

A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON IMMANUEL KANT'S AND HANNAH ARENDT'S CONCEPTS OF EVIL: THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

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Pertanyaan tentang kejahatan adalah pertanyaan filosofis dan teologis yang penting yang langsung menuju inti dari dorongan manusia menuju kehidupan etis, oleh karena itu penting untuk memeriksa kembali masalah kejahatan karena implikasinya pada kemampuan manusia untuk memutuskan bagaimana bertindak dengan benar. Dalam karyanya "Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason." Immanuel Kant mengembangkan konsep kejahatan radikal yang ia gambarkan sebagai "inversion of our maxims" atau penyesatan kehendak individu yang mengakibatkan korupsi pilihan akan tindakannya. "Gagasan mendasar filsafat Kant adalah otonomi manusia." Ini terlihat dalam pandangan konstruktivis Kant tentang pengalaman, yang dengannya pemahaman kita adalah sumber dari hukum-hukum alam yang umum. Dalam nada yang sama, Hannah Arendt mengusulkan konsep kejahatan dangkal dalam bacaannya tentang perbuatan Adolf Eichmann sebagai kepala arsitek holocaust selama Perang Dunia II. Dia menyatakan bahwa dia melakukan tindakan jahat itu tanpa berpikir karena dia hanya menjalankan perannya sebagai seorang birokrat dalam upaya perang Jerman. Arendt menyimpulkan bahwa Eichmann secara konstitusional tidak diperlengkapi untuk mempraktikkan jenis penilaian yang akan membuat korbannya terlihat jelas dan nyata dalam pemikirannya.

Kata Kunci: *Etika, Kejahatan Radikal, Kejahatan Banal, Penderitaan*

The Problem and Its Background

The twentieth century has seen the worst atrocities that man has committed against his fellow men. This century saw the birth of mechanized warfare that made it easier for the two world wars that were fought period to slaughter tens of millions of people, combatants and non-combatants alike. Moreover, genocide and ethnic cleansing saw the annihilation of entire populations whose only fault was being members of a particular ethnic group or race. After the end of Second World War which saw the Nazis instituting the so-called final solution that led to the deaths of millions of Jews in Europe, the world powers thought that the world saw the end of large scale genocide with the birth of the United Nations.

In less than half a century, this proved to be a hopeless aspiration with ethnic cleansing rearing its ugly head again, this time in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda. Asia was not spared from this scourge with the advent of the Vietnam War and the Khmer Rouge atrocities. All in all, the last century proved to be a major disappointment considering that it followed the Age of Enlightenment, a period that supposedly saw the birth of reason. Little did the world expect that the technological progress that came with the Enlightenment would usher in evil in unspeakable terms. Evil became so commonplace that its elucidation and analysis occupied the minds of many thinkers the world over.

The worst manifestation of evil was the Holocaust that was perpetrated by the murderous Nazi regime of Hitler's Germany. It could not be helped that people asked how God in all His goodness allowed evil of such magnitude to happen. Eventually, no one knows why God allows certain things to happen. His thoughts and paths are extremely greater than ours.¹ His supreme plan covers all historical parts, past, present, and future, incorporating all deeds, cause and effect, every possibility, and all likelihoods. People would not be able to understand the complexities of His plans. By faith, we have the confidence that God's plan is the best to restore people from the sinful condition into righteousness and everlasting life.

However, there is one thing we can be sure of: The permission of God is not equal to His approval. God lets Adam to eat the fruit of the forbidden tree, but his action did not get God's approval. Holocaust was permitted by God to happen, but it is not approved Him. God is extremely saddened by the sins of humanity.² We know that God has given all for our salvation by redeeming us for the penalty of sin, which is death. He gave His one and only Son. Those who believe in Jesus Christ will be saved. The world's sin like Holocaust and many others, are the result of the disobedience and rebellion of humanity towards God.³

The Holocaust is caused by human sins. It happened due to the evil choices made by sinful people in their rebellion towards God. The Holocaust proves the humanity has been extremely depraved.⁴ Only in a short while, fourteen years after "the war to end all wars" (World War I), Hitler came to power. Millions of people followed Hitler, this made him able to create extreme policies that leads to national destruction.⁵

An inquiry emerged, while Nazism grabbed hold in Germany, where were the European churches? A few quick against the wickedness in their midst, and some churchmen, for example, Dietrich Bonhoeffer,⁶ died for contradicting. In any case,

¹ Isaiah 55:8-9.

² Genesis 6:6.

³ James W. Bernauer, ed., *Amor Mundi: Explorations in the Faith and Thought of Hannah Arendt* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987), 34.

⁴ Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future* (London: Penguin Books, 1993), 199.

⁵ ____, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 53.

⁶ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, born on February 4, 1906 Dietrich was a German Lutheran pastor, researcher, dissident threatening to Nazi and establishing individual from the Confessing Church. His deals with Christianity's activity in the normal world have gotten comprehensively convincing, and many have named his book *The Cost of Discipleship* a bleeding edge incredible. Beside his strict works, Bonhoeffer got known for his staunch insurance from the Nazi despotism. He unequivocally repudiated Hitler's headstrong elimination program and ruinous maltreatment of the

they were the minority. Most places of worship of the time assented to Nazi Party leads and stayed quiet while the Jews were butchered. Where were the world leaders? Other than England's Winston Churchill,⁷ the world's politicians took the course of disconnection or submission. Neither worked. Where were the good individuals? In spite of the fact that there were a couple of Germans and different Europeans, for example, Oscar Schindler⁸ and Corrie ten Boom⁹ and her family, who took a chance with their lives to spare a huge number of Jews from destruction, most stayed quiet and the Holocaust followed.

The question is not actually on "For what reason did God permit the Holocaust?" but "For what reason did we?" God gives humanity opportunity of decision. We can decide to tail Him and stand firm for uprightness, or we can oppose Him and seek after malevolence. The issue dwells in the core of man. The heart is misleading over all things and past fix. Who can understand it?¹⁰ Until man's heart goes to God, the world will keep on seeing "ethnic cleansings," destructions, and barbarities, such as, the Holocaust.

The question of evil is a basic philosophical and religious inquiry that goes right deeply of man's drive towards the moral life. It is critical to reconsider the issue of malevolence because of its suggestions on the our capacity to choose to act appropriately. Also it brings up the issue of whether the world contains unfortunate conditions of issues that give the premise to a contention that makes it irrational for anybody to have faith in the presence of God. This single inquiry has consumed the brains of probably the best scholars in mankind's history.

Jews. He was caught in April 1943 by the Gestapo and executed by hanging in April 1945 while confined at a Nazi uncaring detainment, just 23 days before the German surrender.

⁷ Winston Leonard Spencer-Churchill (30 November 1874 – 24 January 1965) was a British administrator, generally well known for his position of the United Kingdom during the Second World War. For the most part saw as outstanding amongst other wartime pioneers of the twentieth century, he filled in as Prime Minister twice (1940–45 and 1951–55).

⁸ Oskar Schindler (28 April 1908 – 9 October 1974) was an ethnic German industrialist, German undercover specialist, and individual from the Nazi party who is credited with saving the lives of in excess of 1,200 Jews during the Holocaust by using them in his enamelware and ammunition creation lines, which were arranged in what is by and by Poland and the Czech Republic independently.

⁹ Cornelia "Corrie" ten Boom (Amsterdam, The Netherlands April 15, 1892 – Placentia, California, April 15, 1983) was a Dutch Christian. Close by her father and different family members, Corrie helped various Jews escape from the Nazi Holocaust during World War II and kept in touch with her most well known book *The Hiding Place* about the experience.

¹⁰ Jeremiah 17:9.

The philosophers of ancient Greece were engrossed with this inquiry. As indicated by the Platonic hypothesis, the marvelous world is a spatial impression of the thoughts, which alone are impeccably genuine elements. Since no duplicate or reflection can be indistinguishable with its model or unique, all wonders must miss the mark concerning the truth of the thoughts, and all must thusly be something not exactly great. So all the incredible world is constantly engaged with what might be classified “negative insidiousness,” since it is a discrediting of the real world, the level of deviation from the first, which is inferred in the presence of a duplicate or reflection.¹¹

For Aristotle, mental fortitude, the primary good righteousness he talks about, fills in as an example for his treatment of good prudence all in all. In the first place, Aristotle contends that fearlessness, similar to moral ideals by and large, must be performed for honorability, yet he additionally expresses that bold demonstrations are liable to acclaim and fault, and along these lines subject to the political network, which presents recognition and fault through the appropriation of open distinctions. Second, in spite of the fact that mental fortitude might be more unequivocally political than a significant number of different ethics he considers, Aristotle's record of boldness investigates significant inquiries identifying with moral obligation, the saliency of joy and torment, and the trouble in recognizing the outside appearance of an activity and the air of character that produces it. These issues are integral to Aristotle's treatment of all the specific ideals. Third, Aristotle shows that ethical goodness is indistinguishable from the human limit with regards to the consultation and decision required for moral duty.¹²

Immanuel Kant's Notion of Radical Evil

Immanuel Kant devoted much of his systematic philosophy on the notion of duty, law and freedom, so to speak, on the questions of moral philosophy. The key thought of Kant's way of thinking is human independence. This is found in Kant's constructivist perspective on experience, as indicated by which our comprehension is the wellspring of the general laws of nature. “Independence” truly implies giving the law to oneself, and on Kant's view our comprehension gives laws that comprise the from the earlier system of our experience.¹³

In *Religion Within the Mere Boundaries of Reason* (henceforth, *Religion*), Kant asks the question as to what results from willing and doing right conduct. In any case, previously, he offers a response to this inquiry in *Religion*, be that as it may, he gives a progressively broad record of the impediments to right willing and right lead than

¹¹ Richard Kraut, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Plato* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 21.

¹² Robert Heinemann, “The Improvability of Eudaimonia in the Nicomachean Ethics.” *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 23 (2002), 99–145.

¹³ Norman Kemp Smith, *A Commentary on Kant's Critique of Pure Reason* (New York: Humanities Press, 2nd edition, 1992 reprint), 348.

he offered in his prior basic compositions on moral way of thinking. Vital to this record is the advancement of the thought of “radical fiendishness” in human good life and of the ethical transformation that is expected to beat it.¹⁴

He presents the thought of radical evil in Book One of Religion under the pretense of a philosophical partner to the Christian doctrine of original sin. His conversation of good transformation in Book Two at that point matches the Christian principle of recovery. Kant places specific accentuation upon human duty regarding both radical malevolent and good transformation. In contrast to unique sin, which Christian conviction has comprehended as acquired, radical wickedness is self-brought about by every person. It comprises in a crucial confusion of our willing that undermines our decision of activity.¹⁵

In Kant's wording, it comprises in a “reversal” of our “adages,” which are simply the standards for activity we posture to ourselves in settling on our decisions. Rather than making the rightness of activities — i.e., the straight out objective — the crucial standard for decision, we make the fulfillment of one of our own closures take need in the willing of our activities. We in this manner teach in ourselves an affinity to make special cases to the interest of the straight out basic in conditions when such an exemption is by all accounts in our own kindness.¹⁶

Conquering radical evil a “change of heart” — i.e., a reordering of our key rule of decision — that we are each answerable for affecting in ourselves. Affecting such a change, in any case, leaves agitated our ethical culpability for those decisions that were made under the rearranged saying of abhorrence. In the language of conventional Christian philosophy, what happens to the “elderly person” [sic] — and to the outcomes of decisions made under that pretense — when change makes us “new?”¹⁷

In answer to this inquiry, Kant rethinks the Christian precept of the amends through the death of Jesus Christ. He dismisses the perspective on “vicarious atonement” — that Christ removes the blame of past evil lead by remaining as a substitute for us all for a “exemplary” one.¹⁸ This procedure, under the heading of “justification,” was a focal issue during the sixteenth century Reformation that lead to division of Christian

¹⁴ ____, *Critique of Pure Reason* (London: Macmillan. Pluhar, Werner, tr., 1996), 155.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ ____, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 114.

¹⁷ Kant, *Concise Outline of Some Reflections on Fire* (New York: Peter Lang, 1992), 55.

¹⁸ Allen Wood, *Kant's Moral Religion* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), 331.

places of worship in Europe. Christian religious philosophy conceptualized this action of God in defense as a major aspect of its intricate idea of “grace.”¹⁹

Kant's account of radical evil doesn't end, in any case, with the moral transformation of the person. This is so on the grounds that extreme evil is occasioned by the social conditions of human life and culture and it has social and recorded results. Thus, the ethical transformation of the individual, or even of numerous people, can't to conquer radical wickedness totally. Though the initial two books of *Religion* show significant connections between Kant's perspective on religion and the good, epistemological, and powerful worries of his basic way of thinking, these last two books display associations with his way of thinking of human culture, society and history.²⁰

In Book Three he contends that the copying and rivalry that accompany being a piece of society, a powerful he terms mankind's “unsociable sociability,” trigger the inclination for self that ruins the person's key proverb of decision. The arrangement of common and political society — which Kant imagines as leaving “the juridical condition of nature” — makes it conceivable to put a cutoff upon a scope of outer activities that issue from such a corrupt maxim.²¹

Hannah Arendt on Banal Evil

Hannah Arendt utilizes the expression “the banality of evil” to portray Adolf Eichmann's activities as an individual from the Nazi system, specifically his job as boss planner and killer of Adolf Hitler's destructive “final solution” for the “Jewish problem.”²²

Her portrayal of these activities, so indecent in their tendency and results, as “banal” can't to situate them as workaday. Or maybe it is intended to challenge the pervasive portrayals of the Nazi's odd monstrosities as having exuded from a pernicious will to do underhanded, a have a great time murder. To the extent Arendt could observe, Eichmann went to his willing inclusion with the program of annihilation through a disappointment or nonattendance of the resources of sound reasoning and judgment.²³

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Kant. *Religion Within the Mere Boundaries of Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 124.

²¹ Kant. *Religion Within the Mere Boundaries of Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 124.

²² Annabel Herzog, “Hannah Arendt’s Concept of Responsibility.” *Studies in Political Thought*, 1998.

²³ Garrath William, “Love and Responsibility: A Political Ethic for Hannah Arendt,” *Political Studies*, vol. XLVI, 1998.

Arendt inferred that Eichmann was constitutively unequipped for practicing the sort of judgment that would have made his casualties' languishing genuine or evident over him. It was not the nearness of disdain that empowered Eichmann to execute the decimation, yet the nonappearance of the creative limits that would have made the human and good elements of his exercises substantial for him. Eichmann neglected to practice his ability of speculation, of having an interior discourse with himself, which would have allowed mindfulness of the abhorrent idea of his deeds.²⁴

This added up to an inability to utilize self-reflection as a reason for judgment, the workforce that would have expected Eichmann to practice his creative mind in order to consider the idea of his deeds from the experiential angle of his casualties. This association between the complicity with political fiendishness and the disappointment of reasoning and judgment roused the last period of Arendt's work, which tried to explain the idea of these resources and their constitutive job for strategically and ethically dependable decisions.²⁵

Theological Implications

Immanuel Kant says we can defeat our evil nature by experiencing a transformation in our "mode of thought". Obtaining a unique goodness that establishes "holiness of maxims" is the securing of an aura in consistence with our obligation to the saying of acquiescence to the ethical law and fills in as the reason for our ensuing adages. It ought to be noticed that Kant's utilization of 'unrest' ought not be mistaken for a social or political upset, since this would at last lead to the Terror saw in the French Revolution.²⁶

The obtaining of the holy disposition through such an insurgency requires, that we take up the mien of the human embodiment of the sacred will, present to us in our explanation as the prime example of good flawlessness. To lift ourselves to this perfect of good flawlessness comprises our all inclusive human obligation. Kant distinguishes the recorded human representation of this model as the "Son of God."²⁷

The transformation, at that point, is not a scholarly endeavor. It likewise includes a pragmatic and constant procedure of reorganization of adages as per the recently procured overseeing saying of "sacredness of maxims." An intelligible

²⁴ Hannah Arendt. *Eichmann in Jerusalem: a Report on the Banality of Evil* (London, Faber & Faber, 1963), 34.

²⁵ _____, *On Revolution* (New York, Penguin Books, 1990), 142.

²⁶ Paul Formosa, *Kant on the Radical Evil of Human Nature* (The Philosophical Forum, Inc, 2007). 98.

²⁷ Ibid.

(Denkungsart) revolution happens when a person settles on a particular choice which momentarily turns around "the incomparable ground of his maxims."²⁸

Kant's account of radical evil as an affinity has gotten a lot of conversation at the turn of the twenty-first century and has produced a reasonable level of discussion. One analysis is that he doesn't take into account the chance of devilish shrewd. A second is that, while Kant is focused on holding that the affinity to abhorrent is widespread, his situations on the upset neglect to appropriately take into account the chance of beauty, the tenet that God can act in human issues and impact change inside an individual's ethical mien.²⁹

Hannah Arendt, on the other hand makes an endeavor to explain the astounded loathsomeness of the twentieth century, she names it damnation. The dread and absolute mastery of the concentration camps is the manufacture of terrible: "Concentration camps can be separated into three sorts relating to three essential Western conceptions of life and death: Hades, Purgatory, and Hell."³⁰

Arendt recommends that the development of complete mastery and dread is the hubristic allotment of strict cutoff points, explicitly the faith in heck, it emerges this conviction by embodying it in nature: Suddenly it becomes clear that things which for a large number of years the human creative mind had expelled to a domain past human skill can be made right here on earth, that Hell and Purgatory, and even a sorry excuse for their ceaseless length, can be set up by the most present day strategies for demolition.³¹

Arendt explains that the authoritarian vision of damnation is an endeavor to set up a supreme nearness on the earth itself: "What radical shrewdness is I don't have the foggiest idea, yet it appears to me it some way or another has to do with the accompanying wonder: making people as individuals unnecessary. This occurs when all unconventionality which, in people, is what might be compared to suddenness is disposed of."³²

Conclusion

Thinkers and ordinary folks alike have been grappling with the problem of evil since the fall of our first parent from the garden of Eden. Most notable of these thinkers

²⁸ Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 88.

²⁹ IKant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (New York: Macmillan, 1922).

³⁰ Arendt, *Responsibility and Judgment* (Schocken, New York, 2003).

³¹ Arendt, "Thinking and Moral Considerations: A Lecture," in *Social Research: An International Quarterly*, Vol. 51, no. 3, (Fall, 1984), 7:38.

³² *Ibid.*

were Immanuel Kant who postulated that man in his nature is evil and Arendt who postulated that evil can be committed without any conscious thought thus becoming just as ordinary.

History has shown that evil has been committed by political groups seeking to put into effect their political goals. This has come about when individuals are dealt with not as closures in themselves however as means towards an end. Therefore it implies that people have been treated as objects rather than the subjects that they are. Simply put, evil in politics came about when maxims are inverted to cause people to commit evil in a grand scale.

Questioning evil can never come to an end. There are no "final solutions." The researcher agrees with Arendt that we must nevertheless think without barriers, we must seek to comprehend, even when we acknowledge that radical evil is not fully comprehensible. The researcher admires Arendt for her restless questioning of evil. She does not provide a comprehensive theory of evil, nor did she intend to do so. She invites us to do what she does, to return over and over again to questioning evil.

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