

# What Is the Value of Thinking?

*Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World.* By Elisabeth Young-Bruehl. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982. Pp. xxv, 563. \$25.00.

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On one rather typical page of her comprehensive survey of the life of the late Hannah Arendt, Elisabeth Young-Bruehl describes the style of review "that became characteristic of" her subject.<sup>1</sup> Let us start at the top of the page. The author begins by referring to Arendt's fruitful acquaintances with Kurt Wolff, the founder of Pantheon Books, and with the Schockens of Schocken Publishing, who invited Arendt to meet T.S. Eliot at a business meeting where Eliot "was received like a traveling salesman." This allusion enables Young-Bruehl to make a not-altogether graceless transition to Arendt's 1945 review of Raissa Maritain's book, *Adventures in Grace*.<sup>2</sup> The transition consists of recording the facts that (i) the Schockens missed the opportunity to publish some translations of German poetry by Randall Jarrell; (ii) Jarrell, whom Arendt came to know well, substituted for Margaret Marshall as book-review editor of the *Nation* during 1946; (iii) Marshall had the previous year written in high praise<sup>3</sup> of an article by Arendt;<sup>4</sup> and (iv) Marshall had subsequently asked Arendt to review the Maritain book.

In the page's final paragraph, we come to the matter of Arendt's characteristic reviewing style. Her response to Marshall's invitation was, according to Young-Bruehl, a "long general discussion" in which the book itself "was briefly mentioned." Her review surveyed neo-Catholic thought in France (as well as G.K. Chesterton's thought in England) with special reference to some of its quasi-Fascistic tendencies, and focused on the exceptional case of Jacques Maritain, who was (although Young-Bruehl does not say so) Raissa Maritain's husband. It is mentioned that Arendt had once been acquainted briefly with Maritain through the good offices of (we now move to the first few lines of the next page) Paul Tillich.

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1. E. YOUNG-BRUEHL, *HANNAH ARENDT: FOR LOVE OF THE WORLD* 190 (1982) [hereinafter cited by page number only].

2. Arendt, *Christianity and Revolution*, *NATION*, Sept. 22, 1945, at 288.

3. See Marshall, *Notes by the Way*, *NATION*, Mar. 17, 1945, at 308, 308-09.

4. Arendt, *Approaches to the "German Problem,"* *PARTISAN REV.*, Winter 1945, at 93.

What Arendt found “embarrassing” about Jacques Maritain, despite her admiration for him, we are told, was his compelling need for truth. This, she thought, was unphilosophical, because “[p]hilosophy concerned with truth ever was and probably always will be a kind of *docta ignorantia*—highly learned and therefore highly ignorant.”<sup>5</sup> The paragraph concludes with a reflection of the extent to which Jarrell must have appreciated this *bon mot*.

This single segment of just over a page captures the essence of the book itself, Arendt’s thought, and the dilemma confronting any serious reviewer of the book. These three topics will serve as the divisions of the remainder of the present Review. Inasmuch as it will heavily emphasize the book at hand, the pattern and thrust of my Review will therefore diverge significantly from the reviewing style that, according to her biographer, Hannah Arendt established in her 1945 treatment—or rather nontreatment—of *Adventures in Grace*.

### I. The Essence of the Book

To call Young-Bruehl’s effort comprehensive is in one sense a drastic understatement. The page I have summarized succeeds in dropping a number of very well-known names from several spheres of endeavor and in giving the reader a good sense of some of Arendt’s own principal preoccupations. It also offers brief but breathtaking overviews of an important cultural phenomenon (neo-Catholic thought), of an important philosopher (Jacques, though not Raissa, Maritain), and of the nature of philosophy itself. Most of the book is written in the same vein.

Its subject, Hannah Arendt, lived an extremely full life. She was deeply involved with, and touched by, most of the major developments of the first three-quarters of this century. She was born in 1906 in what was then Königsberg. During the Weimar era she became a university student of theology and philosophy at several German universities, where she studied with Martin Heidegger, Edmund Husserl, and Karl Jaspers. After her first husband fled to Paris, she remained in Berlin to shelter refugees from the police during the early period of Nazi hegemony; she eventually left Germany and, after a time, became the overseer of the Baroness Germaine de Rothschild’s contributions to Jewish charities. She fled once more after the German occupation of France, managing to reach the United States via Portugal in 1941 with her new husband, Heinrich Blücher. Thereafter, New York City remained her home base until her death in 1975. Her early jobs in the United States included part-time teaching, writing, the executive directorship of the Commission on Euro-

5. P. 191.

pean Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, and a senior editorship at Schocken. Later, she held senior faculty appointments at the New School for Social Research in New York (where Elisabeth Young-Bruehl was one of her doctoral student) and on the Committee for Social Thought of the University of Chicago, as well as visiting appointments at Princeton and elsewhere. She lectured extensively and wrote a number of books; the first to be widely read was *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, first published in 1951. She was involved in numerous controversies; the most acerbic and best known surrounded her analysis of the trial of Adolph Eichmann by the State of Israel. Honorary degrees and other distinguished awards were heaped upon her in her later years.<sup>6</sup>

That is the bare factual material with which Young-Bruehl had to work. As she acknowledges, she was able to interview a number of those who knew Arendt, and she had access to considerable archival material, especially letters. Finally, Young-Bruehl was both well acquainted with Arendt and shared many of her intellectual, and especially her philosophical, interests.<sup>7</sup>

What has emerged? The book is eminently readable, filled with facts, comprehensive, and well annotated—just what we expect from a good biography. It contains some fascinating revelations, with just a *souçon* of scandal about some of them. (The short, sentimental account of a brief romantic connection between the young Hannah Arendt and Martin Heidegger<sup>8</sup> is the most “sensational,” and the revelation most frequently noted by readers.) The book is intentionally kind and respectful toward its subject without being excessively reverent. It is similarly pious, in the older and more positive sense of that word, toward Heinrich Blücher, Arendt’s husband and companion for nearly half of her life.

Assuming, then, that one has not approached this book in the hope of participating in a grand orgy of iconoclasm, what more could a reader ask for? Young-Bruehl sensed at least part of the answer. In her preface, she alludes to Arendt’s rigidly-maintained separation of the public and the private and to her strongly-held aversion to writing intimately about others.<sup>9</sup> Arendt surrounded herself with friends—a number of whom her biographer was able to interview—and yet a certain sense of distance remains. The reader is at the end tempted to ask, “Yes, but what was Hannah Arendt *really* like?” This phenomenon suggests many interesting conceptual problems in psychology and in the philosophy of mind.

6. A few months before her death, for instance, the Government of Denmark named her recipient of its Sonning Prize for Contributions to European Civilization. Pp. 460-63.

7. Young-Bruehl’s own study of Jaspers’ thought, E. YOUNG-BRUEHL, *FREEDOM AND KARL JASPERS’S PHILOSOPHY* (1981), was published in tandem with her Arendt biography.

8. Pp. 49-50.

9. Pp. xvi-xvii.

In Arendt's case, there is an overwhelmingly obvious source of information about what she really was like—her extensive public writings. This is an even more appropriate direction in which to turn if one is, as I am, highly skeptical about Arendt's view of the sharp separability of the public and the private spheres. But in this respect as well, Young-Bruehl's effort is somewhat disappointing. True, she proposes some themes to unify the roots and contours of Arendt's thought; the idea of the Jew as "conscious pariah," for instance, developed by Arendt in her biography of Rahel Varnhagen, a famous Berlin *salon* figure of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries,<sup>10</sup> is certainly important and useful.<sup>11</sup> Young-Bruehl also dutifully summarizes the main points of all of Arendt's important works, but these summaries do not pretend to be highly systematic, comprehensive, or analytic. The extant secondary literature on Arendt's thought receives no systematic treatment—a surprising omission in view of the book's overall length and its otherwise extensive documentation. In fact, behind Young-Bruehl's objective reporting of Arendt's intellectual positions and those of her principal critics, the reader senses only a highly qualified enthusiasm for her written work,<sup>12</sup> as distinguished from her role as mentor and friend.

The "more" for which the reader might reasonably have wished, then, is a more penetrating insight into Hannah Arendt as a thinker. Instead we observe a person of courage, energy, and very strong convictions on most of the great issues of her times, who had many interesting friends and acquaintances, wrote many essays and books, gave many lectures, and eventually became quite famous. All of these qualities and activities require some thought, but taken together they do not necessarily add up to a portrait of a great thinker. As the more-or-less random page summarized at the outset of this Review suggests, the essence of Young-Bruehl's book, fascinating and often even riveting as it may be, is its chattiness. And while the book does refer to some of the tributes made to Arendt as a thinker, it does not itself constitute another such tribute.

10. See H. ARENDT, *RAHEL VARNHAGEN: THE LIFE OF A JEWISH WOMAN* 199-228 (R. Winston & C. Winston trans. 1974). The manuscript was actually begun in 1930.

11. It also serves as the title of a posthumously-published anthology of some of Arendt's many articles on Jewish issues. H. ARENDT, *THE JEW AS PARIAH* (1978).

12. Reporting a lecture given by Arendt at the height of the controversy over her Eichmann book, for instance, Young-Bruehl comments: "Had it been clear in Arendt's book that her concern was for what she later called 'personal responsibility under dictatorship' and not obedience to any human interpretation of the Divine Will, some of her critics might have respected her stance, as the students who heard her did." P. 366. After reviewing some of the widely varied criticisms that were made of *On Revolution*, Young-Bruehl admits, "Arendt's portrait of the Founding Fathers was fabulous in the literal sense of the word," although Young-Bruehl then goes on to defend the value of political fables. P. 403.

## II. The Essence of Hannah Arendt's Thought

One should read into this subtitle a certain element of irony. Taken literally, it would be inexcusably pretentious to apply such a heading to a body of theory noteworthy for its meandering, its frequent obscurity, and—perhaps most salient of all—its inability to be pigeonholed. Perhaps the first difficulty lies in trying to assign an appropriate disciplinary label to Arendt's body of writing.

Young-Bruehl records an excerpt from a 1964 television interview in which Arendt denied that she was a philosopher any longer (she admitted only to having studied philosophy at one time) and claimed instead to be a political theorist.<sup>13</sup> But Arendt's last and unfinished work, *The Life of the Mind*, was, as Young-Bruehl points out in the same passage, a return to issues that no one would deny are central to philosophy. In any case, despite the distinction Arendt drew in the interview, political theory of the normative sort with which she was concerned is usually regarded as akin to, if not a branch of, philosophy.

If, then, Arendt was always a sort of philosopher *malgré elle*—albeit a very nonprofessional philosopher, who did not know, when invited to deliver the prestigious Gifford Lectures, what they were<sup>14</sup>—what sort of philosopher was she? To those who think of their approach to philosophy as “analytic”—precise, sensitive to the nuances of words—Arendt's style is foreign. Young-Bruehl reports a vitriolic posthumous attack on Arendt's work by Stuart Hampshire, who identifies himself with the analytic approach;<sup>15</sup> while somewhat extreme in the level of irritability it exhibits, this attack is not wholly unrepresentative. Hampshire found it incomprehensible that Arendt had been taken so seriously in the United States.<sup>16</sup>

On the other hand, while having more roots in the continental tradition of philosophy known as phenomenology, Arendt is said to have denied that her phenomenology was based on that of Edmund Husserl, the founder of the contemporary phenomenological movement.<sup>17</sup> If indeed she did say this, she was surely correct. Husserl was preoccupied with questions of method and was, in his own way, just as precise as any analytic philosopher, whereas Arendt eschewed questions of methodology as much as possible.

Yet Arendt was greatly concerned about distinctions and the meanings of words; indeed, it was around such distinctions that some of her most

13. P. 327.

14. P. 448.

15. P. 471.

16. *Id.*; see Hampshire, *Metaphysical Mists*, OBSERVER (London), July 30, 1978, at 26, col. 7.

17. P. 405.

important books were organized.<sup>18</sup> But her way of drawing these distinctions eventually must prove frustrating to every reader. C.B. Macpherson's characterization of this approach, made during an exchange with Arendt at a symposium devoted to her thought, expresses this frustration well:

This intellectual practice—and it's a very enlivening practice, because it starts off, or should start off, all kinds of controversy—is still rather a curious practice: of taking a word that has perhaps more than one meaning in the ordinary understanding and giving it a very special meaning and then proceeding from there to reach striking, paradoxical conclusions.<sup>19</sup>

Assigning Hannah Arendt a place within the contemporary ideological spectrum is equally frustrating, as Young-Bruehl frequently acknowledges. She was a "liberal" who favored states' rights and attacked progressive education during the controversy over the integration of public schools in Little Rock.<sup>20</sup> She was deeply influenced in many ways by the Marxist tradition, but she steadfastly insisted, against the central insight of that tradition, on separating political issues, in which she was professionally interested, from economic issues, in which she most certainly was not. She was a tireless worker for Jewish organizations, yet her treatments of Eichmann (said by her to exemplify "the banality of evil") and of the relationships between sometimes pusillanimous European Jewish councils and Nazi officials led some to accuse her of anti-Semitism. She was the first woman to receive a number of appointments and honors, and yet she was quite unsympathetic to the women's movement<sup>21</sup> and apparently not especially sensitive to the problems of other women intellectuals.<sup>22</sup> A complete list of such contradictions would be very long indeed.

Arendt's comparative insouciance toward logical consistency and completeness can be documented not only across the span of her works, but also within most of the individual works themselves. A number of critics have noted the highly problematic way in which Arendt conflates Nazism

18. In *The Human Condition*, the outstanding example of Arendt's concern for such distinctions, she discusses, *inter alia*, the difference between the public and the private; work, labor, and action; the political and the social; and power and violence.

19. Arendt, *On Hannah Arendt*, in HANNAH ARENDT: THE RECOVERY OF THE PUBLIC WORLD 322 (M. Hill ed. 1979).

20. See pp. 308-18.

21. See pp. 96-97.

22. "She was suspicious of women who 'gave orders,' skeptical about whether women should be political leaders, and steadfastly opposed to the social dimensions of Women's Liberation. Her own motherly advice to younger women was as bourgeois and conventional in its details as it was, in important matters, open-minded and unsentimental." P. 238 (footnote omitted). Her extremely cavalier treatment of Raissa Maritain in the 1945 review, *supra* note 2, strikes me as a good example of Arendt's insensitivity to the problems faced by women intellectuals.

and Stalinism in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* without much discussion of the second phenomenon.<sup>23</sup> One avowedly sympathetic critic, Margaret Canovan, expresses very well the evaluative problem to which even a partial listing of Arendt's many sins against the usual canons of scholarship and reasoning inevitably points:

We have raised . . . so many objections to Hannah Arendt's book that the reader may by this time be asking whether this enterprise is not self-destructive: if it is indeed possible to quarrel with her thesis on so many grounds, is it worth reading, much less worth writing about?<sup>24</sup>

The question Canovan answers affirmatively was posed apropos *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, but it could have been asked of any of Arendt's longer, theoretical works.

Perhaps the most concise clue to the essence of Arendt's thought is to be found in a sentence in her brief, obscure article referred to at the beginning of this Review. "Philosophy concerned with truth," she said there, "ever was and probably always will be a kind of *docta ignorantia*—highly learned and therefore highly ignorant."<sup>25</sup> This statement is playful and paradoxical, at once extremely dogmatic (despite the qualifying "probably") and self-undermining. Its allusion to the skeptical tradition of Erasmus and certain other Renaissance figures puts into question the value of the author's own erudition as well as any claims to truth she herself might want to make. It is not a remark with which representatives of any of the mainstream traditions of philosophy that flourished during Arendt's lifetime would have been comfortable,<sup>26</sup> but it is extremely thought-provoking within the context of the overall discussion of neo-Catholic thought in general and of Jacques Maritain in particular. What distinguished Hannah Arendt as a philosopher and political theorist, in short, was neither her vast and vaunted erudition (which was often displayed with great imprecision) nor her systematic concepts (which could not easily be sustained against a concentrated conceptual attack), but rather her awesome capacity to stimulate others to reflection. Such a capacity is seldom rewarded, but it was in the case of Hannah Arendt.

23. See Crick, *On Rereading The Origins of Totalitarianism*, in HANNAH ARENDT: THE RECOVERY OF THE PUBLIC WORLD, *supra* note 19, at 27-47.

24. M. CANOVAN, *THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF HANNAH ARENDT* 47 (1974). This is one of several important secondary works on Arendt's thought receiving no recognition from Young-Bruehl.

25. Arendt, *supra* note 2, at 289.

26. Her remark does bear some affinity, however, in spirit if not in style to the current wave of French "deconstructionism" now beginning to make inroads into the American consciousness. See R. RORTY, *PHILOSOPHY AND THE MIRROR OF NATURE* (1979).

### III. The Essence of the Reviewer's Dilemma

The reviewer's dilemma is, I think, somewhat unusual. Initially, there would not seem to be much doubt as to the desirability of taking note of this book in this journal. The book is a definitive biography of someone who at the time of her death was arguably the best known and certainly the most highly honored political theorist in her adopted country, and who also had a very prominent international reputation. Yet the book espouses no major controversial theses about its often highly controversial subject that might have evoked stimulating debate. Before reading Young-Buehl's work, I was displeased with the first important review of it I read, by Peter Berger,<sup>27</sup> and infuriated at the second, by Arendt's former acquaintance, Alfred Kazin,<sup>28</sup> for their apparent superficiality. Neither seemed to make much of Arendt's political philosophy. Both were at least slightly patronizing about her central thought, and each referred, with more apparent enthusiasm, to personal encounters with her.<sup>29</sup> I reflected on the irony that the *New York Review of Books*, in which Kazin's review appeared, had frequently served as a vehicle for some of Arendt's most intellectually provocative shorter pieces. I now understand how these reviews came about. One of my first impulses in beginning to compose this Review was to recall in detail the few occasions on which I had some fleeting contact with Arendt—the circumstances, my reactions, and so on.<sup>30</sup> This biography strongly encourages that sort of reaction.

A reviewer in this situation might, to be sure, choose to ignore the biography for the most part and concentrate exclusively on systematically ex-

27. Berger, *A Woman of This Century*, N.Y. Times, Apr. 25, 1982, § 7 (Book Review), at 1.

28. Kazin, *Woman in Dark Times*, N.Y. REV. BOOKS, June 24, 1982, at 3.

29. Berger took her warm greeting of the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas, whom she met on the occasion that he recounts, as symbolic of an intellectual torch-passing. See Berger, *supra* note 27, at 21. This seems to me to be highly distortive of reality; while Habermas does occasionally refer to Arendt and the two do share a somewhat similar intellectual heritage, the disagreements between them are considerable. See J. HABERMAS, *COMMUNICATION AND THE EVOLUTION OF SOCIETY* 201 (1979).

30. I shall yield to the impulse to the extent of recalling my concluding comments on her lecture, "Reflections on Violence," a short, early version of *On Violence*, given as part of a Yale Philosophy Department series on revolution:

[W]e all sometimes tire of paradoxes . . . . On the other hand, perhaps "truth" itself consists of a series of paradoxes; this is the lesson that [Hannah Arendt] seemed at times to be implying. And so, like much of the audience, I drew from her lecture personal conclusions that were certainly not parts of its content. Of all our lecturers on revolution thus far . . . , Hannah Arendt stood at once for the most and for the least. Vigorous, opinionated, forthright, enormously well read, widely experienced . . . , she appeared as perhaps the closest thing to an absolute *authority* on the subject that the academic world can muster today. And yet, as she pointed out in answer to one of her questioners, the very concept of authority is currently in the process of disappearing. And those delicately abstract paradoxes of hers teetered perilously close to the brink of an intellectual void in which all cats, both revisionist and revolutionary, are gray.

McBride, *Reflections on Reflections on Revolution*, NEW J., Dec. 8, 1968, at 13, 15.



pounding and criticizing some aspect of Arendt's political theory. But such criticism would come relatively cheap, there would be little novelty to it, and it would be beside the point as far as Young-Bruehl's principal labors are concerned.

It would have been even more tempting, given the readership of this journal, to concentrate on the rare occasion on which Hannah Arendt contributed to jurisprudence. The most interesting and obvious instance of this is the use that was made of Arendt's ideas during the constitutional controversy concerning the 1954 McCarthyite law that sanctioned the denationalization of naturalized citizens found guilty of subversive activities.<sup>31</sup> Arendt's personal experience of statelessness as a result of Nazi persecution had made her very sensitive to the issue and highly skeptical of abstract talk about the "Rights of Man" when they have not been codified.<sup>32</sup> Stephen Pollak's analysis, in this journal, of the legislation in question frequently cited Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism*<sup>33</sup> and helped to undergird the Warren Court's view of the law's unconstitutionality. Years later, in her report of the Eichmann trial, Arendt made important jurisprudential observations concerning the problem of mens rea in cases like Eichmann's and the putative need for a more developed international "law of humanity."<sup>34</sup> But no one would want to pretend that Arendt was a sophisticated legal philosopher or a skilled legal craftsman, and so to have focused on these extremely brief references in Young-Bruehl's book and on their possible implications would have been, once again, grossly to distort both the book's message and my assessment of Arendt's significance.

So the reviewer's dilemma is actually twofold. First, one must choose whether to remain within the perceived spirit of the biography and hence to treat the actual detailed contents of Arendt's extensive intellectual writings as relatively secondary, or to offer a concentrated critical analysis of a few aspects of the latter as central regardless of Young-Bruehl's implicit message. Second, since either approach would, I believe, put seriously into question the very high reputation Arendt has enjoyed as a thinker, one must choose whether to agree with Stuart Hampshire that the learned American public has been deceived, or to point to some consideration that will vindicate both that public and Hannah Arendt herself. I hope, though without great confidence, to have transcended these dilemmas.

It would be very attractive to conclude with some sociological specula-

31. See p. 293.

32. See p. 256.

33. Comment, *The Expatriation Act of 1954*, 64 YALE L.J. 1164, 1190 n.139, 1191 n.141, 1193 n.148, 1196 n.164, 1198 n.168 (1955).

34. P. 338.

tion about the origin and nature of intellectual lionization in the United States. Reference could be made to the concentration of book and journal publishers in New York City, to the value of certain personal contacts in this milieu, or to the complex ideological atmosphere that encourages diverse and often even opposed lines of thought while discouraging others. One could point to the rise of certain individuals and institutions, like *The New York Review of Books*, as *arbitri elegantiae intellectualis* and inveigh against the fawning and pretentiousness that inevitably accompany such phenomena. All of this would have some relevance to the case of Hannah Arendt, but it would miss all that was positive about her. And no reader can honestly come away from Young-Bruehl's biography without the conviction that there was much that was positive about Arendt.

Arendt's last work, left unfinished at the time of her death, is entitled *The Life of the Mind*. It is characteristic of her approach in its basic division of three supposedly different types of mental activity—thinking, judging, and willing. In the “Thinking” section, as Young-Bruehl notes,<sup>35</sup> Arendt makes an important distinction between “knowing—scientific cognition—[which] has an object and a purpose,” and “thinking [which] is objectless and self-referential.” The goal of knowing is said to be truth, while the result, if such it can be called, of thinking is *meaning*.<sup>36</sup> As Young-Bruehl also notes, the focal point of *The Life of the Mind* can be seen as sharply discrepant from the primary political concerns of her earlier mature years and hence as constituting a kind of withdrawal from the political world; however, the priority Arendt assigns to “thinking” in the life of the mind is not really a novel turn in her own thought. If we understand that this was always her underlying priority, no matter how politically engaged she became, we can perhaps understand how she remained relatively untroubled by charges, often quite valid, of profound inconsistency in her political judgments as well as her theoretical constructions—charges that she was, as Walter Laqueur put it succinctly, “not a political animal.”<sup>37</sup>

The marvel—and I use this term positively and without irony—is that so many others, her students and listeners and readers, were also left relatively untroubled by this prosaic truth and chose instead to glean what

35. P. 449.

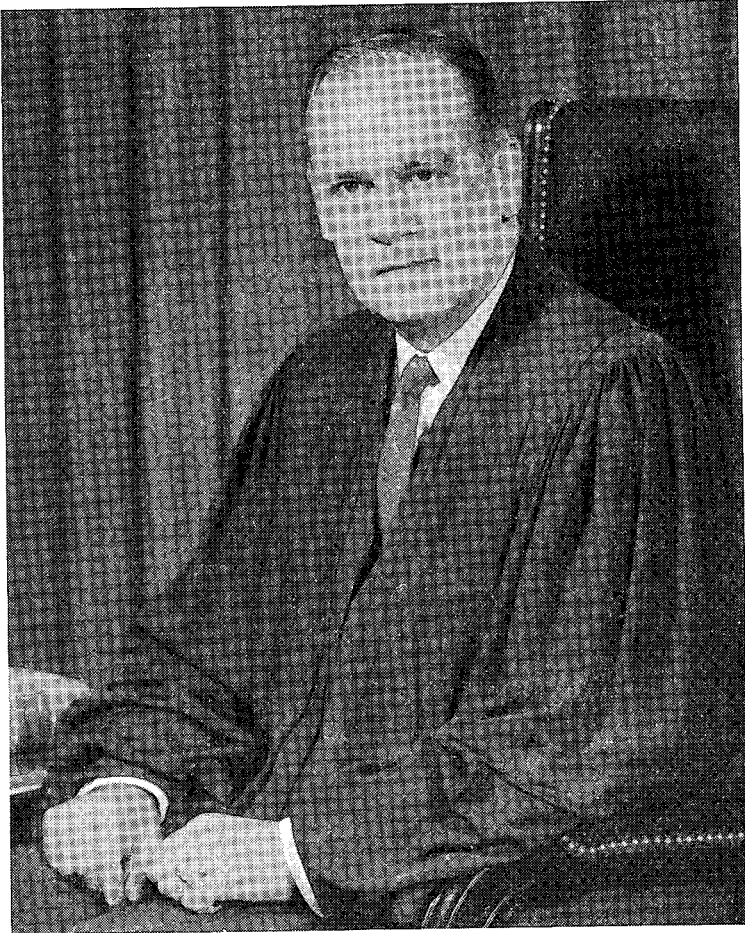
36. H. ARENDT, *THE LIFE OF THE MIND* 62-64 (M. McCarthy ed. 1978). The distinction between knowing and thinking is certainly not altogether original with Arendt. One finds it strongly emphasized in the philosophy of Martin Heidegger, who often refers to what Arendt calls “knowing” as “calculation” or “calculative thinking”; it can be traced back to German Idealism and, indeed, even to the beginnings of Western thought.

37. Laqueur, *Re-reading Hannah Arendt*, ENCOUNTER, Mar. 1979, at 73, 74. The erratic fluctuations in Arendt's assessment of the student protest movement of the 1960's illustrate the shakiness of her political judgments. See pp. 412-17.

*meanings* they could from the often marvelously perceptive insights of a person who, through all the vicissitudes of a long and often very dramatic surface career, so completely embodied the life of the mind. In an alien world filled with calculators of both the human and nonhuman variety, Hannah Arendt steadfastly championed reflective thought—in particular, reflective thought about politics—as a self-justifying activity, valuable in itself, that transcends any inconsistencies it generates along the way.

*The Editors dedicate this issue to Justice Potter Stewart in tribute to his long and distinguished career on the United States Supreme Court. This dedication is particularly fitting given that the focus of the issue—the First Amendment—is the centerpiece of Justice Stewart’s judicial legacy.*

*Following his retirement from the Court, Justice Stewart, a former Journal Comment Editor, served as Justice-in-residence at the Yale Law School. Many of us attended his classes and benefited from his wide-ranging insights. We wish Justice Stewart all the best in the years ahead.*



**JUSTICE POTTER STEWART**