**Banksy- The Banality of the Banality of Evil**



A thrift store painting vandalised then re-donated to the thrift store.

* **banal**

adjective

so lacking in originality as to be obvious and boring.

"songs with banal, repeated words"

synonyms: trite, hackneyed, clichéd, platitudinous, vapid, commonplace, ordinary, common, stock, conventional, stereotyped, overused, overdone, overworked, stale, worn out, timeworn, tired, threadbare, hoary, hack, unimaginative, humdrum, ho-hum, unoriginal, uninteresting, dull, uninvolving, trivial

* **Otto Adolf Eichmann** was a German Nazi SS-Obersturmbannführer (lieutenant colonel) and one of the major organizers of the Holocaust. Because of his organizational talents and ideological reliability, Eichmann was charged by SS-Obergruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich with the task of facilitating and managing the logistics of mass deportation of Jews to ghettos and extermination camps in German-occupied Eastern Europe.
* **Hannah Arendt**
	+ The Human Condition, published in 1958, is one of the central theoretical works of the philosopher Hannah Arendt. She is credited with coining the phrase “the human condition.”
	+ Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the **Banality of Evil** is a book by political theorist Hannah Arendt, originally published in 1963. Arendt, a Jew who fled Germany during Adolf Hitler's rise to power, reported on Adolf Eichmann's trial for The New Yorker.

Arendt states that aside from a desire for improving his career, Eichmann showed no trace of antisemitism or psychological damage. Her subtitle famously introduced the phrase the "banality of evil," which also serves as the final words of the book. In part, at least, the phrase refers to Eichmann's deportment at the trial, displaying neither guilt nor hatred, claiming he bore no responsibility because he was simply "doing his job" ("He did his *duty*...; he not only obeyed *orders*, he also obeyed the *law*." p. 135).

Arendt takes Eichmann's court testimony and the historical evidence available, and makes several observations about Eichmann:

* Eichmann's inability to think for himself was exemplified by his consistent use of "stock phrases and self-invented clichés," demonstrating his unrealistic worldview and crippling lack of communication skills.
* Eichmann was a "joiner" his entire life, in that he constantly joined organizations in order to define himself, and had difficulties thinking for himself without doing so.
* Despite his claims, Eichmann was not, in fact, very intelligent. As Arendt details in the book's second chapter, he was unable to complete either high school or vocational training, and only found his first significant job (traveling salesman for the Vacuum Oil Company) through family connections.
* During his imprisonment before his trial, the Israeli government sent no fewer than six psychologists to examine Eichmann. Not only did these doctors find no trace of mental illness, but they also found no evidence of abnormal personality whatsoever.
* Arendt confirms several points where Eichmann actually claimed he was responsible for certain atrocities, even though he lacked the power and/or expertise to take these actions. Moreover, Eichmann made these claims even though they hurt his defense, hence Arendt's remark that "Bragging was the vice that was Eichmann's undoing."

**DISCUSS**

**What is the human condition?**

The human condition is "the characteristics, key events, and situations which compose the essentials of human existence, such as birth, growth, emotionality, aspiration, conflict, and mortality."- Wikipedia

Philosophical thinking about the nature of evil usually rests on the assumption that evil deeds are the product of strong passions--pride, ambition, envy, hatred. If evil is banal then is it really evil? For something to be considered part of human nature do you think it needs to have a passionate connection to the psyche? Is the human condition the result of our nurturing as children or is it just in our nature?