

for scholarly research, and virtually all relevant journals and most large catalogues are online, and the use – and success – of EEBO and ECCO has far exceeded the expectations of its creators.

Although the financial viability of scholarly monographs and journals has become increasingly precarious, there are numerous and well-documented reasons for making the Web the primary location for scholarly work. Many of the central features of Web scholarship exemplified by the Newton Project are now becoming standard as desiderata in grant applications. The advantages for us have been enormous. The Web medium allows us to refine and extend our materials, and also to connect up to other projects and resources via links. We can provide fully comprehensive diplomatic transcriptions of archives, at a fraction of the cost that would be required for making the same materials available in print, and to audiences that are three or four orders of magnitude greater than is the case with books. Longer term, the presentation of high-quality images of the original texts alongside the transcriptions offers the chance to check transcriptions, or to directly access the ‘originals’. We are, to coin a phrase, no longer reliant on commercial publishers but have control of both horizontal and vertical aspects of publication. In twenty-first century scholarship, production of this size requires technical assistance, and the AHRC has been far-sighted in understanding that the maintenance of the site requires excellent technical support (in our case, provided by Mike Hawkins). Most of our work is also pioneering, in the sense that we are not merely concerned with print-to-Web production, but primarily with the creation of ‘born digital’ resources. This means that at the heart of our project is a highly skilled production process involving XML-encoded transcriptions (in our case, the bulk of which is performed by John Young) made to much higher standards than is to be found in print editions. This can be contrasted with the outsourcing of Print-to-Web work that is the staple of other projects.

There is not the space to discuss this here, but it is evident that the provision of the different sorts of high-quality online resources mentioned in this article is dramatically transforming scholarship. It is impossible to return to the way academic work was performed even a decade ago, and new demands must be met, such as ensuring the robustness of online resources. While members of the Newton Project are obviously committed to the revolutionary opportunities provided by the Web, few scholars in our experience have paid attention to the implications for scholarly work and originality that comes with the immediate gratification provided by these new formats. Hardly any academics of whom we are aware have seriously understood the problems associated with the end of many of the paraphernalia of print culture, such as the instability of citation that comes with the dissolution of temporal stasis that comes with endlessly revisable texts. Alongside the business of presenting Newton material online, larger issues concerning the digital infrastructure of scholarship will be of concern to us in the following decade.

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HANNAH ARENDT 1906–1975

One of the twentieth century’s most discussed and least understood intellectuals has reached her centenary year with events underway in many parts of the globe. In Lisbon and Ljubljana, they are talking about Arendt. In Melbourne and Sydney too. Oslo, Stockholm and Helsinki have each held a Hannah Arendt centennial conference this year, along with the universities of Malta and Brasilia, Luzern, Leeds and Lima, Seoul, Istanbul, and Paris VII. As the Peruvian Circle of Phenomenology and Hermeneutics debated Arendt in Lima, the Kosovo Institute of Journalism and Communication argued for her relevance in Prishtina. In some parts, not one but two conferences have been held: In Madrid – ‘Pensar en Tiempos Sombrios’ and ‘Pensar entre el pasado y el futuro’, both in November; in Berlin — ‘Hidden Tradition, Untimely Actuality?’ sponsored by the Greens and another event by the SPD; in the city of Arendt’s refuge, a conference took place at the New School of Social Research, followed by ‘Hannah Arendt Right Now’ twelve blocks to the south at New York University. Brown, Bard, Baylor, Yale, and Indiana have all followed suit, while at the universities of Heidelberg, Freiberg, Dresden and

Munich, Arendt is the talk of the town. Arendt appears on the tips of many tongues and her relevance in ascendance, extending beyond the confines of the German–Jewish conundrum of the twentieth century.

Arendt's contribution to intellectual history can be divided into three parts: (1) her role as a public intellectual concerned with some of the key issues of the modern period — Anti-Semitism, the Holocaust and Zionism, (2) her contributions to political theory in a period of widespread intellectual conformism and doctrinal thinking, and (3) her innovation in the practice of philosophy, both in the sense of a 'philosophy without bannisters', as she referred to a philosophy without preconditions, yet in the pursuit of a moral framework ready to confront the actual, living, and non-synthetic problems of the time.

In all three Arendt expressed an acute awareness of the importance of political action and was attuned to the role of political figures in history, Benjamin Disraeli being just one of several historical figures which occupied her work. Yet when it came to her own views on political and social matters, whether in the 1930s and 1940s while rallying for a new Jewish politics or her curious comments on American racism in the 1960s, she was personally unfamiliar with the art of compromise. During her first years of refuge in New York, Arendt wrote for the German language periodical *Aufbau*, campaigning for a Jewish homeland in a bi-national Palestine. She was scathing in her criticism of the Zionist Congress (1947) and was passionate in her support for Jewish–Arab coexistence. As scandalous as her views appeared in the 1940s, the notion of a bi-nationalism, whether as two states or as a confederation, forms the basis of any and all proposals for a resolution to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict today.

In May 1960, as Adolf Eichmann was captured in Argentina by the Israeli secret service and brought to trial, Arendt set sail for Jerusalem to cover the event in a series of articles for *The New Yorker*. It later appeared in book form as *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. What Arendt was to discover in her close analysis of Eichmann has initiated a controversy lasting four decades and still strong, judging from ongoing publications and debates, particularly in Israel, where Arendt's position appears to be undergoing a second public hearing.

The two issues most commonly addressed in the controversy concern Arendt's treatment of the *Judenräte*, the Jewish councils established by the Nazis for the purpose of collaboration, and her connotation of Hitler's willing executioners as expressing the banality of evil. Before Arendt, Jewish collaboration had simply been treated as a topic too controversial for public discussion and it is possible that with the publication of her articles in *The New Yorker*, Arendt broached the subject for the first time in English. Today the subject of collaboration is part of the historical record and considered necessary for any accurate depiction of events leading up to the Holocaust. Even the towering historian Raul Hilberg, from whose 1961 *The Destruction of European Jewry* Arendt borrowed extensively for her study of Eichmann, felt the need to revisit the issue so many years later in his 1993 *Perpetrators Victims Bystanders*.

The debate concerning of the banality of evil is somewhat more complex, even if one merely recalls the paradigms during and immediately following the war. Leading up to Arendt's study, the Nazis had been portrayed quite uniformly as the embodiment of absolute and ultimate evil. War propaganda made a significant contribution to this view, not to speak of the Nazis themselves with films such as Lene Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*. Evil was a viable description. To die at the hands of Satan is, after all, a noble death. The same cannot be said of the hands of a human functionary. The argument that the perpetrators lacked supernatural qualities seemed to undermine the memory of the victims. For Arendt, however, the notion of absolute evil left little room for the capacity of moral thinking. Moreover, the idea of the embodiment of evil removed any need for the discussion of the difference between consent and obedience. Whereas a child may blindly obey the law, an adult cannot. In the act of obedience, he or she actually supports the law or regime which claims authority. In matters of politics and morality, Arendt claimed 'there is no such thing as obedience.'

Arendt's view of the banality of the perpetrator can be seen as a revolutionary overturning of the dominant model at the time. Today, there is hardly a scholar of the Holocaust who does not operate from the assumption that it was enacted by hundreds of thousands of small actions that culminated in

a tremendous and radical evil. The individual actions themselves were commonplace. Isolated from one another, they usually did not embody or express evil as such, and as far as Eichmann was concerned, every aspect of his behaviour appeared to Arendt to represent a German bureaucrat of the most simplistic kind. We view the evil of the Holocaust not as a satanic outburst but caused by the repetition of the most simple and basic actions performed by hundreds of thousands of perpetrators in the most routine fashion. A term has come into general parlance regarding a perpetrator who does not undertake individual sadistic acts, but rather operates from the desk, a *Schreibtischtäter*. This is possibly the most applied concept by historians of the Holocaust today and serves in many ways as historical explanation of the event itself. Such thinking was an anathema in the first decades after Auschwitz.

In all these matters Arendt was pioneering. Her thought began with the problems and issues facing the Jewish people in the twentieth century between sovereignty and genocide, but the implications of these thoughts did not rest neatly at the borders of Jewish history. She was vilified in her time for her errors of judgement as well as for her tremendous insights. It appears that, in her centenary year, the significance of these insights can only now be fully known and appreciated.

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