

Hannah Arendt (2012)

Margarethe von Trotta (1942-)

OVERVIEW

Auteur: Margarethe von Trotta is a German film director, screenwriter, and actress. She was born in Berlin in 1942 as the child of Elisabeth von Trotta and painter Alfred Roloff. In the absence of her father who died in 1951, von Trotta formed a profound connection with her mother, which she has acknowledged as instrumental in cultivating her sensitivity to the dynamics of friendships and solidarity among women. Recognized as a key figure in the New German Cinema movement, she is often hailed as the foremost feminist filmmaker globally. In her movies, Margarethe von Trotta often showcases resilient female lead characters set against significant political backdrops. Her films are concerned with relationships between and among women (sisters, best friends), as well as with relationships between women and men. Her important films are *Lost Honor of Katharina Blum* (1975), *Sisters* (1981), *Sheer Madness* (1983), *Rosa Luxemburg* (1986), *Felix* (1987), *Three Sisters* (1988), and *Hannah Arendt* (2012).

Film: *Hannah Arendt* is a 2012 biographical drama film directed by Margarethe von Trotta. It stars Barbara Sukowa, Janet McTeer, Klaus Pohl, Nicholas Woodeson, and Axel Milberg. The film is written by Margarethe von Trotta and Pamela Katz, and produced by Bettina Brokemper. The cinematography is by Caroline Champetier. The music is by André Mergenthaler. The movie, produced through a collaboration between Germany, Luxembourg, and France, revolves around the life of the German-Jewish philosopher and political theorist Hannah Arendt. In 1961, Hannah Arendt journeys to Israel on assignment for the New Yorker magazine to report on the war crimes trial of the notorious Nazi, Adolf Eichmann. Her examination of Eichmann's actions leads to a morally intricate controversy and has personal repercussions. The film won awards at the Toronto International Film Festival and New York Jewish Film Festival.

Historical background: *Hannah Arendt* is about the reporting of Hannah Arendt regarding the 1961 trial of Otto Adolf Eichmann (1906-1962). Adolf Eichmann was a German-Austrian official affiliated with the Nazi Party, served as an officer in the Schutzstaffel (SS), and played a pivotal role as one of the major organizers of the Holocaust. The Holocaust refers to the systematic murder of six million Jews across German-occupied Europe by Nazi Germany between 1941 and 1945. The protagonist of the film, Hannah Arendt, a German-American historian and philosopher, stood as one of the most influential political theorists of the twentieth century. She is primarily renowned for her works exploring the concepts of power, evil, politics, direct democracy, authority, and totalitarianism.

CHARACTERS

Hannah Arendt: German-American historian and philosopher, reports regarding the trial of Eichmann
Adolf Eichmann: German-Austrian official affiliated with the Nazi Party, officer in the Schutzstaffel (SS) who is put on trial in Jerusalem for war crimes in WWII
Heinrich Blücher: Husband of Hannah Arendt, a caring man
Mary McCarthy: A novelist, one of Hannah's best friends
Martin Heidegger: Philosopher who has a romantic affair with Hannah, affiliated with the Nazi Party
William Shawn: Editor of the New Yorker magazine who accepts Hannah's offer to cover the trial
Lotte Köhler: Personal assistant of Hannah Arendt
Hans Jonas: Close friend of Hannah Arendt, joined the British Army to fight against the Nazis in WWII
Kurt Blumenfeld: One of the close friends of Hannah who lives in Jerusalem

SYNOPSIS

As the film begins, Adolf Eichmann is captured in Argentina having escaped there with forged documents. Hannah Arendt, a professor in New York, willingly takes on the task of covering Eichmann's trial for The New Yorker. She expects Eichmann to be a frightening monster. However, upon observing the proceedings, she is struck by the seemingly ordinary and mediocre appearance of Eichmann. When she returns to New York, Arendt faces a substantial volume of trial transcripts to sift through. A personal crisis emerges when her husband suffers a near-fatal brain aneurysm, causing her additional delays. Throughout her analysis, Arendt grapples with Eichmann's rationalization of his actions, attributing them to bureaucratic loyalty and merely following orders. When her work is eventually published, it sparks significant controversy, leading to angry phone calls and a rift with her longtime friend, Hans Jonas. During a night out in the city with her friend, the novelist Mary McCarthy, she vehemently asserts that she is misunderstood. She emphasizes that those who accuse her of defending Eichmann have not properly read her work. As a result of her perspectives, Arendt experiences rejection from numerous colleagues and former friends. The film concludes with her delivering a final speech to a group of students. She says that the trial focused on a novel form of crime that hadn't existed before. It was a man, Eichmann, who stood trial for his actions, not a system or ideology. Eichmann, despite being a man, had renounced all qualities of personhood. This illustrates that significant evil can be perpetrated by seemingly ordinary individuals or rather "nobodies" without clear motives or intentions. Arendt terms this phenomenon "*the banality of evil*".

SCENES

Hannah talks to her friend Mary about her marriage

Hannah and Mary talk about the divorce of Mary. She is going to divorce Bowden and marry a man named Jim but Bowden tries to prevent their divorce. Mary thinks Hannah is defending Bowden but Hannah merely says that people can behave like Bowden under such circumstances because they hope to have some possibility of power. Hannah also asks Mary why she expects real men to be perfect when even the men in her novels are not.



Hannah's husband Heinrich won't be home for the evening

Soon, Lotte Köhler, the assistant of Hannah, comes to tell her that Hans Jonas is on the phone. Hannah tells her that she will call him later. However, soon, Hannah's husband Heinrich calls. Hannah's assistant tells her that Heinrich will have to meet a student early in the morning, so he won't come home in the evening.



Hannah reads about Adolf Eichmann being captured by the Israeli secret agents In the next scene, we see Hannah reading a newspaper. The headline reads: 'Israel seizes Nazi Chief. Secret Agents seized killer Nazi abroad and took him to Israel'. At that moment, Heinrich arrives home. Hannah talks to her husband about Adolf Eichmann being captured. She wonders whether it is right that Eichmann's trial will be in Jerusalem. Heinrich thinks that they should have shot him on the spot in Buenos Aires.



Hannah and Heinrich watch the news about Eichmann being captured

Hannah, Heinrich, and Lotte learn that the investigations have revealed that Eichmann's escape from Germany to South America was made possible with a Red Cross passport that the Vatican helped him obtain. Eichmann received his forged passport in Genoa, and then he boarded an Italian ship to Buenos Aires.



Hannah Arendt wants to attend Eichmann's trial We see Hannah writing on her typewriter. She writes that she left Germany in 1933 and she missed the Nuremberg trials. She never saw the Nazis in the flesh. That is the reason why she wants to attend Adolf Eichmann's trial.



Editors at the New Yorker are excited about Hannah's offer William Shawn, the editor of the New Yorker, thinks that it would be a privilege to have a German-Jewish émigré of such high standing to cover the trial. One of the staff called Frances thinks she should be begging to write for the New Yorker, 'like everyone else'. Another staff informs Frances that Hannah Arendt wrote *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, one of the finest books of the twentieth century. Frances is still not convinced as she believes that philosophers don't make deadlines.

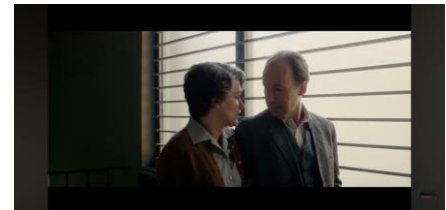


Heinrich has doubts about Hannah's wish to cover the trial

Heinrich asks Hannah whether she wants to cover the trial. Hannah thinks she has to take this opportunity. They talk about the French camp at Gurs and how brave and smart Hannah was to escape from there. Many women stayed at the camp because they feared their husbands wouldn't be able to find them if they left. Soon later, the women stopped taking care of themselves and even Hannah lost her courage. As Hannah tells her inner struggles and emotions to her husband, Heinrich says that this is exactly why he doesn't want her to go to the trial as her painful memories may resurface again.



Hans Jonas congratulates Hannah Hans Jonas sees Hannah at the university and congratulates her for being accepted by the New Yorker magazine. He says everything is simple for a genius. Hannah says she almost dreads this trip but Hans is so excited about her and wishes he could accompany her.



Hannah throws a small meeting before she leaves New York Mary McCarthy, Hannah, and Heinrich talk about American politics, including figures like Nixon and Kennedy. Soon, Hans and Lore Jonas (Hans' wife) arrive at Hannas' house. Hannah introduces Professor Miller to Hans and Lore Jonas. Professor Miller talks about how he heard that Hans is Hannah's oldest and dearest friend. Heinrich explains that Hans and Hannah met in the twenties as students of the German philosopher Heidegger. Hans gets suddenly angry as he doesn't want to hear his name in the same sentence as Nazi Heidegger.



Hans and Heinrich disagree as to the legality of the trial As they celebrate the event and drink champagne, Professor Miller says that he is honored that a colleague from his university has the opportunity to be an eyewitness to history. Hans says that it is just wonderful that Hannah, one of them, will be present for the great trial. However, Heinrich does not agree and thinks this is an illegal trial as the kidnapping of Eichmann was illegal. Hans, on the contrary, thinks that Israel has a sacred right to try a Nazi for crimes against the Jewish people. He adds that he volunteered for the British Army to fight the Nazis.



They were in the Jewish Brigade in 1944: 'Heinrich doesn't know what it means to take up arms to defend his convictions.'

Hannah meets Kurt Blumenfeld in Jerusalem Hannah arrives in Jerusalem and meets Kurt Blumenfeld, one of her old friends. She talks about how Heinrich argued with her about the trip as he was concerned that this trip might send her back to the dark times. Kurt says to Hannah that she was always strong and brave. Then they talk about Kurt's health and he says his heart is not in a good condition anymore.



Hannah visits Kurt's family Hannah visits Kurt's family and they talk about children. Hannah says that they were too poor to have children when they were young, but when they had the money, they were too old. Kurt says he is just sorry that her visit is thanks to the wild predator (referring to Eichmann).



Adolf Eichmann is at the trial Adolf Eichmann comes to sit in his cage made of glass. Gideon Hausner, an Israeli jurist and politician, makes an impressive speech about the victims of the Holocaust: 'When I stand before you here, judges of Israel, to bring charges against Adolf Eichmann, I am not standing alone. With me are six million accusers. But they cannot rise or point towards him in the dock. They cannot cry, "I accuse him!" For their ashes have been scattered over the hills of Auschwitz and in the fields of Treblinka, and thrown into the rivers of Poland. Their graves are to be found throughout Europe.'



Hannah thinks Hausner is turning the trial into a show Hannah talks to Kurt about the beginning of the trial. She says to him that it looks as if Hausner is competing with Eichmann for the leading role in a play: 'Israel has to be very careful that this doesn't become a show trial.' Kurt says that young Jewish people refuse to confront the dark times. They're either ashamed of their parents who didn't fight or protect themselves, or they accuse them of dishonorable behavior. 'They think only criminals or whores could have survived the camps.'

Eichmann says that he was merely following orders Back at the trial, we see Eichmann defending himself. He uses bureaucratic language and says that he was merely following orders: 'I had orders. Whether people were killed or not, orders had to be executed. In line with administrative procedure. I was only responsible for a small part of this.' He has the feeling that he is being slowly grilled like a piece of meat and ultimately believes that the charges against him are impossible to substantiate.



Hannah and Kurt talk about the trial Hannah says to Kurt that Eichmann is so different from what she imagined him to be. Kurt says that Eichmann was with the SS and they are scary creatures. Hannah, on the other hand, does not think he is scary at all. 'He sits in his glass box like a ghost...He's not spooky at all. He's a nobody.'



Hannah and Kurt sit in a coffee shop Hannah continues to talk about her observations about Eichmann: 'He speaks in this awful bureaucratic language.' As they speak, a man who is sitting behind

them joins the conversation. He says that his father was a tailor in Berlin: 'He always quoted Faust as he shaved. Mephistopheles was his favorite.' Kurt quotes from Mephistopheles: 'Blood is a very special juice.' Hannah says that Eichmann is no Mephistopheles.



The trial continues Various witnesses recount their experiences during transportation processes. A man talks about his family members who are all dead. Another person recounts that only two hundred of them remained of the one thousand and two hundred who had been transported and that those who arrived after them were all gassed. Another man who is a Muslim says that it was an unnatural power above nature that sustained him. However, he cannot go on to speak and falls to the ground because of the stress he has been enduring. After watching this part of the trial, Hannah goes out.

Hannah talks to Heinrich on the phone Hannah talks to Heinrich on the phone. She says to him that most of the stories of the witnesses have nothing to do with Eichmann as an individual. Heinrich responds that they both knew from the start that the trial would be more about *history* than the deeds of *one man*. Hannah nevertheless thinks that this is dreadful.



Eichmann had to remain loyal to his oath The trial continues. Eichmann defends himself: 'An officer swears an oath of allegiance. If he breaks this oath, then he is a rogue. I still hold this view...An oath is an oath.' Hausner asks Eichmann if he would have shot his father if the Führer had told him so. He responds that he would have been obliged by his oath if he had proven it. Hausner further asks him: 'Was it proven to you that the Jews had to be exterminated?' Eichmann replies: 'I didn't exterminate them.' One of the other interlocutors asks him if he had felt any conflict between his duty and his conscience. Eichmann says one could call it a conscious split state and that one's *personal conscience* was to be *abandoned*.



Hannah believes Eichmann was no anti-Semite Hannah talks to Kurt and his family about the trial. She believes that Eichmann was no anti-Semite because he was merely obeying the law: 'He'd have obeyed any law.' Hannah finds it interesting that a man who did everything a murderous system asked of him, insists he has nothing against Jews. One of the men listening to the conversation interrupts and says that Eichmann is merely lying. Hannah responds that he is telling the truth: 'He transported people to their deaths, but didn't feel responsible for it.' After all, he is a bureaucrat. She also adds that there is a huge difference between the unspeakable horror of the deeds and the mediocrity of the man. of the deeds and the mediocrity of the man.



Hannah leaves Jerusalem Hannah prepares to leave Jerusalem. Kurt accompanies her until she gets into her car. He says to her he wishes she wouldn't leave so quickly. Hannah and Kurt are both sad to leave each other. Hannah also takes with her transcripts of the trial, that is; six tapes of Eichmann's questioning.



Hannah arrives in New York Hannah arrives in New York. Hannah and Heinrich catch up with each other. Hannah has a lot of work to do as she has two thousand pages to read. Soon, there is a call from Mr. Shawn which Heinrich answers but he says to Mr. Shawn that Hannah is not currently there. Later, Hannah organizes the transcripts and begins to work.



Hannah is happy to have Lotte as her assistant Hannah receives five hundred new pages from the court from Israel. Lotte says to her that she will help with sorting them out. Hannah says that she is so lucky to have her: 'I would never be such good friends with my own daughter.'



At night, Hannah's mind is filled with the voices of people who suffered in camps At night, Hannah continues to work on the transcripts. However, her mind is filled with the thoughts and voices of people who suffered in concentration camps. She hears in her mind someone testifying to the events: 'Someone came in and called out. Quick now, the SS are coming back. I had two friends beside me. Once a week the infamous Dr. Mengele selection was held. The rumor that Dr. Mengele had arrived was enough to spread fear and terror throughout the camp.'

Flashback to Hannah's past We are presented with another flashback to Hannah's past. We see her standing near the door of Professor Heidegger's office. She knocks on the door and steps in. She looks at Heidegger with curious eyes. Heidegger says to her: 'You say you want me to teach you how to think. Thinking is a lonely business.'



Hannah and Mary are good friends Hannah and Mary walk through the university buildings. They talk about the novels Mary wrote. Hannah says to her that she has written her first book without a hint of memoir and that it was pure fiction. Mary is not sure whether this is a left-handed compliment or straight criticism. Hannah comments jokingly that Mary cannot take a compliment.



Hannah gives a lecture Hannah explains to students that Western tradition mistakenly assumes that the greatest evils of mankind arise from selfishness. However, she believes evil is much more extreme than that. Evil is more about making human beings *superfluous* or *redundant* as human beings: 'The entire concentration camp system was designed to convince the prisoners they were *unnecessary* before they were murdered...The camp is a place where every activity and human impulse is *senseless*. Where, in other words, *senselessness* is daily produced anew.' One of the students asks Hannah Arendt if she was in a concentration camp. She explains that she spent some time in a French detention camp called Gurs. She was lucky to receive a visa to America so she could escape.



Heinrich has a brain aneurysm Heinrich has a brain aneurysm while he is at home. He collapses to the ground. Charlotte, one of Hannah's friends finds him and brings him to the hospital. Mary comes to Hannah's class to tell the bad news. Mary takes over Hannah's class and Hannah goes to the hospital.

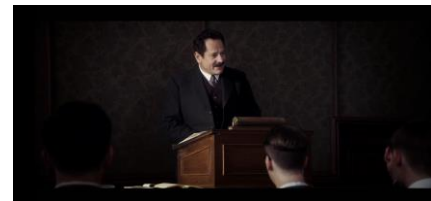
Eichmann is going to be hanged Days after Heinrich has returned home from the hospital, he receives a call. He gives the news to Hannah that Eichmann will be hanged. Hannah responds that they should hang him. Heinrich thinks, on the other hand, that this is not justice: 'The punishment can only give an appearance of justice.' Hannah agrees that there are no real punishments for his deeds. Heinrich says that that's why it'd be braver to let him live.



Hans and Hannah argue about Hannah's thoughts on Eichmann Hans thinks Eichmann is a monster. For Hannah what's new about the Eichmann phenomenon is that there are so many just like him: 'He's a terrifyingly normal human being.' Hans doesn't agree as he says: 'Not all normal people were head of department 4B-4 at the Reich Security Office charged with the extermination of Europe's Jews.' Hannah thinks he is right but Eichmann considered himself an obedient servant of Germany who had to obey the Führer's orders. The Führer's orders became the law and he behaved accordingly. Hans says that it's been proven Eichmann pursued the Final Solution even after Himmler had long since forbidden it. Because 'he wanted to finish his work' of exterminating the Jews.



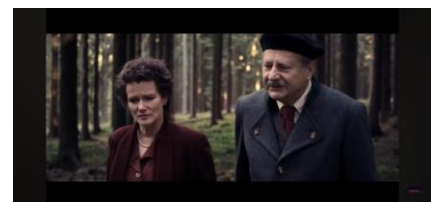
Flashback to Hannah's past We are presented with another flashback to Hannah's past with Martin Heidegger. Heidegger gives a lecture about thinking where he explains that thinking is not as beneficial or practical as the sciences but we nevertheless think because we are thinking beings. Next, we see Hannah in Heidegger's office. She says: 'We are so used to considering reason and passion as opposites, that the idea of passionate thinking, where thinking and being alive are one and the same, is terrifying for me.' Then she excuses herself and leaves the office. Later, we see Heidegger coming to Hannah's room and hugging her.



Hannah's mind is filled with the scenes from Eichmann's trial Hannah thinks about Eichmann's trial. Her mind is filled with the scenes from the trial: One of the interlocutors asks Eichmann: 'You claim you weren't a normal recipient of orders. You thought about what you were doing. Didn't you say that?' 'I don't believe so, no.' 'You were an imbecile? You didn't think at all?' 'Think? Of course, I thought about what I was doing.'



A flashback into Hannah's past Hannah is away from New York, in their winter house. She thinks about her past with Martin Heidegger. We are presented with a flashback where Hannah and Heidegger meet to talk about Heidegger's association with the Nazis. Hannah explains to him that she was sick to her stomach when she read his rector speech: 'The man who'd taught me to think was behaving like a fool.' Heidegger tries to explain himself when he says that he has no talent or experience with politics, but in the future, he wants to learn more about it. Then Hannah asks him why he does not explain himself in public.



Hannah reads her work to Lotte Hannah reads her revised work to Lotte: 'Evil is supposed to be something demonic. Its incarnation is Satan. But in the case of Eichmann, one could find no such trace of satanic greatness. He was simply unable to think.' Lotte thinks that this revised paragraph is wonderful.

People at the New Yorker read and evaluate Hannah's report

At the New Yorker; William Shawn, Frances, and one other staff evaluate Hannah's final work: 'From a humdrum life without significance and consequence, the wind had blown Adolf Eichmann into history.' 'It was sheer thoughtlessness. Something by no means identical with stupidity...that predisposed him to become...one of the greatest criminals of the twentieth century. He was simply unable to think.' Shawn thinks that what she wrote is original. But Frances is more cautious and believes that people might have their heads for some of what she wrote as she seems to be blaming the Jewish victims. Because Hannah writes that Jewish leaders cooperated in one way or another, for one reason or another, with the Nazis.



William Shawn talks to Hannah about her work William Shawn congratulates Hannah on her final report. However, he tells her that there's one section that worries them which is about the description of the Jewish leaders. Hannah says that their relationship with Eichmann's office was very important. Yet, William Shawn responds that her interpretation might disturb the readers: 'To a Jew, this role of the Jewish leaders in the destruction of their own people is undoubtedly the darkest chapter of the whole dark story.' Hannah says this is a fact and thus makes it clear that she does not want to change anything in her report.



People react badly to Hannah's work Hannah's final report is published in the New Yorker magazine. However, people react badly to it, in particular to the part where Hannah describes the role of the Jewish leaders in the holocaust. Innumerable people call William Shawn's office and tell him about their frustrations and anger about the article.



Hannah and Mary's night out in the town Hannah goes out with Mary to play billiards. They talk about Hannah's report. Hannah says that there has not been one single critique of what she actually wrote. Mary asks her whether she had no idea there would be such a furious reaction. Hannah is sure that half of the people haven't even read the book. Mary thinks this is why she should speak publicly about it and expose people's hypocrisy. Hannah, on the other hand, is determined to not explain herself to the *dimwits*.



People discuss about Hannah's work There is an evening talk in New York. People gather to discuss Hannah's work. They are utterly critical of her. They think that her worst mistake was to criticize the Jews while the mass murderer was sitting there in the dock. One person says that Hannah Arendt is 'all cleverness and no feeling'. Soon, William Shawn arrives at the scene. He says that they are treating Hannah Arendt like 'a suspect in a police court' instead of a respected political thinker. Later, Mary also arrives at the scene and protects Hannah's work from the harsh statements of critics.



The Israeli secret service wants Hannah to stop the publication of her book The Israeli secret service sends someone called Siegfried who was in Kurt Blumenfeld's Zionist group in Berlin to talk to Hannah. He requests Hannah that she stop the publication of her book about Adolf Eichmann. Siegfried says that it's incomprehensible that she, a Jew, could tell such lies about her people. When Hannah protests, he says that they



wanted to ask Kurt Blumenfeld to reason with her, but his doctor had said he was dying. Hannah is shocked to hear about this.

Hannah visits Kurt Blumenfeld Hannah goes to Jerusalem to visit Kurt Jerusalem. Kurt is very sick and lying in his bed. When he sees Hannah, he tells her that she has gone too far. He thinks that what she has done is cruel. Kurt asks her whether she has no love for Israel, for her own people. Hannah responds that she has never loved any people, not even Jews: 'I only love my friends. That's the only love I'm capable of.' She says to Kurt that she loves him but he does not respond and turns his back on her.



Lotte cries because of a letter sent to Hannah Hannah is back in New York. Hans' wife comes to help Lotte out. Lotte reads the reviews that are written regarding Hannah's work. However, she is shocked by one of the reviews. Hannah wants her to read the review out loud to them. As Lotte reads the review which is very critical of Hannah, she starts crying: 'Your picture is of a face hard as rock and cold as ice in the North Pole. Contempt hovers on the lips and an iron brutality is seen in the eyes[...]I do not carry hatred in my heart, nor do I take delight in vengeance, but this I know: that the souls of our six million martyrs, whom you desecrated, will swarm about you day and night.'



Hannah talks to university officials Hannah meets with university officials. They advise her to relinquish her teaching obligations. Hannah responds that she will never give up her classes. They think that she may not have enough students who are willing to study with her. Hannah says that she is entirely oversubscribed. She adds that because of the extraordinary support of the students, she decided to accept their invitation and she will speak publicly about the hysterical reactions to her report.



Hannah gives a final speech before the students Hannah Arendt gives a speech before the students where she talks about the phenomenon of the *banality of evil*. She explains that the court had to define Eichmann as a man on trial for his deeds: 'There was no system on trial, no history, no ism, not even anti-Semitism, but only a person.' She further tells that Eichmann always protested that he had never done anything out of his own initiative, that he had no (good or bad) intentions whatsoever, and that he had only obeyed orders: 'This typical Nazi plea makes it clear that the greatest evil in the world is the evil committed by nobodies—evil committed by men without motive, without convictions, without wicked hearts or demonic wills. By human beings who refuse to be persons (individuals). Thus, what Hannah Arendt did was try to reconcile the shocking mediocrity of the man with his staggering deeds.'



Hans talks to Hannah Among the students listening to Hannah's speech is also Hans. After her speech, he talks to her. He thinks that she is both arrogant and ignorant about Jewish affairs and she turns a court trial into a philosophy lesson. According to him, she behaves like a superior German intellectual who looks down on Jews as she accuses the Jews of being accomplices to the Shoah (the Holocaust). Hans believes that Hannah never accepted that the Germans betrayed her. Eichmann was responsible for the transports from Gurs and if she hadn't been lucky enough to escape on time she'd have shared the same fate as the



women who stayed. Hannah cannot stand listening to Hans anymore. Finally, Hans says that he is finished with her and leaves the room.

Hannah and Heinrich's conversation Hannah talks to Heinrich about the banality of evil. She says: 'Evil cannot be both banal and radical at once. Evil is only ever *extreme*. It's never radical. Only *good* can be *profound* and *radical*.' Heinrich asks her whether she would have written about the trial if she'd known what would happen. Hannah says yes: 'Maybe I had to find out who my real friends were.' Heinrich responds: 'Kurt was your friend. He still would be.' Hannah says that Kurt was her family.



CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Hannah Arendt

Hannah Arendt is the protagonist of the film. She is a respected political thinker and historian. She lives in New York with her husband Heinrich Blücher and teaches at the university as a professor. After Adolf Eichmann is captured by Israeli agents and brought to Jerusalem, Hannah Arendt writes to the New Yorker magazine so she can cover the trial. However, her final report leads to a morally intricate controversy and has personal repercussions.

Contemplative: Hannah Arendt is, first of all, a philosopher. She is someone whose very profession is to think and she values thinking above all other occupations. As a young adult in the twenties, she was a student of Martin Heidegger, one of the most influential philosophers of the twentieth century. Thus, she was taught by the best and is knowledgeable about a variety of fields in philosophy.

Investigative: Hannah is an investigative person. Her investigativeness and curiosity lead her to cover Adolf Eichmann's trial. As she watches the trial, she makes careful observations of Eichmann. She contemplates the fact that Eichmann is a mediocre man and tries to reconcile this shocking mediocrity of the man with his staggering deeds. Her contemplative-ness and investigativeness ultimately help her come up with the phenomenon of the *banality of evil*.

Iron-willed: Hannah is iron-willed which means that she is implacably determined on a course of action and very resolute. Even though she faces a lot of harsh criticism from her readers and even friends because of her thoughts, she does not change her views. She does not withdraw her assertions in the face of opposition. She holds onto her point of view as she believes that her portrayal of Eichmann is the very harsh truth about the nature of evil.

Caring: Despite seeming aloof and being described as cold by others, she is ultimately a caring person who values her relationships with her family and friends. Hannah's caring attitude can be observed in her interactions with her husband Heinrich and her close friends such as Kurt Blumenfeld, Mary, and Hans Jonas. She is particularly caring towards Kurt Blumenfeld as he suffers from a heart condition and she has great compassion for him. As she says to her husband at the end of the film, Kurt is her family.

Heinrich Blücher

Heinrich Blücher is Hannah's husband. He is a German poet and philosopher. He teaches philosophy at Bard College despite having no post-secondary education. He is a loving and caring husband who plays an active role in Hannah's life. He is open-minded and supports Hannah throughout the process of the trial and the publication of her work about Eichmann.

Caring: Heinrich is deeply in love with Hannah. Hannah considers him to be the love of her life as she tells Mary when they go out one night to play billiards after the publication of her work. Heinrich is a very caring and considerate husband. At first, he has doubts about Hannah's wish to cover the trial because

he fears that her painful memories may resurface again. He is also emotionally supportive of Hannah after her work is published and she is met with harsh criticism.

Open-minded: Heinrich is an open-minded person who is able to entertain multiple perspectives about a given issue. He frequently has heated debates with Hans Jonas. Hans thinks that Israel has a sacred right to judge Eichmann whereas Heinrich tries to look at the issue from another point of view where he emphasizes that Eichmann was illegally captured by Israel. Other than this, Heinrich is also very supportive of Hannah's work about Eichmann and he never judges her about her personal perspectives regarding Eichmann's mediocrity and the role of the Jewish leaders in the holocaust.

Mary McCarthy

Mary McCarthy is an American novelist, critic, and political activist. She is a close friend of Hannah throughout the film. She is very supportive of her work and even defends her when Hannah's critics harshly judge Hannah's work about Eichmann.

Friendly: Mary is portrayed as a friendly individual. She is very close to Hannah such that they talk about their thoughts, emotions, and relationships very openly and without formalities. After Hannah's work is published and she is met with harsh criticism from readers and friends, Mary and Hannah spend a night out on the town and they talk about how she is being misunderstood and judged by people who haven't even read her work. Mary never judges Hannah for her views and supports her throughout the whole process.

Supportive: Mary is a very supportive friend. Her support for Hannah can be seen in how non-judgmental she is regarding Hannah's final report. She is one of the few people, along with Hannah's husband Heinrich, who does not criticize her perspectives. She even defends Hannah at an evening talk in New York where people criticize Hannah as being 'all cleverness and no feeling'.

Adolf Eichmann

Adolf Eichmann is a German-Austrian official affiliated with the Nazi Party, an officer in the Schutzstaffel (SS) who is put on trial in Jerusalem for war crimes in World War II. We meet him at the very first scene of the film where Israeli agents capture him in Argentina. In the rest of the film, the viewers are presented with real footage from the 1961 trial.

Conformist: One of the characteristics of Eichmann is that he is, above all, a conformist person. This means he behaves or thinks like everyone else, rather than being different; or rather than being an individual. As Hannah Arendt observes him during the trial, he defends himself in a bureaucratic language saying that he merely followed the orders and had only played a small part in the orchestration of the holocaust. As Hannah Arendt points out, he was simply unable to think about what kind of an atrocity was being committed. His conformity and obedience led to his demonic crimes.

Obedient: In addition to not being an individual, Eichmann is an obedient person who follows Hitler's orders until the very end. He defends himself by saying: 'An officer swears an oath of allegiance. If he breaks this oath, then he is a rogue. I still hold this view...An oath is an oath.' As Hannah observes, Adolf Eichmann is someone who would have followed any law as he was unable to make thoughtful decisions by himself.

Martin Heidegger

Heidegger is a German philosopher who is best known for his contributions to phenomenology, hermeneutics, and existentialism. He is often considered to be one of the most important and influential philosophers of the twentieth century. He is Hannah's professor in the twenties and they have a romantic affair while Hannah is a university student.

Contemplative: Heidegger is first of all a contemplative person whose very profession is to think. As he lectures his students, he tells them that thinking is not as practical or beneficial as the sciences but we think because we are thinking beings (German: *denkende Wesen*). In the film, we see how Hannah is shocked because of and disappointed at Heidegger's affiliation with the Nazi Party. In their walk through the forest, Heidegger defends himself by saying that he has no talent or experience with politics, but in the future, he wants to learn more about it.

William Shawn

William Shawn is the editor of the New Yorker magazine. He is excited about Hannah Arendt's offering and thinks that it is a privilege to have a German-Jewish émigré of high standing to cover the trial. Throughout the film, we see that he is a kind individual and not quick to judge people severely.

Charitable: William Shawn is presented as a charitable individual. When Hannah takes a long time to write her work, William Shawn phones her to talk to her about when her work will be ready. As he is a kind individual, he finally tells Hannah that she can take as long as she needs. Moreover, after he reads Hannah's final report, he praises it as being original. Furthermore, he accepts to include Hannah's controversial writings about the cooperation of the Jewish leaders with the Nazis which once again shows us his charitableness.

Lotte Köhler

Lotte Köhler is Hannah Arendt's personal assistant. She is a young woman who helps out Hannah Arendt throughout the whole process of the trial. Hannah likes Lotte as a person and even says to her that she is so lucky to have her: 'I would never be such good friends with my own daughter.'

Disciplined: Lotte is, first and foremost, a disciplined individual. She is work-oriented and we do not get to learn any details about her personal life. She is presented as a reliable individual who helps Hannah throughout the process of writing the report. Hannah sometimes reads her work to Lotte and asks her about what she thinks of the things she wrote. Thus, Hannah trusts her judgment regarding the quality of her writings.

Hans Jonas

Hans Jonas is a German-born American Jewish philosopher. He is a close friend of Hannah Arendt. In the film, we learn that he had joined the British Army to fight against the Nazis in WWII. At the beginning of the film, he is very excited about Hannah's trip to Jerusalem to cover the trial of Eichmann. However, things take a different course after Hannah's final work is published and there is a rift between the two friends.

Nationalistic: Hans Jonas is a Jewish nationalist. He is presented in the film as being proud of being a Jew. He believes that Israel has a sacred right to judge Adolf Eichmann. When Heinrich points out that Eichmann was illegally captured, he talks about how he joined the British Army to fight against the Nazis and that: 'Heinrich doesn't know what it means to take up arms to defend his convictions.'

Narrow-minded: After Hannah's final report is published, Hans is utterly disappointed. He thinks that Hannah is being both arrogant and ignorant about what happened to the Jewish people. According to him, she behaves like a superior German intellectual who looks down on Jews as she accuses the Jews of being accomplices to the Shoah. He thinks Eichmann is a monster, not a mediocre individual. Because of his nationalism and pride, he cannot entertain the possibility that Hannah may be right about the banality of evil. Thus, he can be said to be a narrow-minded individual who is incapable of entertaining alternative perspectives.

Kurt Blumenfeld

Kurt Blumenfeld is a German-born Zionist who lives in Jerusalem. He is a close friend of Hannah. He is a Jewish nationalist like Hans Jonas. In the film, he is presented as a kind and friendly individual who cares deeply about Hannah. Nevertheless, there is a rift between the two friends when he reads Hannah's final report.

Nationalistic: Kurt is a Jewish nationalist. He thinks Eichmann is a scary monster. He even likens him to Mephistopheles when he quotes from Faust: 'Blood is a very special juice.' Thus, he cannot accept Hannah's report when he reads her work. When Hannah finds out that Kurt is very sick, she once again goes to Jerusalem to visit him. However, Kurt does not want to speak to her as he thinks that what she has done is cruel. He asks her whether she has no love for Israel, for her own people. Even though Hannah says that she loves him, he turns his back on Hannah as his nationalism is stronger than the love he has for Hannah.

Friendly: Kurt is presented as a friendly and caring character. He is very close to Hannah and appreciates her strength, courage, and intelligence. However, his nationalism overshadows his friendliness at the end of the film.

THEMES

SOCIETY

Identity Identity is the qualities, beliefs, personality traits, appearance, and expressions that characterize a person or a group. Identity encompasses various aspects such as occupational, religious, national, ethnic or racial, gender, educational, generational, and political identities, among others. In *Hannah Arendt*, we see a contrast between the identities of the German population and the Jewish population. In World War II, the Nazis propagated hostility to or prejudice against Jewish people. This ideology is referred to as anti-Semitism which is a form of racism. Racial antisemitism is driven by the belief that Jews constitute a distinct race with traits that are *repulsive* or *inferior* to the preferred traits within a person's society. Historically, most of the world's violent antisemitic events have taken place in Christian Europe. In *Hannah Arendt*, we observe that the Nazis' perception of Jewish people led to an unprecedented atrocity. The interesting point, however, is that Hannah Arendt is *both* German and a Jew. Thus, she has *multiple identities* that are, to a certain extent, in conflict with one another. On the one hand, she tries to understand the perspective of the Nazis, such as Adolf Eichmann. As she observes Adolf Eichmann, she concludes that he is merely a bureaucrat who is unable to think for himself. From this observation, she concludes that the extreme kinds of evil are not always done by those with malicious intent but by people without motives and critical thinking abilities. However, her conclusion is not easy for Jews to accept as they see Adolf Eichmann as the incarnation of evil. On the other hand, Hannah Arendt is also a Jew. Therefore, people naturally expect her to side with the Jews. When this expectation is not fulfilled, Hannah Arendt is met with harsh criticism and hostility. Here, it should be noted that above being a German and a Jew, Hannah Arendt is a thinker and a philosopher. Thus, her main and most important identity is that of an intellectual who is neither German nor Jew. Hannah Arendt's identity as a thinker is also what is most emphasized in the film. All in all, we can assert that Arendt's identities as a German and a Jew are subordinate to her identity as a thinker.

POLITICS

Freedom of Thought Freedom of thought is the freedom of an individual to hold or consider a fact, viewpoint, or thought, independent of others' viewpoints. Benjamin Franklin says: 'Without freedom of thought there can be no such thing as *wisdom* and no such thing as public liberty without freedom of speech'. In *Hannah Arendt*, we see an individual who is not afraid to assert her point of view and perspectives even if asserting one's views will lead to harsh criticism directed at the individual. Hannah Arendt is an independent thinker and philosopher who resolutely defends her theories and findings. She is iron-willed. Thus, she does not withdraw her assertions in the face of opposition. She believes in the truth of her description of Adolf Eichmann as an individual who is unable to think and form mature judgments. Moreover, she is also of the view that the Jewish leaders truly played a role in the orchestration of the holocaust. Despite being perceived by Jews as blaming the victims, she believes that

the cooperation of the Jewish leaders with the Nazis is a fact. She is thus confident in her assertions. When the viewers witness the struggles of Arendt and her resoluteness, they also witness her incredible *courage* to stand out against the masses. All in all, Hannah Arendt shows us the importance of having the right to freedom of thought and speech.

Power Political power refers to the amount of political control a person or group has in a country. In *Hannah Arendt*, we are presented with a post-war world. Atrocities against Jewish people have come to an end and the Nazis had already been judged in the Nuremberg trials. However, we see that Adolf Eichmann finds a means to escape to Argentina with the help of the Vatican. Here, Israel uses its political power and sends its secret agents to Argentina to capture Eichmann. Even though some may hold this event to be illegal, many Jewish people believe that Israel has a right to try a Nazi for crimes against the Jewish people. A second instance where Israel uses its political power is when Adolf Eichmann is judged in court. After the long process of the trial, the decision is made that he will be hanged. Thus, we can say that beginning from his capture in Argentina up to the point where Eichmann is hanged, Israel uses and exerts its political power to shape the course of events in history.

CRIME

Injustice There are many cases of injustice in *Hannah Arendt*. First of all, it is assumed that the viewers know about the historical background: what the Nazis did to Jewish people, the atrocities of the war, concentration camps, and the suffering entailed in the process of the extermination of a people. It is against this backdrop that the viewers are presented with the story of Hannah Arendt. Therefore, it is natural to assert that the greatest injustice is that which was done to the Jews in the concentration camps as Nazis violated the very human rights of the Jews. In addition to this historical backdrop, we have the case of Adolf Eichmann who as a German official transported people to their deaths. Thus, he is responsible for starting the chain of events that led to the genocide of the Jewish people. This is the reason why Eichmann is judged as one of the worst criminals in history and the Israeli court decides that he be hanged. It is interesting to note that Heinrich Blücher has a different point of view regarding the case of Eichmann. He thinks that it was illegal for Israel to capture Eichmann. Moreover, he also voices his opinion that it would be braver to let Eichmann live as he thinks that this is not justice: '*The punishment can only give an appearance of justice.*' All in all, we can say that there are two types of injustice in *Hannah Arendt*. The first type of injustice is the Nazis' *general* violation of the Jews' human rights which builds the historical backdrop of the film. The second type of injustice is Adolf Eichmann's *particular* act of transporting the Jewish people to their very deaths.

Accusation (False ?) Pride is defined by Merriam-Webster as 'confidence and satisfaction in oneself'. Pride may be related to one's own abilities or achievements. Richard Taylor defined pride as 'the justified love of oneself', as opposed to *false pride* or narcissism. Similarly, St. Augustine defined it as 'the love of one's own excellence'. In *Hannah Arendt*, one question that the viewers might ask themselves is whether Hannah Arendt suffers from false pride. Her critics describe her as arrogant, ignorant, or having no feelings. One of the reviewers of her work writes that: '[her] picture is of a face hard as rock and cold as ice in the North Pole. *Contempt* hovers on the lips and an iron *brutality* is seen in the eyes [...] the souls of our six million martyrs, whom you desecrated, will swarm about you day and night.' Thus, people's perceptions of Hannah Arendt and her work are generally negative. However, the viewers also witness Arendt's personal journey throughout the film. We witness her struggles, her suppressed emotions, her caring for her friends, and her search for the truth no matter how hard it might be for others to swallow. Based on these pieces of evidence, it can be asserted that Hannah Arendt does *not* suffer from false pride or narcissism even though she is *perceived* by others to be doing so. Hannah Arendt is an individual, an independent thinker, a free spirit, a philosopher guided by rationality, and has an investigative attitude to find the Truth. Her quest to find the truth costs her friendships and the respect of many readers. However, her determination and courage underline her strong character. All in all, it can be said that Hannah Arendt has confidence in herself and her achievements. However, she does *not* have false pride.

Punishment As a result of the particular act of injustice committed by Adolf Eichmann, the court decides that he be hanged. This death penalty can be seen as an exemplification of the ancient principle

of 'eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth'. After all, Eichmann was responsible for sending people to their deaths, so it *seems just* to subject him to the same fate by hanging him and ending his life. However, there are people with differing perspectives on this issue. To quote Martin Luther King, he said: 'If we do an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, we will be a blind and toothless nation.' In a parallel fashion, in the film, Heinrich Blücher believes that there are no real punishments for his deeds. Justice is not really won. By hanging Eichmann, people only have the *appearance* of justice. The innumerable people whom Eichmann sent to their deaths will not get their lives back with the hanging of Eichmann. In fact, no matter what kind of punishment is given to the perpetrators, the suffering that the victims endured in gas chambers and concentration camps will never be undone. It is for this reason that Heinrich Blücher believes that it would be better to let Eichmann live so that he could live alone with his conscience and face the moral consequences of his acts. All in all, it is up to the viewers to decide for themselves whether Adolf Eichmann's hanging was a just decision.

Guilt Guilt refers to a *feeling* of worry or unhappiness that you have because you have done something wrong, such as causing harm to another person. Other than a feeling, the term also refers to the *fact* or state of having done something wrong or committed a crime. Thus, it is a term with multiple meanings. In *Hannah Arendt*, it is clearly shown that Adolf Eichmann was responsible for sending people to their deaths and thus, he committed a crime. Therefore, he is guilty as a matter of fact. However, when we consider the issue of *feeling* guilty, we see that Adolf Eichmann never felt guilty as he never believed that he did something wrong. According to Eichmann, he was merely following orders and the orders had to be executed in line with administrative procedure. He was responsible for only a small part of the whole process. Moreover, he says that when an officer swears an oath of allegiance, he has to abide by this oath. Otherwise, he is a rogue. He also clearly states that he did *not* exterminate the Jews. Based on his sayings, the viewers can draw either of the two conclusions. On the one hand, he might be telling the truth that as a bureaucrat he never felt responsible for the ultimate fate of the Jews. On the other hand, he might be lying to present himself as innocent. Hannah Arendt believes that he is telling the truth. Yet, many Jewish people including Hans Jonas, are of the view that Eichmann was merely presenting a facade and he is truly the incarnation of evil. We may never know which was the case as we do not have access to the inner feelings and thoughts of Eichmann. Thus, it is up to the viewers to decide for themselves whether Eichmann was guilty or not.

PSYCHOLOGY

Sadness There are several scenes where Hannah Arendt experiences sadness. One of these scenes is when Hannah talks to her husband about the French camp at Gurs. As Hannah recounts, many women stayed at the camp because they feared their husbands wouldn't be able to find them if they left. Soon later, the women stopped taking care of themselves and even Hannah lost her courage. As Hannah tells her inner struggles and emotions to her husband, she is filled with sadness and painful memories. Another scene where Hannah is filled with painful memories is when she is alone at night and thinks about people who suffered in concentration camps. She hears in her mind someone testifying to the events: 'Someone came in and called out. Quick now, the SS are coming back. I had two friends beside me. Once a week the infamous Dr. Mengele selection was held. The rumor that Dr. Mengele had arrived was enough to spread fear and terror throughout the camp.' [Josef Mengele (1911-1979) whom the witness talks about was a German SS officer and physician. He performed deadly experiments on prisoners at Auschwitz II, where he was a member of the team of doctors who selected victims to be murdered in the gas chambers and was one of the doctors who administered the gas.] Another scene where Hannah clearly experiences sadness is when Heinrich has a brain aneurysm. The possibility of losing her husband fills her with deep sadness and despair. A fourth scene where we are presented with sadness is when Hannah talks to her assistant Lotte about her father. We learn that he died when Hannah was seven and she always knew him as a sick man. Then she suddenly bursts into tears which shows us that she has a lot of suppressed memories that resurface from time to time.

Disappointment After Hannah's final report is published, many readers and Hannah's friends are disappointed with her. There are two reasons for their disappointment. The first reason is that Hannah Arendt makes the case that Jewish leaders, in one way or another, for one reason or another, cooperated with the Nazi officials. We do not get to learn the details about this cooperation. However, people think

that Hannah Arendt is blaming the Jewish victims for the sufferings they endured. The second reason for people's disappointment is that Hannah Arendt tries to understand Adolf Eichmann rather than simply judging him. She thinks that he is someone incapable of forming mature judgments and unable to think for himself. Thus, he would have obeyed any law. Therefore, it is understandable how he sent the Jewish people to their deaths without ever feeling guilty. Such a position, however, is incomprehensible to people like Hans Jonas who firmly believe that Adolf Eichmann is a true monster, the very incarnation of evil on Earth. Hans Jonas believes that Hannah acts like German intellectuals who look down on the Jewish people and that she could never accept that the Germans betrayed her and would have killed her if they had the chance. Therefore, he is utterly disappointed in her.

Regret Regret refers to feeling sad, repentant, or disappointed over something that one has done or failed to do. In *Hannah Arendt*, we can examine the theme of regret regarding two of the characters: Adolf Eichmann and Hannah Arendt. When we consider the case of Adolf Eichmann, we see that he had no regret regarding the atrocities that he caused. He did not feel responsible for his acts. As he says in the trial, he merely followed the orders which had to be executed in line with administrative procedure. He also states very confidently: 'I did not exterminate the Jews.' This statement shows us that he has no feelings of guilt or regret about his role in the orchestration of the Holocaust. The second character that we can examine is Hannah Arendt. She is an iron-willed individual who does not withdraw her assertions when faced with harsh criticism. She continues to defend her views and perspectives. As we see in the film, Hannah Arendt believes that she has tried to examine the character of Eichmann rationally and as *objectively* as possible. As a result of her examination, she came up with the term of *banality of evil* which underlines how an ordinary individual who is merely unable to think can commit unprecedented atrocities. Even though readers and her friends criticize her very harshly, she does not change her point of view. This causes serious breaks in her friendly relations. Nevertheless, she is determined to defend her case. As Arendt states in the very last scene of the film: 'Maybe I had to find out who my real friends were.' All in all, we see that both Eichmann and Arendt feel no regret for their views and particular actions.

Otherness After Hannah Arendt's final work is published, the Jewish people are outraged at her statements. Jewish people and many readers think that Arendt is simply blaming the victims. It seems as if she is siding with the Nazis. Therefore, people's perception of Arendt changes dramatically. Arendt becomes the other. She is considered to be someone who neither belongs with the Germans nor with the Jews. Hans Jonas likens her to a German intellectual who looks down on Jews. Kurt Blumenfeld is shocked at how she has no love for Israel or her people. On the other hand, Hannah is a Jew herself. She has been in a concentration camp and could have been killed by German Nazis. Therefore, she does not belong with the Germans either. For these reasons, she is separated from both sides of the equation. As explained in the identity section, her identity as a thinker and philosopher is more significant than her national or ethnic background. Hannah Arendt's teacher Martin Heidegger says to her that thinking is a lonely business. To think means that one accepts the possibility of being separated from others because of one's views. Hannah Arendt is an independent thinker and philosopher. Thus, it can be said that her otherness is a product of her philosophizing activity and contemplative-ness.

Loss Hannah Arendt's husband Heinrich Blücher has a brain aneurysm. So, Hannah almost loses her husband. This unfortunate event also causes her additional delays with regard to her final report on the trial of Eichmann. After the publication of her report, her friends cannot accept her perspectives, in particular regarding her views about the collaboration of the Jewish leaders with the Nazis which for Hannah is the darkest part of the whole story. She loses both Hans Jonas and Kurt Blumenfeld as friends. This loss is perhaps not as tragic as the physical death of a loved one. Nevertheless, it causes Hannah to become *the other* and be lonelier than ever before. As Hannah's story is the main focus of the film, her personal losses are to be examined first. However, the viewers are reminded throughout the film of the millions of Jewish people who lost their lives in concentration camps. The atrocities committed against the Jewish people by SS officials such as Josef Mengele are of such a degree that they cannot even be compared to the personal obstacles and issues that Hannah Arendt faces which can only be said to be relatively mild.

QUEST

Explore Hannah Arendt explores her environment throughout the film. She is an émigré, a European in the Americas. She lives in New York and teaches there. Thus, she is connected to many people, her readers, her students, and her colleagues. To cover the trial of Adolf Eichmann she goes to Jerusalem. Thus, she explores the country of Israel. She meets her old friend Kurt Blumenfeld. Next, she witnesses the trial of Adolf Eichmann. So, she sees a Nazi in the flesh. Afterward, she goes back to New York and has to sift through the documents of Eichmann's trial. After the publication of her work, she finds herself in an environment where people's perceptions of her have negatively changed. So, she has to navigate through this environment and keep on defending her views. She has to strike a balance between the importance of her friendships and her philosophical desire to find the truth about Adolf Eichmann. All in all, it can be said that Hannah Arendt explores New York and Jerusalem while navigating complex social relationships throughout the film.

Investigation *Hannah Arendt's* main focus is the trial of Adolf Eichmann and how Arendt's report of the trial causes great controversy in her social environment. The investigation part of the film is related to Adolf Eichmann's trial. It is not only the judges of Israel who try to comprehend the case of Eichmann but also Arendt who tries to uncover the true nature of this notorious criminal. She witnesses the trial attentively. She listens to Eichmann's defense of himself and his excuses. She sifts through thousands of pages of the trial and constructs a theory about the *banality of evil*. Her theorization and philosophizing process are the very investigations that she leads. She tries not to forgive but to truly *understand* so as to uncover the reality of the situation.

RELATIONSHIP

Marriage Hannah Arendt's marriage is characterized in the film as being a marriage of love, respect, and devotion. Heinrich Blücher is always there to support Hannah emotionally. At the beginning of the film, he has doubts about Hannah's willingness to cover the trial because he fears that her painful memories of the concentration camp at Gurs may resurface. Thus, he cares for her deeply. They also keep in touch while Hannah is in Jerusalem. After she returns, Heinrich suffers from a brain aneurysm which devastates Hannah and causes her additional delays in her final report. Throughout this difficult process, Hannah is always there for Heinrich and helps him to recover. After Hannah's work is published and she is met with harsh criticism, Heinrich keeps on supporting her. He never judges her for her views and becomes a stable ground on which Hannah can rely. All in all, we can say that Hannah and Heinrich's marriage is a marriage characterized by strong bonds, love, and respect for each other.

Friendship In the film, we see that Hannah's three friendships are emphasized. These friends are Mary McCarthy, Hans Jonas, and Kurt Blumenfeld. Mary is an American novelist whom Hannah met in New York. They are very close friends who confide in each other and comfortably talk about their thoughts, feelings, and relationships. Mary is also a kind individual who buys flowers for Hannah which she appreciates very much. Mary also supports Hannah regarding her covering of the trial. After Hannah's work is published, Mary does not judge the contents of what Hannah has written and understands and respects her point of view regarding Eichmann and the Jewish leaders. Thus, Hannah and Mary's friendship is characterized by mutual affection, love, trust, and support. Hans Jonas is another close and dear friend of Hannah whom she met when she was a student of Heidegger. Hans is a proud Jew which causes friction between the two friends after Hannah's work is published. Hans sees Hannah as an arrogant individual, looking down upon the Jews not unlike the German intellectuals of the time. He cannot accept her views about Eichmann or the role of the Jewish leaders in the holocaust. At the end of the film, he says he is finished with her and ends their friendship. Kurt Blumenfeld is likewise a proud Jew. Regarding Hannah's work, he thinks that she has no love for Israel or her people. He does not want to talk to her anymore. Thus, parallel to the case of Hans Jonas, the friendship between Hannah and Kurt ends bitterly.

Love Hannah Arendt's love of her life is Heinrich Blücher. Their marriage is characterized by mutual love, affection, support, and caring. Heinrich is someone whom Hannah can always depend upon. He supports her on her good and bad days. Hannah, likewise, cares deeply for Heinrich and tries her best to make sure that Heinrich recovers from his brain aneurysm. Another love affair that Hannah has, is with the famous philosopher Martin Heidegger. They meet each other when Hannah is a student of Heidegger.

Hannah is impressed by his intelligence and contemplative-ness. She wants him to teach her how to think. However, this student-teacher relationship turns into love as there is romantic attraction between the two. Yet, when Hannah finds out about Heidegger's supporting the Nazis, she cannot believe how her great teacher who taught her how to think could behave so foolishly. We do not exactly know how their relationship ends. All in all, Hannah's true love of her life can be said to be Heinrich Blücher rather than Heidegger as Hannah herself confesses to her friend Mary that the greatest love of her life is Heinrich.

PAST

Memory Memory plays an important role in *Hannah Arendt*. The film is set against the historical background of World War II. So, the viewers are always reminded of the devastating aspects of the war period. The protagonist Hannah is someone who has suffered in a concentration camp and we see throughout the film that her mind is filled with memories of those days at the camp. Moreover, during Eichmann's trial, many witnesses talk about their past and how the Jewish people suffered during the transportation processes and at the concentration camps. Furthermore, the viewers are presented with historical footage from the 1961 trial. So, the viewers are constantly reminded of the memories and remnants of the war period. In addition to these, we are also presented with flashbacks to Hannah's university years where she has an affair with Martin Heidegger. These flashbacks are Hannah's memories that resurface from time to time. Overall, it can be asserted that the historical backdrop and Hannah's personal memories at the concentration camp and with the philosopher Heidegger play a significant role in the film.