



Responsibility and Judgment

By Hannah Arendt

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Responsibility and Judgment gathers together unpublished writings from the last decade of Arendt's life, where she addresses fundamental questions and concerns about the nature of evil and the making of moral choices. At the heart of the book is a profound ethical investigation, "Some Questions of Moral Philosophy," in which Arendt confronts the inadequacy of traditional moral "truths" as standards to judge what we are capable of doing and examines anew our ability to distinguish good from evil and right from wrong. We also 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 indispensable investigation into some of the most troubling and important issues of our time.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Arendt (1906-1975), among the last century's most eminent political philosophers, never lived to complete the final volume of her comprehensive tome *The Life of the Mind*, entitled "Judging." This first volume in a new series of her unpublished works, comprising a delightful constellation of articles and essays taken from class and public lectures, centers on that unfinished project's theme. The book begins with a piece addressing the controversy around Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, re-examining the arguments regarding the "banality of evil" and responding to criticisms and misinterpretations with a delicate exploration of the imperative "It is better to suffer wrong than to do wrong." Arendt often quotes Faulkner's aphorism "The past is never dead, it is not even past," and in other pieces here, her highly original ideas about what constitutes justice yield seemingly paradoxical answers to vexing questions. The section on racial integration, "Little Rock," while arguing against *Brown v. Board of Education*, makes a parallel case for equality in marriage that speaks to current debates about same-sex marriage and the recent establishment of an independent Muslim school in France. "Responsibility under Dictatorship" and "Coming Home to Roost" will speak to a certain audience about the current political climate, while the chapters on morality are very erudite works on the role of ethical concepts in the history of philosophy that will feed an already ravenous secondary literature market on Arendt. More than anything else, the work's commitment to forthright thinking as a primary political duty, and its lucidity on dangers and deferral of responsibility inherent in received opinion, ensures its relevance to any representative democracy.

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Review

"With **Eichmann in Jerusalem** Hannah Arendt wrote the 20th century's most important - and controversial - work on the problem of evil, and the least understood. The publication of **Responsibility and Judgment** is thus a particularly welcome event. For readers who know Arendt, the autobiographical reflections or the discussions of personal responsibility under dictatorship will be of great interest in understanding the background of **Eichmann in Jerusalem** or **The Life of the Mind**. For readers who don't, essays such as "Auschwitz on Trial" will provide a superb introduction to her views - and a chance to probe, without hearsay or slander, one of the great thinkers of our time."

-- Susan Neiman, author of *Evil in Modern Thought: An Alternative History of Modern Philosophy*

From the Hardcover edition.

From the Inside Flap

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

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