Moral Responsibility for Banal Evil

1.0 Introduction

Adolf Eichmann, although never completing his secondary studies, rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel in the SS. After the war he escaped to Argentina, from where he was secretly abducted in 1960 and brought to Israel to stand trial for the crimes he perpetrated in Nazi Germany. Eichmann's bureaucratic role in the Nazi regime primarily involved organising the 'transportation' and 'emigration' of Jews, largely to extermination camps. Eichmann claims not to have, nor was it proven that he had, directly killed or given a direct order to kill anybody. Thus his main crime, to which he confessed, was that he had shipped people to their death in full awareness of what he was doing. Hannah Arendt, who attended the trial, subsequently published what proven to be, at least at the time, an extremely controversial account of the proceedings. The controversy can be summed up succinctly as follows:

> it seemed as if Arendt was accusing her own [Jewish] people and their leaders of being complicitous in the Holocaust while exculpating Eichmann and the Germans through naming their deeds 'banal'.[1]

The case of Eichmann is so important because he becomes for Arendt the representative banal perpetrator of evil. However, Arendt's account of the banality of evil is sometimes read as 'letting off' Eichmann and the Nazis. No doubt it is clear Arendt did not intend to do this. But stating Arendt's intentions does not counter those critiques, for example by both Barry Clarke and Joseph Beatty,[2] which argue, somewhat plausibly, that Arendt turns Eichmann into a moral idiot to whom we cannot ascribe responsibility. While I ultimately reject such readings of Arendt, I do reach a similar conclusion, via a different route, by arguing that Arendt's concept of the 'nobody' does undermine the grounds for ascribing responsibility to Eichmann. Thankfully, though, this unfortunate conclusion can be avoided through revisiting the concept of the banality of evil.

2. Individual Moral Responsibility

In this essay I shall work within the framework of a broadly *merit* based account of responsibility. On a merit based account a person can be held morally responsible for an act, and thus morally blameworthy, if and only if they satisfy some criteria for meriting responsibility.[3] An alternative approach would be to employ either a consequentialist or a continental account of responsibility. On a broadly consequentialist account one can be held to be morally blameworthy only where such a response would lead to the desired change in behaviour in either the agent or the populace at large. On a broadly continental account, such as found in the work of Emmanuel Levinas, being responsible for the Other is something like a pre-condition of one's own Being.[4] However, the reason I shall be working solely with a merit based account, besides the fact that it seems to be the model Arendt implicitly draws upon, is because this is the only account to which Eichmann seems to provide a significant challenge. On both a consequentialist and continental account it seems to follow trivially that Eichmann ought to be held responsible, simply because this would have good consequences on the one hand and would seem to follow from the mere fact of his Being on the other.

It is generally held, at least on a merit account, that a necessary pre-condition for being held responsible is that of being a *person*. This usually amounts to possessing something like the ability to make autonomous choices. However, being a person is only a necessary but not sufficient condition for meriting responsibility. This is because two extra conditions, it is generally thought, must also be met; these are that neither *excusing* nor *exempting* conditions obtain.[5] Excusing conditions obtain when a person acts under circumstances in which it would be unreasonable or unfair to hold them to be fully responsible for their actions. Those who act under the duress of direct, immediate and serve coercion, for example, with a gun to the head, are often thought to fit this category. Exempting conditions obtain when a person is in a state where it is reasonable for others to refrain from holding them to moral demands. For example, children and the mentally deranged are often thought to fit this category. Among other things, this condition also implies that

responsible agents will possess normative competence and an awareness of the foreseeable consequences of their actions. With regards to normative competence I take it to be a reasonable principle that the "default position regarding 'normal' adults" is that they ought to be held responsible for their actions, unless a specific global or local impairment of normative competence can be explicitly demonstrated.[6]

The problem raised by Arendt's account of Eichmann is that it seems to generate a reasonable *prima facie* case for *not* holding Eichmann to be fully morally responsible for his actions. This is because, given Arendt's very strong account of the pervasiveness of totalitarianism, Eichmann seems to have been in an exempting coercive situation. Further, Eichmann seems to have also been in a global exempting state, as he was, according to Arendt, genuinely incapable of thinking and judging. Even more seriously, Arendt also seems to specifically deny Eichmann's personhood, but if Eichmann is genuinely a 'nobody' then there is no one left behind *who* we can hold morally responsible.

3. Thinking and Totalitarianism

Arendt repeatedly claims, in numerous works, that Eichmann was *incapable* of thinking. Apparently not lazy, not unwilling, but genuinely possessing an "*inability* to speak [outside of 'Officialise' (*Amtssprache*)]…closely connected with an *inability* to *think*, namely, to think from the standpoint of someone else".[7] This of course raises an obvious problem because, if thinking and moral judgment are at all linked, and they certainly are on Arendt's account, then if one is unable to think then one is necessarily unable to judge the morality of one's actions. In short, Eichmann is on this reading portrayed as morally incompetent and those who are morally incompetent are often thought not to merit the ascription of responsibility. However, this seems to be contradicted by the great normality of Eichmann, unless the implication is the worrying claim that most people are in fact normatively incompetent. The claim that Eichmann was unable to think can be understood in two ways. First, that Eichmann was in an situation that made it impossible for him to think (local

exempting case). Clearly, this situation was totalitarianism. Second, that Eichmann was genuinely

unable to think in *any* situation, totalitarian or otherwise (global exempting case).

In the *Origins* Arendt describes totalitarianism as a frightening all-pervasive force that

inculcates every facet of life, effectively removing "all possibility of…the solitude required for all

forms of thinking".[8] Further, Arendt writes:

> the compulsion of total terror on one side…and the self-coercive force of logical deduction on the
> other…has succeeded when people have lost contact with their fellow men as well as the reality
> around them; for together with these contacts, men lose the capacity of both experience and
> thought.[9]

The ability to share an undistorted experience of the world with others is removed through the

compulsion of totalitarian terror. Further, through the imposition of the self-coercive force of

totalitarian logic, one comes to rely completely on a distorted reality seen through the lens of

ideology. For example, by finally accepting the totalitarian logic that 'if the party says 2+2 = 5 then

2+2 = 5', George Orwell's Winston from *1984* comes to lose the very foundations from which to

think, from which to be away from party logic and be truly alone with himself in solitude.[10]

Totalitarianism thus removes worldliness on one side, and solitude on the other, bringing about

isolation and ultimately loneliness as a permanent state of being. Loneliness is the state of being

unable to be with the world, others, or alone with oneself in thought.

Given this very strong account of the all-pervasiveness of totalitarianism Arendt might seem

to have justified her claim that Eichmann was unable to think but simultaneously undermined the

foundation for ascribing responsibility to him. However, this is not the case. This is because it is

only the *essence* or goal of totalitarianism to impose 'total domination' under whose conditions

thinking becomes impossible. But it is clear that Arendt thinks, and she is surely right, that Nazi

totalitarian domination did not in fact fully realise this essence.[11] As such, the very possibility for

solitude and thinking were very far from being actually eliminated in Nazi Germany. Hence,

although Eichmann was in a situation that made thinking difficult, and even dangerous, he was very

far from being in a local exempting situation that would have absolutely precluded the possibility of thinking.

But if this is the case must we, along with Clarke, read Arendt's claim that Eichmann was unable to think as a claim that he was a genuine moral idiot?[12] Again, thankfully not. Arendt writes that:

> Thinking in its non-cognitive, non-specialized sense as…the actualisation of the difference given in consciousness, is not a prerogative of the few but an ever-present faculty in everybody; by the same token, inability to think is not a failing of the many who lack brain power but an ever-present possibility for everybody.[13]

This passage is a key to understanding Arendt. If thinking is genuinely "an ever-present faculty in everybody", it is clear that Arendt is using the term 'inability' in a very strange sense to mean something like 'failing to' or 'choosing not to'. If we grasp this, we see that the ability to think is actually an ever-present possibility in every normal person, though its exercise is always contingent. Given Eichmann's 'normality', it seems to follow that even if Eichmann did not think he nevertheless might have. Hence any normative ignorance that may have clouded Eichmann's judgment was not due to incompetence and so it is an ignorance for which he is responsible, as this ignorance could presumably have bseen rectified through the exercise of his faculties of thinking and judging. Further, it is also important to note that Eichmann was not factually ignorant of what was happening to the 'cargo' whose transportation he was organising. Indeed he personally witnessed both shootings and gassings of Jews.[14] Eichmann knew what the evil consequences of his actions were.

This account clearly draws a link between the possession of the possibility of thinking and the ascription of normal normative competence. This link is present in Arendt's work and it is a link that can be established without recourse to a Kantian notion that knowledge of the objective moral law is a matter of course. Thinking is for Arendt fundamentally critical; it functions like a Socratic discourse in that it leads to the undermining of unfounded beliefs. Thus, in this sense, thinking will be sufficient, under any circumstances where one can think, for ascertaining that the 'justifications'

for genuine evils are ultimately unfounded. But even if we only grant the weaker position that sometimes thinking alone is insufficient for moral competence, if one's surroundings are sufficiently morally corrupt, Eichmann still has no excuse. This is because he was certainly not subject to the sort of systematic indoctrination and complete isolation from alternative views that would be required to justify his having such outrageously unjustifiable moral beliefs about, for example, the permissibility of genocide.[15] Thus it follows that the 'normal' adult Eichmann suffered neither from a global (incapable of thinking) nor local (incapable of thinking under totalitarianism) impairment of normative competence, nor from factual ignorance, from which it follows that we can safely resort to the default position of holding him to be responsible for his actions.

In order to emphasise this point and also to examine any excusing issues of coercion, I shall consider an implication from the above discussion – namely that, under some circumstances, thinking can become impossible. As Arendt makes clear the concentration camps were the representative of the essence of totalitarianism in practice, but even here domination was not always absolutely total. Drawing on Primo Levi's distinction between the 'saved' and the 'drowned' (also referred to as 'mussulman'),[16] we can see that it is only really the case that the latter perhaps shows us what it means for total domination to actually remove the possibility of thinking. The drowned, or mussulman, who "form the backbone of the camp, [are] an anonymous mass, continually renewed and always identical, of non-men who march and labour in silence, the divine spark dead within them".[17] They are "hollow" men who have been "reduced to suffering and needs" and "on whose face and in whose eyes not a trace of a thought is to be seen".[18] It is the faceless and non-spontaneous mussulman who shows us what it means to 'live' under conditions that make it impossible for one to think.

For Levi the 'saved' were those few who held special positions which saved them from the worst conditions. Levi, a specialist due to his chemistry training, with the few extra rations and less strenuous work that his position entailed, claims that this was enough to make him different to the masses of mussulman because, as he puts it, "I am too civilised, I still *think* too much".[19] The saved

were thus, unlike the mussulman, still not completely incapable of thinking. Even here coercion and domination were not absolute, for Levi claims that 'we' (presumably only the 'saved') "still possess one power...the power to refuse consent".[20]

It can be difficult to understand and judge the actions of the so-called saved in the extermination camps. It can be equally difficult to assess their responsibility. Claudia Card, drawing on Levi, refers to 'gray zones' as conditions under which victims of evil are simultaneously put in a position in which they are also made to perpetrate evil.[21] But even under such conditions, as found in concentration camps where victims were forced to actually carry out much of the day to day evil, moral responsibility does not seem to be completely undermined. For example, while there may have been a certain minimum of evil that, say, a Kapo, had to inflict in order not to be put themselves in mortal danger, there were many who seemed to brutally go well above what was required and for this at least we might judge them responsible. Importantly there were some who simply refused to cooperate and so chose not to taint themselves through complicity in evils simply in order to delay what was likely to be an inevitable death anyway. Thus we might think of responsibility as diminished, but not completely undermined, proportionally to the degree of coercion or the grayness of the zone under which it is perpetrated.

This discussion thus leaves us with the following conclusions. What seems clear is that the true "drowned", those faceless phantoms who were the product of radical evil, do not satisfy any of our requirements for moral responsibility. This is due not to the degree of coercion experienced, but rather because of the radical annihilation of everything human about them, indeed their very spontaneity. However, the ascription of (partial or full) responsibility to the "saved" seems somewhat reasonable, though far from unproblematic. Certainly some camp survivors later (reasonably) held their fellow prisoners responsible for at least some of the evil they were coerced, and sometimes not even directly coerced, into performing.[22] Finally, the conditions experienced by someone like Eichmann were so infinitely better that we are in a position to find him, on these grounds of situation and coercion, as meriting full and complete responsibility for his actions.[23]

4. Eichmann's free heteronomy

The analysis of the previous section inevitably leads us to ask how and why Eichmann was able to be so thoughtless. Eichmann, in his own handwriting, seems to answer this question when he writes:

> From my childhood, obedience was something I could not get out of my system…I found being obedient not a bit…difficult…It was unthinkable that I would not follow orders…Now that I look back, I realize that a life predicated on being obedient and taking orders is a very comfortable life indeed. Living in such a way reduces to a minimum one's need to think.[24]

In short, Eichmann found that following orders was an easy way not to have to think, and to not have to think was comfortable and easy. It was not literally unthinkable for him not to follow orders, but rather it would have been too difficult for him if he had thought about his orders. But not only is this true in general, it is far more important in times when the status quo, what one is being asked to do on a daily basis, is murder. Eichmann, the effective bureaucrat, was able to be so thoughtless because his job viewed through Nazi lenses was no more than a purely *technical* one. *How* to efficiently transport x amount of cargo to destination y – never *why* are we transporting these human beings to their deaths. Thinking would have done nothing but make things difficult for Eichmann.

We can better understand this situation, following Clarke, by thinking in terms of heteronomy. In Kantian terms we act autonomously when our principles for actions are based on self-legislated reasons, and heteronomously when those principles are based on reasons that are receptively given rather than self-chosen. However, in either case we retain spontaneity and so in both cases we act freely. This amounts to the view that Eichmann freely chose to be conditioned by habit, to be heteronomous, and for this choice he is responsible. That is, while both Eichmann and the mussulmen may not have acted autonomously, their cases differ crucially in that the former, but not the latter, retained spontaneity, and so acted freely and retained the potential for autonomy.

A heteronomously evil action is free but not autonomous. In heteronomous evil an act must be evil, an extreme moral wrong, and the evil must have been brought about by an agent who acts

on the basis of a maxim of heteronomy. Eichmann, Clarke rightly claims, was heteronomously evil. This is because:

> Eichmann surrendered only his autonomy and not his spontaneity and at each moment of time he could presumably have resumed exercising his judgment…to recommence choosing for himself…[a] causally undetermined agent can in one sense be unfree, namely heteronomous, and yet still be morally responsible for their actions.[25]

Thus heteronomy leads to heteronomous evil when one defers in act, will or judgment to an evil person, practice, ideology or principle. This allows us to understand the curious fact that Eichmann is being held responsible for a choice that in itself is banally innocuous in that, under different circumstances, it would more than likely never have led Eichmann to evil but to instead live an apparently exemplary life. Eichmann himself realised something like this was at play when he claimed that: "the subject of a good government is lucky, the subject of a bad government is unlucky. I had no luck".[26] Eichmann may not have had much luck, but the point is precisely that when it comes to something as important as our moral well-being, it is simply negligent to leave it up to luck. This shows us why it is false and too simplistic to portray Eichmann as simply making his self-interest the supreme condition of his behaviour. Eichmann was not a great egoist, indeed he claimed that he always made his perceived 'duty' the condition of his inclinations and self-interest. This seems to fit the model of the selfless morally good agent,[27] except for the crucial failure, at least on a Kantian model, to autonomously self legislate one's own moral duty.

We understand Eichmann better if we take seriously his claim, on hearing the court's verdict, that: "the court did not understand him: he had never been a Jew-hater".[28] According to Arendt Eichmann did indeed not act out of a genuine *conviction* to an evil anti-Semitic Nazi agenda.[29] Rather he acted out of a *commitment* to following rules, to being obedient to perceived authority. That is, his is an example of a sort of thoughtless *blind* commitment, as opposed to a thoughtful *convinced* commitment that may arise through thoughtful (but false) reasoning. This forms the distinction between, for example, a terrorist who is convinced of an ideology which leads to evil, and the banal rule follower Eichmann, who acts not out of conviction but commitment. This

difference is important for the former is always likely to wilfully go out of their way to murder and will be able to justify murders done by others in the name of ideology. In contrast the latter, who is not an outcast or rebel but a follower of a mass movement, will not wilfully go out of their way to murder, nor strongly hold the murderous acts of others to be justified.

Further, we can extend this above analysis by finding Eichmann not only responsible for his decision to follow Nazi authority, to be a cog in the machine, but also for implicitly and directly supporting that authority. Arendt argues that "if an adult is said to obey, he actually *supports* the organization or the authority or the law that claims 'obedience'".[30] Arendt explains this by distinguishing between the case of the slave, where the "notion of obedience makes sense" because the slave "becomes helpless if he refuses to 'cooperate'", whereas in a political situation it is the leader, not the obedient follower, who becomes helpless if cooperation is refused (at least if it is refused on a large or important enough scale).[31] Power requires support, and Eichmann, who was no slave, provided that support through an obedient commitment to rule-following, come what may.

This analysis leads Arendt to claim that it is our personal responsibility, under conditions of dictatorship, to do no more than not act. This is because Arendt seems to think that one could simply not act under Nazi rule, for example, without in some way being implicated in evil. This implies a model where it is our political responsibility under conditions of evil dictatorship to engage in civil disobedience, in the sense of withdrawing support through non-participation in all state institutions.[32] However, Arendt also finds the actions of those who actively fight evil, the resistance fighters, as commendable, arguably provided they avoid perpetrating evils themselves in the process.[33] This then leaves open whether it is our responsibility to actively fight evil under conditions more politically empowering than dictatorship. It seems to follow that if action presupposes power and that fighting evil, without also perpetrating it, is morally praiseworthy, we might argue that a bystander's responsibility to act against evil is proportional to their power for combating evil.[34] We might formalise these two points by the (provisional) normative claims that (in Kantian terms) there is a perfect duty to neither participate in nor support through obedience evil

persons or practices, and an imperfect duty to combat or reduce evil (without, in the process, perpetrating evil) whose normative force is proportional to one's power to in fact do so. Eichmann can therefore be held responsible for perpetrating evil, for supporting evil persons and practices through obedience and also for failing to at least somewhat reduce evil when it was in his power to do so.

5. The Nobody

Thus far I have developed an account of Eichmann's responsibility that is compatible with Arendt's trial report. This would seem to support the thesis that Arendt in no way 'let off' Eichmann and the Nazis through her account of banality. Unfortunately this is not the case, as I shall now show, and the reason for this is because of Arendt's account of the 'nobody', a figure that permeates her entire oeuvre; for Arendt, the nobody is literally a non-person.

Arendt derives 'person' from the Latin *persona*. It represents for her not so much an intrinsic property of a human being, but one's legal (or political) appearance. *Persona* is thus a normative category, in which we show 'who' we are, and is to be distinguished from the descriptive category of *homo*, in which we merely show 'what' we are.[35] For Arendt the normative requirements of personhood are defined in terms of what she calls 'natality', an idea which has its roots in Augustine. Natality as a person-constituting activity seems to coincide approximately with *action* arising out of spontaneous autonomy. It involves an act of spontaneity as it must go beyond receptivity, it must be a new birth, the beginning of something new. Further, if it is to be genuinely the beginning of something new it needs also to be autonomous. However Arendt, in a later account, states that it is *thoughtfulness* (and thus seemingly not *action*) that constitutes personhood.[36] The correct reading of this seems to me to be that either action or thoughtfulness, or perhaps some combination, are sufficient as sources of natality to constitute personhood.[37]

Personhood is for Arendt a public property that requires a plural human togetherness in order to manifest itself through appearance. That is, in order to appear as *who* you are, a public political space is required. This public space is, of course, the *polis*. For Arendt:

> This space does not always exist, and although all men are capable of deed and word, most of them
> – like the slave, the foreigner, and the barbarian in antiquity, like the labourer or craftsman prior to
> the modern age, the jobholder or businessman in our world – do not live in it.[38]

Arendt sees the modern age as distinguished precisely by the loss of the public realm and its replacement by society. In society persons have "become social beings…[who] unanimously follow…certain patterns of behaviour, so that those who did not keep the rule could be considered to be asocial or abnormal". Here 'behaviour' is likened to 'behaving', following the rules, a reduction of all activity to "the level of a conditioned and behaving animal".[39] In short, a social being behaves privately, a person acts publicly. With the rise of the social being humans become not persons but mere "laborers and jobholders". For Arendt a society of jobholders:

> demands of its members a sheer automatic functioning, as though individual life had actually
> submerged in the over-all life process of the species and the only active decision still required of the
> individual were to let go, so to speak, to abandon his individuality…and acquiesce in a dazed,
> 'tranquilized,' functional type of behaviour.[40]

It is clear that Eichmann is meant by Arendt to fit into this model of the nobody who lives outside the public space of the polis. He is seen as a mere jobholder, who behaves with sheer automatic functioning according to the rules of a society in which 'racial purity' is held to be the highest good. Eichmann neither engaged in action nor was he constituted by thoughtfulness. Thus on Arendt's account Eichmann is a mere nobody, a non-person, who did not act or think but at best laboured or worked like a mere *homo*.

However, I find Arendt's claim that Eichmann is a nobody, a non-person, to be far too strong and her account of personhood too restrictive. Arendt's account ties personhood too closely to the public appearance of the political actor or the reflections of the philosophical spectator. But these are obviously elitist categories. Arendt's position here relies on a very strong distinction between the public as opposed to the private and social spheres. If however we accept that we also express *who* we are in the social realm, in interaction with friends and family, that we can act here and not just behave, then we open enough room to expand our notion of personhood to include the likes of Eichmann. Alternatively, if we more reasonably tie personhood to the use (or potential use)

of autonomy, or the presence of spontaneity, we again find room for Eichmann's personhood as he is constituted by the free choice to be heteronomous, which admittedly shows only a very shallow person, but not absolutely nothing. That is, I take it that at least *some* of what Eichmann says and does shows us *who* he is, with or without the existence of a polis.

Further, Arendt's restrictive account of personhood also has undesirable implications for her account of forgiveness and respect, as well as undermining the foundation for the ascription of responsibility. For Arendt forgiveness involves forgiving *what* a person has done for the sake of *who* they are. She argues that either respect or love of the offender are necessary but not sufficient preconditions for forgiveness. Forgiveness plays a central role in Arendt's economy of action, indeed she likens it to the moral standard of plurality. Without forgiveness we might be too cautious in acting, too afraid of raising a stumbling block that would make further action impossible. On this Arendt writes:

> Evil according to Jesus is defined as a 'stumbling block' *skandalon*...The *skandalon* is what it is not in our [human] power to repair by forgiving or punishment – and what therefore remains an obstacle for all further performances and doings.[41]

Here evil is a stumbling block that forgiveness cannot overcome. This makes sense if we think of evils as opposed to less extreme moral wrongs, such as trespassing, which does not seem to create the sort of stumbling blocks that prove to be impassable for further action. Arendt often claims that the perpetrators of radical evil are beyond our human powers of forgiveness. Given the above account of the *skandalon* it would seem plausible to think that Arendt might justify this claim in relation to forgiveness as follows. We cannot forgive *what* a perpetrator of radical evil has done, *who*ever they are, because their actions have created such a *skandalon* that is beyond our human powers to overcome. This seems to be a reasonable argument, but it is not in fact the one Arendt employs. Instead, somewhat surprisingly, she argues that "in rootless evil [i.e. banal evil] there is no person left whom one could ever forgive".[42] Thus, Arendt claims that Eichmann, and banal perpetrators of evil like him, are unforgivable because they are nobodies, there is no one *who* we can forgive.

But this solution is highly problematic because if we forgive *what* someone has done for the sake of *who* they are, as Arendt holds we do, then it follows that we cannot forgive a nobody for *anything* they do. Thus Eichmann lying to his superiors about how many hours he was working is *equally* and for *the same reason* as unforgivable as his perpetration of radical evil. In both cases the stumbling block cannot be removed, not because of the size of the stumbling block, but because Eichmann is a nobody. But surely we would wish to say, in terms of forgiveness, that there is some relevant difference between Eichmann lying about the number of hours he was working and perpetrating radical evil. That is, the ability to forgive ought to bear at least some relation to the severity of the deeds that are to be forgiven.

Not only that but this position also implies a politically dangerous view of respect, because just as there is nobody who we can forgive, there is equally nobody who we can respect. Respect is for Arendt:

> independent of qualities which we may admire or of achievements which we may esteem…Respect…concerns only the person…the same *who*, revealed in action and speech, remains also the subject of forgiving [and respect].[43]

We respect not *what* a person is, but that they are a *who* at all. Everybody who is a somebody is necessarily worthy of respect, but a nobody is not worthy of respect. However, Eichmann fails to be worthy of respect, not because of the immense evil he wrought, but rather just because he is a nobody. Further, for Arendt, Eichmann is the representative of the modern human, the representative jobholder who dominates modern mass society. Thus on Arendt's view it seems modern society is primarily composed of nobodies. This might seem like harmless elitism, but it is in fact far from harmless. This is because personhood is a necessary condition for respect on Arendt's account[44] and the Nazis showed us only too well what happens when we regard a segment of the population as not deserving of moral respect – they are inevitably treated 'expediently' rather than ethically, with all the evil consequences that brings.

However Arendt's account not only undermines the foundation for holding Eichmann and the common mass of jobholders worthy of respect, but it also undermines our ability to hold

Eichmann morally responsible for his actions. I have already shown that Arendt clearly wants to assign responsibility to Eichmann and I argued in the previous section how we might justify this move. But by denying Eichmann's personhood it also follows that there is nobody *who* we can hold responsible for his actions – that is, it is persons not things (and nobodies) that are held responsible for their actions. Further, we would also similarly lose the ability to hold the vast mass of anonymous nobody jobholders responsible for their actions.

Thus Arendt's concept of the nobody, with its unappealing implications for her accounts of forgiveness, respect and responsibility, seems, as is, somewhat dangerous and flawed. However, thankfully it does not require much to amend it. The solution is to see that someone like Eichmann can banally perpetrate evil without also being a complete nobody, a non-person – I argue in the next section that we ought to see Eichmann and his like as lacking in *character*, not personhood. This solution elegantly resolves the difficulties Arendt's account faces. The problem with Arendt's view on forgiveness is that Eichmann is unforgivable because he fails the personhood condition. Under my solution he (potentially) cannot be forgiven because his evil actions have created an irremovable stumbling block, a real *skandalon*. This approach is also able to consider not only the extremity of what was perpetrated but also who the perpetrator is, what their 'inner life' was like, whether they have shown remorse or remembrance about their evil actions, sought reparations etc. Similarly, by denying that Eichmann and the masses of jobholders are nobodies, we can instead see them as persons, even if only shallow ones, and so we can maintain that they are worthy of basic moral respect and are potentially able to be held individually responsible for their actions.

6. The Banality of Evil Revisited

For Arendt the banality of evil refers to evil perpetrated thoughtlessly by a banal nobody. That is, there seem to be two criteria involved: thoughtlessness and lack of personhood. Clearly, given the above discussion, it follows that we ought to reject, or at least modify, this second criteria. Indeed, I shall also argue that of these two criteria only thoughtlessness, at least as elaborated below, turns out to be a necessary requirement for classifying an evil act as perpetrated banally.

We can say that the perpetrator of evil banally perpetrates that evil if the motive for performing the evil deed is in itself a banal non-evil one, such as to make life easy, to gain and secure promotion at work etc. A banal perpetrator is not motivated primarily by, for example, maliciousness, envy or sadism. They are also not motivated to act out of a convinced commitment to an evil ideology. This is not to deny that banal perpetrators may come up with a 'cover story' to explain their actions if an explanation is pursued under conditions of evaluative cross-examination. Clearly for Eichmann and the Nazis such a 'cover story' was of course anti-Semitism, even if many later denied it. But a banal perpetrator has only a thoughtless blind commitment to such an ideology, whereas a non-banal fanatic, such as a Hitler or Himmler, has a thoughtful, convinced commitment to their anti-Semitic 'cover story'.[45] A banal perpetrator is able to commit evil so thoughtlessly because they are lead to evil by doing no more than mindlessly adhering to rules, customs etc, without reflecting on them, where those rules or customs lead to evil. We can see this in Eichmann's attitude to the Nazi treatment of Jews and his claim that if so many more prominent people than he took it on board without question, then who was he to judge? But the unquestioned pervasiveness of such a belief did not convince him of its truth in any deep and thoughtful sense, but merely caused the question of its veracity to never explicitly arise for him. No doubt this thoughtless repetition of 'truths' was made even easier for Eichmann, and those like him, by operating in an all-encompassing institutional environment, complete with peer and social reinforcement, whereby such pervasive beliefs could be easily and blindly consumed.

According to Henry Allison, "Arendt locates the real basis of Eichmann's attitude, and that of the Nazis as a whole, in self-deception".[46] Self-deception amounts to, for Allison, ignoring or obscuring morally salient features of a situation. Eichmann, according to Allison's Kantian analysis, is able to universalise his maxims because he wilfully ignores the morally salient issue that he is dealing with actual human beings. However I find Allison's account to be mistaken on two fronts. First, he over-generalises – a single explanation, in terms of self-deception or otherwise, to explain the actions of *all* Nazis is doomed to be too simple to account for the complexities of what

happened. Second, self-deception (in Allison's sense) is not in general the right category to think through the actions of a banal perpetrator of evil like Eichmann. This is because self-deception presumes a certain level of thoughtfulness, of an attempt to formulate universalisable maxims of action in Allison's terms. But such thoughtfulness does not describe the banal perpetrator. This is because if one is deceiving oneself it must first be recognised, at some level, that what one is doing is, at least potentially, wrong, but then nevertheless proceeding to deceive oneself about this, more than likely through some 'rationalisation' that ignores or obscures morally salient features. But Eichmann and his like did not need to deceive themselves or 'rationalise' their behaviour, as for them the potentially morally troubling nature of their actions was not a question that ever explicitly arose for them in any deep sense. They simply "have never given any thought to the matter".[47]

This also explains why we can't think through the notion of banality with the Aristotelian concept of 'incontinence', or 'weakness of will' as it is usually called, whereby a person knowingly acts other than as they think best or right. Weakness of will can perhaps be useful in describing the actions of those deeply conflicted participants in Stanley Milgram's infamous 'obedience' experiments.[48] But again, this does not explain the non-conflicted Eichmann, who neither went out of his way to act for what he thought was either good or evil, nor was troubled by any failure to achieve such non-existent moral goals. Eichmann was, in Arendt's words, merely "swept away unthinkingly by what everyone else does and believes in".[49] He was thus not swept away through weakness from doing what he knew he ought.

In response to my analysis of Eichmann as representative of a banal perpetrator of evil one might object, as many have, that Eichmann, as it happened, did not fit such a model.[50] That is, he was in fact a convinced and thoughtful anti-Semite and motivated to act primarily because of such beliefs. However, in that case I can respond by asserting that whether or not the actual Eichmann was a banal perpetrator, nonetheless everything my discussion claims about him would still hold of a hypothetical, but possible, Eichmann*, where Eichmann* by definition fits precisely the description of the banal perpetrator. In other words, in this paper I have been primarily concerned

with developing and elaborating a conceptual model of the banal perpetrator and not with investigating the subtle historical details of Adolf Eichmann. To this the antagonist might still object that though the model I propose is possible, regardless of whether or not Eichmann fits it, as Eichmann* does fit the model and is not implausible, but nonetheless such a case is uncommon and unusual. This is clearly not a view Arendt would endorse. We can see some of these same issues raised in the so-called intentionalist/functionalist debate about the importance and motivational force that anti-Semitism had for the Nazis and their many followers.[51] Although both of these positions have an element of truth about them, that is, surely there were both those strongly motivated by anti-Semitism (intentionalists) and those who were not (functionalists), the question is really about how wide spread each model is. Clearly Arendt's analysis of Eichmann is supported by a functionalist analysis, but whatever the case in regard to Nazi Germany, I still take it that the category of a banal perpetrator of evil is an important one. That is, as I shall make clear below, banal perpetrators of evil are not confined to Nazi Germany.

As stated above, for Arendt both thoughtlessness and lack of personhood are characteristic of a banal perpetrator of evil. In relation to the second point, I wish to first argue that we ought to instead see lack of character, rather than lack of personhood, as often involved in banal evil and, second, that the link between thoughtlessness and lack of character is not a necessary one. In order to be able to thoughtlessly follow rules and customs, even into evil, one will *in general*, though not necessarily, be an extremely banal person who lacks character. Character can be thought of in at least two senses. On a more traditional Aristotelian definition character amounts to dispositions to behaviour. Thus on this definition Eichmann had an evil character because he habitually performed evil deeds and so was disposed under certain conditions to perpetrate evil. But character can also be used in Mill's sense to refer to a type of person who does not simply do what it is customary to do, or at least does not do so unthoughtfully.[52] In short, a person with character, in Mill's sense, is one who shows a willingness to buck the tide and think independently about what they are doing.[53] Something like this definition is not surprising if we realise that, strictly speaking, it is only really

non-customary behaviour that is truly individuating and thus evidence of character.[54] In this sense of character Eichmann did not have an evil character but rather lacked character altogether. Mill's analysis of those who lack character coincides quite precisely with those Arendt classifies as nobodies. Crucially, though, where here, as I showed in the previous section, Arendt finds a lack of personhood, Mill instead finds merely a lack of character. Arendt's move here is surely the wrong one. Rather we can still see Eichmann as a person, possessing spontaneity and the ability to act autonomously, and so worthy of basic respect and able to be held responsible, but also as possessing a lack of character which allowed him to perpetrate evil by thoughtlessly adhering to status quo rules and customs.

However, Eichmann is not here being held responsible for having a lack of character *per se*, but for the evil that flowed from his intentional acts. His lack of character is being used only to explain how and why he did what he did, to help us to understand, not to excuse him. Eichmann was no monster, as Gideon Hausner, the prosecuting lawyer in his trial, tried to argue, though he certainly performed monstrous deeds.[55] This does not show us, of course, that there are no moral monsters, but only that we need not find a depraved character beneath even the most radical evil.

However, it seems to be a hasty generalisation to claim that *only* those banal persons who lack character can thoughtlessly perpetrate evil. For one might banally perpetrate evil without also doing absolutely everything banally, that is, without necessarily completely lacking character. Let's take it to be the case, for the sake of the argument, that rich people in affluent nations are acting evilly in not stamping out poverty when they easily could. Perhaps sometimes they give money but it is always done out of charity. It just never occurs to them that they have an obligation to be doing this, that they are simply doing what is required to not perpetrate evil. In this case many people will perpetrate evil (if evil it be) thoughtlessly. There need not be any maliciousness, nor a false belief that their actions are not evil. It simply never occurs to them to question what they are doing. Other examples of this might possibly include, if evil they are, participating in global warming through driving a car and participating in the cruel slaughter of sentient animals through eating meat. Such

evils (if evil they are) will generally be perpetrated thoughtlessly by those who lack character, but at least some, perhaps many, thoughtful and deep characters will also perpetrate such evils banally, and not simply due to a weakness of will, normative incompetence or maliciousness. That is, it seems that if certain beliefs that cover up the moral saliency of certain issues are culturally deeply ingrained and pervasive, it is certainly possible that even a thoughtful person, possessing character, might still be able to thoughtlessly perpetrate evil. Likewise, mental compartmentalisation may also allow thoughtful people to thoughtlessly perpetrate evil, where they, for example, act thoughtlessly at work, but thoughtfully and with character elsewhere.[56]

I take it that the category of the banal perpetrators of evil is an important one because it helps us to understand why certain persons perpetrate evil and how such evil might be lessened in the future. That is, by understanding why the banal perpetrator acts as they do, we can understand the conditions that are more conducive to wide spread evils being perpetrated banally. Banal evil can only be perpetrated on large scales where there is wide spread and unquestioned acceptance of evil practices, persons or institutions. Thus one way to combat such acceptance is to firstly encourage all people to think independently, without 'pillars and props' as Arendt puts it, but at the very least to encourage free and open critique of those persons, practices, beliefs and institutions that (potentially) lead to evil. Such questioning might at least alert others to what might otherwise go unquestioned, and this is one way of lessening the likelihood that people will be able to thoughtlessly perpetrate evils. That is, when "despicable moral climates" exist it is all too easy for many to "unthinkingly commit the unspeakable"[57] and so we ought to at least not silently accept the existence of such climates.

Thus one factor that can lead to banal evil occurring is cases where society's respected moral authorities acquiesce or remain silent in the face of evil, as seen in the notable example of the churches during the Nazi period, as this is often enough to comfort the majority of 'ordinary' people that they need not worry, for 'who are they to judge?'. Further, it is important to realise such evil practices and institutions, as the Nazis showed us, can be made acceptable through implementation

via small, gradual and incremental shifts. In other words, it is important to challenge especially the first moves on a slippery slope to evil - in the Nazi case, the initial moves, relatively benign in themselves, towards racially specific laws. Further, the existence of certain types of bureaucratic structures can also become potentially dangerous. This is because these structures can create legitimating routines and bureaucratic functions that can be mindlessly followed, as well as increasing dramatically the distance between an, in itself, banal action and its (potentially) evil consequences, thereby deadening any moral awareness. Such bureaucratic structures also tend to encourage heteronomous 'cogs' who focus blindly and narrowly on efficient implementations of ends that themselves go unquestioned.[58] Further, bureaucracy also tends to encourage mental and practical compartmentalisation which, as shown above, can also lead one to banally perpetrate evil.

7. Conclusion

Banal perpetrators of evil perform their evil thoughtlessly as their evil has no roots in malice, envy or an evil ideology of which they are convinced, nor arises from a weakness of will to do what they know they ought. Eichmann, according to Arendt, acted on purpose, that is intentionally, but he did not act from base motives, nor did he act in full knowledge of the criminal nature of his deeds, but neither of these undermines his responsibility. This is because motive is incidental for ascribing responsibility and Eichmann's lack of moral awareness was not due to normative inabilities or factual ignorance but a failure to think – a failure for which he is responsible. Eichmann was not wicked, nor a great villain,[59] nor was he a great egoist, always putting his self-interest above duty. Crucially, though, Eichmann's 'duty' was not autonomously legislated but heteronomously absorbed; we hold him responsible for this because he at all times retained the ability to spontaneously recommence acting autonomously. However, I argued that we must reject Arendt's restrictive account of personhood in order to maintain this account of responsibility. Instead I argued that nobodies like Eichmann lack not personhood but character. Further, while in general banal evil will be perpetrated by those with banal characters, I also claimed that at least sometimes evil can be perpetrated thoughtlessly by those who have thoughtful, non-banal characters. Such evil

can be avoided by encouraging people to think, and as thinking people, to undermine evil ideologies, practices, customs and rules that people could thoughtlessly follow. Crucially though, we can reject those who claim that Arendt 'let off' Eichmann and the Nazis through her notion of banality. This is because by judging that a perpetrator commits evil banally in no way undermines the grounds for holding them to be responsible for their actions, but it does help us to understand both why such persons are able to act as they do and how we might be able to prevent such evil from occurring again. [60]

Notes

[1] Seyla Benhabib, "Arendt's Eichmann in Jerusalem," in *The Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt*, ed. Dana Villa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 68.

[2] Barry Clarke, "Beyond 'the Banality of Evil'," *British Journal of Political Science* 10, no. 4 (1980): 293. Joseph Beatty, "Thinking and Moral Considerations: Socrates and Arendt's Eichmann," *The Journal of Value Inquiry* 10 (1976).

[3] See Andrew Eshleman, "Moral Responsibility," The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed. N. Zalta (Fall 2004), URL = http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2004/entries/moral-responsibility/

[4] See, for example, Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991).

[5] I follow Doris' account here - see John M Doris, *Lack of Character: Personality and Moral Behavior* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 129-30.

[6] Ibid. 137-8.

[7] Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Penguin Books, 1965), 47-9.

[8] Hannah Arendt, "Philosophy and Politics," Social Research 57, no. 1 (1990), 90.

[9] Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1961), 473-4.

[10] "O'Brien held up the fingers of his left hand, with the thumb concealed. 'There are five fingers there. Do you see five fingers?'. 'Yes'. And he did see them." - George Orwell, *1984* (Great Britain: Penguin Books, 1967), 207.

[11] See Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* 467.

[12] Clarke reads Arendt as portraying Eichmann as "incapable of reason and thought and will and judgment…[so] he could hardly be said to be morally culpable for his actions" - Clarke, "Beyond 'the Banality of Evil'," 425.

[13] Hannah Arendt, *The Life of Mind : Thinking*, ed. Mary McCarthy, (London: Secker & Warburg, 1978), 191.

[14] Eichmann personally witnessed Jews being shot at Chelmno, Minsk, Lwów and gassed at Treblinka. He apparently found it a "horrible sight" – see Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* 87-9.

[15] On this point see Todd Calder, "The Apparent Banality of Evil: The Relationship between Evil Acts and Evil Character," *Journal of Social Philosophy* 34, no. 3 (2003): 371. However, Scarre paints a more complicated picture in which we might need to take into account individual people's actual thinking abilities – Geoffrey Scarre, "Excusing the Inexcusable: Moral Responsibility and Ideologically Motivated Wrongdoing," *Journal of Social Philosophy* 36, no. 4 (2005): 468-9. Whatever the case, Eichmann did not even try to think.

[16] Levi explains: "This word '*Muselmann*' I do not know why, was used…to describe the weak, the inept, those doomed to selection" - Primo Levi, *If This Is a Man*, trans. Stuart Woolf (London: Orion Press, 1959), 101.

[17] Ibid. 103.

[18] Ibid. 21, 103.

[19] Ibid. 120. Italics mine.

[20] Ibid. 39.

[21] See Chapter 10 of Claudia Card, *The Atrocity Paradigm: A Theory of Evil* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[22] "In later years former Kapos were pursued by former prisoners over whom they had authority in the camps, prisoners who were certainly prepared to hold them responsible for abuse" - Ibid. 222.

[23] Eichmann could have resigned or asked for different duties, as many other Nazis did without mortal repercussions. Further, we need to keep in mind that when assessing the intensity of coercion, frequency of acquiescence is not an indicator to be overly relied upon, because "'everybody's doing it' is no excuse" – on this last point see Doris, *Lack of Character: Personality and Moral Behavior* 135.

[24] Eichmann quoted in Roger Cohen, "Why? New Eichmann Notes Try to Explain," *New York Times* August 12, 1999, A1, A3.

[25] Clarke, "Beyond 'the Banality of Evil'," 438.

[26] Eichmann quoted in Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* 175.

[27] According to Arendt 'good people' are usually equated with selflessness and wicked ones with selfishness - Hannah Arendt, "Some Questions of Moral Philosophy," in *Responsibility and Judgment*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken Books, 2003), 76.

[28] Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* 248.

[29] Arendt claims "his [Eichmann's case] was obviously also no case of insane hatred of Jews, of fanatical anti-Semitism or indoctrination of any kind…[he] did not enter the party out of conviction, nor was he convinced by it" - Ibid. 26, 33.

[30] Hannah Arendt, "Personal Responsibility under Dictatorship," in Responsibility and Judgment, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken Books, 2003), 46.

[31] Ibid. 47.

[32] However, Arendt only advocates such a position in 'emergency situations' and "otherwise…she remains steadfastly committed to the idea that political evil is best avoided through active citizenship" - Dana R Villa, "Arendt and Socrates," *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 2, no. 208 (1999): 250.

[33] Although this seems to represent Arendt's view, it might be too strong, for it does seems to deny that choosing something like the 'lesser of two evils' is *ever* a morally praiseworthy act.

[34] There is widespread agreement in the Holocaust literature that Hitler was able to perpetrate a lot of his crimes only because other nations stood by and did nothing. My position is similar to Card's, who argues that "bystanders become doers, in the relevant sense, if they choose to do nothing when they could have done something that might have made a constructive difference" - Card, *The Atrocity Paradigm: A Theory of Evil* 19-20. Of course any such position faces problems of 'limited altruism'. We can meet such problems by following Mill's common sense: "to make [someone]…answerable for not preventing evil is, comparatively speaking, the exception. Yet there are many cases clear enough and grave enough to justify that exception" - John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, ed. H B Acton (London: J M Dent & Sons, 1972), 74. Surely it is not difficult to see that the evil of the Holocaust certainly justifies such an exception.

[35] See Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), 179. Also: Hannah Arendt, "Prologue," in *Responsibility and Judgment*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken Books, 2003), 12-13.

[36] "What we usually call a person or a personality as distinguished from a mere human being or a nobody, actually grows out of this root-striking process of thinking" - Arendt, "Some Questions of Moral Philosophy," 100.

[37] Throughout Arendt's work there is always a fundamental and perhaps irresolvable tension between thinking and acting, and no doubt the interpretative difficulties that arise here come out of that same tension.

[38] Arendt, *The Human Condition* 199.

[39] Ibid. 42.

[40] Ibid. 322.

[41] Arendt, "Some Questions of Moral Philosophy," 125.

[42] Ibid. 95

[43] Arendt, *The Human Condition* 243.

[44] This is because, as quoted above, "respect…concerns only the person", a roughly Kantian position. But even this might be too restrictive because otherwise those who are descriptively humans (*homo*) but fail normative personhood requirements, such as small children and mussulman, would fail to warrant moral respect.

[45] Calder does not make such a distinction and so puts Eichmann and Hitler in the same category - Calder, "The Apparent Banality of Evil: The Relationship between Evil Acts and Evil Character," 372. This doesn't seem right. Instead I see Hitler as a convinced fanatic of anti-Semitism and Eichmann as blindly committed.

[46] Henry E Allison, "Reflections on the Banality of (Radical) Evil," in *Rethinking Evil*, ed. Maria Pia Lara (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 90.

[47] Arendt, "Some Questions of Moral Philosophy," 94-5.

[48] For an excellent recent account, see Doris, *Lack of Character: Personality and Moral Behavior* 39-51,134.

[49] Hannah Arendt, "Thinking and Moral Considerations," in *Responsibility and Judgment*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken Books, 2003), 188.

[50] This claim is made in numerous texts, especially by those more historical, as opposed to philosophical, encounters with Arendt's work. For example, see the following: Yaacov Lozowick, *Hitler's Bureaucrats: The Nazi Security Police and the Banality of Evil*, trans. Haim Watzman (London: Continuum, 2000) and Peter J Haas, *Morality after Auschwitz: The Radical Challenge of the Nazi Ethic* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988).

[51] This debate arose from the work of Daniel Goldhagen (intentionalist) and Christopher Browning (functionalist). According to Zabgwill: "Browning holds they [the Nazis] acted in accord with anti-Semitism but not out of respect for anti-Semitism, whereas Goldhagen holds they [the Nazis] acted in accord with and out of respect for anti-Semitism" - Nick Zabgwill, "Perpetrator Motivation: Some Reflections on the Browning/Goldhagen Debate," in *Moral Philosophy and the Holocaust*, ed. Eve Garrard and Geoffrey Scarre (England: Ashgate, 2003), 91.

[52] Mill's critique of society, in the section 'Of Individuality' in *On Liberty*, in which "the despotism of Custom is complete" (128), bears a great many similarities to Arendt's critique of modernity in *The Human Condition*. Mill speaks of human "automatons" and those that have "no character, no more than a steam-engine has a character…It does not occur to them to have any inclination, except for what is customary...conformity is the first thing thought of; they live in crowds; they exercise choice only among things most commonly done…their human capacities are withered and starved" - Mill, "On Liberty," 117-19.

[53] Thanks to the journal's reviewer for helping me clarify this point.

[54] Those who lack character do not behave outside the norm and so we lack the basis for character attribution - see Doris, *Lack of Character: Personality and Moral Behavior* 19.

[55] As Levi puts it: "monsters exist, but they are too few in number to be truly dangerous. More dangerous are the common men, the functionaries ready to believe and to act without asking questions, like Eichmann" - Primo Levi, *The Voice of Memory: Interviews 1961-1987*, ed. Marco Belpoliti and Robert Gordon, (New York: The New Press, 2001) 204. Similarly, Eichmann's lawyer claimed, reasonably accurately, that "his client's personality was that of 'a common mailman'" – quoted in Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* 145. What this might tell us about how the 'common mailman' might behave under certain conditions is of course troubling.

[56] For example Franz Stangl, Treblinka commandant, remarks that: "the only way I could live was by compartmentalizing my thinking" – Gitta Sereny, *Into that Darkness* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1974), 164.

[57] See Laurence Thomas, "Forgiving the Unforgivable?," in *Moral Philosophy and the Holocaust*, ed. Eve Garrard and Geoffrey Scarre (England: Ashgate, 2003), 207.

[58] Fasching speaks of "the power of the bureaucratic organisation to neutralise our capacity to be ethical" as "in a bureaucracy ends and means are separated. Someone higher up is thought to have a larger perspective and is best suited to choose the ends" - See Darrel J Fasching, "Ethics without Choice," in *Remembering for the Future: The Holocaust in an Age of Genocide*, ed. John K Roth and Elisabeth Maxwell (Great Britain: Palgrave, 2001), 85.

[59] "We were here [in dealing with Eichmann]…concerned…with evil; not sin and the great villains who…usually acted out of envy and resentment, but with the nonwicked everybody who has no special motives" - Arendt, "Thinking and Moral Considerations," 188.