Isonomy guaranteed... equality, but not because all men were born or created equal, but... because men were by nature not equal, and needed an artificial institution, the polis, which... would make them equal. Equality existed only in this specifically political realm, where men met one another as citizens and not as private citizens. The difference between this ancient concept of equality and our notion that men are born or created equal and become unequal by virtue of social and political, that is man-made, institutions can hardly be over-emphasized.²⁶

Inequality and binding necessity are not worldly, they are part of the human condition; only equality and freedom require the concerted efforts of men and their associations. Freedom and equality require the security of citizenship, as

the case of European Jewry proved to the world.

The idea of novelty that came to pervade the eighteenth century view of revolution, was, interestingly, initially muted and even contradicted the early aspiration: "to revolve back to old times when things had been as they ought to be."²⁷ This is understandable because the word "revolution," an old astronomical term, was used to designate "the regular, lawfully revolving motion of the stars, which, since it was known to be beyond the influence of man and hence irresistible, was certainly characterized neither by newness nor by violence."²⁸ Arendt claims that when the astronomical definition was used to explain the human world it was used purely metaphorically to impose a continual, inevitable cyclical order upon a world that would otherwise be seen to move in an indiscriminate and chaotic manner. When revolution first entered the political scene in the mid- to late seventeenth century, governments were overthrown with the purpose of restoring previous forms of rule. Revolution "was used for a movement of revolving back to some pre-established point and, by implication, of swinging back into a preordained order."²⁹ This conservative idea of revolutions even initially preoccupied the minds of those who led the French and American revolutions--the two revolutions that, according to Arendt, brought the authentic political meaning of revolution to the fore, independent of the social question and its desire for liberation. "It was only in the course of the

eighteenth-century revolutions that men began to be aware that a new beginning could be a political phenomenon, that it could be the result of what men had done and what they could consciously set out to do."³⁰

On a world that seemed to move haphazardly, the ancients imposed an explanation of never-ending circularity based upon the regular movement of the heavens. But when the word "revolution" was first used with its new emphasis on novelty (as opposed to restoration) it carried with it also the strong connotation of irresistibility: "for the first time perhaps, the emphasis has shifted from the lawfulness of a rotating, cyclical movement to its irresistibility... The motion is still seen in the image of the movement of the stars, but what is stressed now is that it is beyond human power to arrest it, and hence it is a law unto itself."³¹ "Revolution" was employed in 1789 in Paris to describe the surge of the masses, the poor and oppressed; people who had previously remained in the "darkness" of their private world had suddenly broken into the open public space demanding their share of prosperity. Into this space offering freedom and equality streamed poverty-stricken masses who knew nothing of freedom but were, rather, driven by the necessity of their unceasing bodily needs and the desire to be liberated from them. Because the multitude knew nothing of public freedom, the French revolution continued relentlessly from revolutionary action to counter-revolutionary action: "the mighty current of the revolution... was constantly

accelerated by the 'crimes of tyranny', on one side, by the 'progress of liberty', on the other, which inevitably provoked each other, so that movement and counter-movement neither balanced nor checked or arrested each other, but in a mysterious way seemed to add up to one stream of 'progressing violence', flowing in the same direction with an ever-increasing rapidity."³²

The French Revolution became an arena of biological necessity understood and theorized in terms of an historical inevitability that, since the Revolution, has been understood as "a continuation of the movement originally started in 1789."³³ The idea of historical necessity, or historical inevitability, was elaborated particularly by Hegel as he reflected on the events of the French Revolution. Hegel's dialectical movement, the movement of negation, is a circular movement gradually realizing the goal of freedom. But as soon as one attempts to define or establish freedom, the necessary movement of negation begins again so that the process of striving for freedom becomes perpetual circular movement stretching out indefinitely in rectilinear time. Cyclical movement *superimposes* itself upon the rectilinear movement of time. The movement of History is, then, conceived of as cyclical at its base, operating from the principle of necessity. However, when carried along as a world story, as an event caught within and played according to the rectilinear movement of time, it becomes the unilinear movement of process.

The modern concept of history, with its unparalleled emphasis on history as process, has many origins and among them especially the earlier modern concept of nature as a process. As long as men took their cue from the natural sciences and thought of this process as a primarily cyclical, rotating, ever-recurring movement... it was unavoidable that necessity should be inherent in historical as it is in astronomical motion. Every cyclical movement is a necessary movement by definition. But the fact that necessity as an inherent characteristic of history should survive the modern break in the cycle of eternal recurrences and make its reappearance in a movement that was essentially rectilinear and hence did not revolve back to what was known before but stretched out into an unknown future, this fact owes its existence not to theoretical speculation but to political experience and the course of real events.³⁴

Arendt's explanation of the metaphorical manner in which spectators and participants of the French Revolution viewed their historical process concentrates entirely on metaphors of movement. The reader is reminded at times that these are merely metaphors, but it is also quite clear, as seen above, that these metaphors had real effects and that they were based on actual experiences and events. The unilinear movement of process--the conflation of cyclical necessity and rectilinear time--owed "its existence not to a theoretical speculation [i.e. metaphorical fiction] but to political experience and the course of real events." At its root, Arendt sees the development of the notion of historical necessity in terms of the biological condition of humans: "behind the appearances [the metaphors] was a reality, and this reality was biological and not historical, though it appeared now perhaps for the first time in the full light of history."³⁵ This reality which had political and

historical ramifications was the reality of the life process--the circular and repetitive, automatic and irresistible, movement that is not metaphoric but genuine and tangible, and "permeates our bodies and keeps them in a constant state of change"--that directed the masses as they stormed Paris in "the image of one supernatural body driven by one superhuman, irresistible 'general will'."³⁶

"Misery and want" characterized the reality of the poor in France who defined their freedom in terms of necessity (an obvious contradiction of principles) and came up with the pursuit of happiness, of abundance. The success of the American Revolution, on the other hand, was not so much the result of a complete absence of poverty, but the lack of pervasive misery and want. The result in America was not a "social question" but a political one that concerned itself with more than banishing the "darkness" of poverty. In France, this "darkness" prompted compassion. Compassion, considered "the supreme political passion and... highest political virtue," became the "driving force of the revolutionaries" allowing them to relate to *le peuple* and derive from them a general will.³⁷ But compassion, Arendt argues, can only relate to an individual, particular situation and is incapable of comprehending the plight and general will of a group of people. Only solidarity, a faculty of reason rather than a passion of the heart, can institute "a community of interest with the oppressed and exploited" because solidarity which "partakes

of reason, and hence of generality, is able to comprehend a multitude conceptually, not only the multitude of a class or a nation or a people, but eventually all mankind.”³⁸

The course of the French Revolution, influenced by the valorization of compassion for the poor, socialized the political realm and fought for liberation the only way a people ruled by necessity could know how, with prepolitical violence. As the revolution deteriorated into violent tyranny, it also degenerated into war. The suffering of the poor which had lasted for centuries was unleashed as rage and frustration. Yet this violent release did not free the poor, it merely perpetuated their enslavement to necessity because necessity feeds the rage of the hungry, what Francis Bacon called the “rebellions of the belly.”³⁹ Hunger urged the poor inexorably toward their biology, rather than toward a polity of freedom and equality. The Declaration of the Rights of Man, drawn up in the course of the French Revolution, was meant to establish and found the principles upon which the polity would be constituted. These were, however, “the rights of life and nature rather than the rights of freedom and citizenship;”⁴⁰ they were determined by needs and wants, not guiding principles or constitutional ingredients necessary to secure political action. “The new body politic was supposed to rest upon man’s natural rights, upon his rights in so far as he is nothing but a natural being, upon his right to ‘food, dress, and the reproduction of the species’, that is

upon his right to the necessities of life."⁴¹ And even if these "Rights of Man" could not artificially guarantee the downtrodden's necessities, the irresistible movement of the revolution, "[would] surely, in the words of Rousseau, ... 'force men to be free'."⁴²

Revolutions always arise in times when ruling bodies are in the process of deterioration; which is not to say that the ruination of governments occurs *because* of revolutions. Only when governing bodies have begun to break down and people with common goals collaborate with the objective of contracting a new state of political affairs, does the opportunity of revolution arise. Revolutionary action requires the realization of two major tasks if it is to triumph: first, the foundation or constitution of a new polity and, second, the perseverance and extension of the revolutionary spirit and motivating principles responsible for the act of political constitution.⁴³ The French Revolution did not succeed in establishing a republic based on political freedom and was motivated more by an "intoxication"⁴⁴ of passions and sentiments than ideas and principles. The American Revolution, on the other hand, was successful—at least in founding a new body politic—because its leaders "knew very well... 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."⁴⁵ For the

Americans, happiness was public freedom, not, as we saw in the work of Augustine, a reclusive, unworldly freedom attained within the contemplative confines of the inner self.

Unlike the short life of the first French constitution drafted in 1791 that developed into "an avalanche of constitutions," the American constitution remains today the prized foundation of the United States of America and the archetype of a successful revolutionary "beginning."⁴⁶ Yet, America, too, fell short of its revolutionary striving by failing to maintain and continue the spirit of public happiness and public freedom. The Americans proved ultimately to be no less susceptible to interests of private affairs and freedom, as the significance of the founding shifted "from a share in public affairs for the sake of public happiness to a guarantee that the pursuit of private happiness would be protected and furthered by public power."⁴⁷ After the constitution of the republic, it was expected that the private pursuit of prosperity be protected by the political realm, a political realm that citizens no longer wanted to participate in, but needed to guarantee their civil rights. The social question also affected America: "Since the country was never overwhelmed by poverty, it was 'the fatal passion for sudden riches' rather than necessity that stood in the way of the founders of the republic."⁴⁸ For Arendt, the problem today remains one of inconsistency between the dreams of the American Revolution and the American dream, between the dream of

public, political freedom and “the dream of a ‘promised land’ where milk and honey flow.”⁴⁹

While both the French and American Revolutions began hoping to reestablish or revolve back to a previous political state, the French ended up producing a perpetual and permanent situation of revolution while the Americans, upon the cessation of the revolution, developed a constitution-based form of limited government. Separating the American from the French Revolution was an act of foundation or constitution that endured and thereby founded a lasting body politic. Arendt notes that “constitution” implies both “the act of constituting as well as the law or rules of government that are ‘constituted’.”⁵⁰ Important for both revolutions was that their constitutions were not administered by a governing body, but that the people themselves had been directly involved in the process of constituting their new polity’s guiding principles. “Hence the need in France as in America for constituent assemblies and special conventions whose sole task it was to draft a constitution; hence also the need to bring the draft home and back to the people and have the Articles of Confederacy debated, clause by clause, in the town-hall meetings and, later, the articles of the Constitution in the state congresses.”⁵¹

One sees in the American constitution the effort to prevent leaders from wielding unlimited power and also the desire to keep the majority from

imposing its interests against the minorities. Yet the constitution-makers had recognized that to safeguard the American people from such abuses of power, they had to endow these people with power, that only power can resist power, and that this power coexisted with political freedom. "Power can be stopped *and* still be kept intact only by power, so that the principle of the separation of power not only provides a guarantee against the monopolization of power by one part of the government, but actually provides a kind of mechanism, built into the very heart of government, through which new power is constantly generated, without, however, being able to overgrow and expand to the detriment of other centres or sources of power."⁵² Power must be shared and enacted amongst a plurality and arises only when this plurality compacts together to establish a common political realm. "Hence, binding and promising, combining and covenanting are the means by which power is kept in existence; where and when men succeed in keeping intact the power which sprang up between them during the course of any particular act or deed, they are already in the process of foundation, of constituting a stable worldly structure to house, as it were, their combined power of action."⁵³ The revolution's spirit emerged and established itself only through the continued "cosociation" of citizens acting in the public realm, because, in the process, they recreated the action of constitution and of promising.

In contrast, "The great and fateful misfortune of the French

Revolution was that none of the constituent assemblies could command enough authority to lay down the law of the land;... they lacked the power to constitute by definition; they themselves were unconstitutional.”⁵⁴ What is more, Arendt points out that the French revolutionaries ardently believed that power and law originated out of a single source. The problem for the revolutions, then, was the problem of authority, of authorizing the legal code and the power-executing bodies. This problem was greatly complicated because the model of authority in the governments replaced by revolution was absolute. Rooted in the eternal and transcendent authority of the Church, absolute authority took the form of absolute monarchies, embodied by the “divine right of kings,” even when the secular realm emancipated itself from the Church. Obviously not “divine,” absolute monarchies degenerated into tyrannies and when revolutions arose, the problem of authority arose with them. While France had to contend with the absolute rule of the *anciens régimes*, America had to deal with only a “limited monarchy.” The result was truly revolutionary, for the Americans compacted together to discover “an entirely new concept of power and authority.”⁵⁵ “Those who received the power to constitute, to frame constitutions, were duly elected delegates of constituted bodies; they received their authority from below, and when they held fast to the Roman principle that the seat of power lay in the people, they did not think in terms of a fiction and an absolute, the nation above all

authority and absolved from all laws, but in terms of a working reality, the organized multitude whose power was exerted in accordance with laws and limited by them.”⁵⁶

Indispensable for the success of the American Revolution was the act of foundation. The Founding Fathers of the revolution had sought to emulate Rome’s model of authority derived from concrete institutions like the Roman Senate. But, there existed a marked difference: “In Rome, the function of authority was political, and it consisted in giving advice, while in the American republic the function of authority is legal, and it consists in interpretation.”⁵⁷ The Roman Senate, the seat of political advice and governance, represented the tradition of Roman authority emanating out of the very foundation, the very beginning, of the Roman republic. The Senate embodied the *principium*, the beginning of Rome, and, at the same time, was authorized to adapt the Roman republic to the changing times:

*For auctoritas, whose etymological root is augere, to augment and increase, depended upon the vitality of the spirit of foundation, by virtue of which it was possible to augment, to increase and enlarge, the foundations as they had been laid down by the ancestors. The uninterrupted continuity of this augmentation and its inherent authority could come about only through tradition, that is, through the handing down, through an unbroken line of successors, of the principle established in the beginning. To stay in this unbroken line of successors meant in Rome to be in authority, and to remain tied back to the beginning of the ancestors in pious remembrance and conservation meant to have Roman pietas, to be ‘religious’ or ‘bound back’ to one’s own beginnings.*⁵⁸

A reverent allegiance to the act that founded the Roman republic provided the authority necessary to guide future affairs; authority, the act of augmentation in aid of the continuation of public freedom, was tradition. It was noted earlier, however, that America's authority was legal and based in the American Constitution, rather than deriving from a senate that grants political advice. But, for Arendt, this does not change the fundamental fact that America's almost fanatical worship of the Constitution can be understood to have as much, if not more, to do with the worship of the *act* of constitution as with the actual document and its literal laws. In other words, a body like the Supreme Court is constantly referring back to the very foundation of the American republic and its job of interpretation deals precisely with the need to augment the Constitution and perpetuate the body politic: "one is tempted to conclude that the remembrance of the event itself - a people deliberately founding a new body politic - has continued to shroud the actual outcome of this act, the document itself, in an atmosphere of reverent awe which has shielded both event and document against the onslaught of time and changed circumstances."⁵⁹

Political natality, the revolutionary beginning of republics, the act of founding something entirely new, broke the cycle of the world's meaningless change. But while it can only be understood within a rectilinear time concept - a beginning that nourishes and protects the existence of a body politic which

both extends forward and refers back--it is by no means bound to one itself.

Not only is [the beginning] not bound into a reliable chain of cause and effect, a chain in which each effect immediately turns into the cause for future developments, the beginning has, as it were, nothing whatsoever to hold on to; it is as though it came out of nowhere in either time or space. For a moment, the moment of beginning, it is as though the beginner had abolished the sequence of temporality itself, or as though the actors were thrown out of the temporal order and its continuity. ... In other words, the problem of beginning is solved through the introduction of a beginner whose own beginnings are no longer subject to question because he is 'from eternity to eternity'. This eternity is the absolute of temporality, and to the extent that the beginning of the universe reaches back into this region of the absolute, it is no longer arbitrary but rooted in something which, though it may be beyond the reasoning capacities of man, possesses a reason, a rationale of its own.⁶⁰

Foundation, then, provides the absolute authority lost through the secularization of the political world. The movement of beginning is important because in a sense it is a non-movement, standing outside the contingency and instability of moving time and stabilizes the political affairs of men. Foundation *as tradition* provides continuity to the process of augmentation, to the process of movement, necessary to the rectilinear development and continuation of the republic; and foundation *as beginning* brings movement to rest securing the republic's absolute authority.

To sum up: It was revolution, ironically, emerging authentically in the American and French Revolutions, that broke the cycle of eternal return, and, even then, only the American Revolution succeeded in constituting a body politic secure in the act of foundation. The novelty of foundation enacts the

beginning of a political union that, ideally, could last indefinitely, working to maintain the principle of freedom through an unpredictable future. The ideal body politic is stable and durable, enacting the "timeless now" Augustine prized. As the world continues to change and alter, it is the responsibility of the acting political realm to stabilize these fluctuating movements by referring back to the polity's founding principles and then, from the present, employing the tradition's guiding precepts to navigate into the future. While individual political actions take the form of undetermined rectilinearity adapting and augmenting as time continues, the body politic adopts the image of permanence, the eternal, stabilizing the flux of time.

CHAPTER 5

**Adolph Eichmann:
“The ‘Master’ Who Knew How to Make People Move”**

If the defendant excuses himself on the ground that he acted not as a man but as a mere functionary whose functions could just as easily have been carried out by anyone else, it is as if a criminal pointed to the statistics on crime—which set forth that so-and-so many crimes per day are committed in such-and-such a place—and declared that he only did what was statistically expected, that it was mere accident that he did it and not somebody else, since after all somebody had to do it.

Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*

Arendt researched and wrote *On Revolution* during the mid to late 1950's, but the book was not published until 1963. This was partly because Arendt reported the trial of Adolph Eichmann, an ex-Nazi lieutenant colonel, for the *New Yorker* in 1961 and 1962. Arendt's report on the trial, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, also published in 1963, created world-wide public outcry from Jewish communities. Arendt not only criticized the process of the trial, but portrayed European Jews actively cooperating in their own slaughter. But this was a *trial*, not a history of the Jewish people or a study of totalitarianism, and therefore, Arendt argued,

only Eichmann's deeds could be considered pertinent to the case. Arendt concluded that Eichmann had been unable to think and thereby unable to judge his actions. Eichmann's evil acts were not vindictive or malicious but *banal*. This chapter seeks to explore Arendt's reactions to the Eichmann trial and connect it to her final work, *The Life of the Mind*, where she attempted to link thought with action and resolve the "fact" that confronted her during the trial: Eichmann's thoughtlessness. In this way, Arendt's book on Eichmann provides a bridge from her political theory to her later theory of the mind.

In the Postscript to *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*,¹ Arendt claims emphatically that her book is just a "trial report" and that its objective is to show "the extent to which the court in Jerusalem succeeded in fulfilling the demands of justice."² On trial is (Otto) Adolf Eichmann, a retired Nazi lieutenant colonel, who had been kidnapped from Argentina on May 11, 1960 by the Israeli Secret Service and brought back to Jerusalem to stand trial on April 11, 1961.³ Arendt claims that if one is to judge Eichmann according to the dictates of justice, one must remember that his actions--and only his actions--are on trial. Yet the prosecution built their case "on what the Jews had suffered, not on what Eichmann had done" and the defense merely allowed the prosecution to wander "no matter how irrelevant and immaterial" its testimony.⁴ This was, Arendt decides, no

ordinary trial, for the facts had not been presented or debated properly; moreover, many facts were ignored altogether. By including omitted facts and by discarding the theatrical qualities and “general picture drawing” superfluous to the judgement of actions, Arendt seeks to expose the problems of the Eichmann trial.

However, it becomes quite clear (as much as Arendt wants us to believe her work is “simple reporting”) that *Eichmann in Jerusalem* is about more than the mere evidence of the case. A highly moralistic book, it continually points out lessons on political responsibility, outlines the nature and purpose of justice, and provides the opportunity for Arendt’s own judgement of Eichmann. Lurking behind Arendt the journalist, is Arendt the judge.

* * * * *

Shortly after the war, Eichmann was caught and put in a camp for S.S. officers. After unsuccessful attempts to discover his identity and because of his name’s frequent appearance at the Nuremberg Trials, Eichmann fled to the southern outskirts of Hamburg and began work as a lumberjack under an assumed name, “Otto Heninger.”⁵ In 1950 he escaped to Buenos Aires, Argentina, where many other ex-Nazis fled, and resided as “Ricardo Klement.”⁶ However, Eichmann did not try particularly hard to hide his

identity and it was surprising, Arendt says, that the Israelis took quite so long to find him. Eichmann knew Jews were snooping in his area and closing in but, in his words, “simply let things catch up with [him]” and was soon after captured by three Israelis.⁷ Eichmann wrote a statement consenting to a trial in Israeli where he and his kidnappers arrived on May 22, 1960.

From the beginning, the Eichmann trial was problematic because the prosecution, led by Attorney General Gideon Hausner, voiced the political interests of David Ben-Gurion, Prime Minister of Israel. Mr. Ben-Gurion, who planned Eichmann’s kidnapping, was determined to have a show trial and was, Arendt argues, the “invisible stage manager of the proceedings.”⁸ Despite the stage-like setup of the court house and the efforts of the prosecution to show the world, its audience, the tragedy of Jewish history, the Eichmann trial failed to become a drama. After a few weeks most of the journalists left and, with them, world attention subsided. The three presiding judges worked hard to consider only the evidence pertinent to Eichmann’s deeds and shunned publicity, for they knew weighing judgement was a necessarily private affair. But, more than anything else, the “play aspect of the trial... collapsed under the weight of the hair-raising atrocities.”⁹

Prime Minister Ben-Gurion, and Mr. Hausner too, hoped the trial would become a potential mine for unearthing other Nazis--particularly Nazis thought to be protected by Arab rulers. While no Nazis connected to

the Arabs were uncovered, many others elsewhere were found.¹⁰ But the German courts that tried these and other Nazi criminals were remarkably lenient, as Germany, under Chancellor Adenauer, had been by appointing people with Nazi histories to prominent public positions. "True, if the Adenauer administration had been too sensitive about employing officials with a compromising Nazi past, there might have been no administration at all"¹¹--for the Nazi machine was not a small group of directors, but penetrated virtually every sector of German public life.

More problematic for Arendt was the trial's other, allegorical, "purpose," to teach the world, both Jews and Gentiles, lessons: the lesson of how the Nazis murdered millions of Jews, because they were Jews; the lesson that it was not just Nazis, but the whole Gentile world that was responsible, and should be ashamed, for thousands of years of Jewish persecution; and the lesson that Israelis must not forget that their history is the history of the Jewish people, a history inseparable from continual oppression.¹² Based on a history of hostile relations, Mr. Ben-Gurion wanted to reinforce the "us" and "them" ideology of "Jewish consciousness." Yet "it was this conviction which produced the dangerous inability of the Jews to distinguish between friend and foe... because they somehow thought that all Gentiles were alike."¹³ The prosecution wanted to indict history, not the real individual brought to Jerusalem for trial, and quoted Haman's decree and Ezekiel as sources of

Jewish contempt for Israel's enemies. Arendt saw this as "bad history and cheap rhetoric" but, worse than this, it distracted from judging the accused, the sole purpose of the legal system, and could equally be interpreted to vindicate Eichmann's actions. In other words, the implication could follow that Eichmann was not responsible because Auschwitz was just the logical conclusion of the predestined history of anti-Semitism. But History cannot be prosecuted and defended in the courts, and History cannot be judged and punished. Eichmann cannot pay for History, but can only pay for his individual part in it, for the actions that he had control over.

Justice demands that the accused be prosecuted, defended and judged, and that all other questions of seemingly greater import--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 in abeyance... On trial are his deeds, not the sufferings of the Jews, not the German people or mankind, not even anti-Semitism and racism.¹⁴

Adolf Eichmann, born March 19, 1906, in Solingen, Germany, was neither a good student nor particularly successful in the job market.¹⁵ He did not graduate from high school or an engineering program in vocational school and relied on his family to secure much of his employment. (Interestingly, one of Eichmann's jobs, as a travelling salesman for the Austrian Vacuum Oil Company, was due to a Jewish relation and was

"among his 'private reasons' for not hating Jews."¹⁶) Yet Eichmann always had an explanation for the quick changes in employment, explanations indicative of a man prone to lying and bragging. Though born into a "solid middle-class family," he was a "*déclassé* son" who felt, and was treated as, socially inferior throughout his life.¹⁷ In April 1932 he was invited to join the National Socialist Party (Nazi Party) and entered the S.S., or *Schultzstaffeln*, where he was promoted finally to *Obersturmbannführer*, lieutenant colonel. "From a humdrum life without significance and consequence the wind had blown him into History... into a Movement that always kept moving and in which somebody like him—already a failure in the eyes of his social class, of his family, and hence in his own eyes as well—could start from scratch and still make a career."¹⁸ Eichmann, as he was facing the court in Jerusalem, "might still have preferred... to be hanged as *Obersturmbannführer a.D.* (in retirement) rather than [live] out his life quietly and normally as a traveling salesman for the Vacuum Oil Company."¹⁹

It appeared that Eichmann was not fully aware of what he was getting into when he joined the Nazis; "he did not even know the Party program, he never read *Mein Kampf*."²⁰ And when Eichmann joined the S.D., the *Sicherheitsdienst* or Security Service of the Reichsführer S.S., in 1934, he found himself equally ignorant of this section of the regime's operations.²¹ Eichmann had mistaken the S.D. for a more glamorous security service and

was put, much to his dismay, into an Information department where he controlled material about Freemasonry. A short time later he transferred to a new department dealing solely with Jewish information. In the late 1930's, the S.D. merged with the "regular Security Police of the State" (which included the Gestapo) to compose the R.S.H.A. (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt* or Head Office for Reich Security)—one of twelve head offices of the S.S.²² The R.S.H.A. was divided into seven sections with subsections further divided into offices. Eichmann's first job with the R.S.H.A. began in January 1940 in Bureau IV-D-4 (section IV, subsection D, office 4), the Bureau of Emigration and Evacuation.²³ In March 1941 he was moved to Bureau IV-B-4, "Jewish Affairs, Evacuation," and in October of that year he was awarded his final promotion to *Obersturmbannführer* of this section.²⁴ From Eichmann's perspective, the chain of command began with Adolf Hitler and moved through Heinrich Himmler (Reichsführer S.S. and Chief of the German Police) to Reinhardt Heydrich (Chief of the R.S.H.A.) to Heinrich Müller (Gruppenführer, or major general, and Head of Bureau IV, the Bureau of the Gestapo) to the head of IV-B (which turned out to be empty) to, finally, Eichmann himself.²⁵ The most important fact of the Nazi administrative mayhem, besides perhaps serving as an explanation for Eichmann's uncertainty about what he was entering, was that "all these organs, wielding enormous power, were in fierce competition with one another—which was of

no help to their victims, since their ambition was always the same: to kill as many Jews as possible.”²⁶

In the early stages of the Nazi regime, policies of discrimination had aimed at a broad section of the population, “primarily... ‘anti-Fascists’-- Communists, Socialists, left-wing intellectuals, and Jews in prominent places--[and] had not yet shifted entirely to persecution of the Jews qua Jews.”²⁷ The first time the Nazis distinguished Jews from the rest of the German population was in 1933 when they were excluded from the Civil Service, most other public positions, and many universities. Jewish legal and medical positions, on the other hand, slowly petered out, while Jewish business and industry were not affected until 1938. The Nazi regime, slowly beginning to deal with the “Jewish problem,” issued the Nuremburg Laws in 1935 stripping Jews of their German citizenship: “The Nuremburg Laws had deprived the Jews of their political but not of their civil rights; they were no longer citizens (*Reichsbürger*), but they remained members of the German state (*Staatsangehörige*). Even if they emigrated, they were not automatically stateless.”²⁸ Jews were allowed to live, to exist, within the state of Germany, but without the rights of German citizens. They were, though, encouraged to leave by both Nazis and Zionists. Emigration soon became a popular alternative and provided Jews with the possibility of leaving with most if not all of their savings (as time went on, emigration became more difficult and

Jews were prevented from taking money with them). Viewed for a short time as a solution to the "problem," the Nuremberg Laws even satisfied those Jews willing to remain, "stabilizing" their position in the German state: "Now, the Jews felt, they had received laws of their own and would no longer be outlawed. If they kept to themselves... they would be able to live unmolested."²⁹ Hence when Eichmann transferred to the new department dealing entirely with the "Jewish question," he found "both Zionists and Assimilationists [talking] in terms of a great 'Jewish revival,' a 'great constructive movement of German Jewry,' and [still quarreling] among themselves in ideological terms about the desirability of Jewish emigration, as though this depended upon their own decisions."³⁰

Eichmann was "fascinated" by the Jewish question (he went so far as to read the "famous Zionist classic" Theodor Herzl's *Der Judenstaat* and Adolf Böhm's *History of Zionism*) and pointed out that he shared with the Zionists an "idealism" and, because of this, "respected them [and] 'treated them as equals.'" ³¹ Eichmann saw "idealists" as people who "live" for a single, solitary ideal, who sacrifice their feelings and any other beliefs to secure a paramount goal to which "everything and, especially, everybody" was to be sacrificed.³² Jewish emigration was desired by both Nazis and Zionists and they worked together to fulfil their compatible ideals. The Nazis adopted a "pro-Zionist attitude" and worked with "emissaries from Palestine... for the

illegal immigration of Jews into British-ruled Palestine.”³³ Eichmann argued, “That solution I envisaged as putting firm soil under their feet so that they would have a place of their own, soil of their own... it was also the kind of solution approved by movements among the Jewish people themselves, and I regarded this as the most appropriate solution to the matter.”³⁴

But when Eichmann moved to Vienna in March 1938, the ideal of voluntary emigration suddenly became a policy of forced emigration to make Germany *judenrein*, or clean of Jews. This systematic expulsion of Jews was the first of three solutions³⁵ to the Jewish question. The horrible thing was that Eichmann viewed his actions as benevolent, helping the Jews work toward what they themselves wanted. In retrospect, he also viewed his actions as saving hundreds of thousands of Jews from an almost certain death. To Arendt, this showed Eichmann’s fundamental character flaw, “his almost total inability ever to look at anything from the other fellow’s point of view.”³⁶ And this character flaw manifested itself in Eichmann’s inability to express himself, his continual use of clichés, and bad memory: “the longer one listened to him, the more obvious it became that his inability to speak was closely connected to his inability to *think*, namely, to think from the standpoint of someone else.”³⁷ It was precisely this inability to understand what one was doing, that made Eichmann’s evil banal; what Arendt called “*word and thought defying banality of Evil*.”³⁸

Zionists, meanwhile, were the only Jews able to negotiate, to speak, with the Nazis during these years and they looked favourably upon the possibility of reversing Jewish assimilation--"dissimilation"--as a "solution" to the "problem."³⁹ Consequently when Zionists, negotiating to bring Jews back to Palestine, chose only those Jews they thought appropriate or fitting--prosperous businessmen, youth, intellectuals--the remaining majority of German Jews "found themselves confronted with two enemies--the Nazi authorities and the Jewish authorities."⁴⁰

Vienna had been the "real beginning of [Eichmann's] career" and initiated a series of four promotions between 1937 and 1941 including, in October 1941, his last and most important post, *Obersturmbannführer*.⁴¹ Early in 1939 he unhappily left Vienna where everything ran like clockwork to start a new emigration post in Prague, but by September war had been declared and Eichmann returned to Berlin to become the head of the Reich Center for Jewish Emigration.⁴² By this time Poland and Rumania had just begun expelling their Jews and Germany, a short time later, conquered Poland leaving the Reich another two to two and a half million Jews.⁴³ Jewish emigration, as a "solution," became less and less plausible because, as Germany conquered more nations, the "Jewish problem" increased through the acquisition of foreign Jews.

After Eichmann's success in Vienna, he was considered an expert on

the "Jewish question" and, what is most important, "an 'authority' on emigration and evacuation."⁴⁴ But emigration was now impossible and if Eichmann wanted to keep his job, it would be important to figure out how he would fit into a new "solution." Still working toward "putting firm soil under their feet" and toward making the Reich *judenrein*, Eichmann decided to force Poles out of the Russian-controlled General Government area of Poland (Poland was separated during the Nazi invasion) by moving Jews from Reich-controlled, western Poland into this General Government area. This was the "idea of Nisko," developed by Eichmann and Dr. Franz Stahlecker (his superior in Vienna and Prague) but also ordered by Heydrich, to "concentrate" Jews within a defined area of Poland. Eichmann saw this second "solution to the Jewish question" as "the erection of an autonomous Jewish state in the form of a protectorate."⁴⁵ The Nazi authorities soon became confident, however, that "nothing less than complete evacuation from Europe would do."⁴⁶ Yet this still required the concentration of Jews to expedite their movement out of Europe and, important for Eichmann's career, the movement of Jews into specific areas. While the content of the "solution" had changed, Eichmann's job had changed little; he was put in charge of Theresienstadt, a ghetto in Bohemia, but his job still consisted almost wholly of the transportation and delivery of Jews. Eichmann was, after all, *the 'master' who knew how to make people move,*⁴⁷ and it was this

control of movement that determined the effectiveness of the killing camps in the East: "Eichmann's position was that of the most important conveyor belt in the whole operation, because it was always up to him and his men how many Jews could or should be transported from any given area, and it was through his office that the ultimate destination of the shipment was cleared, though that destination was not determined by him."⁴⁸

Various final destinations were considered--Madagascar, places in Canada and South America--but the impracticality of this "solution" soon became evident and the ghettos and concentration camps became either extermination camps or bases from which to move Jews to extermination camps. The third solution, officially and appropriately called the "Final Solution," was relayed to Eichmann in a personal interview with Heydrich in September 1941: "*The Führer has ordered the physical extermination of the Jews.*"⁴⁹ Killing was the easiest and most assured way of dealing with the "Jewish question." Eichmann, thinking back on this, said, "I now lost everything, all joy in my work, all initiative, all interest; I was, so to speak, blown out." But Eichmann's disappointment, Arendt implies, had less to do with upset over mass murder and more to do with the fact that Heydrich had passed control of the "final solution" to the Head Office for Economy and Administration and not to the R.S.H.A. where Eichmann worked. It must be remembered that Eichmann's "greatest 'grief and sorrow,' [was that] he never

advanced beyond the grade of S.S. Obersturmbannführer," and the Final Solution had gotten in the way.⁵⁰

Eichmann was declared "normal" by half a dozen psychiatrists, had never killed before and could not stand to see violence of any kind, and did not hate Jews but treated with the greatest of respect, and on occasion with subservience, those he met. Why, then, was Eichmann not distraught about the prospect of mass murder? Why was he, who had been brought up believing with the rest of the German population "Thou shalt not kill," willing to commit to a policy of genocide? "As Eichmann told it, the most potent factor in the soothing of his own conscience was the simple fact that he could see no one, no one at all, who actually was against the Final Solution."⁵¹ It was during the Wannsee Conference, where Ministers and Civil Servants gathered to discuss the particulars of the Final Solution as applied to the whole of Europe, that Eichmann first experienced an unburdening of conscience. Here he "[saw] with his own eyes and [heard] with his own ears that not only Hitler, not only Heydrich or the 'sphinx' Müller, not just the S.S. or the Party, but the élite of the good old Civil Service were vying and fighting with each other for the honor of taking the lead in these 'bloody' matters. [Eichmann claims:] 'At that moment, I sensed a kind of Pontius Pilate feeling, for I felt free of all guilt.' *Who was he to judge? Who was he 'to have [his] own thoughts in this matter?'*"⁵² There was not, Arendt

argues, a "single organization or public institution in Germany" that had not been involved criminally with the Nazi regime, businessmen, for example, actively sought Jews for slave labour, setting up their businesses near concentration camps.⁵³

Yet, for Arendt, "the darkest chapter of the whole dark story" was the cooperation of the Jews, particularly the Jewish leaders, in their own massacre, and was the "gravest omission" of the prosecution's politically interested case. Wherever Eichmann endeavoured to round up Jews and transport them to their deaths, he established Jewish Councils, composed often of pro-Zionist, Jewish leaders, who were made responsible for recording people's names and property and collecting their money, distributing Yellow Star badges, recording vacant property, organizing Jewish police to ensure delivery of Jews to concentration camps, and imparting whatever Jewish material remained to the Nazi authorities.⁵⁴ "Wherever Jews lived, there were recognized Jewish leaders, and this leadership, almost without exception, cooperated in one way or another, for one reason or another, with the Nazis. The whole truth was that if the Jewish people had really been unorganised and leaderless, there would have been chaos and misery but the total number of victims would hardly have been between four and six million people."⁵⁵ What is worse, Arendt claims, "they enjoyed their new power." Within the camps, too, Jews were responsible for building gas

chambers, the physical killing of Jews, and digging graves. And so Eichmann did not feel any guilt because he saw no opposition; in fact, his job, in his eyes, had been legitimated. Regardless of whether people were “inwardly opposed” to the Final Solution, Eichmann, wherever he looked, “saw the zeal and eagerness with which ‘good society’ everywhere reacted as he did. He did not need to ‘close his ears to the voice of conscience,’... because his conscience spoke with a ‘respectable voice,’ with the voice of respectable society around him.”⁵⁶

There were, on the other hand, forms of resistance that confronted the Nazis and that issued from within the Nazi regime. An anti-Hitler conspiracy arose in July 1944 made up of ex-Nazis and high ranking officers of the Third Reich. This rebellion, which Hitler crushed, was, however, perpetrated by people who foresaw Germany’s defeat and ruin and thought Hitler to be “criminal and a fool,” rather than because of any concern over the Nazi policies in the East. Another case of internal resistance arose when a “moderate wing,” backed by Himmler, in 1944 stopped obeying Hitler’s orders and began to slow the killings in the death camps.⁵⁷ However, their reasons were purely self-interested: first, they hoped that by proving they had killed fewer Jews than they were capable they would be saved from the courts after the war and, second, they began to see Jews in terms of dollars, selling them for as much as possible to outside organizations hoping to save Jews. Again,

internal resistance lacked authentic concern for Jewish lives and betrayed little, or no, moral understanding of the crimes that were being committed.

Arendt tells us that, in German-conquered nations, "where the Nazis did not succeed in setting up a puppet government, they also failed to enlist the cooperation of the Jews" and subsequently encountered difficulties when trying to deport them to killing centres.⁵⁸ When countries deported Jews, they tended to begin deporting only "stateless" or foreign Jews and often ended their deportations there. France, for example, was very willing to expel foreign Jews, but when the Germans asked for native French Jews they immediately refused and "started making such endless difficulties with regard to the deportation of stateless and other foreign Jews that all the ambitious plans for the evacuation of Jews from France did indeed have to be dropped."⁵⁹ Citizenship became the deciding factor in the fate of many European Jews; to lose one's citizenship meant one was automatically subject to expulsion. To be stateless was to be without rights: "the necessary legislation for making victims stateless... was important on two counts: it made it impossible for any country to enquire into their fate, and it enabled the state in which they were resident to confiscate their property."⁶⁰ In Germany, all German Jews who lived outside of Germany's borders automatically lost their nationality, and the denaturalization of local Jews was an absolutely essential prerequisite for their extermination. Ironically, when

Eichmann fled to Argentina he did not secure Argentinean citizenship; nor would West Germany protect him as a citizen living abroad: "it was Eichmann's de facto statelessness, and nothing else, that enabled the Jerusalem court to sit in judgement on him. Eichmann though no legal expert, should have been able to appreciate that, for he knew from his own career that one could do as one pleased only with stateless people."⁶¹

Denmark, however, used statelessness to its advantage when it refused to deliver to the Nazis the denaturalized Jews that had left the Reich for Denmark: since they were no longer German citizens, the Germans had no right to demand their deportation. Denmark was, along with Norway, Italy, Bulgaria, and Sweden, one of the countries that refused to comply with the Nazis' Final Solution. Croatia, Serbia, Hungary, Slovakia, Greece, and, most notoriously, Rumania complied with the Nazi orders, while France, Belgium, and Holland were willing to give up foreign Jews but resisted when asked for their native Jews. Arendt was most fascinated by the "*sui generis*" character of the Danes' opposition to the Nazis: "One is tempted to recommend the story as required reading in political science for all students who wish to learn something about the enormous power potential inherent in non-violent action and in resistance to an opponent possessing vastly superior means of violence."⁶² The Danes had not only sabotaged Nazi orders and hid Jews behind the Nazis' backs, but openly denounced the anti-Jewish policies, while

the whole population, from the King to government officials to dock workers, refused on principle to cooperate. What is more important, the German officials and special S.S. units living in Denmark began to respond to the Danes' opposition and began sabotaging the orders coming from Germany. Through the Danes, Arendt gained a lesson to teach political science students about resistance and political responsibility: "It is the only case we know of in which the Nazis met with *open* native resistance, and the result seems to have been that those exposed to it changed their minds. They themselves apparently no longer looked upon the extermination of a whole people as a matter of course. They had met resistance based on principle, and their 'toughness' had melted like butter in the sun... the ideal of 'toughness'... was nothing but a myth of self-deception, concealing a ruthless desire for conformity at any price."⁶³

There is little doubt that one of Arendt's major concerns in *Eichmann in Jerusalem* is individual political responsibility. She could not have asked for a better situation--the trial of an individual who acted within the context of a devastatingly dominant political movement--to illustrate this ideal. Arendt argues that it is precisely because the court weighs individual actions that a dominant social or political system cannot be used to "explain away" the actions of the defendant. The defense, fought by Dr. Robert Servatius, had argued that Eichmann was a "tiny cog" in the total Nazi system, but for

Arendt this was no excuse because "all the cogs in the machinery, no matter how insignificant, are in court forthwith transformed back into perpetrators, that is to say, into human beings."⁶⁴ Human beings must accept the consequences of their actions, for they are responsible and neither History, Nature, nor the total system of Nazi rule can justify these actions.

Of course it is important to the political and social sciences that the essence of totalitarian government, and perhaps the nature of every bureaucracy, is to make functionaries and mere cogs in the administrative machinery out of men, and thus to dehumanize them... Only one must realize clearly that the administration of justice can consider these factors only to the extent that they are circumstances of the crime—just as, in a case of theft, the economic plight of the thief is taken into account without excusing the theft, let alone wiping it off the slate. True, we have become very much accustomed by modern psychology and sociology, not to speak of modern bureaucracy, to explaining away the responsibility of the doer for his deed in terms of this or that kind of determinism.⁶⁵

Arendt's greatest fear is that social, political, historical, or psychological explanations of the situation will swallow up the responsibility of individual actions. This modern phenomenon consumed both prosecution (by "general picture drawing" and making allusions to History as the cause of Jewish persecution: "Is there not perhaps something like 'the spirit of history which brings history forward... without the influence of men?' "⁶⁶) and defense (by pointing to the unavoidable orders and inevitable movement of the Nazi regime) and threatened the ability of the court to make a real judgement. A court can only pass judgement on the deeds of the accused. But this desire of

Arendt's to point to individual responsibility and to shun analyses of social and political conditions or "deterministic" explanations, points further to her belief that people should be political and avoid capitulating to social pressure. Resistance is always possible and will not be forgotten even in the face of inevitable defeat, because there will always be people left to remember and tell the story: "holes of oblivion do not exist."⁶⁷ "Hence, nothing can ever be 'practically useless,' at least, not in the long run... Politically speaking, [the story] is that under conditions of terror most people will comply but *some will not*, just as the lesson to the countries to which the Final Solution was proposed is that 'it could happen' in most places but *it did not happen everywhere*."⁶⁸

Why, then, did some nations oppose the Final Solution while others embraced it wholeheartedly? Unfortunately, Arendt's dismay with the sociological approach in the face of her inspirational concept of individual natality prevents her from giving any concrete explanations for why some people resist and others comply. To say that the Danes refused to comply "on principle," refused *because of their "principles,"* is no answer, especially when the principle is not defined or its origin explained. Why did the Danes have this "principle" and not the Rumanians? Arendt does, on the other hand, offer some form of explanation: "What in Denmark was the result of an authentically political sense, an inbred comprehension of the requirements

and responsibilities of citizenship and independence--'for the Danes... the Jewish question was a political and not a humanitarian question' (Lenin Yahil)--was in Italy the outcome of the almost automatic general humanity of an old and civilized people." Is this, the closest Arendt gets to an explanation, her alternative to a sociological, what she calls deterministic, explanation? Does "an inbred comprehension of the requirements and responsibilities of citizenship and independence" or the "general humanity of an old and civilized people" have any substantial meaning whatsoever? Arendt's "authentically political sense" is, here rendered, vacuous and, at best, can only be taken allegorically.

However, the book was, Arendt argued, just a "trial report" and only meant to convey the evidence and material necessary for the judgement of Eichmann's actions. Eichmann was guilty and hanged and everyone had known he was guilty before the trial began because "the facts of the case were beyond dispute." How otherwise could the Israelis have got away with kidnapping Eichmann? So the trial could have served only one purpose: "It [discharged] justice."⁶⁹ And justice required his hanging because "politics is not like the nursery; in politics obedience and support are the same and just as [Eichmann] supported and carried out a policy of not wanting to share the earth with the Jewish people and the people of a number of other nations--as though [Eichmann and his] superiors had any right to determine who should

and should not inhabit the world—we find that no one, that is, no member of the human race, can be expected to want to share the earth with [Eichmann].”⁷⁰ This was no ordinary crime; it was a crime that eclipsed the previous understanding of a “crime against humanity.” For a “crime against humanity” was understood in terms of violating the “comity of nations” and this was realized when Germany expelled its Jews into other nations. But the Nazis’ crime was genocide, which is not a crime against “fellow-nations,” but is “an attack upon human diversity as such, that is, upon a characteristic of the ‘human status’ without which the very words ‘mankind’ or ‘humanity’ would be devoid of meaning.”⁷¹ The Nazis’ crime was an attack upon human plurality.

Long after Arendt had completed her study of Eichmann, one fact continued to bother her more than any other: what she referred to as Eichmann’s thoughtlessness. She concluded that Eichmann’s evil deeds were not the result of a malicious or vindictive character—“there was no sign in him of firm ideological convictions or of specific evil motives”⁷²--but of “banality.” This disturbing and perplexing fact helped provoke Arendt’s last major work *The Life of the Mind* published posthumously in 1978. She asks, “Could the activity of thinking as such, the habit of examining whatever happens to come to pass or attract attention, regardless of results and specific content, could this activity be among the conditions that make men abstain

from evil-doing or even actually 'condition' them against it?"⁷³ Could the hidden operations of the mind provide the principles and criteria for proper action in the world? The relation between the *vita contemplativa*--the three basic mental activities, thinking, willing, and judging--and the *vita activa* had plagued Arendt since the writing of *The Human Condition*. Problematic was the term *vita activa* because it had been developed by philosophers, not labourers, workers, or actors. In order to find the links between thought and action and between thought and evil, Arendt felt it necessary to carry out a full-fledged inquiry into the mind.

The mind's three fundamental activities--thinking, willing, and judging--inescapably involve a *withdrawal* from the phenomenal world, from what Arendt calls "the world of appearances," and are invisible. Because of this withdrawal, the mind is a special place free from necessity and the conditions of existence Arendt outlined in *The Human Condition*: it is the one place where humans "transcend all these [existential] conditions, but only mentally, never in reality."⁷⁴ Understood from the standpoint of the "world," the activities of the mind are "out of order," they are "*contrary to the human condition*," because they require stopping to think.⁷⁵ A person who is, for example, thinking will appear to those standing nearby to be at rest or at least to have paused from the regular activities of everyday life. However from the perspective of the thinker, the mind is continually active.⁷⁶ This constant

activity is directed by oneself *at oneself* in the form of internal, dialogic discussion and debate: "Since plurality is one of the basic existential conditions of human life on earth... to be by myself and to have intercourse with myself is the outstanding characteristic of the life of the mind."⁷⁷ Though part of life, the *vita contemplativa* is autonomous and lacks the hierarchical valuation that marks the *vita activa*. Moreover, "the principles by which we act and the criteria by which we judge and conduct our lives depend ultimately on the life of the mind. In short, they depend on the performance of these apparently profitless mental enterprises that yield no results and do 'not endow us directly with the power to act' (Heidegger)."⁷⁸

Each faculty has a relative level of withdrawal: judgement deals with particular cases and withdraws the least, willing is the spring of action but contends with potential rather than actual deeds, and thinking, withdrawing the most, finds its worldly orientation through language. While thinking is "prior" to willing and judging, it has little value on its own, gaining its priority by informing the world-oriented faculties of the will and judgement.⁷⁹ Thinking is preparatory: it prepares the mind to judge and initiate actions. So, for example, Eichmann's inability to *judge* the enormity of his deeds was due in great part to his inability to think. Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, in an essay seeking to construct what Arendt's section on judging would have looked like--Arendt died on December 4, 1975 shortly after

completing the section on willing--argues, "One of thinking's 'by-products' or 'side-effects' is judging--but this means that thinking *is*, in some sense that we must explore, the necessary condition for judging."⁸⁰ What, then, is thinking? And what is thoughtlessness, the failure to think?

Humans have always thought. Moreover, thinking is a *natural* activity that Arendt sees complementing the life process: "Thinking accompanies life and is itself the de-materialized quintessence of being alive; and since life is a process, its quintessence can only lie in the actual thinking process and not in any solid results or specific thoughts."⁸¹ Thinking, probing for the *meaning* of things, may search for truth but never find it, for questions of meaning are unanswerable and cannot be satisfied. Arendt saw Socrates as the model thinker: someone who was equally interested in thinking and acting and who easily moved between the two realms. Socrates' search for meaning never issued in a final conclusion but circled continuously, unsatisfied with any answer, pushing the limits of concepts forever further: "None of the *logoi*, the arguments, ever stays put; they move around. And because Socrates, asking questions to which he does *not* know the answers, sets them in motion, once the statements have come full circle, it is usually Socrates who cheerfully proposes to start all over again and inquire what justice or piety or knowledge or happiness are."⁸² It was perhaps because Socrates did not, like so many "professional thinkers," conflate thinking with the quest for

ultimate truth, that he was able to “set in motion” the quest for meaning which has no end. “Understanding, as distinguished from having correct information and scientific knowledge, is a complicated process which never produces unequivocal results. It is an unending activity by which, in constant change and variation, we come to terms with and reconcile ourselves to reality, that is, try to be at home in the world.”⁸³ Thinking does not find its purpose in truth or any other end external to its own activity—an activity of continual questioning—for it is an end in itself.

“The activity of thinking [*energeia* that has its end in itself] is life.” Its inherent law, which only a god can tolerate forever, man merely now and then, during which time he is godlike, is “unceasing motion, which is motion in a circle”—the only movement, that is, that never reaches an end or results in an end product. This very strange notion that the authentic process of thinking, namely the *noesis noeseos*, turns in circles—the most glorious justification in philosophy of the circular argument—has oddly enough never worried either the philosophers or Aristotle’s interpreters—partly, perhaps, because of the frequent mistranslations of *nous* and *theoria* as “knowledge,” which always reaches an end and produces an end result. If thinking were a cognitive enterprise it would have to follow a rectilinear motion, starting from the quest for its object and ending with cognition of it.⁸⁴

Thinking, an unremitting, circular quest for the meaning of concepts like freedom, justice, and equality, makes people morally alert. Thinking works against potential immoral deeds because people come home to share and discuss thoughts with themselves in the duality of their minds—what Arendt calls the “two-in-one.” When I go home to the solitude of my mind, how could I, Arendt asks, bear to live with myself if I were a liar, a cheat, or a

murderer? How could I want to make myself an adversary of the only person that I am certain of having to live with--myself? "The partner who comes to life when you are alert and alone is the only one from whom you can never get away--except by ceasing to think. It is better to suffer wrong than to do wrong, because you can remain the friend of the sufferer; who would want to be the friend of and have to live together with a murderer? Not even another murderer."⁸⁵ It is precisely for these reasons that Arendt argues that, even though thinking and acting are very different activities, the *criteria* we use to act and conduct ourselves in the world rely on the activities of the mind.⁸⁶ "If thinking--the two-in-one of the soundless dialogue--actualizes the difference within our identity as given in consciousness and thereby results in conscience as its by-product, then, judging, the by-product of the liberating effect of thinking, realizes thinking, makes it manifest in the world of appearances, where I am never alone and always too busy to think. The manifestation of the wind of thought is not knowledge; it is the ability to tell right from wrong, beautiful from ugly. And this, at the rare moment when the stakes are on the table, may indeed prevent catastrophes, at least for the self."⁸⁷ Eichmann did not have to worry about opposing his self because he acted, according to him, with the full support of society who had not opposed the steps leading to the Final Solution. "Who was he to judge?" Who was he to think?

The faculty of thinking is as old as humanity, but the faculty of the will became particularly evident historically with the rise of Christianity. Corresponding to “the ‘idea’ of Freedom,” the will provides the impetus for action, the spontaneous beginning, found implicitly in the absolute novelty of the birth of Christ and in the novelty of every human’s birth. The Greeks had no concept of the will because they saw the world rotating in terms of a circular time concept. In other words, for the Greeks all future occurrences derive from a number of previously given possibilities. While one may have been able to choose between these possibilities, the possibilities themselves were not new or novel but rather predetermined and given. Young-Bruehl argues, “when thinkers emphasize the past within the context of a cyclical time theory--that is, when the future is seen as an actualization of consequence of the past--no mental ‘organ’ for the future, no Will, is posited; but, on the other hand, when they emphasize the future within a rectilinear time theory--that is, when unique events are thought to be possible--an ‘organ’ for the future is considered essential.”⁸⁸ It was Christian thinkers who saw in the birth of Christ a previously unknown reality that could only be understood rectilinearly. Augustine was, Arendt believes, the first philosopher of the will, for he refuted “the philosophers’ cyclical time concepts, inasmuch as novelty could not occur in cycles.”⁸⁹ Instead, Augustine argued, “In order... that there may be novelty, a *beginning* must

exist; 'and this beginning never before existed,' that is, not before Man's creation."⁹⁰ Men were put on earth as individuals, not as a species; as such individuals have the power to will: "this individuality manifests itself in the will"⁹¹ which debates, between me and myself, the pros and cons of what I will versus what I will not.

It is only within the concept of a rectilinear time continuum that the idea of novelty and beginning things anew can exist and it is only individuals, seen with a definite beginning and end, that can will or initiate these new beginnings in time. "The creation of the world and of man was an absolute beginning as Augustine had imagined it, but each individual's birth is a beginning in the sense that it interrupts a causal chain and begins a new series of events."⁹² What Arendt found in the faculty of the will was the faculty of beginning, the faculty of foundation, that is so important to her political theory of action. Actions are, we have seen, spontaneous, contingent beginnings. For Arendt, spontaneity and contingency were not understood until Christianity broke with the cyclical notion of time. Moreover, the spontaneity and contingency *of actions* were not realized until the age of revolutions. Revolution, an historical event arriving in its fullest and most complete form in the late eighteenth century with the French and American Revolutions, realized the mental faculty of the will in action, in the political sphere.

What might the last and unwritten section of *The Life of the Mind*, the section on judgement, have comprised? Young-Bruehl argues that Arendt's reflections in *The Life of the Mind* are "tied to time concepts," they are "reflections on *homo temporalis*,"⁹³ and that Arendt's move from willing to judging would have involved a change in the understanding of time: "In order to consider the Will, Arendt had to emphasize *homo temporalis*, man who had a beginning and is going toward an end, and to do this she had to turn away from cyclical time theories. A different sort of time speculation stands in the way of her consideration of Judgment: a [unilinear] time theory in which the future, so to speak, calls events toward itself. In such a future events are judged by history as the determinants of the process."⁹⁴ In other words, Arendt's faculty of judgement counters the unilinear movement of process characteristic of the modern age's belief in progress and characteristic of Hegel's process of "becoming."⁹⁵ The faculty of judgement is meant to prevent us from blindly following the laws of Nature and History that defined the twentieth century's totalitarian movements. Where thinking enacts a silent duality between me and myself and willing enacts the duality of the I will and the I nill, "Judging's recoil is different: it is the activation of a 'me and you (plural)'. When we judge we imaginatively make others present in ourselves... [we] make, so to speak, an interior public space 'by comparing our judgment with the possible rather than the judgment of others, and by

putting ourselves in the place of any other man.' "96

When we put ourselves in the place of others, we are gaining a perspective of impartiality or disinterestedness: "This disinterestedness... of judging is its freedom; it is the activation of the 'me and you,' the overcoming of *self-interest*."97 While judging relies on thinking, only judging has political effects in the world. By denying our self-interest and relating personally to the interests of others, we put our interest in society, our interest in humanity as a whole. This interest in humanity as a whole, Young-Bruehl attributes to Arendt's belief in *humanitas*. Arendt "tried to show that judging and acting have the same principle, which is not transcendental, but empirical: We must act and judge in ways that do not violate the actually existing solidarity of mankind. 'A secret trust in man, in the *humanitas* of the human race' animates action and judgement. Trust in *humanitas* is another way of saying trust in the love men have for meaning, the love they have for the existence of things and people, and the communicative pleasure they take in reflecting on those things and people."98 In short, the faculty of judgement provides the solidarity necessary to prevent extreme self-interest and promote care for the human race. Thinking provides the groundwork for good judgements by providing the faculty of judgement with ideas of good and evil, right and wrong, when they are needed in the world. Eichmann was unable to relate to the other, unable

to relate to the situation of the Jews, and thus unable to judge the evil of his deeds. His inability to think, his inability to let the freedom of his mind run with questions of right and wrong, was due in great part because he allowed himself to identify his will with the Führer's will. The freedom of disinterestedness prevents the unilinear compulsion and necessity of History, Nature, or Progress, and could have prevented Eichmann's automatic, unthinking obedience to reified "ideals" and to Hitler.

Movement is evident, then, in Arendt's philosophical, as well as her political, theory as a principle and formative element. Thinking is an activity concurrent with the appearance of humans on earth. The faculty of the will did not become evident until Christians began thinking about the significance of the birth of Christ and thus understanding the movement of time rectilinearly. And the faculty of judgement did not become fully significant until Immanuel Kant wrote the *Critique of Judgement* around the time of the French Revolution, when the social and political world, finally understood rectilinearly, became open to change and manipulation.

CONCLUSION

The Invasion of the Public by the Social

In broad terms, Hannah Arendt, a theorist whose reputation is currently undergoing revitalization, bears some resemblance to those classical social theorists who took modernity—what Arendt prefers to call the modern age—as their object of study. While Arendt shares with them an interest in human action, this is because she shares with Marx a common concern to change the modern world and not merely to interpret it. Unlike Marx, however, Arendt wanted to safeguard the separation of the private and public spheres, to prevent the “social” from interfering with and contaminating the “political.” Arendt is concerned about the modern age because the pervasiveness of social issues—of social inequality, social domination, social injustice, patriarchy, and so on—has perverted and suffocated authentic political action. In contrast, her ideal public men pursue political affairs out of a genuine desire for free and open debate, to share and confirm a common reality, for honour, glory, heroism. The rise of the social and the fall of public man are one and the same development. Politics today has become an expression of social situations, class positions, and economic stakes. As such,

it cannot be free because it becomes tied to necessity, to the concerns of maintaining life, not to the concerns of maintaining a free body politic. "Social" issues are "natural" issues: they pay their dues to the life process. "Political" issues are "artificial" issues, concerned with the freedom and equality that nature cannot spontaneously provide.

In Arendt's effort to show in general theoretical terms why this segregation of the social and political is valid, she argues that these realms contain fundamental activities whose defining character corresponds to different kinds of movement. Chapter 1 revealed that Arendt characterized labour, the activity of *animals laborans*, as the movement of nature, as repetitive, circular motion. And work, the activity of *homo faber*, with its emphasis on utility and the attempt in the modern age to "make" History, Arendt viewed as unilinear movement. In contrast, action (activity in the public sphere) contained neither the cycle of nature nor the motion forward to some historically determined point. Arendt linked action, arising neither from necessity nor determined by social or historical forces, to "natality," the initiation and spontaneous beginning of a movement. As such, action is no definite movement; it is the timeless *beginning of*, indeed condition of, a movement unencumbered by social and historical conditions. In contrast to the unilinear nature of processes that work towards a predetermined end, actions can only be understood within a rectilinear time construct. The

difference is a subtle but vital one for Arendt's philosophical position. While both unilinear and rectilinear mean movement in straight lines, Arendt argues that only rectilinear movement provides for the possibilities of new beginnings. Rectilinear movement, then, is not a single, thus *uni*, linear movement, but contains many straight linear movements that are understood to be free and novel precisely because their condition is action and thus the human possibility of making new beginnings.

Arendt's singular achievement was not only that she developed a taxonomy of activities as movements, but also that she outlined a theory of the perception of time, which itself constituted a theory of the western world's interpretation of change as the historical shift from a cyclical time concept to a rectilinear time concept. Arendt outlined her theory of the human construction of time by focusing upon particular, historical events; events, she argued, which "broke the cycle" of "the indifferent flow of everlasting change."

Significant for Arendt are two entirely unprecedented events that recast the perception of time and change: the birth of Jesus Christ and the development of the modern revolution characterized particularly by the American and French Revolutions. Distinguishing these events and providing the necessary uniqueness to break the banal circularity of the mundane world are their thoroughly *novel* character. Novelty, Arendt

argued, cannot be understood in terms of a cyclical time concept but rather requires a conception of temporal change that is expressly rectilinear. This emphasis upon newness and individuality is precisely what links Arendt's taxonomy of human activities with her theory of the perception of time and change. Arendt's praise of novelty, expressed most saliently in her concept of natality, graces both her description of political action and those historical events that rupture the endless similarity of cyclical change. Equally, human labour, the cyclical, continual toil necessary for the perpetuation of the life process, corresponds to those early explanations of time and change modelled upon the movement of the heavens.

To a significant extent it was Saint Augustine who supplied Arendt with an outlook for reading the world in terms of movement, an outlook that valued *beginnings* for rupturing the determined regularity of a naturally and automatically changing world. Chapter 2--focusing on Arendt's PhD thesis, *Love and Saint Augustine*--traced the origin of Arendt's concern with beginnings and natality and examined the significance of Christianity for her theory of the human perception of time. Human beings, according to Arendt's reading of Augustine, introduce an entirely new configuration into the otherwise meaningless movement of nature. Because humans can plan for and project themselves into the future, they are able to insert a rectilinear movement into the world altogether different from the purposeless

movement of nature. Since humans are “conscious of, and remember [their] ‘beginning’ or [their] origin, [humans are] able to act as [beginners] and enact the story of mankind.”¹

Yet the origin so important to Augustine—the act of creation enabling individuals to begin their lives anew by way of salvation—was made manifest to humanity only through the birth of Jesus Christ. As such, the birth of Christ represented a wholly novel and unprecedented historical event that was strikingly different from the insignificant births of previous generations. According to Arendt, the pre-Christian perception of time as cyclical change underwent radical reconceptualization as a result of this transmundane event: the birth of Christ led to an understanding of rectilinear time that broke the cosmological circle. Individuals were suddenly presented with the possibility of entirely new beginnings, with birth rather than rebirth, initiation as opposed to renewal. However, these beginnings were considered primarily to be the capacities of private individuals who had rejected the public world in order to immerse themselves in a deeply personal, hidden relationship with God. Consequently, the social and political world remained turning regularly in circles of predestined change. It was not until the advent of the modern revolution, argued Arendt, that the historical development of the secular world ceased to be understood cyclically.

With modernity came liberation from a conception of history that

endlessly replicated old social and political orders and that was considered never to produce anything new. But the unleashing of free and spontaneous human action also meant the unleashing of the potential for negative as well as positive political orders, for negative as well as positive linear movement. Political action, Arendt pointed out, is an individual obligation and an individual responsibility necessary for the development of constructive as opposed to destructive political action. Yet the modern age produced totalitarian regimes, which Arendt saw embodying the radical nature of absolute evil. Through an examination of Arendt's first major political work, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, I sought to show in Chapter 3 how conceptions of movement inform Arendt's examination of Nazi and Stalinist totalitarianism.

Totalitarianism, Arendt claimed, is an altogether different form of political organization in as much as it fails to respect, indeed sets itself radically against, the conventional political distinction between stability and change. Instead of upholding laws that both stabilize and protect the transient character of human action, totalitarian movements destroy the unpredictability of action and replace it by the monolithic behaviour of an homogenized mass. As opposed to "positive laws" that provide limits on and conditions for free action, totalitarian regimes inculcate ideologies and inflict terror necessary for the development of "laws" of Nature or History. The logic

of these *laws*, the logic of totalitarianism, is of an unavoidable process—the idea of a naturally evolving “progression” with a predetermined direction. As such, Arendt argued that the content and import of these laws lie in their movement. Indeed she went so far as to claim that totalitarianism does not just enact an ideal of movement, but, based upon laws of Nature or History, becomes movement in itself “where the essence of government itself has become motion.”²

However the movement of totalitarianism is not just any movement, it is the third of the three forms of process movement identified in chapter 1.³ As opposed to the conservative character of nature and the life process, the unilinear process of totalitarian regimes sacrifices the individual goal of self-preservation for a self-sacrificing and irrepressible linear movement of “progression.” On the other hand, it is quite clear that Arendt is not opposed to linear movement as such, but rather is only hostile towards its *unilinear* species. We have seen that Arendt’s political project was in some key respects animated by a desire to overcome the cyclical monotony of a life devoted to “social” concerns, a desire she expressed in her preference for the “public” sphere. That sphere was, par excellence, the locus of “action.” Action, while in essence no particular type of movement itself, cannot be comprehended except in terms of a rectilinear time construct: “It is obvious that only under the conditions of a rectilinear time concept are such phenomena as novelty,

uniqueness of events, and the like conceivable at all.”⁴ What is it, then, that made unilinear movement so problematic for Arendt?

According to Arendt, unilinear movement is a uni-directional, unswerving arrow--it drives blindly forward in an undeviating straight line from the present to an ostensibly foreordained future. But at the same time, unilinear movement preserves the properties or attributes of cyclical movement: necessity, inevitability, regularity, futility. In other words, a movement is unilinear when cyclical movement superimposes itself upon and alters the rectilinear mode that action assumes. The reason why this is problematic for Arendt becomes evident once we understand her tendency to identify particular activities (and in turn the realms they inhabit) with particular types of movement. Consequently, when cyclical movement superimposes itself upon the contingent and indeterminate character of rectilinear movement, Arendt sees the necessary and irresistible character of the labour process contaminating the public realm of politics.

Arendt's taxonomy of activities as movements, then, reveals not a neutral classification but a value-loaded appraisal that sets the artificial freedom of political action against the natural necessity of labour, the freedom of an undefined and contingent beginning against the irresistible and predetermined movement of the cycle. As a result, unilinear movement is not just the conflation of two types of movement that are meant to remain

separate and distinct, but it is the displacement of the valued rectilinear movement of political action by the devalued movement of the cycle.

Chapter 4 examined Arendt's *On Revolution*. In that work she maps the development of unilinear movement--what she calls "the rise of the social" and what she sees as one of the defining features of the modern age--in historical terms as a product of the modern revolution and in particular of the French revolution.

Arendt argued that the American and French revolutions were radically unprecedented political events that signified the same absolute novelty as the birth of Christ. But whereas the birth of Christ had only broken the cosmological circularity of the perception of time and change for individuals and their secluded relationships with God, revolution broke the regular and predestined cycle of the secular world making it amenable to human alteration and control. But the newly exposed possibilities of human action did not often translate into the constitution of a body politic that fiercely protected a public realm defined by political action. Instead, many revolutions unleashed private, economic interests and struggles whose management and adjudication were then considered to be the very *raison d'être* of political action. Arendt's key example of such a revolution was the French revolution of 1789 which saw the poverty-stricken masses stream into the public streets of Paris dragging with them their private personal needs.

She saw this development as the invasion of the public realm by the urgency and necessity of the biological life process, as the superimposition of cyclical movement on rectilinear movement, as the momentary triumph of the “irresistible” and historically necessary. Consequently, it was the French revolution that represented for Arendt the first major occasion in which unilinear movement found political expression, and thereby affirmed the primacy of the social over the political. Moreover, the Jacobin “Terror” destroyed political freedom not only in its increasingly arbitrary destructions of victims, but in its sanctioning a view of history and nature as an inexorable process that rages on with or without human cooperation. Against this, Arendt valued a notion of politics as decidedly un-natural, the product of an artificial realm that preserves freedom *and* law, political action *and* restraint.

Arendt saw the ambivalence of the modern age in revolution’s capacity for responsible as well as irresponsible political action, its capacity for the undefined contingency of rectilinear change as well as for the necessity of unilinear development. Revolution’s import for Arendt’s political project, then, springs from the political potential of *beginnings* that “break the cycle” of undifferentiated history in favour of significant and purposeful change. It was precisely the American revolutionaries’, the “Founding Fathers’,” integration of the act of foundation into their constitution that made the American revolution successful. In a sense, then, the movement of

beginning is a non-movement standing outside the instability of moving time. But the timeless act of foundation can neither be understood nor can it attain political significance except in terms of a rectilinear time concept, through which the beginning nourishes and protects a body politic by providing it with a past with which to negotiate its future. As such, the non-movement of the foundational act provides the ground for maintaining the free rectilinear duration of a body politic.

Chapter 5 tied together Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* and her last unfinished work *The Life of the Mind*. In her report on the Eichmann trial, Arendt concluded that what lay behind the monstrosity of Eichmann's deeds was the inability to think which prevented the proper judgement of action. Prompted by this discovery, Arendt's later work switched from an emphasis on the phenomenal world of politics to an introspective philosophical analysis of the mind; she put aside her concern with the *vita activa* to consider the three basic activities of the mind--thinking, willing, and judging--that form the *vita contemplativa*. Interestingly, the defining character of Arendt's reading of mental as well as worldly activities corresponds to different kinds of movement.

Of all three activities of the mind, thinking is the least oriented to the world, since it amounts to a private dialogue with oneself. As such, thinking is comparable to labour in its privacy and inborn naturalness. But most

important, thinking shares labour's movement, for it is a constant activity of dialogue that never arrives at any end but continues indefinitely and interminably. Thinking and labour attain significance as the means necessary for judging and acting. It was only because the novelty of Christ's birth "broke the cycle" in favour of a rectilinear time concept that the will, a future-oriented faculty, became prominent as a subject of philosophical speculation. While the will provides the impetus for action, it is clear that Arendt views its form of movement similarly to that of work: the will, as future-oriented, posits a particular object or outcome towards which the individual is called. Therefore both the will and work have the tendency of moving unilinearly towards an imposed, definite end.

While Arendt died before writing the section on judgement, we saw that there was good reason to argue that the faculty of judgement, the most worldly or publicly-oriented faculty of the mind, would have posed itself, as does political action, against the movement of a unilinear conception of change. By putting ourselves in the place of others, judgement overcomes the self-interestedness of willing and therefore overcomes the God-like quality of the will as "making" or "creating" its own future. Consequently, the indeterminate and contingent character of judgement closely resembles the rectilinear movement of political action which never determines its end because of the nature of public *interaction*. And while judgement, like

thinking and willing, corresponds well with Arendt's taxonomy of activities as movements, judgement also arises historically, relating fundamentally to Arendt's theory of change: judgement was not systematically conceptualized until Kant wrote the *Critique of Judgement* shortly after the French Revolution. In sum, just as thinking, willing, and judging correspond to labour, work, and action, so do each of these elements also correspond to Arendt's prescriptive taxonomy of movement-activities.

Arendt's appraisal of modernity is inseparable from her method of analysis: a method which relies upon explicitly identifying the metaphors vital to the modern age, metaphors which continually refer to movement. Arendt does not, however, impartially record these metaphors, but embellishes and expands upon them, clearly developing her own theoretical constructs, analyses, and judgements. Movement, then, is evident in Arendt's social and political theory as a principal and formative element. That theory directly opposes the necessity of nature and the "life process" and articulates an alternative, action, which she argues is free and open, providing the necessary space for human--as distinct from animal--movement. Human movement thus conceived is thus not just any movement for Arendt; crucially, it is not a unilinear process directed towards a pre-given, determined end. Instead, action is a human ideal set against our natural, biological existence, an ever-renewed, ever-changing rectilinear motion as

fragile and unpredictable as the world in which it is located.

Introduction: Arendt and Sociology, Sociology and Arendt

1. There has been much literature devoted to the "Atlantic Republican Tradition" of which J.G.A. Pocock's *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*, Princeton: 1975, is exemplary. Specifically in connection with the work of Arendt, one might look at Peter Fuss, "Hannah Arendt's Conception of Political Community," in *Idealistic Studies*, 1973, 3: 252-65.

Chapter 1. Movement and the Vita Activa

1. Note, however, Margaret Canovan's contrary argument in *Hannah Arendt: A Reinterpretation of Her Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), where she argues that the themes developed in Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* are at the centre of her political thinking.
2. Margaret Canovan, *Hannah Arendt: A Reinterpretation of Her Political Thought*, 96-97.
3. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), 99.
4. "Ideology and Terror" appended to the second edition of Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1958). It was first published in the publication *Review of Politics* in July 1953.
5. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1973), 463.
6. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 47. See also page 191: "The fences inclosing private property and insuring the limitations of each household, the territorial boundaries which protect and make possible the physical identity of a people, and the laws which protect and make possible its political existence, are of such great importance to the stability of human affairs precisely because no such limiting and protecting principles rise out of the activities going on in the realm of human affairs itself."
7. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 96.
8. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 7.
9. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 11.
10. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 9-11.
11. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 7. See also Arendt's *The Life of the Mind*, one-volume edition, *Thinking*, vol. 1, *Willing*, vol. 2 (San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1978), vol. 1: 185, where she argues "Nothing perhaps indicates more strongly that man exists *essentially* in the plural than that his solitude actualizes his merely being conscious of himself, which we probably share with the higher animals, into a duality during the thinking activity. It is this *duality* of myself with myself that makes thinking a true activity, in which I am both the one who asks and the one who answers."
12. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 33.
13. Hannah Arendt, "What is Freedom?" in *Between Past and Future, Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (New York: The Viking Press, 1968), 149.
14. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 46.

15. Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: The Viking Press, 1965), 78.

16. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 97-98.

17. Hannah Arendt, "The Concept of History: Ancient and Modern" in *Between Past and Future, Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (New York: The Viking Press, 1968), 42-43. "The mortality of man lies in the fact that individual life, a *βίος* with a recognizable life-story from birth to death, rises out of biological life, *ζωή*. This individual life is distinguished from all other things by the rectilinear course of its movement, which, so to speak, cuts through the circular movements of biological life. This is mortality: to move along a rectilinear line in a universe where everything, if it moves at all, moves in a cyclical order. Whenever men pursue their purposes, tilling the effortless earth, forcing the free-flowing wind into their sails, crossing the ever-rolling waves, they cut across a movement which is purposeless and turning within itself... What is difficult for us to realize is that the great deeds and works of which mortals are capable, and which become the topic of historical narrative, are not seen as parts of either an encompassing whole or a process; on the contrary, the stress is always on single instances and single gestures. These single instances, deeds or events, interrupt the circular movement of daily life in the same sense that the rectilinear *βίος* of the mortals interrupts the circular movement of biological life. The subject matter of history is these interruptions—the extraordinary, in other words."

18. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 97.

19. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments* (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1993—originally published in English by Herder and Herder, Inc. in 1972) 134.

20. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 88.

21. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 246.

22. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 87.

23. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 116.

24. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 46-47.

25. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 115.

26. Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, 19-20. "The notion of a state of nature alludes at least to a reality that cannot be comprehended by the nineteenth-century idea of development [note: this is the unilinear conception Arendt links with Marx and Darwin in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 463], no matter how we may conceive of it – whether in the form of cause and effect, or of potentiality and actuality, or of a dialectical movement, or even of simple coherence and sequence in occurrences. *For the hypothesis of a state of nature implies the existence of a beginning that is separated from everything*

following it as though by an unbridgeable chasm." (Emphasis added)

27. Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, 27. "We have stressed the element of novelty inherent in all revolutions, and it is maintained frequently that our whole notion of history, because its course follows a rectilinear development, is Christian in origin. It is obvious that only under the condition of a rectilinear time concept are such phenomena as novelty, uniqueness of events, and the like conceivable at all. Christian philosophy, it is true, broke with the time concept of antiquity because the birth of Christ, occurring in human secular time, constituted a new beginning as well as a unique, unrepeatable event."

28. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 116.

29. Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. 2: 50. Here, Arendt is quoting Martin Heidegger, "Überwindung der Metaphysik," in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, Pfullingen, 1954, vol. 1, sect. xxiii, p. 89.

30. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 124.

31. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 141.

32. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 143.

33. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 148-149.

34. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 142.

35. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 105.

36. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 153.

37. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 153-154.

38. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 154.

39. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 137.

40. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 155.

41. Arendt, "What is Freedom" in *Between Past and Future, Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, 146.

42. Arendt, "What is Freedom?" in *Between Past and Future, Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, 153.

43. Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, one-volume edition, *Thinking*, vol. 1, Willing, vol. 2 (San Diego:Harcourt Brace & Company, 1978), vol. 1: 45-46.

44. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 176.
45. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 177.
46. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 189.
47. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 189.
48. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 190.
49. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 206.
50. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 184.
51. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 192. See also page 233: The action's "meaning never discloses itself to the actor but only to the backward glance of the historian who himself does not act." Also note Arendt's discussion of spectators and participants in *The Life of The Mind*, vol. 1: pages 132-133.
52. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 95-96.
53. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 463.
54. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 465.
55. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 137.
56. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 20.
57. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 26.

Chapter 2. Novelty and the Birth of Christ

1. Gustav Mahler adapted this from the 8th-century Chinese poet Li Tai Po.
2. Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: The Viking Press, 1965), 55.
3. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), 177.
4. Hannah Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, edited and with an interpretive essay by Joanna Vecchiarelli Scott and Judith Chelius Stark (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 7.
5. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 106.
6. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 20, 21.
7. The idea of continual or “repetitive” labour is important in Arendt’s *The Human Condition*, and may be derived from an understanding of the “temporal” condition of the earth.
8. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 10.
9. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 11.
10. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 13.
11. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 16.
12. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 17.
13. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 30. (Emphasis added)
14. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 10.
15. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 14.
16. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 15.
17. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 15.
18. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 19.
19. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 17.
20. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 18-19.
21. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 23.

22. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 24-25.

23. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 25.

24. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 16, 27. Arendt argues "This good [Being], which is not to be obtained on earth, is projected into eternity and thus becomes again that which lies ahead from outside. For man, eternity is the future, and this fact, seen from the viewpoint of eternity, is of course a contradiction in terms. The reason the contradiction arises is that eternity as everlasting life is desired like any other object, a 'good' among goods, even though the highest."

25. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 27.

26. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 28.

27. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 33-35.

28. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 33.

29. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 34.

30. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 39.

31. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 37.

32. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 51-52.

33. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 48.

34. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 50.

35. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 52.

36. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 53.

37. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 54.

38. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 55.

39. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 63.

40. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 57.

41. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 78-79.

42. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 82-83.

43. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 85.
44. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 87.
45. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 89.
46. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 91.
47. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 95.
48. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 98-99.
49. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 100, 112.
50. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 101.
51. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 106.
52. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 110.
53. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 110.
54. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 111.
55. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 111.

Chapter 3. Totalitarianism and the Movement of Process

1. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1973), 460. Originally published in 1951 under the title *The Burden of Our Times*.
2. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 229.
3. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 465.
4. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 11.
5. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 23.
6. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 8.
7. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 15.
8. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 475.
9. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 125.
10. Imperialism, it has been argued, is not new and not necessarily capitalist. I thank Stuart Pierson for pointing this out and for pointing out that J.G.A. Pocock, for example, believes imperialism to be implicit in Machiavelli's idea of republican *virtù*.
11. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 125-126.
12. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 143.
13. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 144.
14. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 143.
15. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 215.
16. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 232.
17. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 232.
18. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 208.
19. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 463. "If one considers, not the actual achievement, but the basic philosophies of both men [Marx and Darwin], it turns out that ultimately the movement of history and the movement of nature are one and the same. Darwin's introduction of the concept of development in nature, his insistence that, at least in the field of biology, natural movement is not circular but unilinear, moving in an infinitely progressing direction, means in fact that nature is considered to be historical." (Emphasis added)

20. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 462.
21. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 464.
22. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 466.
23. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 465.
24. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 159.
25. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 470.
26. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 469.
27. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 472.
28. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 474.

Chapter 4. Revolution, Novelty, and the Permanent Body Politic

1. Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: The Viking Press, 1965), 11.
2. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 12, 13.
3. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 14-15.
4. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 15.
5. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 15-17.
6. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 17-18.
7. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 35.
8. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 19-20.
9. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 21.
10. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 21.
11. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 27.
12. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 27.
13. Hannah Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, edited and with an interpretive essay by Joanna Vecchiarelli Scott and Judith Chelius Stark (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 55.
14. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 28.
15. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 22. It should be noted, however, that the social question "must not be equated with the lack of equality of opportunity or the problem of social status which in the last few decades has become a major topic of the social sciences" as these ideas were entirely unknown to the early revolutionaries of France and America (72).
16. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 23.
17. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 22.
18. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 25.
19. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 29.
20. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 32.
21. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 32.

22. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 30.
23. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 33.
24. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 30.
25. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 30.
26. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 31.
27. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 44.
28. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 42.
29. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 42-43.
30. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 46.
31. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 47-48.
32. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 49.
33. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 50.
34. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 55.
35. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 59.
36. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 59, 60.
37. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 75.
38. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 88.
39. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 112.
40. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 109.
41. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 109.
42. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 115.
43. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 126.
44. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 120.
45. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 119.

46. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 125.
47. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 135.
48. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 137.
49. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 139.
50. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 145.
51. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 145.
52. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 151-152.
53. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 175.
54. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 165.
55. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 166.
56. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 166.
57. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 200.
58. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 201.
59. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 204.
60. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 206.

**Chapter 5. Adolph Eichmann:
"The 'Master' Who Knew How to Make People Move"**

1. Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: The Viking Press, 1965). Originally published as a series of articles in *The New Yorker* and in book form in 1963.
2. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 280, 298.
3. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 21.
4. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 6, 9.
5. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 236.
6. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 236.
7. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 239-240.
8. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 5.
9. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 8-9.
10. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 14. Among the Nazis later to be tried were Richard Baer, Commandant of Auschwitz, and many members of the "Eichmann Commando" including Franz Novak, Dr. Otto Hunsche, Hermann Krumei, Gustav Richter, and Willi Zöpf.
11. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 17-18.
12. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 9-10.
13. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 11.
14. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 5.
15. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 27-31.
16. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 30.
17. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 31-32, 33-34.
18. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 33.
19. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 34.
20. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 33.

21. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 36.
22. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 68.
23. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 157.
24. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 157.
25. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 68-70.
26. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 71.
27. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 38.
28. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 39.
29. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 39.
30. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 40.
31. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 40-42, 57.
32. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 42.
33. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 60.
34. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 56.
35. The two other solutions were concentration and extermination; see below.
36. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 47-48.
37. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 49.
38. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 252. Emphasis added.
39. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 58-60.
40. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 61.
41. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 65.
42. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 67.
43. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 66-67.
44. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 65.

45. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 74.
46. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 77.
47. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 65. Emphasis added.
48. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 153.
49. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 83.
50. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 33.
51. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 116.
52. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 114.
53. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 79, 159.
54. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 118.
55. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 125.
56. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 126.
57. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 144-145.
58. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 117.
59. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 165.
60. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 115.
61. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 240.
62. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 171.
63. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 175.
64. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 289.
65. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 289-290.
66. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 19-20.
67. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 232-233.
68. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 233.

69. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 254.
70. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 279.
71. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 268-269.
72. Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, one-volume edition, Thinking, vol. 1, Willing, vol. 2 (San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1978), vol. 1: 4.
73. Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. 1: 5.
74. Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. 1: 70-71.
75. Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. 1: 78.
76. Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. 1: 72.
77. Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. 1: 74.
78. Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. 1: 71.
79. Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. 1: 192. "...Thinking as such does society little good, much less than the thirst for knowledge, which uses thinking as an instrument for other purposes. It does not create values; it will not find out, once and for all, what the 'good' is; it does not confirm but, rather, dissolves accepted rules of conduct. And it has no political relevance unless special emergencies arise." In such situations, thinking's political relevance does not lie in its activity but as an informant of the faculty of judgement.
80. Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, "Reflections on *The Life of the Mind*," in *Hannah Arendt: Critical Essays*, ed. Lewis P. Hinchman and Sandra K. Hinchman (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1994), 337.
81. Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. 1: 191. See also vol. 1: 124, "Aristotle's circular motion, taken together with the life metaphor, suggests a quest for meaning that for man as a thinking being accompanies life and ends only in death. The circular motion is a metaphor drawn from the life process which, though it goes from birth to death, also turns in circles as long as man is alive."
82. Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. 1: 169-170.
83. Hannah Arendt, "Understanding and Politics (The Difficulties of Understanding)," in *Essays in Understanding, 1930-1954*. Ed. Jerome Kohn. (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1994), 307-308.
84. Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. 1: 123-124.

85. Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. 1: 188.
86. Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. 1: 71.
87. Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. 1: 193.
88. Young-Bruehl, "Reflections on *The Life of the Mind*" in *Hannah Arendt: Critical Essays*, ed. Lewis P. Hinchman and Sandra K. Hinchman, 345.
89. Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. 2: 108.
90. Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. 2: 108.
91. Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. 2: 109.
92. Young-Bruehl, "Reflections on *The Life of the Mind*" in *Hannah Arendt: Critical Essays*, ed. Lewis P. Hinchman and Sandra K. Hinchman, 349.
93. Young-Bruehl, "Reflections on *The Life of the Mind*" in *Hannah Arendt: Critical Essays*, ed. Lewis P. Hinchman and Sandra K. Hinchman, 344-345.
94. Young-Bruehl, "Reflections on *The Life of the Mind*" in *Hannah Arendt: Critical Essays*, ed. Lewis P. Hinchman and Sandra K. Hinchman, 351.
95. Note for further reference Arendt's argument in *The Life of the Mind*, vol 2: 39-51, about the movement of Hegel's "becoming," where both circular and linear movement unite in the movement of a spiral.
96. Young-Bruehl, "Reflections on *The Life of the Mind*" in *Hannah Arendt: Critical Essays*, ed. Lewis P. Hinchman and Sandra K. Hinchman, 354. Young-Bruehl is quoting from Kant's *Critique of Judgment*.
97. Young-Bruehl, "Reflections on *The Life of the Mind*" in *Hannah Arendt: Critical Essays*, ed. Lewis P. Hinchman and Sandra K. Hinchman, 356.
98. Young-Bruehl, "Reflections on *The Life of the Mind*" in *Hannah Arendt: Critical Essays*, ed. Lewis P. Hinchman and Sandra K. Hinchman, 361.

Conclusion. The Invasion of the Public by the Social

1. Hannah Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, edited and with an interpretive essay by Joanna Vecchiarelli Scott and Judith Chelius Stark (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 55.
2. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1973), 466.
3. See in chapter 1 pages 20-25 and the brief summary of the three forms of process on page 38.
4. Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: The Viking Press, 1965), 27.

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