

**Hannah Arendt, in and on America:
An Émigré from Germany in the Promised Land**

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

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Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) captured the interest and imagination of scholars and the literati by developing two important concepts: *totalitarianism* and the *banality of evil* which influenced the second half of 20th century political thinking and has continued to permeate political and social theories and cultural descriptions. Her theories and analyses provided questions and answers which caution us today on both foreign and public policies and issues of governance and power. Quotes from Arendt's writings could easily be the subtext for most front page headlines as her range of ideas extended from the social (segregation and education) to the most esoteric philosophic and political systems. This paper will introduce the unique contributions of Hannah Arendt's major theories and present an overview of Arendt's important mid-twentieth century political theories formulated while in America, the nation she adopted, and will offer examples of their importance today. Hannah Arendt's body of work, much of which was translated from German, her

native language, into English (and other languages) with continuous reprinting and some revised editions, has become essential scholarship. Three selections have been consistently cited as her major works: *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), *The Human Condition* (1958), and *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1963). This research relied upon recent publications of Arendt's essays, interviews, lectures, and correspondence, most interestingly, Arendt's correspondence with her teacher, philosopher Karl Jaspers, from 1926 until Jaspers' death in 1967. Arendt's letters were consulted to and from her husband, Heinrich Blucher, (1936-1968) which provided Arendt with essential intellectual support. They were both professors and members of the New York intelligentsia. The correspondence between Arendt and American writer, Mary McCarthy, (1949-1975) provided Arendt with not only the comradeship between confidants, but also a quiet and trusted therapy needed and respected by each woman. Hannah Arendt's written and spoken words will form the basis of this presentation.

Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) captured the interest and imagination of scholars and the literati by developing two important concepts: *totalitarianism* and the *banality of evil* which influenced the second half of 20th century political thinking and has continued to permeate political and social theories and cultural descriptions. Her theories and analyses provided questions and answers which caution us today on both foreign and public policies and issues of governance and power. Quotes from Arendt's writings could easily be the subtext for most front page headlines as her range of ideas extended from the social (segregation and education) to the most esoteric philosophic and political systems. This paper will introduce the unique contributions of Hannah Arendt's major theories and present an overview of Arendt's important mid-twentieth century political theories formulated while in America, the nation she adopted, and will offer examples of their importance today.

Arendt defies labels. She has been described as an enigma, as politically both conservative and liberal. Yet an understanding of the underlying basic truths she espoused, the need for careful *thought* and *action*, and an understanding of the past as a story for the present rather than as a series of lessons, place her in the context of an independent voice of reason irrespective of religion, tradition, or nationality. Her limited public persona was straightforward, considered too blunt, yet awe-inspiring, sardonic and brilliant which may have enlisted what some critics describe as a cult-of-personality following. Although frequently listed as a political philosopher, Arendt denied she was a philosopher but instead, a political theorist. Eleven years before her death, in a 1964 West German interview, Arendt, with a typically straightforward response, stated: "I do not belong to the circle of

philosophy. My profession, if one can speak of it at all, is political theory.

Interviewer: I consider you to be a philosopher... **Arendt:** Well, I can't help that, but in my opinion I am not."¹ Arendt's profession, her vocation, *if one can speak of it at all*, encompassed many years as a professor of political philosophy at Princeton University, the University of Chicago, the New School for Social Research in New York City, and as a visiting professor to others. Arendt's vocation was that of political philosopher, her avocation was one of political theory and action.

Hannah Arendt espoused what she taught – *thought and action*—and exemplified the best and worst of both. She championed her beliefs in the face of extraordinary criticism, risked accusations of being politically incorrect, and was shunned by the very associations she once supported as a volunteer. Yet she frequently revised her thinking, and her written works, if essential to the integrity of her beliefs and her changing analyses. She revised one of her landmark works, *On the Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) in a 1966-67 edition with remarks in the 'Preface to Part One' offering a *second glance* at the Jewish Question and the historical existence and significance of antisemitism as it related to totalitarianism:

Twentieth-century political developments have driven the Jewish people into the storm center of events; the Jewish question and antisemitism, relatively unimportant phenomena in terms of world politics, became the catalytic agent first for the rise of the Nazi movement and the establishment of the organizational structure of the Third Reich, in which every citizen had to prove he was *not* a Jew,

¹ *Essays in Understanding*, "What Remains? The Language Remains": A Conversation with Gunther Gaus," 1-2.

then for a world war of unparalleled ferocity, and finally for the emergence of the unprecedented crime of genocide in the midst of Occidental civilization. That this called for not only lamentation and denunciation but for comprehension seemed to me obvious. This book is an attempt at understanding what at first and even second glance appeared simply outrageous. (xiv).

Beginning with Part One of three in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Arendt presented a history of the Jews, of antisemitism and Jews and society, and finally of the Dreyfus Affair at the end of the nineteenth century. With writings and analyses as comprehensive and detailed as Arendt's have been on antisemitism and the Jewish question throughout history, a look at her life and ethnic and religious background is relevant to her body of work and the lens through which she viewed the world and her life.

Hannah Arendt's body of work, much of which was translated from German, her native language, into English (and other languages) with continuous reprinting and some revised editions, has become essential scholarship. Three selections have been consistently cited as her major works: *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), *The Human Condition* (1958), and *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1963). This research relied upon recent publications of Arendt's essays, interviews, lectures, and correspondence, most interestingly, Arendt's correspondence with her teacher, philosopher Karl Jaspers, from 1926 until Jaspers' death in 1967. Arendt's letters were consulted to and from her husband, Heinrich Blucher, (from 1936-1968) which provided for Arendt the intellectual support between the spouses which they referred to as exchanges in time and space "within

four walls.”² They were both professors and members of the New York intelligentsia. The friendship between Arendt and American writer, Mary McCarthy, (from 1949-1975) provided Arendt with not only the comradeship between confidants, but also a quiet and trusted therapy needed and respected by each woman. Hannah Arendt’s written and spoken words will form the basis of this presentation. As a scholar at a young age, her life in Germany until 1933 set the direction of her life’s work, *if one can speak of it at all*.

Born a German Jew to a non-religious family in the East Prussian city of Königsberg, Hannah Arendt was privileged to have had early parental support with an introduction to intellectual pursuits and an education in the classics. She studied the classics and Christian theology at the age of seventeen at the University of Berlin, and then moved on to the Universities of Marburg and Heidelberg where she studied under the prominent philosophers Martin Heidegger and Karl Jaspers respectively. Arendt earned a doctorate at the age of twenty-three with Jaspers, completing a dissertation on Saint Augustine of Hippo’s *concept of love*. According to Arendt biographer, Elisabeth Young-Bruehl in *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World*,³ Arendt’s intellectual depth and unique intensity, although “not rare” in the university circles around Arendt’s time, stood out among her peers and was recognized by the great philosophers with whom she studied: Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, and Edmund Husserl (61). Socially, Arendt immersed herself in an intellectual circle self-proclaimed as the “Greek Circle,” but she enjoyed being alone

² From *Within Four Walls: The Correspondence between Hannah Arendt and Heinrich Blucher 1936 – 1968*.

³ Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World*, (Yale UP, 2004), 2nd ed. 1982 Young-Bruehl’s 1982 work is considered the definitive biography of Arendt and is cited in most works on Arendt. Young-Bruehl completed her doctoral dissertation in philosophy under Arendt.

from the time she was a child, reading, writing and studying, described as having an interesting *internal existence*. A combination of introvert and extrovert and purely intellectual, she was pampered by her mother, her patrons, and her teachers who intentionally and thoughtfully guided Arendt's education and her intellectual curiosities.(35-36). Hannah's father died of a worsening syphilitic condition that he had contacted as a young man. Her recollections of him were idealized as she witnessed his gentle and scholarly ways, yet incapacitating physical disabilities as a young child and was only eight years old when he died (16-17). Arendt's perception of her "Jewishness" demonstrated her unique independence from traditional influences, which Young-Bruehl attributed to her mother's influence and approach to the *Jewish Question*, "...I do not believe that she [my mother] had any special ideas about this....The question did not play a role for her."⁴ Arendt continued to explain that the experience of antisemitism seldom occurred for her, yet her earliest recollection were remarks which came from children playing on the street. She claimed that at that point, she became "enlightened."⁵ Somewhat stoic about her Jewishness, "I found the so-called Jewish question boring,"⁶ holding an image of herself first and foremost as a German with continual devotion to German culture and especially to the language: "I have always consciously refused to lose my mother tongue. ...Always. ...What is one to do? It wasn't the German language that went crazy."⁷ Yet, as age and experience began to teach the lessons of life, Arendt began a passionate interest in the Zionist movement and the conditions of the *stateless*

⁴ "A Conversation with Gunther Gaus," *Essays in Understanding*. 6.

⁵ Ibid, 6.

⁶ *Hannah Arendt Karl Jaspers Correspondence 1926 – 1969*, Letter135, 197.

⁷ *Essays in Understanding*, 13.

which directly connected her to the rise of the National Socialists in Germany and the end to the Germany of her youth.

As early as the 1920's and as a university student, Arendt blended her devotion to studies in theology and philosophy, politics, power, and humanity with writings inspired by her intellectual mentors. Although philosopher Karl Jaspers became her teacher and lifelong mentor, it was philosopher Martin Heidegger who captured her intellectual curiosity along with her heart when she was nineteen years old in 1923. Heidegger was seventeen years older, Catholic, married, and considered charismatic. He attracted students to matriculate at Freiburg with the hope of studying with him. ⁸Young-Bruehl offered samples of Arendt's poetry during the period with Heidegger where the poetic form was used by Arendt as a tool for assessing the reasons for their affair and their eventual break. From Heidegger, Arendt became deeply interested in the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, on *passionate thinking* and on "something remarkable in even the most matter-of-fact and banal things. ...a mere unnoteworthy nothing which everyone takes for granted, which is not even worth talking about." (Young-Bruehl, 51). Early on, she thought deeply about the banality of life as she experienced it and assumed it to be. Almost forty years later, Arendt revisited her thoughts on *banality* and judged the Nazi, Adolph Eichmann for crimes against the Jews, and therefore crimes against humanity, as an example of *the banality of evil*. ⁹ The term, *the banality of evil*, used to describe Eichmann during his war crimes trial, became highly recognized and continues to be used and misused.

⁸ Young-Bruehl, Ch.2.

⁹ Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. 252. *The banality of evil*, which appears in the title of Arendt's Eichmann trial report, has become a euphemism for the opposite of *radical evil*, also used by Arendt.

With her doctoral dissertation completed in 1929, recently married and actively involved in the Zionist movement, Arendt and her husband moved to Berlin to begin a life of study, writing, and teaching. Her correspondence with Karl Jaspers during this period evolved from student-teacher requests and impressions to serious discussions on philosophy, the German character, and on being Jewish. Referring to the importance of Karl Jaspers in her life, she stated: “And if I may say so – I grew up without a father -- ...I don’t want to make him [Jaspers] responsible for me, for God’s sake, but if anyone succeeded in instilling some sense in me, it was he.”¹⁰ Although Jaspers was not Jewish, his wife was, and they suffered constant threats of camp deportation right up until the end of the war. Jaspers continued to be a mentor, friend and literary collaborator with Arendt until his death in 1969. His presence in her life was important to her work and also to her personal life and, the correspondence between them, compiled and published ten years after her death in 1985, revealed much to substantiate their intellectual and spiritual closeness.

The year 1933 became a turning point of no return for Hannah Arendt with the rise of the Nazis and Adolph Hitler’s appointment as chancellor of Germany. The burning of the Reichstag soon after, impacted the safety of Arendt’s husband, Gunther Stern, a Jewish philosopher with leftist sympathies. The Communists were blamed and the National Socialist Party began to gather information on those who they deemed opponents of Nazi Germany, which included the Jews. In a 1964 West German television interview, Arendt responded to the question as to whether or not the 1933 events affected her political disinterest to that point. She responded: “Yes, of course. Indifference was no longer possible in 1933. It was no longer possible even

¹⁰ *Essays*. “What Remains? The Language Remains: A Conversation with Günter Gaus.” 22.

before that.”¹¹ She continued that it was the night of the Reichstag burning that drove her to politics:

...the illegal arrests that followed during the same night. The so-called protective custody. ...people were taken to Gestapo cellars or to concentration camps. What happened then was monstrous, but it has now been overshadowed by things that happened later. This was an immediate shock for me, and from that moment on I felt responsible. ...no longer of the opinion that one can be a bystander. ...I intended to emigrate anyhow.¹²

Gunther Stern left for Paris and Hannah followed soon after. After a threatening interrogation in Berlin by the police for collecting “horror propaganda,”¹³ anti-Semitic remarks from various publications to be used by the Zionist organization against the German government, Arendt managed a release but said: “I got out, but had to cross the border illegally...my name had not been cleared.”¹⁴ She did not consider herself, or any expelled person, to be a refugee, since she explained that refugees were sent out of their native country for something that they did, not for who they were.¹⁵ However, as a Jew, she was forced to emigrate and became, nonetheless, a refugee.

¹¹ Ibid., 4.

¹² *Essays*, “Interview with Gunter Gaus,” 5.

¹³ Young-Breuhl, 105.

¹⁴ *Essays*. “Interview,” 6-7. Although Arendt claimed in the interview that she not a Zionist, she was inclined to work for their cause at that time.

¹⁵ Hannah Arendt, “We Refugees.” 69.

“I am a German Jew driven from my homeland.”¹⁶ Therein began Arendt’s eighteen years as a stateless person. From her German emigration in 1933 until the granting of her citizenship in the United States in 1951, Hannah Arendt experienced what she termed an *inner emigration*, the feeling of not belonging anywhere. By 1935, the Nuremberg Laws had essentially divided Germans into citizens, and those without political rights. Arendt, along with all Jewish émigrés, became a stateless person without civil rights or national affiliation. In a 1953 article for *The Review of Politics*, she explained how a totalitarian system stripped the person or group of “the public realm of life... without destroying, [but] by isolating men, [and] their political capabilities.”¹⁷ She believed that isolation led to loneliness which was the “common ground for terror” and throughout her writings continually drove her point that the condition of terror was one of the dominant and necessary tools of a totalitarian government, and statelessness was a crime against humanity¹⁸. Fear of reprisal (as in Arendt’s case with her Berlin interrogation) or an understanding of the political path that Germany was taking in the 1930’s, drove many intellectuals, artists, and those with the means to leave Germany – the condition of forced emigration.

After The Nuremberg Laws of 1938, enforced emigration became official policy and Jews and non-Jews alike emigrated from Germany, by choice when possible, or by expulsion with no place to go. Arendt considered expulsion a crime against humanity as she explained in the Epilogue of *Eichmann in Jerusalem*:

¹⁶ Deborah Lipstadt, *The Eichmann Trial*, quoted in, 181. from Alfred Kazin, *New York Jew*, (New York: Knopf, 1978), 218.

¹⁷ Arendt, “Ideology and Terror: A Novel Form of Government,” 323.

¹⁸ Heilbut. 393. Heilbut makes reference to the fact that statelessness as a crime against humanity was cited by Supreme Court Justice Earl Warren when he recommended the outlawing of denaturalization.

...those who were expelled appeared at the frontiers of other countries, which were forced either to accept the uninvited guests or to smuggle them into another country, equally unwilling to accept them.

...Neither the national crime of legalized discrimination, which amounted to persecution by law, nor the international crime of expulsion was unprecedented, even in the modern age. (268)

The list of notable émigrés settling in Paris was impressively long. Usually traveling by way of other cities and countries, as Arendt had, they formed a community where not only physical needs, but also intellectual and social needs were satisfied. Jobs in Paris were few especially for those who had limited language skills in French, but Arendt found work to support herself, her husband, and her mother (who emigrated soon after Hannah) and joined and volunteered for Zionist groups which afforded her travel, experience, and even study. The experiences with Zionist activities during the eight years of exile in France, and the reality of growing discrimination toward the European Jews, encouraged an interest and finally a firm devotion to her Jewish roots. Arendt labeled Jewish émigrés and others when she coined the terms *parvenu* for the émigré Jews who *assimilated*, the “socially ambitious,” or *pariah* for those who were “politically conscious” (Young-Breuhl, 121). The famous Rothschild banking family from France was considered parvenu by Arendt who occasionally worked for them, and although she respected their charity work and their recognition of Jewish immigrants, the Rothschilds nonetheless applied political and social pressure “behind- the- scenes” to assert control on provocative leftist politics by any immigrants who resided in France (120-21). As guests in a foreign country, the parvenus preferred that the new immigrants remain

politically quiet and socially together. The preferred climate for a sense of community was restricted to the social rather than the political. However, Hannah Arendt was thoroughly initiated into the political realm during her Paris years through her work with a Zionist organization and with her partnership with Hans Blücher, a leftist sympathizer and her second husband as of 1941. She was a pariah of action and intellect ready, willing, able, and forced to move on to the promised land of America by 1941.

Hannah Arendt's life in America, in New York City, became a world within a new world as other immigrants and first generation immigrants: artists, writers, scientists, and teachers found and supported one another and began to build a "cultural network" and who were "unloading their European Baggage"¹⁹ referring to their experiences with both Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia. This group "The New York Intellectuals,"²⁰ also known as "The New York Family," shared a deep hatred for both Nazism and Stalinism at a time when the "liberal intelligentsia" flirted and touted the idealized virtues of communism (Wald, 261). A split in support for Hannah Arendt's ideas, especially after the publication of *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, caused some of the New York circle to condemn her and others to question their own understanding and sensitivity to the plight of the European Jews. If nothing else, Arendt's high regard for the *thought process* found followers intentionally or not.

¹⁹ Alan A. Wald, "Radical Evil" *Reviews in American History*, 9:2, 260. Rev. of Stephen J. Whitfield's, *Into the Dark: Hannah Arendt and Totalitarianism*. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1980.

²⁰ Ibid. Both Jews and non-Jews. critics, writers, editors, professors: Sidney Hook, Lionel and Diana Trilling, Elliot Cohen, Daniel Bell, Delmore Schwartz, Saul Bellow, Mary McCarthy, Dwight MacDonald, F.W. Dupree, James Burnham, et.al. Wald also refers to an article by Irving Howe, "The New York Intellectuals," in the 1970 anthology, *Decline of the New*.

Arendt embraced the beauty and the novelties of American culture yet felt a freedom to explore her roots in a nation of diversity. Accordingly, Arendt believed that it was also practical to revisit the terms and values of pariah and parvenu:

She did not advocate that émigrés remain pariahs – they had been that long enough ...Rather, she wanted them to transcend their pariah-hood by engaging in a group effort: ...Admit who we are, and we can become the ‘vanguard’ of all nations.²¹

Interestingly, Arendt’s “vanguard” referred to the Jewish émigrés whom she envisioned as future leaders of nations, although she supported a vision beyond nationalism, race, or ethnicity. In 1943, the year Arendt learned about Auschwitz,²² she wrote a bitter and facetiously detailed article, “We Refugees,” for *The Menorah Journal* explaining the typical German Jewish immigrant’s position in America, and on assimilation – a sensitive and self-conscious issue. She writes that “We [Jews anywhere] are like people with a fixed idea who can’t help trying continually to disguise an imaginary stigma,” (76) and, “Refugees driven from country to country represent the vanguard of their peoples – if they keep their identity.” (77). Assuming a voice for all Jewish immigrants, Arendt keyed in on the predicaments of the immigrants while she inferred details of continued discrimination by the new American “saviors”:

Our optimism, indeed is admirable, even if we say so ourselves. ...We lost our home,...our occupation, ...our language, ... We left our relatives in the Polish ghettos and our best friends have been killed in

²¹ Heilbut. 405.

²² *Essays*. “Interview,” 13.

concentration camps, ...Nevertheless, as soon as we were saved –and most of us had to be saved several times –we started our new lives and tried to follow...all the good advice our saviors passed on to us. (69)

With Zionist affiliations and the loss of her native nationality, Arendt dealt with the question of *assimilation* on a more personal level. Does one first and consciously embrace one's Jewishness or one's current national culture? For Hannah Arendt, ever the pragmatist, she embraced her new culture as an adventure and sought American citizenship which she was granted in 1951. At the same time, she continued to work for Zionist organizations and became a reporter for *Aufbau*, the Jewish journal: "Since I've been in America ...I've become a kind of freelance writer, something between a historian and a political journalist."²³ Combining the two, Arendt began to write one of two works for which she became well-known, her classic on totalitarianism, *On the Origins of Totalitarianism*, which took ten years and many transformations until it was completed in 1951. With the publication of *Origins*, Hannah Arendt established herself as a prominent voice in political theory and philosophy.

Arendt used the term and supported the idea of a *comity of nations* ²⁴and was considered a "cosmopolitan" (one who thinks on a global level).²⁵ Arendt believed that it was important to think and feel beyond one's nation and applied her theories concerning *crimes against humanity* to her writings and to her conclusions on

²³ Karl Jaspers. Arendt to Jaspers. 18 November 1945. Letter 31 *Hannah Arendt Karl Jaspers Correspondence, 1926 – 1969*. Eds. Lotte Kohler and Hans Saner, NY: Harcourt, 1992. 23.

²⁴ *Encarta World English Dictionary*, NY: St. Martins, 1999. Defined as the mutual recognition among nations of one another's laws, customs, and institutions. Arendt uses the term throughout her writings.

²⁵ Vinay Dharwadker, *Cosmopolitan Geographies*, NY: Routledge, Intro.

governance and social harmony. She represented a universal voice and attempted to free herself of generally accepted values based on her religion, her politics, or her experience of statelessness. She strongly supported a European union or federation and believed that “race-thinking” rather than “class-thinking” was the “ever-present shadow which accompanied the development of the comity of European nations.”²⁶ Sharon Marcus, in the essay, “Anne Frank and Hannah Arendt, Universalism and Pathos,”²⁷ describes Arendt as “...the Holocaust survivor who became an internationally renowned cosmopolitan intellectual,”²⁸ and argued that Arendt’s criticism of the sentimentality of Anne Frank’s *Diary* was justified, that the Diary represented the values of “conformity, liberal optimism, and a universalism based on assimilation to a homogenized American culture.” (Marcus, 95) Arendt represented independent thought, realism and rationality, and a universalism based on plurality and *natality* or beginnings. Her report on the Eichmann trial in the 1960’s was an attempt to assess not only the criminal in the context of his crime, but also to assess the significance of the trial itself to the nation of Israel and to the world. After the publication of the series of trial articles for *The New Yorker* magazine, Arendt published a compilation with additional writings in 1963 under the title, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. If ever Hannah Arendt needed the support of her husband, “within their four walls,”²⁹ and contact with her best friend, writer Mary McCarthy, and the advice of her mentor Karl Jaspers, it was then – since Jewish communities all over the world, for the most part, expressed outrage at

²⁶ Arendt, “Race-Thinking before Racism,” *The Review of Politics*, Jan. 1944, 42. and *Origins of Totalitarianism*, 161.

²⁷ *Cosmopolitan Geographies*, 92.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 94.

²⁹ The term of endearment used by Arendt and husband, Blucher to denote their intellectual and spiritual conversations and correspondence.

her assessment of the trial and of Eichmann. Apparently expected to take on a favorable and sympathetic slant in support of the Jewish concerns, Arendt instead approached the trial as a cosmopolitan in a highly nationalistic setting. Her critics succeeded in carving controversy into the Arendtian legacy, some of which will be detailed further on.

By the 1951 publication of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Arendt had established herself as a lecturer in various universities and became senior editor at Schocken Books in New York City. She had the distinction of being the first full woman professor at Princeton University and in later years, settled in as professor of political philosophy at the New School for Social Research in New York City. Her husband, Heinrich Blücher lectured at Bard College in New York State until his death in 1970. Today, Bard houses *The Hannah Arendt Center* for her personal papers and writings which are under the control of her former student and now editor, Jerome Kohn.

Although Hannah Arendt's life story is dramatic and informative, her writings on totalitarianism have made a profound mark on the understanding of politics and power. Outside of academia and the Jewish community, Arendt's name may be relatively unknown. Probably best known for her work on the Eichmann trial and the frequently and often misused term, *the banality of evil*, Arendt managed to fly "under the radar" of public recognition, just as she would have preferred: "I tend to shy away from the public realm."³⁰ Nonetheless, Arendt traveled to Europe each year to lecture, visit with friends, and fulfill public

³⁰ *Responsibility and Judgment*. 8. Said in a 1975 speech on the occasion of the Denmark Sonning Prize.

obligations of her choosing. However, her stage remained academia and publishing rather than popular culture as, for example, one of her contemporaries, émigré Ayn Rand who was an Eastern European Jewish “philosopher” and self-styled lecturer with an ongoing cult of personality. In a review of *The Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt*, David Luban stated that Hannah Arendt, around the time of her death in 1975, was “a renowned public intellectual, her fame exceeded that of any academic philosopher in America,” yet very little scholarly research or discussion had taken place. Since the 1990’s, “Arendt’s stature could hardly be greater.”³¹ Luban stated that there are about 120 books on Arendt and that she is referenced frequently in political theory dissertations and has been cited in hundreds of law review articles. What has Hannah Arendt contributed to political American discourse that deserves our attention and respect? With a body of writings extending from 1943 until her death in 1975, Arendt consistently provided provocative and unusual approaches to post World War II events. With regard to how her ideas were received, two of her best known books: *The Origins of Totalitarianism* and *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* will be referenced to examine her descriptions of evil and totalitarianism. Studies of political theory or political science, public policy or public administration benefited from the Arendt’s contributions to the big issues or universals of: *totalitarianism, evil, thought and action, isolation, bureaucracy, institutionalized terror and violence, power, and human rights*. Her insights were progressive and perceptive, her criticisms were relentless: “She produces no arguments, no evidence of serious philosophical or historical thought. It is all a stream of metaphysical free association. She moves from one sentence to another, without logical connection,

³¹ David Luban, *Book Review*. n.p.

without either rational or imaginative links between them.”³² And at times personal and sexist, for example, “journalist B.Z. Goldberg “wondered how Arendt could dig into the depths of the pure souls who died in the camps with such beautifully manicured fingernails.”³³ Seven years after her death, Nobel laureate Saul Bellow commented:

“...her errors were far more extensive than her judgment. That can be said of all of us, but she was monumentally vain, and a rigid *akshente* [Yiddish: impossible woman, ballbuster] [sic] Much of her strength went into obstinacy, and she was the compleat intellectual... [she] could not support the might of historical analysis, unacknowledged prejudices, frustrations of her German and European aspirations ...She could often think clearly, but to think simply was altogether beyond her, and her imaginative faculty was stunted.”³⁴

Yet Hannah Arendt provided the world with the thoughtful consideration of what and why evil exists in the world and how it was manifested in the new twentieth-century political system, totalitarianism. In *Origins*, she explained that philosopher Immanuel Kant coined the term *radical evil* and “rationalized it in the concept of a ‘perverted ill will’ that could be explained by comprehensible motives.” (459) In strong contrast to the criticism of Yehouda Shenhav [fn. 35] Arendt *reasonably linked* Kant’s radical evil to:

³² Yehouda Shenhav “All Aboard the Arendt Express,” *Book Review*. Web. n.pag.

³³ Ibid., n.pag.

³⁴ “Saul Bellow on Hannah Arendt: The Upshot? He didn’t like her much,” from *Stanford University Book Haven* website, <http://bookhaven.stanford.edu/2010/11/saul-bellow-on-hannah-arendt>. (1 March 2011).

only one thing that is discernible ...we may say that radical evil has emerged in connection with a system in which all men have become equally superfluous. The manipulators of this system believe in their own superfluousness as much as in that of all others, and the totalitarian murderers are all the more dangerous because they do not care if they themselves are alive or dead...(*Origins* 459)

Arendt defined *totalitarianism* as *arbitrary power*.³⁵

...we are tempted at once to interpret totalitarianism as some modern form of tyranny, that is a lawless government where power is wielded by one man. Arbitrary power, unrestricted by law, yielded in the interest of the ruler and hostile to the interests of the governed, ...fear as the principle of action, namely fear of the people by the ruler and fear of the ruler by the people, ...have been the hallmarks of tyranny throughout our tradition.³⁵

Using both Nazism and Stalinism as totalitarian examples, Arendt pointed out that instead of following a “rule of law” based on a constitutional foundation, each followed Laws of Nature (racial superiority) and Laws of History (dialectical class struggle) respectively (“Ideology” 307). Arendt emphasized that each dictator, Hitler and Stalin, drove their ideological implications to the extreme, with their populations probably not aware of how it would all end, what the goals actually were. Arendt also believed that it was conceivable that they themselves did not know how it would all end. The belief of a “dying class or race” consisted of those

³⁵ “Ideology and Terror: A Novel Form of Government,” *The Review of Politics*, 15:3, (July 1953), 306.

who would be “condemned to death; races that are ‘unfit to live’ were to be exterminated.” (318) The use and need for *terror* kept people together but isolated and Arendt pointed out that:

The preparation has succeeded when people have lost contact with their fellow men as well as the reality around them; ...The ideal subject of totalitarian rule is not the convinced Nazi or the convinced Communist, but people for whom the distinction between fact and fiction...and the distinction between true and false...no longer exist. (321)

Through her analysis of twentieth-century totalitarian systems, Arendt pointed out many cautionary items: that racism places groups outside of society and makes them superfluous, expendable, and vulnerable to genocide; that careful and reasonable thoughtfulness and awareness leads to reasonable actions; ambiguous or idealized goals are deceptive – assume nothing – and discriminate between facts and fiction. The parallels to political and social issues today are remarkable as examples of universal issues that will always require Arendt’s *thought* and *action* to control or improve.

Where *Origins of Totalitarianism* defined the terms of totalitarianism and evil, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1963) demonstrated that in the Nazism, anything was acceptable and possible beginning with the Jews’ loss of citizenship, deportation, and eventually the execution of millions of innocent people because for the victims, nothing was possible. The system not only supported Hitler’s radical concepts of society but nourished its growth and the total

penetration into all aspects of society through complicity. The state of complicity, of yielding to evil actions, took three forms: those who were knowingly compliant; those who were aware and compliant; and those who were compliant by force. After Hitler, those at the top of the power structure followed orders, assisted in the planning, or helped to direct and carry out orders. Those who were knowingly aware of *radical evil* taking place throughout the country were those who Eichmann described as his superiors, such as Himmler and Heydrich. They supported Hitler's agenda, and as such, represented willing compliance. They did not conform to Arendt's "rule of Nobody"³⁶ where sheer bureaucracy blurs the leadership and thus the responsibility. Leaders at the apex may have had a purely systematic rule of terror and force to complete its own rule of law. To its perpetrators, evil may be intentional and a "necessary evil."

As Arendt became the target for Jewish outrage in Israel and in America after the publication of *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, she spent the rest of her life defending or adjusting her ideas to keep in step with the times. *Origins* underwent at least three revisions, but most importantly, she added a Postscript to *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1964 edition) in which she took the opportunity to clarify controversial issues such as the Judenrat (the Jewish Councils of the ghettos) as being compliant with the Nazis; the idea of banality regarding evil and Eichmann as ordinary or thoughtlessness; and the essence of the totalitarian government as terror-driven. She recognized that the future of any totalitarian system would be different than what was past, because the present was different, and the tools of totalitarianism

³⁶ *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 289.

would therefore be different. In this regard, Hannah Arendt spoke eloquently yet provocatively on America.

During the last thirty-four years of her life, Hannah Arendt lived in America but was a citizen of the world. Home was New York City where she lectured in American universities, wrote, and traveled each year to Germany and other European countries to visit friends, guest lecture, and absorb inspiration. America gifted her with the freedom to express her ideas and get them out into the *public space* she so completely believed in. With books and essays in scholarly publications, and fame from at least one of her first publications, Arendt did not recoil from the whirlwind of controversy and criticism that followed some of her books. Completely acclimated to the United States and a citizen by 1951, the year of the publication of *Origins of Totalitarianism*, Arendt commented consistently on various social and cultural issues on America while frequently making connections to the politics of the time and the modern world.

America's diversity of both people and ideas, led her to believe that America was:

...a living thing which cannot be contemplated or categorized, it cannot be fabricated. It is not and never will be perfect because the standard of perfection does not apply here. Dissent belongs to this living matter as much as consent does. If you try to 'make America more American' or a model of democracy according to any preconceived idea, you can only destroy it. (qt.in Young-Bruehl, 274)

However, in a long letter to Jaspers, Arendt expressed a disquieting alarm at the "disintegration of the government machinery" with "hardly any resistance" to the

Congressional investigating committees set up by Senator Joseph McCarty on un-American activities (Jaspers 210) She refers to the “Good old American know-nothingness” which she believed would eventually take the place of the ex-communists who were responsible for the disintegration of government. Continuing on the theme of American stupidity, Arendt told Jaspers the story of a college president who was born and raised in Iowa and therefore “didn’t need to think or read anymore to know what was right.” (Jaspers, 213) Questioning why then President Eisenhower was not confronting the McCarthy committee on its extremism, especially since she believed that the executive branch held almost “dictatorial powers,” she found it very “curious” that congress and the executive had almost reversed roles, where “Congress represents public opinion. And only God knows what that really is.” (Jaspers, 214).

These statements, written in 1953, were in response to the fanatical anti-communist hearings and attempted communist purges by Senator Joe McCarthy in the 1950’s and also during a period when citizens – many former immigrants – were being investigated for denaturalization and deportation as subversives. Arendt and her husband Heinrich Blücher, a former Communist sympathizer, had reason to be concerned during this time. In a letter to Hannah while she was in Europe in 1952, Blücher commented on his fears and made an ominous prediction about the United States:

...the dreadful new immigration bill has demoralized the best people here. ...It seems that one can now deprive someone of citizenship with a simple denunciation. And in my case, absolutely nothing could stop it. [American] citizenship could, it seems to me, become the most

worthless in the world at a stroke. And how soon these “Born American” people could become a Master Race. (qt. in Young-Bruehl, 275)

Many immigrants made a choice to leave America to return to Europe for the same reasons expressed by Blucher. The McCarran-Nixon Act also known as the Internal Security Act of 1950 “excluded ‘totalitarians,’ but ...the word ‘totalitarian’ did not refer to former Nazis or Fascists and was simply a code word for ‘Communist.’ (Heilbut, 382). German émigré, Thomas Mann, a Noble Prize laureate and writer who received his U.S. citizenship in 1944 was one such émigré who chose to return to Europe, but not to Germany. He said:

As an American citizen of German birth, I finally testify that I am painfully familiar with certain political trends. Spiritual intolerance, political inquisition, and declining legal security, and all this is the name of an alleged ‘state of emergency’...this is how it started in Germany.” (Heilbut, 386)

Along with the fear of political reprisals, some émigrés also returned to Europe and to a more settled Germany to try to rebuild a past life and renew devotion and memory to their roots, although Mann never lived in Germany. He paid visits from his home in Switzerland.

Hannah Arendt satisfied her appreciation for Europe and her native homeland with frequent visits, but her new life was firmly established in the United States. In a 1959 letter to Arendt’s husband, Karl Jaspers reflects on Hannah’s new relationship with Germany:

...she has pulled away even more, is more indifferent toward it. That pains me somewhat. I feel she is mistaken about herself, even though she truly has, together with you, achieved a state in which she exists with her feet on the ground, even though deprived of the ground of her origins.³⁷

Secure in the status of her new homeland, and ever the independent voice, Hannah Arendt provided insight into current events that parallels issues today in America: unpopular wars, immigration, education, race, and technology, to name a few. By 1968, Arendt referred to another “McCarthy” (Eugene, a senator and presidential nominee) in a letter to Jaspers which indicated a continued loyalty and devotion to America during one of the most turbulent decades in U.S. history at a time of anti-Vietnam war sentiments, civil rights abuses, and race riots:

The major factor here [U.S.] is [Eugene] McCarthy, who has all the young people on his side. Things are in an extremely dangerous state here, too; but I sometimes think this is the only country where a republic at least still has a chance. And besides that, one has the feeling that one is among friends. (Jaspers 681).

The year was 1968 and Arendt was immersed in the many violent public actions which were occurring, and in 1969, she published *Crisis of the Republic*, a collection of essays on the current events of the 1960’s and their implications. She described the student protests against the war in Vietnam as “very positive” and believed that they experienced what the “eighteenth century had called ‘public happiness,’ which

³⁷ Karl Jaspers, Correspondence, #379.

meant that when a citizen takes part in public life he opens up for himself a dimension of human experience that otherwise remained closed to him and that in some way constituted a part of complete “happiness.”³⁸ Here was an example of Arendt’s firm belief that action must take place in the *public realm* for citizens to have a voice and political power. In his Introduction to *Responsibility and Judgment*, Jerome Kohn, Arendt’s former student and future editor, included the story of Arendt’s response to an alarmed faculty who were on lock-down during student protests at the New School where Arendt taught. One of the faculty suggested that the authorities should be called in for help. Arendt’s response was “For God’s sake, they are students not criminals.” (Intro. x). For Arendt, civil disobedience cannot be considered criminal if its goal is the preservation of our constitutional rights, especially under the First Amendment. (*Crisis*, 75)

Interestingly, Arendt denied charges that student protesters in the U.S. were children of a “permissiveness” and abundance that afforded student rebellion. She believed “that student rebellion was a global phenomenon.” (*Crisis*, 117).

Throughout Western civilization, revolutions have been born from the universities with organized groups developing a movement and willing to die for it. Arendt believed that “the universities made it possible ...to stand outside all social groups and obligations, to be truly free.” Any destruction of the universities would be an end to an important “base of operations” and spell the end of protests. (*Crisis*, 208).

³⁸ *Crisis*, “Thoughts on Politics and Revolution, A Commentary,” 203.

As early as the 1950's Arendt was commenting on the "Crisis in Education"³⁹ and the first lines of her essay could replace any current article on the crisis that America is trying to deal with today:

In America, one of its most characteristic and suggestive aspects is the recurring crisis in education that, during the last decade at least, has become a political problem of the first magnitude, reported on almost daily in the newspapers.(Between Past..., 170).

Arendt used the word "equalization" to describe the innate weaknesses of the American system of education where distinctions between the better students and others, the rich and the poor, the native born and immigrants, pose problems which today we carefully refer to rather than risk being politically incorrect. Arendt believed that the very act of discrimination would actually benefit the educational system, especially if individual needs were assessed. There were three assumptions that Arendt examined to determine the failure of education in America: first, that all educational needs of the child should be assessed individually; second, that teachers must have a depth of knowledge of their subject instead of being "one hour ahead of his class in knowledge;" and third, that teachers promote hands-on experiences rather than just listening to learn. (Between Past...181-85). Continual "research [into the crisis in the schools] has become a technique of evasion," (Crisis, 73) and Arendt used an example of the "over-researched" fact that hungry children do not have the learning readiness and concentration that is needed for good learning. Published in 1969, this essay on the crisis in education is applicable to educational issues today. Education continues to be a politically divisive issue, sometimes used

³⁹ *Between Past and Future*, 1954. 170.

as the excuse for financial shortfalls and occasionally used for political promises to be traded for support and votes. Arendt pointed out that frequently, the children were the ones who paid the price for political follies, as she so provocatively wrote about in her 1959 essay, “Reflections on Little Rock.”

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 made segregation illegal and ushered in years of civil rights discord in protests, violence, and repercussions which permeated American social, political, and cultural life. Hannah Arendt’s 1959 essay, “Reflections on Little Rock” generated extreme reactions toward Arendt personally – she was called a racist – which instigated global educational issues into the frame. In “Preliminary Remarks” written for the journal, *Dissent* (Winter 1959), which finally published the piece after being rejected by *Commentary*, Arendt explained that she held back publication of “Reflections” for a while due to the “controversial nature of my reflections which, obviously, were at variance with the magazine’s stand on matters of discrimination and segregation.” Those reflections supported segregation. Being convinced that “the routine repetition of liberal clichés may be even more dangerous,” she hoped that a discussion could take place held “from both sides.”⁴⁰ Arendt prefaced her essay with an extraordinary statement as disclaimer in stating that she was writing “as an outsider” who had never lived or even visited the South because she might have found it “personally unbearable,” adding that “as a Jew I take my sympathy for the cause of the Negroes as for all oppressed or underprivileged peoples for granted and should appreciate it if the reader did likewise.” (*Portable*, “Reflections” 232). She therefore expressed her complete disagreement with the fact that forced integration would take place, as portrayed in a photograph

⁴⁰ *The Portable Hannah Arendt*, (NY: Penguin: Classics, 2000), 231.

taken, published, and inserted into the Jerome Kohn's edition of *Responsibility and Judgment*, also containing the "Reflections" essay. In this edition, Arendt stated that she was greatly impressed with a photograph of a high school girl (one of the first to integrate) leaving school at the end of her first day thereby having tested the integration policy. Arendt stated:

...she was persecuted by a mob of white children, protected by a friend of her father, and her face bore eloquent witness to the obvious fact that she was not preciously happy. The picture showed the situation in a nutshell because those who appeared in it were directly affected by the Federal court order, the children themselves. (193)

Arendt questioned the wisdom and benefit of forcing anyone, especially children, into a threatening and "humiliating position" believing that if someone was not going to be accepted, they should not be forced. In this respect, she urged parents to take charge of their own children which was their right, and not ask or expect their child "to be a hero, -- something neither her [subject of photo] absent father nor the equally absent representatives of the NAACP felt called upon to be." (203) Arendt's argument spoke to the cause and not just the symptom of racism. By urging parents to take control of the decision if and when to integrate, by urging a complete improvement of the very schools held to be inferior -- those of their children -- and by refusing to have their children be expected "to change or improve the world...[Arendt asked] ...do we intend to have our political battles fought out in the school yard?" (204)

In “Reflections on Little Rock,” Arendt did not address racism, instead she examined the effects of racism on culture and society, and how it impacted the politics of a society. Laws such as The Civil Rights Act of 1964 had extreme social and cultural effects. Personal and parental rights of both white and black citizens were challenged and she emphasized that any enforced integration, “was no better than enforced segregation.” (235) As a Jew, and an émigré due to her particular “ethnicity” (Jewishness is not considered a race), Arendt had a unique and qualified position from which to speak. She explained racism, which she referred to as “race-thinking”⁴¹ as destructive, unpatriotic and “the main ideological weapon of imperialistic politics...racism has stirred up civil conflicts in every country, ...and has proved to be the most ingenious device for preparing civil war that has ever been invented.” (“Race-Thinking” 41)

In a 1968 *New York Times* article, “Is America by Nature a Violent Society?” Arendt suggested that due to the diverse ethnic groups that make up America, it lacked a “national character” and was “artificial by nature” due to its lack of homogeneity. But where it lacked the possibility of extreme nationalism, and “where respect for the law is so deeply rooted and where citizens are so law-abiding,” it nonetheless teetered on the brink of violence when its citizens exercised its freedom of assembly which Arendt believed was “among the crucial, most cherished and, perhaps, most dangerous rights of American citizens.”⁴² Writing from New York to Jaspers in 1963, Arendt commented on the profound issue of race relations and peace between the races in assessing names for the Nobel Peace Prize for which

⁴¹ Arendt, Hannah, “Race-Thinking before Racism,” *The Review of Politics* (Jan. 1944).

⁴² Arendt, “Is America by Nature a Violent Society?” *The New York Times*, (28 April 1968).

Jaspers was submitting a name.⁴³ Believing that it should not go to an American based on the violent situation there. Arendt suggested Trevor Huddleston of South Africa to Jaspers and wrote:

...socially, here in America, all hell is breaking loose. Things are much worse than I realized. Most people of good will are very pessimistic. A Jewish friend who is very active on behalf of the Negroes said yesterday: We are all lost. I'm by no means pessimistic. Much will depend on whether the Kennedy's succeed in getting their Civil Rights bill through. That won't solve the problems, but it will open the way for progress. But if the bill does not pass, we had better brace ourselves for the worst here.⁴⁴

Many of her other writings, of the Sixties and Seventies, reflected the context of the times in which she lived, such as *On Revolution* (1963), *On Violence* (1970), *Men in Dark Times* (1968), *Crisis of the Republic* (1972), "The Crisis in Education" (1958), "Kennedy and After" (1963), "Man's Conquest of Space" (1963), "Civil Disobedience" (1970). Weaving together the political with the cultural, there were few topics of the day that Arendt did not address. Just three years after obtaining her American citizenship, Arendt commented on European and American synergy in which she believed that America reaped the benefits of European civilization by accepting not only its political institutions, but also "a new ideal of equality and a

⁴³ Karl Jaspers, *Correspondence*, Letter 331, p. 508. Jaspers considered Arendt's advice to name someone involved in peace between the races. He considered John and Robert Kennedy, finally submitted the name of South African activist, Trevor Huddleston. The 1963 Award went to Pope John XXIII.

⁴⁴ Karl Jaspers, *Correspondence*, Letter 331, 508.

new idea of freedom... Only in the United States did this image find a political realization through the establishment of the American Republic.”⁴⁵ Yet, speaking as a cosmopolitan observer more so than an American, Arendt suggested that “anti-American feeling is well on the way to becoming a new European ‘ism’” (“Dream” 551). A lack of trust, America’s “stupendous wealth,” and an awareness of the “have-and-have-not countries” according to Arendt, along with a need to develop a pan-European spirit of nationalism would be an encouraging factor to the development of a federated Europe. The Cold War and arms race “with their reliance on ‘destructive technicalization’ [sic] and the Europeans with their tendency ...to retreat into the private sphere as well as their failure to recognize that hostility to Americanization was in fact dread of the ‘emergence of the modern world.’”⁴⁶ The reference to “the modern world” was a reference to destructive technology, exemplified by the United States’ use of the atomic bomb on Japan. Arendt believed that after the bombing of Hiroshima, European “attitude changed...there has been a growing tendency to both look upon all technical achievements as inherently evil and destructive and to see in America chiefly, and in Russia sometimes, the epitome of destructive technicalization which is hostile and alien to Europe.”⁴⁷

Arendt’s cautious, even suspicious attitude toward technology was strongly implied in any discussion related to modernity. To Arendt, modernity meant isolation, loneliness and anonymity and therefore, the elimination of the public sphere, so essential to a successful republic. Bureaucracy, or the *Rule of Nobody*,

⁴⁵ Arendt, “Dream and Nightmare,” *Commonweal*, (10 Sept 1954), 551.

⁴⁶ David Watson, “Hannah Arendt and the American Republic,” *Transactions of the Charles S. Pierce Society*, (Summer, 1992), 435.

⁴⁷ Hannah Arendt, “Europe and the Atom Bomb,” *Commonweal*, (17 Sept 1954), in *Essays in Understanding*, 419.

made government difficult, ambiguous and ineffective. In the Epilogue of *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Arendt cautioned:

The frightening coincidence of the modern population explosion with the discovery of technical devices that, through automation, will make large sections of the population “superfluous” even in terms of labor, and that, through nuclear energy, make it possible to deal with this twofold threat by the use of instruments beside which Hitler’s gassing installations look like an evil child’s fumbling toys, should be enough to make us tremble. (*Eichmann*, 273)

The story of Hannah Arendt ended in 1975 when she died at home in New York, alone but never lonely. Her husband died four years earlier and she had found a new “four walls” with her friend, Mary McCarthy, who assisted her with the back and forth brainstorming of ideas and events which Arendt continued with her usual pace. During this time, around 1974, Arendt began to work on her final book, *The Life of the Mind*, which was a three-part reflection on *thinking*, *willing*, and *judging*. *Thinking* and *Willing* were completed as lectures, but the third section on Judging was never completed. Mary McCarthy edited the first two parts and published *The Life of the Mind* in 1978. By the time of her death, Arendt’s popularity and respect for her thoughts had made enormous strides with two events in 1974: the awarding of Denmark’s Sonning Prize for contributions to European civilization and for “Home to Roost,” an address presented in Boston in the Spring of 1975 on the occasion of the nation’s Centennial and later broadcast on National Public Radio and printed in the New York Times.

In “Home to Roost,” Arendt held nothing back as she opened the address with an admonition that a celebration of the Republic may be at an inopportune time since the Republic was in crisis. From Vietnam to Watergate to a disastrous foreign policy, she warned of buying the “wisdom of Madison Avenue” who advertised to a consumer society “who spends more time consuming its wares than it takes to produce them.”⁴⁸

Image making as global policy... and Watergate signified the intrusion of criminality into the political process of this country ...In other words, it is as though a bunch of con men, rather Mafiosi, had succeeded in appropriating to themselves the government of ‘the mightiest power on earth.’ (“Home to Roost” 266-67)

On a lighter note, in a letter to McCarthy referencing her “Home to Roost” address, Arendt commented on the many “fan” letters she received by noting the “power of the press.” And then, “Among these letters one greatly amusing – after the usual compliments the young man wrote that he heard that I was ‘going on in years’ and he wanted me to know his opinions before I ‘pass on.’”⁴⁹

According to Heilbut, “she ended her days deeply troubled by American politics and by no means convinced that her days of emigration were over...” (*Exiled*, ix) Arendt may never have been freed from the *inner emigration* of the once stateless person. From Germany, Jaspers wrote:

⁴⁸ Hannah Arendt, “Home to Roost,” in *Responsibility and Judgment*, (Schocken, 2003), 261.

⁴⁹ Mary McCarthy, from Hannah Arendt, July 1975, *Between Friends, The Correspondence of Hannah Arendt and Mary McCarthy, 1949 – 1975*. NY: Harcourt, 1995. 381.

And in Germany the number of those who want to hear your voice is growing. They have great respect for you, and what you say is welcome to many Germans' ears. They are aware that for all your criticism, your thinking is not all nihilistic and that behind it is a great love, which is the true essence of a philosopher.⁵⁰

During the final four years after her husband's death, Hannah Arendt was aware of the respect and loyalty of her American friends, her "fans" and students, and as Jaspers relayed, Germany. Just months before her death, during her acceptance speech for Denmark's Sonning Prize, Arendt mentioned the public *persona* that one puts on for such occasions because "by personal temperament and inclination...I tend to shy away from the public realm."⁵¹ With public recognition, came the need for the mask, the public persona, which afterwards can be put away.

Then I, greatly honored and deeply thankful for this moment, shall be free...identifiable, I hope, but not definable and not seduced by the great temptation of recognition which, ...can only recognize us *as* such and such, that is, as something which we fundamentally are *not*.

(Responsibility, 14)

Hannah Arendt defied labels. Unfiltered, her universal voice of reason seldom needed *the mask*, and her 'love of the world' continues to speak to us today.

⁵⁰ Karl Jaspers, *Correspondence*, Letter 257, 389.

⁵¹ *Responsibility and Judgment*, 7-8.

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