



# Responsibility and Judgment

*Hannah Arendt*

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## **Responsibility and Judgment** Hannah Arendt

Each of the books that Hannah Arendt published in her lifetime was unique, and to this day each continues to provoke fresh thought and interpretations. This was never more true than for *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, her account of the trial of Adolf Eichmann, where she first used the phrase “the banality of evil.” Her consternation over how a man who was neither a monster nor a demon could nevertheless be an agent of the most extreme evil evoked derision, outrage, and misunderstanding. The firestorm of controversy prompted Arendt to readdress fundamental questions and concerns about the nature of evil and the making of moral choices. *Responsibility and Judgment* gathers together unpublished writings from the last decade of Arendt’s life, as she struggled to explicate the meaning of *Eichmann in Jerusalem*.

At the heart of this book is a profound ethical investigation, “Some Questions of Moral Philosophy”; in it Arendt confronts the inadequacy of traditional moral “truths” as standards to judge what we are capable of doing, and she examines anew our ability to distinguish good from evil and right from wrong. We see how Arendt comes to understand that alongside the radical evil she had addressed in earlier analyses of totalitarianism, there exists a more pernicious evil, independent of political ideology, whose execution is limitless when the perpetrator feels no remorse and can forget his acts as soon as they are committed.

**Responsibility and Judgment** is an essential work for understanding Arendt’s conception of morality; it is also an indispensable investigation into some of the most troubling and important issues of our time.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

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