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THE ANXIETY OF INFLUENCE
On Arendt's Relationship to Heidegger*

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Introduction

The fact that Hannah Arendt was Martin Heidegger's student was never a secret. Nor was his philosophy's influence upon her analysis of totalitarianism and her thinking about politics. What was a secret, at least until the publication of Elisabeth Young-Bruehl's biography in 1982, was that she and Heidegger were lovers while Arendt was his student in Marburg during the period 1924–29 (she moved to Heidelberg to work with Karl Jaspers in 1926).[1]

Young-Bruehl's revelations raised some eyebrows, but they were set in the context of a remarkable life story, together with an account of Arendt's intellectual development and her primary contributions to political thought in the twentieth century. As a result, no controversy was engendered. Indeed, the overall effect of the revelation about the relationship with Heidegger was merely to make an already colorful life appear that much more dramatic.

Things took a sharply different turn in 1995, when Elzbieta Ettinger published her brief account of the relationship. Because Ettinger had been able to peruse the Arendt-Heidegger correspondence, which had been off limits to scholars for years, she could claim that something new was being revealed: the "fact" of Arendt's lifelong,** seemingly selfeffacing devotion to Heidegger. According to Ettinger, this devotion led Arendt to become Heidegger's agent" in the U.S. after the war, generating translations of his work and "whitewashing" the nature and extent of his complicity with the Nazis. Such, at least, were the conclusions Ettinger had drawn from materials which were finally published in German in 1998.[2]

Reviewers of Ettinger's book hostile to Arendt seized upon the slim reed of her psychologizing restatement of Young-Bruehl's basic facts, charging that Arendt was a German-Jewish intellectual snob, more in love with German Geist and its representative (Heidegger) than with "her own people," the Jews. Richard Wolin, writing in The New Republic, drew a dark parallel between Arendt's alleged exculpatory treatment of the "banal" Adolf Eichmann in *Eichmann in Jerusalem* and her supposed "exoneration" of Heidegger in her 1969 birthday tribute, "Martin Heidegger at Eighty" A debate about the damage to Arendt's moral and intellectual reputation spilled over into the popular press, with articles in *The New York Times*, *The Nation*, and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, to name only the most prominent.

I will refrain from rehashing the details of the socalled "Hannah Arendt scandal." I do, however, want to challenge the primary idea which the controversy put into wide circulation, namely, that Arendt was a disciple of Heidegger, a thinker without any critical distance on the master's thought. This idea, the basis of Ettinger's account, helped revive the charge that Arendt was (in 'Wolin's phrase) a "left Heideggerian,"

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** The publication of the Arendt/Heidegger correspondence in German in 1998 and in English translation in 2004 has added little to the picture of their theoretical relationship presented here. This is due, in large part, to the fact that relatively few letters from Arendt to Heidegger are included, while the majority from Heidegger tend to be romantic and poetic, rather than philosophical. A more interesting source for philosophical connections is Arendt's "Denktagebuch" (2 Volumes) published in 2002 by Piper Verlag. [*autor's note*, June 2004]

a thinker as hostile to democracy and constitutional government as was her teacher. It also made plausible Ettinger's contention, amplified by Wolin, that a good deal of Arendt's energies in the 1950s and 1960s were devoted to restoring Heidegger's badly damaged reputation.

I cannot give a detailed biographical account of Arendt's distanced and often skeptical view of Heidegger the man (readers anxious for such an account will find Young-Bruehl a much more reliable guide to the ups and downs of their personal and intellectual relationship than Ettinger). What I propose to do in this chapter is provide an overview of the evolution of Arendt's critical view of Heidegger the thinker. This overview falls into two parts. First, I will look at Arendt's published assessments of Heidegger before and after *1950*, the year of Arendt and Heidegger's supposedly complete reconciliation (if we are to believe Ettinger). Second, I will examine the two moments in Arendt's work where Heidegger's philosophical legacy is most strongly felt. These are The Human Condition (generally described as her most Heideggerian book) and the essay in which she allegedly exonerates Heidegger, "Martin Heidegger at Eighty."

What we find in these writings, and in her voluminous correspondence with Karl Jaspers, is a far more complicated and critical attitude toward Heidegger than Arendt's critics have allowed. The Human Condition is, in its own way, every bit as critical of Heidegger as it is of Plato or Marx. Similarly, "Martin Heidegger at Eighty" turns out to be less an exercise in apologetics than a rumination on the dangers of "extraordinary thinking." While Arendt took Heidegger seriously as a thinker (perhaps too seriously), she never approached his work or actions uncritically – even when she was paying tribute to his philosophical achievement.

Before and after 1950

Absolutely central to both Ettinger's story and the moral judgment Wolin derives from it is the idea that Arendt's postwar meeting with Heidegger in 1950 led her to fall back under the personal spell of the "magician from Messkirch." From this point forward, we are told, her capacity to render objective judgments on either the man or the thought, let alone his Nazi involvement, ceased. As Ettinger puts it, in 1950 Arendt swiftly forgave Heidegger his sins, "not as much out of loyalty, compassion, or a sense of justice as out of her own need to save her pride and dignity."[3] Or, as Wolin puts it, "in 1950 her tone changed completely"[4] Gone was the bitter criticism of Heidegger found in her 1946 *Partisan Review* essay, "What Is *Existenz* Philosophy?" Its place was taken by a series of selfdeluding apologetics, culminating in "Martin Heidegger at Eighty," where, Wolin tells us, Arendt "copped a plea on behalf of her embattled mentor."[5]

A survey of Arendt's writings and reflections on Heidegger during these years casts this tidy narrative of love, disillusionment, and renewed selfdeception (not to mention intellectual self-sacrifice) in doubt. To be sure, Arendt is most acidly critical of Heidegger right after the war. However, the critical stance does not disappear after 1950; rather, it modulates, gaining substance, depth, and power. Beginning with the 1954 lecture on "Concern with Politics in Recent European Thought" and ending with the chapterlong Heidegger critique in the posthumously published The Life of the Mind, Arendt's public statements on Heidegger display what is, considering the circumstances, a remarkable impartiality. Her attitude toward Heidegger after 1950 is one of qualified respect for the work combined with a penetrating sense of the extent of his human failings and his political stupidity.

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The Partisan Review essay is more accessible if we look first at Arendt's review of Max Weinreich's book, Hitler's Professors, also published in 1946. Weinreich's primary thesis was that "German scholarship provided the ideas and techniques which led to and justified unparalleled slaughter." This is, as Arendt laconically put it, "a highly controversial statement."[6] "While contending that the "majority of German professors" fell in line "for the sake of their jobs," she singles out a few "outstanding scholars" who "did their utmost to supply the Nazis with ideas and techniques."[7] Among these (including the legal theorist Carl Schmitt and the theologian Gerhard Kittel) she counts "the existential philosopher Martin Heidegger." Arendt criticizes Weinreich's book for concentrating on academic mediocrities, thereby diverting attention from these "outstanding" cases. At the same time, however, she notes that the Nazis had remarkably little use for thinkers like Schmitt or Heidegger, since they were far more interested in obtaining the veneer of "scientificality" for their racial theories than they were in packaging themselves as the latest installment of the *Weltgeist*. Anticipating her analysis of the role ideology in The Origins of Totalitarianism, Arendt writes:

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"So while it is perfectly true that quite a few respectable German professors volunteered their services to the Nazis, it is equally true – which was rather a shock to these gentlemen themselves – that *the Nazis did not use their 'ideas.' The Nazis had their own ideas* – what they needed were techniques and technicians with no ideas at all or educated from the beginning in only Nazi ideas. The scholars first put to one side by the Nazis as of relatively little use to them were oldfashioned nationalists like Heidegger, whose enthusiasm for the Third Reich was matched only by his glaring ignorance of what he was talking about."[8]

This paragraph articulates a perspective that Arendt adheres to with remarkable consistency over the course of her career.[9] She holds Heidegger and other "outstanding scholars" responsible for their political choices, while questioning the notion that Heidegger's ideas played even a minimal role in shaping or contributing to Nazi ideology. This was, in her view, a vulgar Idealist fantasy, one predicated on an almost total ignorance of the nature of the regime and its leading ideas. To be sure, Heidegger, Schmitt, and others sought to influence the regime, perhaps hoping to become its philosopher-kings.[10] Yet such hopes revealed the enormous gap between the mentality of an "oldfashioned nationalist" (Heidegger) anxious to lead the leader in the cause of German renewal, and the reality of Hitler's totalitarian mass movement. Arendt's phrase about Heidegger's enthusiasm in 1933 being matched only by "his glaring ignorance of what he was talking about" is thus hardly exculpatory.'[11] It points to a kind of moral as well as political stupidity, to an absence of judgment for which the individual must be held accountable.

With these comments in mind, we can turn to "What Is *Existenz* Philosophy?" This is, as its title suggests, a mostly philosophical account of the currents in postKantian thought leading to the development of Heidegger's and Jaspers's existentialism. Arendt's ultimate concern in the essay is to contrast the "solipsistic" existentialism of Heidegger's Being and Time with Jaspers's focus on communication as the irreducible medium of the quest for truth and human freedom.

Arendt's critique of Heidegger, and her praise of Jaspers, are notable on a number of counts. First, she criticizes Heidegger for a kind of radical humanism, claiming that

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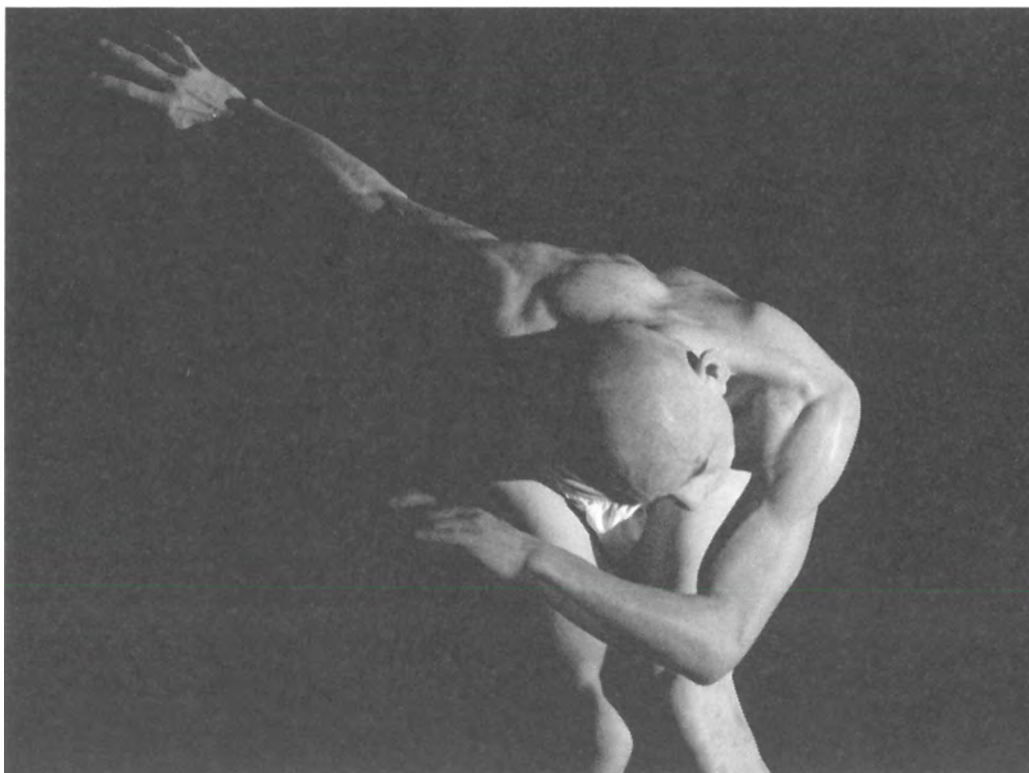
the "existential analytic" of Being and Time is actually philosophical idealism by other means. According to Arendt, Heidegger's turn to temporality as the "meaning of Being" – as the irreducible horizon through which human beings understand the isness of what is – leads him to focus on the negating or nihilating character of human existence. Where there is no preestablished harmony of thought and being (and Kant's critical philosophy had destroyed this illusion), and where the Being which I am not is irreducibly given, something I did not create – there the "nothingness" of human existence provides a medium in which such sheer facticity can be dissolved or negated. Arendt argues that the idea that "Being is really nothingness" has been of "inestimable value" to postKantian philosophy, since "proceeding from this idea, man can imagine that he stands in the same relationship to Being as the Creator stood before creating the world, which, as we know, was created *ex nihilo*."[2] In addition to putting man into the traditional place of God, Arendt finds Heidegger guilty of a kind of ontological functionalism, one that reduces man to his modes of being or functions in the world.'[3] Eschewing a normative conception of man such as we find in Kant, Heidegger gives an ontological description of the modes of being available to the abstract "Self." From Arendt's perspective, the descriptive thrust of Heidegger's fundamental ontology "dispenses with all those human characteristics that Kant provisionally defined as freedom, human dignity, and reason, that arise from human spontaneity, and that therefore are not phenomenologically demonstrable... "[14] Or, to put it more straightforwardly, because Heidegger rejects any positing of a nature of man sepa-



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rate from his existence, he winds up denying human freedom and spontaneity. This, Arendt suggests, is the price paid for moving from an ideal or noumenal self to an existential or phenomenological "Self."

Taken together, these criticisms boil down to accusing Heidegger of radicalizing the already schizophrenic character of Kant's conception of the human subject. On the one hand, the God-like character of Heideggerian *Dasein* takes the Kantian notion of autonomy several steps further (just as the German Idealists had done); on the other, fundamental ontology "debases" man by reducing him not to his phenomenal existence (in the "mechanism of nature"), but to a conglomeration of "arbitrary" modes of being, which he has no way of ranking or choosing among.[15] Arendt underlines the paradoxical implications of her own critique when she writes that "apart from Nietzsche,... Heidegger's is the first absolutely and uncompromisingly this-worldly philosophy," immediately adding that Heidegger's authentic "Self" demands a virtual isolation from both the world and our fellow men: "The essential character of the Self is its absolute Selfness, its radical separation from all its fellows."[16] It would be easy to accuse Arendt here of neglecting Heidegger's emphasis on beingwithothers (*mitdasein*) as a structural characteristic of human existence. Indeed, Arendt minimizes the import of Heidegger's description of human being as "being-in-the-world," arguing that the worldly and intersubjective dimensions of the Heideggerian "Self" are consigned to the realm of inauthenticity, or fallenness (*Verfallenheit*). This is a controversial and somewhat slanted interpretation of Being and Time, one that Arendt will later modify. The moralpolitical point of her polemical exaggeration of tendencies in Heidegger's early philosophy is clarified by the following passage, where she plays the Heideggerian "Self" off the Kantian conception of man:

"What emerges from this absolute isolation is a concept of the Self as the total opposite of man. If since Kant the essence of man consisted in every single human being representing all of humanity and if since the French Revolution and the declaration of the rights of man it became integral to the concept of man that all of humanity could be debased or exalted in every individual, then the concept of self is a concept of man that leaves the individual existing independent of humanity and representative of no one but himself – of nothing but his own nothingness. The Self in the form of conscience has taken the place of humanity, and being-a-Self has taken the place of man."[17]

This passage reveals the real critical thrust behind Arendt's interpretation. Heidegger is "the last (let us hope) Romantic." He earns this sobriquet not simply because of any delusions of genius, but because of the subjectifying approach to individual and social existence found in Being and Time. However problematic the Kantian conception of humanity or Mankind might be, it at least retained a worldly referent, a sense of reality untainted by the expansive Romantic conception of the self. Thus, in the *Existenz* philosophy essay Arendt is accusing Heidegger of contributing to the "world alienation" which she will later describe (in The Human Condition) as one of the defining characteristics of the modern age.

In stark contrast to the weird mixture of romanticism, functionalism, and subjectivism she detects in Heidegger, Arendt's treatment of Jaspers emphasizes how *his* version of *Existenz* philosophy retains a focus on communication as "the preeminent form of philosophical participation," as well as giving human freedom priority over the category of existence. In Jaspers's thought, according to Arendt, "Existence is not man's being as such and as a given; rather, 'man is, in Dasein, possi-

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ble existence."[18] For Jaspers, the "thrown" or irreducibly situated character of our being-in-the-world and our being-with-others is the guarantee of, rather than an obstacle to, our existential freedom.[19] The gap between Being and thought, the sheer contingency of human existence, opens a space for freedom, a space denied by the contemplative philosophical tradition (with its fixation on an order of Being) and Heidegger's notion of an authentic Self.

It is only in a note to "*What Is Existenz Philosophy?*" that Arendt addresses directly the question of Heidegger's political engagement, linking it to his allegedly solipsistic version of existentialism. I cite this note in its entirety, since it is Arendt's first published statement on the relationship between Heidegger's philosophy and his politics. (It also led to an important exchange between Arendt and Jaspers on the question of Heidegger's support of and obedience to the Nazis, which I discuss below.) Arendt writes:

"Another question and one certainly worthy of discussion is whether Heidegger's philosophy has not been taken unduly seriously because it concerns itself with very serious matters. In his political behavior, in any case, Heidegger has provided us with more than ample warning that we should take him seriously. As is well known, he entered the Nazi party in a very sensational way in 1933 – an act which made him stand out pretty much by himself among colleagues of the same calibre. Further, in his capacity as rector of Freiberg University, he forbade Husserl, his teacher and friend, whose lecture chair he had inherited, to enter the faculty because Husserl was a Jew. Finally, it has been rumored that he placed himself at the disposal of the French occupational authorities for the reeducation of the German people.

In view of the truly comic aspect of this development and in view of the no less genuinely abysmal state of political thought in German universities, one is tempted simply to dismiss the whole business. What speaks against such a dismissal is, among other things, that this entire mode of behavior has such exact parallels in German Romanticism and that one can hardly believe them to result from sheer coincidence of a purely personal failure of character. Heidegger is (let us hope) the last Romantic – an enormously talented Friedrich Schlegel or Adam Müller, as it were, whose complete lack of responsibility is attributable to a spiritual playfulness that stems in part from delusions of genius and in part from despair."[20]

One is struck by how this stinging indictment says both too much and too little. On the one hand, Arendt refuses to acknowledge Heidegger's philosophical importance. If this "immensely talented Friedrich Schlegel or Adam Müller" is to be taken seriously, it is only because of the symptomatic character of his political affiliation. But this actually begs the question of the relation between his philosophy and his politics, reducing it to a mere function of the adolescent political posture of Romanticism, with its "spiritual playfulness," "delusions of genius," and indulgence of despair.

Arendt's attempt to diminish Heidegger's philosophical stature is not very convincing, one suspects not even to herself. Nevertheless, writers like Ettinger and Wolin stress the importance of the 1946 essay, seeing in it a cleareyed condemnation of Heidegger the Nazi and antisemite, the betrayer of Husserl. Both Ettinger and Wolin stress how, at this point in her life, Arendt thought of Heidegger as a "potential murderer." And, from their point of view, the subsequent moderation of her views can only represent moral backsliding.

The phrase "potential murderer" comes from a letter Arendt sent to Jaspers in July 1946, after she had sent him a copy of "What Is *Existenz* Philosophy?" Jaspers

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had pointed out that "the facts in the note on Heidegger are not exactly correct."[21] While agreeing with the substance of the note, Jaspers had indicated that Arendt's description of the process through which Husserl was barred from the university was misleading. The letter sent by Heidegger informing Husserl of his exclusion from the faculty was in fact not the fruit of a personal initiative on Heidegger's part, but rather a circular "that every rector had to write to those excluded by the government from the university by law]."[22] Arendt responds to Jaspers as follows:

"Regarding the Heidegger note, your assumption about the Husserl letter is completely correct. I knew that this letter was a circular, and I know that many people have excused it for that reason. It always seemed to me that at the moment Heidegger was obliged to put his name to this document, he should have resigned. However foolish he may have been, he was capable of understanding that. We can hold him responsible for his actions to that extent. He knew that the letter would have left Husserl more or less indifferent if someone else had signed it. Now you might say that this happened in the rush of business. And I would probably reply that the truly irreparable things often – and deceptively – happen almost like accidents, that sometimes from an insignificant line that we step across easily, feeling certain that it is of no consequence anymore, that a wall rises up that truly divides people. In other words, although I never had any professional or personal attachment to old Husserl, I mean to maintain solidarity with him in this one case. And because I know that this letter and this signature almost killed him, I can't but regard Heidegger as a potential murderer."[23]

Read in context, Arendt's judgment is more nuanced than either Ettinger or Wolin present it. The moral condemnation of Heidegger is severe, but it is a condemnation not of an ideologue or fanatical antisemite, but of a professor who, flush with his new power as rector and excited by the possibilities for restructuring the university opened by the Nazi regime, willingly signs off on a document that represents the most profound personal betrayal of his friend and mentor, Husserl. Heidegger is a "potential murderer" not because his letter to Husserl exposed a hitherto concealed "eliminationist" antisemitism, but rather because he allowed himself to cross a seemingly insignificant line when his duties as rector demanded it. (Anyone familiar with academic life, or administrative structures generally, will recognize this human, all too human evasion of moral responsibility.) The moral judgment Arendt clarifies in her letter to Jaspers points to what she will later refer to as Heidegger's "lack of character," a lack that prevented him from seeing how friendship should have placed clear limits on the extent of his coordination (*Gleichschaltung*) with the regime.[24]

The correspondence between Arendt and Jaspers proves an invaluable resource for those interested in the nature and evolution of Arendt's view of Heidegger. For the most part, it reveals a remarkable consistency over time in her judgment of Heidegger's political ignorance and lack of character. Both Arendt and Jaspers viewed Heidegger as (in Alan Ryan's phrase) a "political idiot," prone to lying and selfdelusion. Their (often quite strained) friendship with him hardly made them less critical.[25] Yet despite their ample personal reasons for not trusting Heidegger, both acknowledged the obvious: here was one of the great thinkers of the twentieth century (a judgment shared by such fierce critics of Heidegger as Leo Strauss). The resulting ambivalence toward Heidegger is nicely expressed in a 1966 letter from Jaspers, who writes "It seems to me that there is something appealing about Heidegger at the moment. I've experienced this and think back on it

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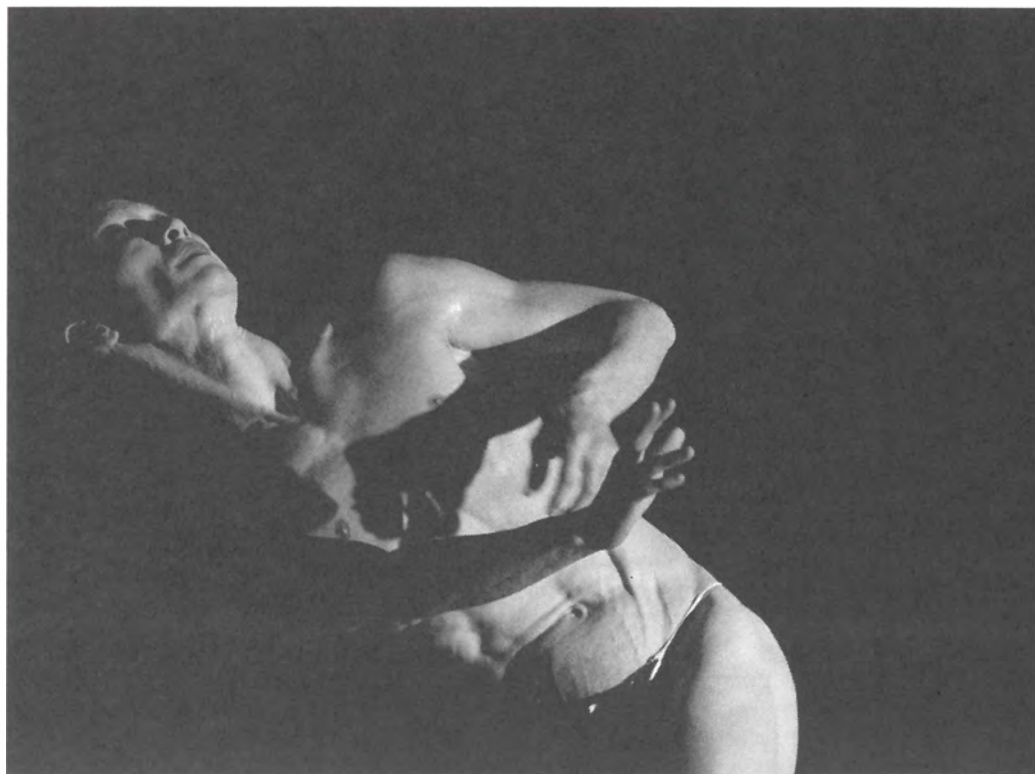
with nostalgia and horror. There is something in him, and something substantial, but you can't rely on anything with him. And awful things happen."[26]

The Correspondence shows that, far from being helpless under Heidegger's spell (like the hapless Mario in Thomas Mann's parable of fascism, "Mario and the Magician"), both Arendt and Jaspers spent a good deal of time wrestling with the question of his personal behavior, his engagement with National Socialism, and the tendency toward kitsch and selfindulgence which threatened the quality of his philosophical work.[27] Given Jaspers's conception of philosophical activity as a direct expression of the *Existenz* of the thinker, it is not surprising that the relation between the personal and the philosophical in Heidegger preoccupied him more than Arendt (the Correspondence shows him frequently broaching the idea of a book on Heidegger's life and thought, and – just as frequently – deferring the task). For Arendt, the question of Heidegger's character (or lack thereof) was important, not because it expressed itself directly in the content of his work, but because his submission to the cult of his own genius threatened the quality and depth of his philosophical writing. Ettinger and Wolin are correct in noting that Arendt was concerned for Heidegger after their *1950* "reconciliation" meeting. However, this concern was animated more by anxiety about the fate of Heidegger's "passionate thinking" than it was by any nostalgia for an old romance.[28]

In *1954*, four years after the supposed "transformation" in Arendt's attitude toward Heidegger, she delivered an address to the American Political Science Association. This lecture, "Concern with Politics in



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Recent European Thought," is an important marker in the evolution of her public evaluation of Heidegger. While the remarks on Heidegger in the *Existenz* philosophy essay were (in Young-Bruehl's phrase) "overwrought and acerbic," Arendt's consideration of the interest his philosophy holds for political science in this lecture is balanced yet critical. Reading it, the fact that she had gained a certain distance on Heidegger becomes clear. This distance allowed her to measure the significance of his philosophical work in relation to both the tradition and contemporary thought.

Arendt's address focuses on the "sea-change" in recent (postwar) continental thought. If the hallmark of the Western philosophical tradition had been a lofty, deprecatory attitude toward the entire realm of human affairs, then the experience of two world wars, totalitarian regimes, and the prospect of nuclear war had made such a posture impossible to maintain. Politics, the realm of human affairs, emerged as a domain "in which genuine philosophic questions arise," questions that cannot be answered from the traditional philosophical standpoint of the "wise man" or *sophos* who affects to stand above this realm, communing with the Absolute. *Events*, not timeless Being, gave rise to a new mode of philosophical thought, one that was essentially noncontemplative.[29]

As Arendt tells it, Hegel's concept of history prepared the way for this revolutionary turn by giving "the realm of human affairs a dignity it never enjoyed in philosophy before."[30] Yet Hegel maintained the philosopher's traditional contemplative stance (the "standpoint of the Absolute"), viewing history as the medium in which a larger, speculative truth appears. Heidegger's importance is that he radicalizes the Hegelian concept of historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*), to the point where "no transcendent spirit and no absolute" is revealed in human history to the philosophical spectator. In this regard, Arendt cites a sentence from Heidegger's essay *"Das Ding"*: "We have left the arrogance of all Absolutes behind us." This, she states, "means that the philosopher has left behind him the claim to being 'wise' and knowing eternal standards for the perishable affairs of the City of men, for such 'wisdom' could be justified only from a position *outside the realm of human affairs* and be thought legitimate only by virtue of the philosopher's proximity to the Absolute."[31]

Heidegger's concept of historicity thus makes a fundamental reorientation of philosophical thought to the political world possible. Arendt calls the abandonment of the position of the "wise man" "perhaps the most important and most fruitful result of the new philosophical concern with politics." The reason why is that

"The rejection of the claim to wisdom opens the way to a reexamination of the whole realm of politics in the light of elementary human experiences within this realm itself, and implicitly discards traditional concepts and judgments, which have their roots in altogether different kinds of experience."[32]

But, Arendt hastens to add, "such a development does not proceed unequivocally." In the case of Heidegger, the ancient philosophical hostility to the *polis* recurs in the phenomenological descriptions of *das Mann* (the "they") and *Offentlichkeit* (publicness or publicity) as fallen modes of being. Arendt no longer views these descriptions as utterly negative, in the manner of her *Existenz* philosophy essay. While condescending, they do not create an irreducible gap between the authentic (or philosophical) self and its "fallen," everyday world. Indeed, from a certain perspective, they offer "penetrating insights into one of the basic aspects of society," namely, the rule of public opinion.[33]

This is certainly a switch from the earlier essay. Yet "Concern for Politics in Recent

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European Thought" can hardly be seen as an attempt to proselytize for Heidegger. In focusing on his concept of historicity, Arendt is not saying that Heidegger's thought contains anything like adequate resources for founding the "new political science" demanded by the unprecedented political events of the twentieth century. The moment the concept of historicity is extended beyond society and public opinion to the analysis of the realm of politics proper, its limitations become all too clear.

Like the older Hegelian notion of history, Heidegger's concept of historicity approaches the political realm, but always manages to miss what Arendt calls "the center of politics – man as an acting being."[34] To be sure, Heidegger's concept emphasized the connectedness of thought and event to a degree unparalleled by Hegel and the rest of the contemplative tradition. Yet it ultimately created a conceptual framework "better prepared to understand history than to lay the groundwork of a new political philosophy."[35] Thus, Heidegger philosophy is "highly sensitive to the general trends of the time" (such as "the technicalization of the world, the emergence of one world on a planetary scale, the increasing pressure of society upon the individual, and the concomitant atomization of society"), while remaining disturbingly forgetful of what Arendt calls "the more permanent questions of political science": "What is politics? Who is man as a political being? What is freedom?"[36]

Somewhat surprisingly, Arendt holds that such questions have been better preserved by Catholic philosophers like Etienne Gilson and Jacques Maritan and neoPlatonists like Eric Voegelin. Immune to Hegelianism and historicism, these thinkers awaken an "awareness of the relevance of the classical and permanent problems of political philosophy." Yet their return to religion and tradition, motivated by the trauma of recent events, hinges upon a denial of the full novelty of the crimes committed by totalitarian regimes, and thus upon a denial of the extent of the moral breakdown which led to the ordinary individual's complicity with these crimes. Arendt praises the antitraditionalist, action-focused response of French existentialists like Sartre and Camus, which avoids this form of bad faith. However she is extremely dubious about their tendency to look "to politics for the solution of philosophic perplexities," to seek "salvation from thought through action."

The limitations of these alternative paths in continental thought lead Arendt, at the conclusion of her lecture, to turn once more to the existentialism of her teachers, Jaspers and Heidegger. As in the *Existenz* philosophy essay, Arendt praises Jaspers 's focus on communication. Philosophy, conceived not in contemplative terms but rather as a special kind of communicative practice, "becomes the mediator between many truths, not because it holds the one truth valid for all men, but because only in reasoned communication can what each man believes in his isolation from all others become humanly and actually *true*."[37] So conceived, philosophy is stripped of its arrogance "toward the common life of men." But Jaspers's communicative paradigm, while appropriate for the activity of philosophy, is of limited political relevance. Its phenomenological roots are found "not in the public political sphere, but in the personal encounter of the I and the Thou. This relationship of pure dialogue is closer to the original experience of thinking – the dialogue of one with oneself in solitude – than to any other."[38] Reversing the judgment she made in the *Existenz* philosophy essay, Arendt now says that Jaspers's dialogical paradigm "contains less specifically political experience than almost any relationship in our average, everyday lives."

Heidegger's philosophy scarcely holds the key to this dilemma, the dilemma of how to think political experience in its own

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terms once the contemplative standpoint has been abandoned. However, his philosophy does have one notable advantage over Jaspers's attempt to generate a political form of intersubjectivity out of the experience of personal communication or the dialogue of thought with itself. It is in Heidegger's concept of "world," and of *Dasein* as being-in-the-world, that Arendt now sees a possible "step out of this difficulty" and the persistent tendency of philosophers to think the political realm from the standpoint of thoughtful solitude. Heidegger's descriptions of the existential structures of a being who is essentially a being-in-the-world, a being with others, attributes "philosophical significance to structures of everyday life," structures that are "completely incomprehensible if man is not primarily understood as being together with others."[39] Here, for the first time, Arendt signals her awareness that Heidegger's project of overturning a whole raft of Cartesian prejudices about a subject detached from the world and others is of the greatest interest to any political theory that takes *worldliness* and *human plurality* as fundamentally constitutive of political experience itself.

These second thoughts about the relative value of Jaspers and Heidegger's approaches for political thinking reveal Arendt struggling to find a philosophical precedent for her own concept of human plurality (what she will call in The Human Condition the *conditio sine qua non* of the public realm). The postwar philosophers had tried to overcome the contemplative prejudices of the tradition. In the end, however, their various alternatives reproduced the characteristic deficiencies of the tradition (the tendency to interpret political experience in terms of solitary, philosophical experience; the inability to recognize or understand genuine novelty). Although spurred to engage politics by "the sheer horror of contemporary political events," none of the postwar philosophers actually succeeded in coming to terms with this horror. As a result, their thinking continued to express "the traditional refusal to grant the realm of human affairs that *thaumadzein*, that wonder at what is as it is, which, according to Plato and Aristotle, is at the beginning of all philosophy, yet which even they had refused to accept as the preliminary condition of political philosophy."[40]

This incapacity to experience wonder, rather than horror or bemused contempt, at the realm of human affairs is what limits the postwar philosophers' capacity to provide a new foundation for political philosophy. The "rejection of the claim to wisdom" underlying these efforts may have opened, in principle, the way to a "reexamination of the whole realm of politics in the light of elementary human experiences within this realm itself." However, none of the philosophers Arendt discusses in her lecture, Jaspers and Heidegger included, proved capable of actually performing such a reexamination.

At the conclusion of her address, Arendt rhetorically asks "who else is likely to succeed [in creating an authentic political philosophy] if they [the philosophers] should fail us?"[41] Arendt did not wait for an answer, for she had already begun the reexamination of the fundamentals of political experience suggested, but never directly engaged, by *Existenz philosophy*. The result of this reexamination was, of course, The Human Condition, the next stage in Arendt's critical dialogue with Heidegger's thought.

The Appropriation of Heidegger in The Human Condition

Thanks to Ettinger, we know that Arendt intended to dedicate The Human Condition to Heidegger. Indeed, she wrote Heidegger a letter to this effect, noting that "the book evolved directly from the first Marburg

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days, and it owes you just about everything in every regard."[42] This certainly sounds like the kind of statement a disciple would make, and taken at face value it seems to support Wolin's contention that Arendt was nothing more than a "left Heideggerian."

There is little doubt that The Human Condition is a work deeply influenced by Heidegger. The real question is: what is the nature of this influence? Does Arendt slavishly follow in the master's footsteps, jettisoning only his reactionary politics and cultural sensibility? Or does she use Heidegger violently, twisting his thought in directions he would neither have recognized nor endorsed, overcoming her teacher in a manner similar to the creative appropriations of such other Heidegger students as Leo Strauss, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and Herbert Marcuse?

Heidegger's thought aids Arendt's project of reexamining "the whole realm of politics in light of the elementary experiences within this realm itself" in several ways. First, the "existential analytic" of Being and Time, with its rebellion against the subject/object problematic of Descartes and Kant, suggested not only a revised conception of our fundamental relation to the world, but also a reformulation of the question of human freedom. Heidegger's conception of human being as being-in-the-world displaced both the cognitive subject and the practical subject as abstract entities standing over against the world. In their place, Heidegger stressed the essentially *involved* character of *Dasein* as both acting and understanding being. This revolutionary turn was clearly of great importance to Arendt, in that it helped her to surmount the monistic, subject-centered conception of freedom as freedom of the will (or "practical reason") which dominated the Western tradition of philosophical and political thought.[43] Heidegger's conception of *Dasein* as primordially both a being-in-the-world and a being-with-others helped her to place worldliness and human plurality at the heart of human freedom rather than at the extreme margins.

Second, Heidegger's work after Being and Time exposed the will to power or mastery underlying the traditional view of freedom as a form of sovereignty and action as an essentially goal-directed activity. For Arendt, Heidegger's insight into the tradition's rebellion against the finitude and frailty of the human condition provided the departure point for a critical reading of the Western tradition of political thought from Plato to Marx. This tradition, with its persistent misinterpretation of political action as a kind of making or fabrication, repeatedly tried to overcome what Arendt calls the "frailty, haphazardness, and contingency" of action in the public realm, with disastrous moral and political results. Heidegger's critique of the tradition's will to dominate Being through a "science of grounds" (metaphysics) thus sets the pattern for Arendt's critique of Western political philosophy's tendency to efface human plurality and spontaneity, which are typically seen as obstacles to the realization of the just society. (Think, in this regard, of the radical devaluation of moral disagreement we find in Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Hobbes, Rousseau, Hegel, and, of course, Karl Marx.)

Third, Heidegger's diagnosis of the pathologies of the modern age, however mired in cultural conservatism and images of pastoral wholeness, provided Arendt with the frame for her own critique of modernity in The Human Condition. Heidegger's account of how the modern age places the knowing and willing subject in the structural place of God (reducing the dimensions of reality to that which can be known and represented by such a subject) enabled Arendt to question the Promethean tendency of modern science and technology, along with the idea that a completely "humanized" reality will be

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one in which alienation is overcome. "Resentment of the human condition" is seen to drive both modern science and technology, two forces that contribute mightily, in Arendt's view, to our increasing "alienation from the world" and from political action (for Arendt, the most worldly of human activities).

These three themes constitute what The Human Condition owes positively to Heidegger. But what has made the book a classic is hardly its reformulation of abstruse Heideggerian notions into more accessible language. Its startling originality is evident in the way Arendt uses Heidegger against Heidegger, in the service of ideas he would have condemned. Arendt's subversion of Heidegger's thought is every bit as profound as her philosophical debt.

Thus, while Heidegger opened the way to a more worldly conception of freedom, he severely limited the political relevance of his conception of human being by framing it in terms of the broad distinction between authentic (*eigentlich*) and inauthentic (*uneigentlich*) existence. One can live one's life by adhering to the given and the everyday, or one can resolutely eschew the false comfort of everything public and established and confront the groundlessness of one's own existence. While authentic existence can never wrench itself free of "fallenness" and is, in fact, dependent upon it, Heidegger leaves little doubt that the public world is the privileged locus of inauthenticity. The "light of the public obscures everything" because it covers over the fundamental character of human existence as groundless, finite, and radically open or atelic.

In The Human Condition Arendt appropriated Heidegger's conception of human existence as disclosedness, as open possibility divorced from any pregiven hierarchy of ends, and turned it inside out. The *public* realm, which for Heidegger had signified the everydayness of *Dasein*, became, in Arendt's phenomenology, the arena of human transcendence and freedom, of *authentic* existence. According to Arendt, it is through political action and speech on a public stage that human beings achieve a unique identity and endow the "human artifice" with meaning. The realm of opinion and public talk – what for Heidegger had been the sphere of "idle chatter" (*Gerede*) – is recast by Arendt as the space of disclosure par excellence; the space where human beings are engaged in a form of initiatory, intersubjective activity; the space which reveals both a unique self and a meaningful "human artifice" or world.

Arendt's appropriation of Heidegger's deconstruction of the tradition is every bit as critical and transformative as her appropriation of his conception of existence as disclosedness. While Heidegger's story was built on quasi-idealist presuppositions and asserted a dubious linearity (an "inner logic") from Plato to Nietzsche, Arendt's radical revision was far more limited in its claims. She hardly thought that the "destiny of Being" (*Seinsgeschick*) came to language in the words of the great thinkers, who in Heidegger's metahistory of philosophy provide a kind of x-ray vision into the "essential" yet hidden history of the West.[45] She retained the phenomenologist's focus on concrete experiences and events. Thus, her concern with the language of theory focused, instead, on how it imposed an alien metaphorics upon the realm of human affairs, a set of structuring metaphors taken from other domains of human activity (such as thinking or fabrication) in which the condition of human plurality played little or no role.

For Arendt, the fact that the public political world has been conceptualized by a tradition originally fixated upon the experiences of contemplation and fabrication meant that essential phenomena of this realm (for example, human plurality) have never received their theoretical due. Moreover, it meant that political thinkers

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and actors had repeatedly construed action as a form of making, casting human beings as the "material cause" of the just state. The result is the baneful identification of action with violence ("You can't make an omelet without breaking eggs") and an enormous increase in the temptation for the best to do the worst as they attempt to "sculpt" human material into something ordered, beautiful, whole. From Plato to Marx, the tradition gives ample evidence of this tendency, the tendency of theorists to transpose political experiences and judgments into aesthetic or productivist terms. The result has been, and continues to be, moral horror.

While Arendt shared Heidegger's trepidation about the way modern science and technology act into nature, setting into motion processes that undermine the integrity of the human artifice, she hardly subscribed to his solution. For Heidegger, the escape from the "power trip" of Western metaphysics, science, and technology was to be found in an attitude of releasement (*Gelassenheit*): we must abdicate the "will to will," the will to human self-assertion and the domination of nature. For Arendt, in contrast, the danger posed by the existential resentment driving modern science was not (simply) that it objectifies nature or even human nature; rather, it was that by increasing our alienation from the world, it leads us to substitute the will to increased power for a politically engaged (and morally concerned) "care for the world."[46] Thus, while the later Heidegger's diagnosis of the pathologies of modernity led him to a "will not to will" and an intensified "thinking withdrawal," Arendt's critical appropriation of his diagnosis led to a renewed emphasis upon the importance of political action, moral judgment, human freedom, and an engaged worldliness. It led her to reiterate the importance of constitutional or republican government as a frame for sane political action and to emphasize the very human capacities which Heidegger had rejected in the mistaken belief that the only true form of action was thinking.[47]

But what about the charges of elitism and "political existentialism" which have hounded Arendt and which Wolin repeats in his review of Ettinger's volume? After all, doesn't The Human Condition celebrate heroic, agonal action over more associational forms of political engagement? And doesn't Arendt's Heidegger-inspired focus on the disclosive or revelatory quality of "great" deeds come at the expense of justice, rights, and more democratic forms of solidarity? Finally, doesn't Arendt's insistence on the relative autonomy of the public realm lead her to espouse an existentialist call for action for the sake of action?

There is no denying that The Human Condition is Grecophilac, or that Arendt's strenuous effort to distinguish political spaces and modes of action from social, economic, and other forms of activity broadly parallels the efforts of Carl Schmitt in his The Concept of the Political. Nor can it be denied that Arendt "aestheticizes" politics, describing action with the help of metaphors taken from the performing arts, theater in particular.

But before we charge her with being an elitist (or worse) in democrat's clothes, we need to be clear about her theoretical motivations. Arendt turned to the Greeks, not out of a Germanic longing for an idealized past, but because she sought an understanding of political action prior to the Greek philosophical or Christian view of politics as a means to the attainment of a predetermined (natural or divinely ordained) end. It was the experience of free political action in a realm of civic equality, a realm marked out and guaranteed by law, which Arendt wanted to preserve through her political theory. Wherever politics is understood primarily as a means, even to an ostensibly moral end, there the experience of a plurality of equals is bound to be deval-

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ued if not altogether effaced. Political action conceived as the vehicle to a preestablished end tempts good men to treat their fellows not as peers, but as means to the ultimate end of an eschatological form of justice. Thus Arendt rejects the moralizing interpretation of action laid down by Plato and Christianity, *for moral reasons*. (The parallel to Kant, and to liberalism generally, should be clear.)

It is for this same reason – the moral desire to respect and preserve human plurality – that Arendt aestheticizes action and rejects various forms of rationalism. Her "existentialism" consists in the rejection of the deeply ingrained Western assumption that there is or can be one correct or true answer to the question of how one should live, and that reason is the faculty which will deliver this answer to us. Arendt shares with liberals like Isaiah Berlin and conservatives like Michael Oakeshott a deep suspicion of rationalism in politics and the pretenses of theory to guide a transformative practice. From Plato's "tyranny of reason," to the French Revolutionary terror, to Marxism's catastrophic fulfillment in Stalinist totalitarianism, political rationalism has shown itself every bit as capable of generating moral horror as either religion or romantic nationalism. Arendt is certainly not "against" reason as such in politics. Rather, she demands that we view opinion as one of our primary rational faculties, thereby facilitating a deliberative politics from which the tyrannizing claim to a singular moral or political truth has been eliminated.[48] Again, the preservation of civic equality and human plurality – of human dignity – is at stake. Hence her view of the public realm in The Human Condition as a kind of stage on which plural actors appear, engaging in strenuous debate as well as concerted action.

Finally, Arendt's desire to view the political realm as relatively autonomous has nothing to do with establishing its hegemony as the field in which the life-and-death struggle between friends and enemies is played out, as in Schmitt's Hobbesian existentialism. If politics and political action are, for her, "existentially supreme" it is because they provide the most adequate vehicles for the human capacity to begin, to initiate. Viewed as relatively autonomous – as not subject to the dictates of economic, biological, or historical necessity – the political realm stands forth as the realm of human freedom. *The Human Condition* and Arendt's other major theoretical statements are devoted to reminding us of this fact, a fact obscured by rationalist philosophies of history; schools of economic determinism, and liberal celebrations of "negative freedom" (a liberty largely confined to the private sphere).[49] When, in her essay "What is Freedom?," Arendt writes that "freedom is the *raison d'être* of politics," she succinctly sums up her hopes for the political sphere, a potential space of "tangible freedom." The distance between these hopes and Heidegger's philosophy and politics is, obviously, vast.

"Martin Heidegger at eighty": a "Whitewash"

As the Arendt/Jaspers correspondence indicates, Heidegger did not take kindly to the violent appropriation (and implicit critique) of his thought which The Human Condition represented. His response to receipt of a copy of the German translation was frosty silence, and Arendt was subject to a "burst of hostility" from him and his circle, including a pointed snub by Eugen Fink during her 1961 visit to Freiberg.[50] For all intents and purposes, contact between Arendt and Heidegger broke off until 1967, when, with the mediation of Arendt's friend J. Glenn Gray, she gave a lecture in Freiberg and struck "a new accord" with Heidegger.[51] This was followed, a year later, by her agreement to contribute to Heidegger's

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eightieth birthday *Festschrift*. This contribution was subsequently translated and published in *The New York Review of Books* in 1971 under the title "Martin Heidegger at Eighty."

Both Ettinger and Wolin view this essay as a scandalous white-wash, typical of what they see as Arendt's desire to exonerate "the master" of his political past. Ettinger writes: "Arendt went to extraordinary pains to minimize and justify [sic!] Heidegger's contribution to and support of the Third Reich... In her tribute to Heidegger, the last act in a drama started almost half a century ago, Arendt displayed the same unquestioning generosity, loyalty, and love she had shown since the beginning."[52] Wolin attacks as "blind devotion" what he reads as a defense of her "embattled mentor," a defense that hinged upon disputing "any essential relation between Heidegger's thought and his support of Hitler" and the denial that the "gutter born" ideology of Nazism owed anything to representatives of German *Kultur* such as Heidegger.[53]

Arendt certainly did not agree with Theodor Adorno's judgment that Heidegger's philosophy was "fascist down to its most intimate components." Indeed, any impartial reader of Heidegger's seventy-plus-volume Gesamtausgabe will be impressed by just how resolutely apolitical his philosophy generally is. (I am deliberately excluding the nonphilosophical public speeches he made in his capacity as rector of Freiberg during 1933. These are, of course, craven harangues, blatant attempts to coddle up to the new regime.) But if the question of an "essential relation" between Heidegger's thought and politics is a highly contentious (and by no mean obvious) one, what about the charge of "whitewash," of minimization and justification of Heidegger's engagement with National Socialism? What does Arendt actually *do* in her tribute essay?

The reader seeking a nest of "exculpatory" statements by Arendt will be disappointed. It is only in a long note that Arendt makes the following statement, in parentheses: "Heidegger himself corrected his own 'error' more quickly and more radically than many of those who later sat in judgment over him – he took considerably greater risks than were usual in German literary and university life during the period."[54] This statement accepts Heidegger's own account of his reasons for resigning from the rectorship and the nature of his subsequent philosophical activity under the Reich.[55] The biographical work of Hugo Ott and Rudiger Safranski enable us, in hindsight, to charge Arendt with excessive credulity on this score.[56]

The bulk of Arendt's essay is given over not to apologetics, but to an account of Heidegger's early fame as a teacher, and to an extended description of the nature of his "passionate thinking." With regard to the latter, Arendt emphasized the noninstrumental, noncognitive nature of thinking as practiced by Heidegger, a thinking which had "a digging quality peculiar to itself," an *active* (as opposed to contemplative) thinking which yields no results and is constantly beginning again.[57]

Such passionate thinking, so different from scholarship about philosophical doctrines or philosophical "problem solving," begins in wonder at that which is, and demands an abode in which such wonder can be experienced and extended. As Arendt puts it, the "abode of thought" is one of essential seclusion from the world, while thinking itself "has only to do with things absent."[58] The famous Heideggerian thesis about the "withdrawal of Being" was, according to Arendt, a function of thinking's need to create a "place of stillness" withdrawn from the world, where the distractions of everydayness prevent both thoughtful solitude and the experience of wonder. In Arendt's words:

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"Seen from the perspective of thinking's abode, 'withdrawal of Being' or 'oblivion of Being' reigns in the ordinary world which surrounds the thinkefs residence, the 'familiar realms of everyday life,' i.e., the loss of that which thinking – which by nature clings to the absent – is concerned. Annulment of this 'withdrawal,' on the other side, is always paid for by a withdrawal from the world of human affairs, and this remoteness is never more manifest than when thinking ponders exactly those affairs, training them into its own sequestered stillness.[59]

One can see where Arendt is going with this passage, and how it might provide grist for those who charge her with being an apologist for Heidegger. In her view, the greatness of Heidegger's thinking was manifest in its purity, in the thoroughness of his withdrawal to thinking's "sequestered abode." When worldly events draw the thinker out from his abode, back into the realm of human affairs, he experiences a disorientation similar to that described by Plato in the Republic's famous allegory of the cave. Egregious "errors" of political judgment may result. Thus, Arendt concluded her tribute by retelling the story from Plato's Theaetetus about the pre-Socratic philosopher Thales, whose upward glance to contemplate "higher things" led him to stumble into a well, to the amusement of a Thracian girl who witnesses the thinker's fall. Heidegger, Arendt seems to be saying, also "stumbled" when he gave in to the temptation to "change his residence and get involved in the world of human affairs."[60] Yet, according to Arendt, "he was still young enough to learn from the shock of the collision, which, after ten short hectic months thirtyseven years ago drove him back to his residence, to settle in his thinking what he had experienced."[61]

Thanks to Hugo Ott, we know that the "collision" lasted more than ten months: twelve years is more like it. In accepting Heidegger's account of the span of his engagement with National Socialism as coterminous with his rectorship, Arendt can again be charged with excessive charity and credulity. But more troubling is the description of Heidegger's engagement as an "error." This, more than the mistaken statements about the length of his support of the Nazis, appears to support Ettinger and Wolin's charges of whitewash.

Yet the surface is deceptive. If we put Arendt's tribute essay together with the lengthy Heidegger critique found in the penultimate chapter of The Life of the Mind, we see that what at first glance appears to be an apology is, in fact, an indictment. For what Arendt draws attention to in both places is the way Heidegger's thought focuses on the absent: Being in it withdrawal, obscured by everyday ("fallen") reality. As a "pure activity" that issues in no concrete, useful result, Heidegger's passionate thinking resembles that of Socrates', but with one crucial difference. Socrates *performed* his thinking in the agora: the aporetic arguments of the dialogues are deployed by a "citizen amongst citizens." Socratic thinking points to a kind *of ordinary* thinking we should be able to demand of everyone: a capacity to reflectively dissolve conventional moral pieties and socially given rules, the better to activate the faculty of judgment and the voice of conscience. In opposition to such "ordinary" or Socratic thinking, Arendt posed the example of Heidegger's *extraordinary* thinking, a thinking utterly divorced from the world of appearances which is, for Arendt, the world of politics.

What is the force of this distinction between "ordinary" Socratic thinking and "extraordinary" Heideggerian thinking? The answer emerges when we consider the relation of thinking to judgment. For Arendt, as for Kant, judging and thinking are two different faculties. The former, in its reflective mode, ascends from particulars to universal

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concepts; the latter is neither a form of judgment nor a mode of cognition, but a quest for meaning beyond appearances. In the case of Socrates, the activity of thinking dissolves all ready to hand standards and rules for conduct. Yet Socratic thinking, because it is performed in the agora, retains its link to the world of appearances, the public world of plural human being. Thus, Arendt can claim that Socratic thinking, which refuses to tell us how to judge or provide us with shortcuts that might avoid the labor of judgment, stimulates the capacity for judgment precisely because it throws our everyday derivation of conduct from preestablished rules out of gear. The perplexity induced by Socrates' "dissolvent "thinking is the prelude to a genuinely reflective, that is, moral, exercise of judgment. In "emergency situations" where most are carried away by their enthusiasm for a popular political regime or their unthinking identification with a group, it is this capacity to think for oneself – for judging "without banisters" – which can provide salvation.[62]

Arendt's point in "Martin Heidegger at Eighty" and the Heidegger critique in The Life of the Mind is that the activity of thinking, when purified of the "taint" of the world of appearances, loses its link to the activity of judging. Her surprising thesis is that pure thought is the death of judgment. This thesis, the result of her consideration of Heidegger's political idiocy, resonates with her suspicion of philosophy's traditional attitude toward the realm of human affairs. Moreover, it resonates with her portrait of the "thoughtless" Adolf Eichmann in Eichmann in Jerusalem, whose conduct she saw as a function of the unthinking application of clichés and "language rules" to every new situation. Heidegger and Eichmann, it turns out, are linked: pure thought and thoughtlessness are two sides of the same phenomenon, the incapacity for judgment. Heidegger's "error" was no error in judgment, his engagement with National Socialism no "mistake"; rather, what it testified to, in Arendt's view, was the *absence* of judgment.

This is a shocking and farreaching claim. It constitutes a more profound and objective indictment of Heidegger than Ettinger's narrative of a nasty manipulative male or Wolin's reiteration of Adorno's charge. Of course, Heidegger was no Eichmann: he was not part of the killing apparatus. Nor was he, as Ettinger and Wolin both claim, an ideologue of the Party (his naive and silly idea that the National Socialist revolution could, in 1933, be given spiritual direction by a return to the thought of the pre-Socratics notwithstanding). He was a *genuine* philosopher – in Arendt's view, a great one – whose life is an object lesson in how pure thought can be, from a political point of view, indistinguishable from the greatest thoughtlessness.

The thematic of thought, thoughtlessness, and the absence of judgment I have just outlined does not lessen either Heidegger's responsibility for his support of the Nazi regime or Eichmann's responsibility for the central role he played in the genocide. In typically original fashion, Arendt focuses our gaze on two representative Germans under National Socialism. Her unsettling lesson is that moral and political judgment can be extinguished by extraordinary thinking as well as by no thinking at all. We see how far she is from any attempt to exempt genius from the responsibility inherent in citizenship (as Wolin charges) or "justifying" Heidegger's involvement (as Ettinger wrongly asserts). If Arendt is guilty of anything, it is failing to draw more explicitly the connections between her reflections on Heidegger, the nature of thinking, and the capacity for moral and political judgment. Her failure to do so enabled her critics to take phrases out of context and construct an apology where, in fact, one finds a worldly and wise moral judgment about the "philosopher's philosopher," Heidegger.

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The story of Arendt's relationship to Heidegger cannot be reduced to the stuff of soap opera or to the category of unthinking discipleship. From 1946 on, her public and private reflections on Heidegger, as well as her theoretical work, show an uncanny ability to arrive at an impartial judgment of a thinker to whom she had once been intimately attached. For Arendt, as for Kant, distance and impartiality were the hallmarks of judgment. Arendt's ability to appreciate Heidegger's philosophical achievement while remaining critical of its content; her intense awareness of his failings as a human being and his idiocy as a political actor; her respect for his passionate thinking and her fear of its radical unworldliness – all these things testify to a faculty of judgment which remained remarkably unclouded, even when confronted by the "magician from Messkirch."

NOTES

1. Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, Hannah Arendt: *For Love of the World* (New Haven:Yale University Press, 1982).
2. *See Hannah Arendt/Martin Heidegger*, Briefe 1925 Bis 1975, edited by Ursula Ludz (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1998). This chapter was written before the publication of these letters.
3. Elzbieta Ettinger, *Hannah Arendt/ Martin Heidegger* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 78.
4. Richard Wolin, "Hannah and the Magician" in *The New Republic*, October 15, 1995, pp. 27—37.
5. Ibid., p. 34.
6. Hannah Arendt, *"The Image of Hell"* in Arendt, EU, p. 201.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., p. 202.
9. In a letter to her friend J. Glenn Gray toward the end of her life, Arendt characterizes Heidegger's pro-Nazi Rectoral Address of 1933 as less an authentic expression of National Socialist ideology than "a very unpleasant product of nationalism." See Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt*, p. 443.
10. See Hans Sluga's essential work, *Heidegger's Crisis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).
11. In this regard, it's helpful to remember Arendt's description (in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*) of the attraction of the pre- and intrawar intelligentsia to antibourgeois "mob movements" of one form or another. See Arendt, *OT*, pp. 326—40 (the section entitled "The Temporary Alliance Between the Mob and the Elite"). Young-Bruehl offers a penetrating analysis of how Arendt's description applies to Heidegger in *Hannah Arendt*, pp. 219—22. She concludes by noting "Hannah Arendt never claimed that those intellectuals who were, like Heidegger, enchanted by the mob should be absolved of responsibility for their own roles in the National Socialist revolution. But ... she did not look on the European intellectual tradition as responsible for Nazism."
12. Hannah Arendt, "What Is Existential Philosophy?" in Arendt, *EU*, p. 177. The gist of Arendt's critique here is more appropriately aimed at the version of existentialism found in Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*.
13. Ibid., p. 178.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid., pp. 171, 178.
16. Ibid., pp. 180 - 81.
17. Ibid., p. 181.
18. Ibid., p. 183.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid., p. 187.
21. *Hannah Arendt - Karl Jaspers Correspondence: 1926—69*, ed. Lotte Kohler and Hans Saner, trans. Robert and Rita Kimber (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992), p. 43.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid., pp. 47 - 48. Jaspers replied: "I share your judgment of Heidegger—alas. My earlier remarks referred only to the correctness of the facts as you presented them" (p. 63).
24. Ibid., p. 142. It is interesting to place Arendt's judgment against the background of the history of Heidegger's personal and professional relationship with Husserl, as described by Hugo Ott in his book *Martin Heidegger: A Political Life* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), pp. 172 - 86. While Ott is, if anything, more severe in his judgment of Heidegger, his story reminds us that Heidegger had already "betrayed" his mentor on a strictly philosophical level before his ascension to the rectorship of Freiberg. Relations had been strained long before the "Jewish question" reared its ugly head in the form of the Reich Law of 1933 banning Jews from the teaching faculties of German universities.
25. In a letter to her husband Heinrich Blucher from December, 1949, Arendt recounts telling Jaspers about her relationship with Heidegger. Jaspers's statement to Arendt on this occasion ("Poor Heidegger, we sit here now, the two best friends he has in the world, and see right through him") nicely captures the mix of loyalty and intense skepticism which colored their relations

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with Heidegger. See Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt*, p. 246.

26. Ibid., p. 603. See also Jaspers's postwar report to Allied authorities on Heidegger which, while recommending barring him from teaching, is extremely judicious in its view of his political engagement with the Nazis. The report is reprinted in Ott, *Martin Heidegger*, pp. 336 - 41.

27. See, for example, Arendt's September 29, 1947 letter to Jaspers, in which she expands on the dangers Heidegger's "lack of character" held for his own philosophical activity, threatening to distort and kitschify it: "He probably thought he could buy himself loose from the world

28. See Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt*, p. 304_307.

29. Arendt, "Concern with Politics in Recent European Thought" in EU, p. 431.

30. Ibid., p. 430.

31. Ibid., p. 432.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid., p. 433. Cf. Arendt's invocation of Heidegger's statement *"Das Licht der Offentlichkeit verdunkt alles"* in the Preface to Arendt, *Men in Dark Times* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1968) (hereafter cited as MDI), p. x.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid., p. 142.

38. Ibid., p. 441.

39. Ibid., p. 443.

40. Ibid., p. 444.

41. Ibid., p. 446.

42. Quoted in Ettinger, *Hannah Arendt/ Martin Heidegger*, p. 114.

43. See Arendt's essay "What Is Freedom?" in Arendt, *Between Past and Future* (New York: Penguin, 1968).

44. See, in this regard, Heidegger's essays "The Age of the World Picture" and "The Question Concerning Technology," both in Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and other Essays* (New York: Harper and Row 1977). See also mv *Arendt and Heidegger*, chap. 6.

45. See Arendt's Heidegger critique in Arendt, *The Life of the Mind* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1978), vol.2, chap. 15.

46. See Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), chap. 6.

47. See Martin Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism" in Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, edited by David Farrel Krell (New York: Harper and Row, 1977).

48. See Arendt. *On Revolution* (New York: Penguin Books, 1990), p. 229: "...opinion and judgment obviously belong among the faculties of reason, but the point of the matter is that these two, politically most important, rational faculties have been almost entirely neglected by the tradition of political as well as philosophical thought."

49. It is hardly the case that Arendt denigrates such liberty; as her analyses of totalitarianism make clear. Her critical point, developed in *On Revolution*, is that being a "participant in government" and "public happiness" are the dimensions of freedom most cherished by those who have experienced them, but all too often seen as a needless burden by those who have not.

50. *Arendt - Jaspers Correspondence*, pp. 447, 453, and 457. Arendt recounts being snubbed by Fink during her visit in a letter dated August 6, 1961, in which she also tells Jaspers of Heidegger's failure to get in touch with her.

51. Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt*, p. 442.

52. Ettinger, *Hannah Arendt - Martin Heidegger*, p. 10.

53. Wolin, "Hannah and the Magician," pp. 34-35.

54. Hannah Arendt, "Martin Heidegger at Eighty" in *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy*, edited by Michael Murray (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), p. 302.

55. See the text of Heidegger's interview with *Der Spiegel*, reprinted in *Martin Heidegger and National Socialism*, edited by Gunther Nesler and Emil Kettering (New York: Paragon House, 1990).

56. Rudiger Safranski, *Ein Meister aus Deutschland: Heidegger und seine Zeit* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1994).

57. Arendt, "Martin Heidegger at Eighty," pp. 296—97.

58. Ibid., p. 299.

59. Ibid., p. 300.

60. Ibid., pp. 300—301.

61. Ibid., p. 301.

62. This paragraph outlines the argument Arendt makes in "Thinking and Moral Considerations."

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