

"Where are we when we think?":

Hannah Arendt and the Place of Thinking

ABSTRACT: "Where are we when we think?", asks Hannah Arendt, and her answer, apparently, is "nowhere". Indeed, she seems to suggest that the very way in which this question is framed is itself misguided or mistaken, and so seems to go on to replace the question about the *place* of thinking with an inquiry into the *time* of thinking. But Arendt's own investigation of the temporality at issue here nevertheless arrives at a mode of temporality that itself appears as a form of place or *topos*. Beginning with some of the problems Arendt's account seems initially to present, but moving on to an examination of the underlying direction in which that account moves, the discussion will thus explore the underlying topology that, in spite of appearances to the contrary, is at work in Arendt's account of thinking.

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I. Time and the Place of Thinking

"Where are we when we think?", asks Hannah Arendt at the end of the first volume of *The Life of the Mind*, and her answer, advanced almost immediately, seems to be "nowhere".¹ Yet having asserted the placelessness of thinking, Arendt then goes on to claim that thinking nevertheless has a 'location' in relation to time, namely, in the gap 'between' past and future. So far as thinking is concerned, then, time is presented as taking precedence over place understood in terms of space, and thinking itself appears as determined essentially in relation to time. Arendt's assertion of the priority of time is given with surprisingly little argument – as if it were assumed almost from the start. In this respect, Arendt's account of the place of thinking, like the *Daseinanalysis* of the early Heidegger (with which it bears certain surprising similarities),² seems infused by a problematic 'temporalism' – by an ungrounded prioritization of the temporal in which place as such, and with it space, is effectively overlooked.

Given the initial directness of her claim that the place of thinking is 'nowhere', as well as her assertion of the primacy of temporality, Arendt's account in *The Life of the Mind* seems to present a challenge to anyone who wants to argue, as I have argued elsewhere,³ for the centrality of place in all thinking, including the thinking of thinking itself. Consequently, from the perspective of the project of a philosophical topology or topography, Arendt's position is one that deserves to be addressed. Moreover, even from the perspective of an interest *in thinking*, the issue of place, and of space as well as time, remains significant. The idea of thinking as

placeless surely brings with it a different conception of what thinking is than a mode of thinking that insists on its essential placedness. At the same time, however, the question of the place of thinking, and the way *place* figures or does not figure in that question, is itself tied to some of the core issues in Arendt's own thinking.

In fact, in inquiring into Arendt's treatment of the place of thinking, part of what emerges is a sense in which her apparent privileging of time actually turns out to draw upon ideas that are nevertheless essentially bound to place – time itself, one might say, comes to be understood in terms of place. Thus, in spite of what indeed appears the 'temporalism' that seems present in *The Life of the Mind* in particular, Arendt nevertheless develops an account of the temporality of thinking, in *The Life of the Mind* and elsewhere, that is fundamentally *topological*. The movement in Arendt's discussion of the place of thinking is thus actually a movement that takes us back to place, in spite of having seemingly set it aside, in virtue of the way place appears already implicit in her understanding of time itself. In this respect, the way the question 'where are we when we think?' appears in Arendt's work, and the manner in which it is addressed, actually opens up a path, though a rather complex one, towards understanding the way time and place might belong together. It is this path that the current inquiry aims to follow, beginning with some of the difficulties that seem to attach to Arendt's treatment of the place of thinking.

II. Thinking, its Place, and Displacement

Almost from the outset, one might well be struck by a certain oddity in Arendt's approach to the question of place that she herself puts. It is an oddity that relates both to the speed with which she moves to an answer, and her seeming disregard for alternative responses to her question – in particular, for an obvious sense in which thinking does indeed have a place. Thus, to the question 'Where are we when we think?', one might well respond, most immediately and intuitively, by saying that where we are when we think is just *where we are* – where we are ourselves placed – and that the act of thinking does not change our place in the world, even though it may well provide us with a different perspective on that place. One might add, furthermore, that thinking always arises, can only arise, out of the place in which we

already find ourselves – so not only does thinking *have a place*, but in many respects it can be understood as a response *to our place*.

The placed character of thinking is surely no less evident – is perhaps even more so – in the case of philosophical thinking. Does not Heidegger have his hut at Todtnauberg? And what of Thoreau and Wittgenstein with their own secluded cabins? Nietzsche certainly has his Sils Maria and explicitly acknowledges the direct connection between his thought and the places in which it arose.⁴ Even in Arendt's case, one might argue that her own thinking was embedded in the library and the classroom – in her own library especially (a quite extensive one) – and it is surely no accident that she writes so eloquently of Benjamin's relation to the library and bookroom.⁵ Here it seems hard to believe that there is not some element of self-revelation on Arendt's part. In fact, no matter what else we say about the relation between thinking and place, it seems clear that thinking has to take place somewhere, and that where it takes place is not accidental to thinking – that the place of thinking is essential in grounding, sustaining and giving rise to thinking. Whether we look to Heidegger or Nietzsche or Wittgenstein or Thoreau – or even to Quine or Rawls (to cite representatives of a very different tradition) – we find thinkers whose thought bears the marks, even if unconsciously presented, of the places in which it originates.

On the face of it, then, there seems something counter-intuitive about Arendt's claim that thinking has no place, that it occurs 'nowhere'. It might be said that this is, nevertheless, to misunderstand Arendt's question – to take it too 'literally' and to miss its fundamental character. What concerns her is not the place of the *thinker*, one might say, but the place of the *thinking* in the thinker (although at one point she approvingly quotes an Epicurean saying, "live in hiding", as providing a "negatively exact description" of the topos of the man who thinks⁶), and this is not reducible merely to where the thinker is. Indeed, when one looks to this aspect of the matter, one might even claim that Arendt's position actually has something intuitively right about it. After all, although the thinker will always be somewhere when they are thinking, thinking itself surely occurs 'in a place' only incidentally, as it were, through occurring 'in' the thinker. Moreover, the very experience of thinking might itself seem to suggest a view of thinking as always involving a certain

withdrawal or retreat from things – most dramatically exemplified in the case of Socrates⁷ – and so also a certain removal or remoteness from the places in which we find ourselves. Such removal might itself be thought to be tied to the universality and generality that appears essential to thinking.

Arendt's assertion of the placelessness of thinking, and of the associated primacy of time, is undoubtedly tied to this idea of thinking as involving withdrawal or removal. Indeed, Arendt herself calls attention to just these features of thinking in the analysis that makes up the first volume of *The Life of the Mind*. It is this analysis that appears to provide the basis for Arendt's assertion of the placelessness of thinking as that is set out in *The Life of the Mind* – an analysis that is summarised at the beginning of the discussion of the place of thinking in terms of three main points: 1. "thinking is always out of order, interrupts all ordinary activities and is interrupted by them"; 2. "the manifestations of the thinking ego's authentic experiences are manifold" – which seems to mean that thinking serves not only to render uncertain what may otherwise be assumed, but also to establish differences and oppositions; 3. "thinking always deals with absences and removes itself from what is present and close at hand".⁸

This is not the end of the matter, however, since the fact that thinking has these features – even the fact that it involves withdrawal or removal from the ordinary places in which we find ourselves – does not, of itself, show that thinking is therefore placeless. To infer the placelessness of thinking on this basis is already to construe the question of the place of thinking as a question that concerns the relation between thinking and the 'ordinary' places of our lives. It is on the basis of that assumption, together with the idea that thinking stands somewhat apart from those 'ordinary' places, that the conclusion that thinking has no place follows – or seems to follow. Of course, put more carefully, what actually follows is only that thinking has no 'ordinary' place, not that it is placeless. Indeed, when one reflects on the experience of thinking as an experience of withdrawal or removal, recognising also the character of withdrawal or removal as itself topological in character, then one is easily led to the idea, not that thinking is a withdrawal or removal *from place*, but that it involves a withdrawal or removal from one place towards another – that it actually involves a movement *to a different place*. One might also say that the

experience of thinking as a withdrawal or removal is actually an experience of thinking as the opening up of a 'gap' between thinker and world – so thinking can be said, as it often is, to involve a certain form of alienation, estrangement, or *displacement*.

The way place emerges here as potentially ambiguous between different places or senses of place (whatever they may be) actually serves to render place uncertain – to bring the concept itself into question. What really do we mean when we ask after the place of thinking – or when we contrast the supposed placelessness of thinking with the placed character of our ordinary activities? What sense of place is at issue talk of the 'ordinary' sense of place? In asking after the place of thinking, then, not only are we led to consider whether thinking has a place, but in the very asking of that question we ought also be led to question place as such, and so to question the 'place' in which we ordinarily live and act. Of course, on the face of it, this is not the direction in which Arendt's own discussion seems to lead. She makes no attempt to engage explicitly with the question as to what place might be, even though she herself raises the question of place in the question of the place of thinking. Inasmuch as the notion of place does indeed remain ambiguous, however, so the issue of place remains alive in Arendt's thinking, and is not necessarily closed off.

III. Time, Placelessness, and the 'Inner'

Even so, that place might indeed remain at issue here seems initially belied by the character of Arendt's own discussion. Having raised the question of the place of thinking, she then seems, almost immediately, to put the issue of place behind her, suggesting that the way in which the question is framed – the way it asks after the *place* or *topos* of thinking – is misguided or mistaken:

Perhaps our question – Where are we when we think? – was wrong because by asking for the *topos* of this activity we were exclusively spatially oriented – as though we had forgotten Kant's famous insight that "time is nothing but the form of inner sense, that is, of the intuition of ourselves and of our inner state." For Kant that meant that time had nothing to do with appearances as such – "neither with

shape nor position" as given to our senses – but only with appearances as affecting our "inner state" in which time determines the "relation of representations".⁹

There are two crucial assumptions in this passage that deserve attention: first, that in talking of the *place* of thinking we treat thinking as if it were "exclusively spatially oriented"; and, second, that thinking is something essentially 'inner', and is, therefore, something essentially temporal.

The first of these assumptions – the treatment of place and space as more or less interchangeable – is not uncommon, but it is highly questionable. Place and space are certainly related notions (just as place and time are related also), but they are not identical, or at least cannot be assumed to be so.¹⁰ Moreover, the distinction between the two has not gone unnoticed even in recent philosophy. There is an implicit distinction between place and space in Kant, even as the two are also related,¹¹ and the distinction is especially important in Heidegger's later thinking where there is a clear insistence on the difference between place (*Ort/Ortschaft*) and space (*Raum*), as well as a questioning of the conventional view of space itself.¹² One can even argue, in spite of the lack of any developed conception of place in the earlier work (and the fact that the specific terms *Ort/Ortschaft* do not figure there at all), that there is an implicit distinction between space and place in *Being and Time* – something suggested by the different character of existential spatiality (*Raumlichkeit*) in contrast to the homogenous spatiality of physical extension to be found in Cartesianism.¹³ The significance of this distinction in later Heidegger may be thought to make Arendt's lack of attention to the distinction all the more surprising.

The second assumption – that thinking belongs to what is inner *and non-spatial* – seems actually to beg the original question, especially given Arendt's ready assimilation of place to space. If one already takes space and place to belong to what is outer, and time to what is inner, then to say that thinking is not something outer is just to say that it is not spatial or placed; while to say that thinking is something inner is already to associate it, on this account, with temporality rather than with spatiality or place. If the claim regarding the inner character of thinking is to carry any argumentative weight, we actually need some independent account of the inner

and the outer as these are related to thinking, and of the supposed association of the one with time and the other with space (and so with place). Arendt does not offer any such account, instead seeming to do little more than invoke the supposed authority of Kant on the matter – although the idea of thinking as inner might also be thought to be implied in Arendt's conception of thinking as "the soundless dialogue we carry on with ourselves",¹⁴ such a dialogue being taken to be one that is 'internal' to myself.

Yet the distinction between the inner and the outer as applied to thinking may well be viewed, regardless of its Kantian origins, with some suspicion. There are good reasons for rejecting a view of thinking, or of mental activity generally, as existing only in some internal, private realm – and this is surely one of the key lessons of the anti-Cartesian tendency that has been such a central thread in much of the philosophical thinking of the latter half of the twentieth century from Heidegger to Wittgenstein.¹⁵ Indeed, one of the reasons why one might resist Arendt's claim that thinking belongs 'nowhere' is precisely because of a commitment to the character of thinking, and the life of the mind generally, as taking place, not in some private 'inner' realm, but rather as always externalised in the world, even if only in the form of language – language itself being that which always draws us into a domain that is 'outside' just as much as it is 'within' us. We thus encounter ourselves in thinking – which means that it can indeed be understood as a "silent dialogue" – and yet this encounter is not one that has to be understood as therefore 'inner' in the sense of being non-spatial or apart from spatiality. Moreover, even if there is some sense to be attached to the notion of the 'inner' and of interiority as applied to thinking, that need not itself imply any abstraction of thinking from the spatial or topological or a view of thinking (or the mind) as belonging *only* to such an 'inner' realm.

The very language of the 'inner' and 'outer', as Kant himself was aware, is a language drawn from spatiality, or better, from the topological. Although to speak of an inner and outer is to invoke space, space does not itself have an inner or an outer – only place allows for such a distinction since only place brings the required sense of boundedness. The experience of the inner is, one might say, just the experience of placedness – of 'being-in-place' (more specifically, it is tied to a certain experience of

being-within-bounds).¹⁶ Not only does Arendt seem to ignore the topological dimension at work in the very distinction between the inner and the outer, but, in her appeal to Kant, she also seems actually to overlook Kant's insistence on the interconnection of the inner and the outer, and of the spatial and the temporal, as essential to the very possibility that thought can be contentful. This is a point that can be seen already to be presaged by Kant's insistence on the necessary connection between subjectivity and objectivity, but which is also evident in the character of inner sense, the form of which is time, as determined only through outer sense, that is, through space, and, connected with this, in the necessity of spatiality to the possibility of differentiation that is itself essential to content.¹⁷ Arendt's assumption both of the inner-outer distinction and its correspondence to a distinction between the spatial and temporal is thus problematic even on the Kantian grounds that Arendt herself seems to invoke. The appeal to that distinction as the basis for the claim concerning the placelessness of thinking not only begs the question then, but it also ignores the complications within the Kantian framework itself at the same time as it seems to imply an untenable, or at least highly questionable, view of the key concepts at issue here.

IV. Locating Thinking in Time

The move to the idea of thinking as something inner hardly seems to offer any independent basis for the notion that thinking has no place. Indeed, the way Arendt seems to move to give priority to temporality in her discussion of thinking has less the appearance of a developed *argument*, whether Kantian or otherwise, but looks more like the assertion of a much deeper and prior commitment to the centrality of temporality as such. In fact, the real focus of Arendt's discussion of the place of thinking is not place or space, but time, and the question concerning the place of thinking seems to function as little more than an expository device to introduce the task, in Arendt's words, "of finding out where the thinking ego is located in time and whether its relentless activity can be temporally determined".¹⁸ Not only, then, does the discussion move from the place of thinking to the time of thinking quite abruptly, with little real consideration given to the question of place that seems briefly to be

invoked, but the issue of the time of thinking seems actually to be what underpins the discussion all along.

Central to Arendt's discussion of the matter is a parable she takes from Franz Kafka's *Notes from the Year 1920*, in which Kafka describes a figure, 'He', on a path beset by two antagonists. One presses him forward from behind, while the other blocks the path ahead pushing him back. He gives battle to both, at the same time dreaming he could be lifted out of the fight, and stand instead as umpire over the battle between the two.¹⁹ Arendt's use of this parable is not peculiar to her discussion in *The Life of the Mind* – she also deploys it in the Preface to *Between Past and Future*.²⁰ Moreover, the title of the latter volume describes exactly the situation of Kafka's 'He' as Arendt interprets it, and Arendt herself makes clear that she regards the essays that make up the volume as 'exercises' in thinking that are explicitly oriented to this temporal 'between'.²¹ Although the discussion in *Between Past and Future* adumbrates the discussion in *The Life of the Mind* – with much of the discussion in one more or less repeated in the other – the former does not begin with the question 'where are we when we think?', nor is the question of the place of thinking even alluded to in the earlier work. Instead, Arendt's discussion begins with a line from the poet René Char, "Our inheritance was left to us by no testament",²² that expresses the seemingly new situation of the world, and especially Europe, following the end of the Second World War in particular (but actually a problem for modernity more generally), in which the gap between past and present can no longer simply be bridged by tradition. The gap between past and future appears as a problem, but also as a kind of solution, since it is in that gap that Arendt sees the proper exercise of thinking as located.

The problem that both *The Life of the Mind* and *Between Past and Future* address is thus already understood as a problem about the temporality of thinking, and also, one might add, about the temporality of the human condition. Time is typically understood as linear – as a constant succession of moments from the past to the future through the present – but the insertion of the human into time, by which such linearity can itself be recognised, also breaks that linearity, producing the discontinuity and conflict that appears in Kafka's parable. Time is thus brought both to appearance and into conflict at the point of human insertion into time. The

conflict that Kafka describes is, however, not merely a conflict *within time*, between two aspects of temporality, but a conflict *within the human condition, a conflict that afflicts thinking itself*. Thinking can only occur in relation to time – without time, without past and future, thought has nothing to concern it, nothing that is demanded of it; without time, thought cannot even arise – and yet time also seems to curtail the possibility of thinking, leaving it caught between the incessant demands of past and future. This is expressed, in Kafka's parable, in terms of the conflict between being caught up in the struggle of past against future, and what Kafka describes as the dream of stepping outside of that struggle.

Remaining within a conception of time as linear, and so seeming to have no option but to respond immediately to the demand of the future by the mere repetition of the past, or as one might also say, to respond to the demand of the past by its repetition in the face of the future, thinking loses any sense of its own possibility, is given over to entrapment, exhaustion and loss. It is precisely because it does disrupt the linearity of time, however, that the insertion of thinking – of the human – into time brings with it the chance for thinking to grasp its own temporality in a way that stands outside of that linearity. Arendt talks of the insertion of the human (Kafka's "He") as deflecting the two forces at play here, producing a third angle of force diagonal to the original two – a third force that does not merely return us to the past or to the future, since its direction is diagonal to both even though it has its origin in the present, but rather opens up as a gap in time ("this small non-time space in the very heart of time"²³) that allows a respite from the struggle and so also opens up the possibility of going beyond that struggle. Here it is precisely the *finitude* of the human, its being *in time*, that also *disrupts* time, and that allows the finitude of human being into the expansiveness of the world.

One might say that this disruption in time, this 'gap' between past and future, makes thinking itself possible, except that it is also what is made possible by thinking – "Only insofar as he thinks... does man in the full actuality of his conscious being live in this gap of time between past and future".²⁴ Thinking is the opening up of this gap – it is precisely the disrupting of the usual linearity of time as this arises out of the experience of that linearity. The parable to be found in Kafka does indeed describe the situation of a particular historical moment, whether of the immediate post-War

World, or of modernity more generally, in which the gap between past and future has been revealed by the loss of tradition. But as Peg Birmingham argues, it also describes the temporality of the human condition which is the temporality of *natality*²⁵ – the temporality that belongs with the having of a beginning, as well as the capacity to begin anew, and with the capacity genuinely to judge and to act. Here natality is not merely a fact of physical birth, but is tied to the generative capacity of thought – to thinking as event and initiation. As it happens, this conception of thinking as it stands in relation to natality (and so also to a particular temporal conception), is itself suggestive of a direction in Arendt's own thought that appears to go against her initial characterisation, at least in *The Life of the Mind*, concerning the question of the place of thinking, and that instead opens towards a genuinely Arendtian topology – a topology that will be taken up more directly below, although not before some further exploration of the Arendtian discussion of thinking and temporality.

V. Time, Thinking, and the 'Now'

In *The Life of the Mind*, although not in *Between Past and Present*, Arendt follows her account of the parable from Kafka with another story (an 'allegory' as Arendt refers to it) taken from Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*,²⁶ that might appear, on the face of it, to reinforce the temporal focus of her discussion. The story concerns Zarathustra's arrival before a gateway at which two pathways meet – each stretching to an eternity before and behind – and whose name is inscribed above it: *Augenblick*, the 'moment', 'now'.²⁷ The image that Nietzsche presents here is strikingly similar to that which appears in Kafka's parable. Even though it lacks Kafka's dramatisation of the situation as one of conflict, it nevertheless presents much the same idea of two counter-posed paths meeting at a single place. Moreover that place, in Nietzsche's story the gateway that is the *Augenblick*, appears only for the one who stands before it, and who is no mere onlooker, but is rather engaged in that place. Without him, without Kafka's "He" or Nietzsche's Zarathustra, there is no meeting place, no gateway, no point of conflict, but only one road stretching interminably.

In Nietzsche, the story that is told is related directly to the doctrine of the eternal recurrence – the idea that time is a constant repetition of the same, and in the face of which we can either react with revulsion or with joyful affirmation. Knowledge of the eternal recurrence forcibly brings us back to the 'now' as that in which we find ourselves and the world; in affirming the eternal recurrence we thus affirm the 'now' in all its open, if bounded, expansiveness (and not merely as an element in the procession of past, present, and future), and we say 'yes' to the world, overcoming the 'revenge against time' (the desire to escape from time) whose expression is metaphysics. Thus Arendt quotes Heidegger: "This is the authentic content of the Doctrine of Eternal Recurrence, that Eternity *is* in the Now, and that the Moment is not the futile Now which it is only for the onlooker, but the clash of Past and Future".²⁸ It is this same 'now' that Heidegger identifies, In *Being and Time*, as that *kairotic* mode of time in which Dasein achieves a proper understanding of itself, an understanding that enables it to grasp its own situatedness, and so to realise its own existence – the temporality that belongs to this 'now' is thus the authentic temporality of Dasein's existence.

The 'now' that appears here, and that is identical with the gap that Arendt identifies in Kafka's parable, is also connected by Arendt with the idea of the *nunc stans*, the 'standing present', that appears in the work of Augustine and Duns Scotus. Arendt is careful to note that in its original form the idea of the *nunc stans* appeared as a "model and metaphor for divine eternity"²⁹, whereas the gap between past and future, the 'now' that appears in Nietzsche and Heidegger, is itself defined in direct relation to human finitude (it arises, after all, through the human insertion into time). The *nunc stans* appears, however, much earlier in the first volume of *The Life of the Mind* than the discussion of Kafka – it occurs in the context of Arendt's discussion of thinking as always withdrawn from the world, even to the extent of being beyond any notion of spatial or temporal distance. There she writes that:

Since space and time in ordinary experience cannot even be thought of without a continuum that stretches from the nearby into the distant, from the now into past or future, from here to any point in the compass, left or right, forward and backward, above and below, I could with some justification say that not only distances but also space and time themselves are abolished in the thinking process. As

far as space is concerned I know of no plausible philosophical or metaphysical concept that could plausibly be related to this experience; but I am rather certain that the *nunc stans*, became the symbol of eternity – the '*nunc aeternitas*' (Duns Scotus) – for medieval philosophy because it was a plausible description of experiences that took place in mediation as well as in contemplation, the two modes of thought known to Christianity.³⁰

What matters for Arendt in regard to the *nunc stans* is its origin in the experience of thinking, or the experience of a certain kind of thinking, and the way this experience is itself seen as standing in relation *to time* (something expressed in the idea of the *nunc stans* as a model of eternity, but which need not be taken to depend on any commitment to the latter notion). In this respect, the connection between thinking *and time*, rather than place or space, might seem to be confirmed – as might Arendt's use of the stories from Kafka and Nietzsche seem to confirm the connection also.

V. Heidegger and the Prioritization of Time

It is significant, but also a little curious, that Arendt's discussion of the question at issue here should make mention of Heidegger, but only in relation to his commentary on the 'now', the *Augenblick*, in Nietzsche. This is all the more so when one reflects on the implicit correspondence between the account Arendt gives in her discussion of the place of thinking and the account of 'authentic temporality' that Heidegger advances in *Being and Time* – the latter being that which clearly underlies Heidegger's treatment of the 'now' in Nietzsche. Arendt's position as set out at the end of the first volume of *The Life of the Mind* seems, in fact, almost to be a summary reprise of the early Heidegger's argument regarding authentic temporality even while it makes no mention of it.³¹

Division Two of Part One of *Being and Time* presents an account of authentic temporality as the ecstatic unity of future, past and present that is itself expressed in the *Augenblick*, the 'now' or visionary moment, in and through which the disclosedness of the world is grounded. Unlike Arendt, Heidegger does not present this in terms of a gap between past and future, but he does present it as having a similarly open and generative character to that which Arendt's account of thinking

also directs attention. Heidegger's elaboration of the idea of the *Augenblick* depends on distinguishing a form of kairotic temporality from the ordinary time of mere succession, as well as from eternity, ordinarily understood. Of course, Heidegger also explicitly distinguishes the *Augenblick* from the idea of the *nunc stans*, which he treats as merely an extrapolation of the idea of ordinary time.³² In this respect, Arendt might be taken implicitly to propose a reading of the *nunc stans* that partly takes issue with Heidegger's (reading the *nunc stans* more in line with Heidegger's understanding of the *Augenblick*, and so with his account of authentic temporality). Yet where Arendt and Heidegger agree is in rejecting the idea of the *nunc stans* as a representation of divine eternity. For both of them the focus is on the finitude of human being, and the character of that being as it is determined, so it seems, in relation to time. In both cases, finitude is characterised temporally, but in being temporal, finitude is also opened up to the world. One might say, therefore, that it is precisely through its temporality that finitude is *transcendent*.³³

Notwithstanding the difference between place and space, the connection between the two itself means that the language of topology and of spatiality are often intertwined (place is openness as well as boundedness, and so always involves a certain 'space' or 'room'). Heidegger, like Arendt, presents authentic temporality as having priority, not only over ordinary temporality (the temporality of succession), but over spatiality. Authentic temporality is non-spatial, and is indeed that by means of which spatiality is disclosed. Given the way the spatial is implicated in the topological, the seeming rejection of spatiality in Arendt and early Heidegger is thereby also a rejection of a key aspect of the topological. The way in which Arendt's echoes Heidegger's seems, once again, to provide further confirmation of Arendt's prioritization of the temporal and so of here temporalized conception of thinking. Yet the connection to Heidegger that becomes evident here, and that is suggested, even if not made explicit, by Arendt's use of the story from Nietzsche and Heidegger's commentary on it, itself serves to problematize Arendt's apparent focus on temporality and her seeming rejection of the spatial and topological, returning us back to the question of the *place* of thinking – a question that can now be seen to be contained within the very idea of thinking as located in relation to time.

One of the remarkable features of *Being and Time*, and of Arendt's account of the temporality of thinking, is the constant resort to spatial ideas and images – to a topology in fact – so that at the same time as the focus is supposedly on temporality, temporality is itself presented topologically. The very character of Heidegger's analysis in *Being and Time* as oriented to that mode of being that is Dasein – which is perhaps best understood as 'placed being' (and so on the *Da* – the 'there/here' as *place* – and with it on the idea of 'being-in') is itself indicative of the topological character of Heidegger's early thinking.³⁴ Moreover, Heidegger's articulation of the *Augenblick* in the earlier work is itself inextricably tied to the notion of *Situation*, while the idea of the *ek-stasis* at work in authentic temporality also carries a topological connotation through its character as a 'standing out'.³⁵ In Arendt's discussion in *The Life of the Mind*, having established the temporal 'location' of thinking (which is not strictly 'in time' at all), she talks of that 'location' in spatial and topological terms: it is indeed a 'gap' – a 'space between' (which in Greek is *diastema* – a term that has an important connection to notions of place and space) – it is a "non-time space"³⁶; it is identical with Kant's "land of pure intellect"³⁷ – even the language of Kafka's parable on which Arendt focuses is spatial and topological, as is that of Nietzsche's story (in both cases one is placed on a pathway, in a gateway), while Arendt's geometrical development of the Kafka parable is, as geometrical, so also essentially spatial. Even the idea of the *nunc stans*, the 'standing moment', invokes a sense of place or placedness through the very idea of that which *stands* (*stans* coming from the Latin word *stare*, meaning 'to stand' – and so could perhaps be said even to return us to something of what is at issue in the Heideggerian *ek-stasis*).

One might be tempted to reply, on Arendt's part at least, that since she presents much of her discussion of the place and time of thinking as metaphorical, so her use of spatial and topological ideas should be construed as metaphorical also, and thus need not be construed as in tension with her commitment to the primacy of temporality. Such a response does nothing, however, to resolve the apparent difficulty Arendt faces here, since the problem concerns the seeming inescapability of recourse to spatial and topological terms, regardless of whether those terms are employed metaphorically or 'literally'.³⁸ That spatial terms, in particular, cannot be

eliminated even from the thinking of time is itself acknowledged by early Heidegger, but he argues that this does not undermine the priority of temporality over spatiality. Moreover, his argument to that conclusion, namely that the prevalence of spatial categories as itself a consequence of the tendency for Dasein to give itself over to the categories of the everyday,³⁹ reappears in Arendt. So she writes that:

... the time continuum depends on the continuity of our everyday life, and the business of everyday life, in contrast to the activity of the thinking ego – always independent of the spatial circumstances surrounding it – is always spatially determined and conditioned. It is due to this thoroughgoing spatiality of our ordinary life that we can speak plausibly of time in spatial categories, that the past can appear to us as something lying 'behind' us and the future as lying 'ahead'.⁴⁰

Elsewhere Arendt reiterates the point with reference to Bergson's claim that in the thinking of time we inevitably draw on space, transforming time into space – on this basis, the task is to maintain a sense of the distinct character of time even in the face of such a tendency.

VI. Time and its Place

Both the early Heidegger and Arendt seem to occupy a peculiar position in regard to place and space – most obviously in the way they appear so often to resist the spatial and topological elements that nevertheless surface constantly in their thinking. Part of the reason for this resistance (which is itself somewhat inconsistent) is undoubtedly the lack of a clear and explicit articulation of the concepts of place and space themselves (and this in spite of the fact that, as I noted briefly above, there does seem to be an implicit distinction between space and place, and certainly between different modes of spatiality, already at work in *Being and Time*), together with the fact that part of what both Heidegger and Arendt are concerned to reject is a narrowly spatialized mode of thinking of the sort typically associated with Descartes and the dominance of physical theory. Arendt's position is especially peculiar, however, not only because of the ambiguity of its stance in relation to the topological, nor even its apparent and unacknowledged reprise of the Heideggerian position in which those same ambiguities are present, but also because the position

at issue is one that, by the time Arendt wrote, Heidegger had himself significantly modified – and especially so with regard to its treatment of place and space.

The lines that stand at the head of the first volume of *The Life of the Mind* come from Heidegger's 1951 lectures, *What is Called Thinking? (Was heisst Denken?)*. Those lectures do not end with an affirmation of the primarily *temporal* character of thinking, but rather, through consideration of the relation between thinking and questioning, thinking and memory, thinking and thanking, thinking and being, they end with an affirmation of the way thinking is called as a response to what is to be thought:

'What is called thinking?' At the end we return to the question we asked at first when we found out what our word 'thinking' [*Denken*] originally means. *Thanc* means memory [*Andenken*], thinking that recalls, thanks [*Danken*]. But in the meantime, we have learned to see that the essential nature of thinking is determined by what there is to be thought about: the presence of what is present, the being of beings.⁴¹

This return to 'the presence of what is present' is not a return to some purely temporal phenomenon, but implicitly evokes the idea of *topos* that is such a strong element in the later thinking, and that is adumbrated in the earlier. 'The presence of what is present' takes the form of a 'coming close', a 'being here'.⁴² As presence is itself always a happening within certain bounds, so 'the presence of what is present' is a happening within and of a place, and in this way the topological character even of time begins to appear. The topological direction of Heidegger's thinking in *What is Called Thing?* can be discerned in his very account of thinking as remembrance – of *Denken* as *Andenken* – since not only does this play upon the character of thinking as a gathering that mirrors the gathering of place, but it also implicitly invokes the topological character of memory itself (memory is both placed and placing⁴³) – indeed, elsewhere Heidegger talks of remembrance as itself 'placement into being'.⁴⁴ The topological shift that is evident here, and which is explicit in Heidegger's other writing from the same period (in the 'Letter on Humanism' as well as in many of the latter essays, perhaps most notably 'Building Dwelling Thinking' but also 'Art and Space'), is not a shift to an entirely new perspective – it draws out elements already

present even in Heidegger's early thinking. It does, however, involve a shift away from the insistence on the primacy of the temporal alone, and a recognition of the topology that also belongs to time.

The prioritisation of temporality that one seems to find in Arendt's discussion in *The Life of the Mind*, and along with it the apparent de-emphasis on spatiality, is something that Heidegger had already explicitly abandoned in the rethinking of *Being and Time* that occurred in the period following its publication – so that even by the mid-1930s Heidegger no longer talks of time as prior to space, nor of space as derivative or secondary, but rather of 'time-space' (*Zeit-Raum*) and *Ereignis*. Moreover, in his later thinking, Heidegger even takes language itself to stand in an essential relation to the spatial – language, one might say, is spacing.⁴⁵ The shift toward an explicitly topological mode of thinking is perhaps nowhere clearer in Heidegger than in the increasing focus (already present in nascent form even in the early work) on the idea of the *Lichtung*, the 'clearing' of being, that is understood as both the event of truth and as the happening of place – of the *Da*.

This shift in thinking is not some idiosyncratic aspect of Heidegger's intellectual development, but arises as a response to problems immediately present within the attempt to think the relation of being to time, as well as to space, and of being to the human. These problems are evident in Arendt's account no less than in Heidegger's. Part of the difficulty is that the concept of temporality to which early Heidegger and Arendt appeal, whether as given in the idea of the 'now', the *Augenblick*, in the modified version of the *nunc stans*, or in the temporal 'gap' between past and present, precisely because it stands in opposition to the ordinary sense of time (and so is no longer successive), cannot simply be *assumed* to be a more primordial form of temporality. This is something that would have to be *shown*, and it is obscure how this could possibly be done. Moreover, what lies at the heart of the putative notion of temporality that is at issue here is precisely the idea of a 'time', if it is indeed to be called such, that is characterised by its expansiveness and openness – by what would otherwise be associated specifically with the idea of the topological.⁴⁶

If Heidegger is slow to recognise the way place is implicated here, it is, as I noted above, partly a result of the lack of a sufficiently developed and explicit

vocabulary of place and space in his early work, something that he comes to address largely through his engagement, through the 1930s and into the 1940s with poetry, and especially with Hölderlin. In spite of her closeness to Heidegger (and also to Kant – who is more subtle in his appreciation of these matters than is sometimes recognised, including by the early Heidegger), the turn toward an explicit recognition of the problems relating to place and space, and towards a clarification of what is at issue in those concepts, including as they stand in relation to time, never seems to have emerged in her work – there is thus no turn towards an explicit topology. As a result, Arendt does indeed seem often to assert a rather simple distinction between space and time, and to resort to an ambiguous conception of place. Nevertheless, there is a topology that seems to run through much of Arendt's thinking – and not merely in the sense that is implied by her seemingly unanalysed reliance on spatial and topological ideas and images. Instead, there is a sense of *topos* at work that does indeed connect up with some of the ideas we find given explicit attention in the later Heidegger – even though Arendt does not draw attention to them in quite the same way as Heidegger or explicitly acknowledge their topological character.

VII. The Topology of Thinking

Arendt's own account of thinking as belonging in the 'gap' between past and future, and in the associated terms by which this idea is elaborated upon (the 'now', the 'moment' and so on), actually draws upon a conception that, although it appears to assert the temporal character of thinking, invokes a set of topological, and hence also, spatial, ideas and images. Thinking is, on this account, an event, but even its character as event – as a 'taking place' – does not itself imply that it is temporal alone. What is crucial to the 'event-character' of thinking is not its temporality in the conventional sense (the sense associated with the linear progression of past, present, and future), but rather its character as an opening and an emergence. This understanding of the event, however, draws it precisely into the domain of the topological – into the domain of an understanding of place as that which, through its very boundedness, allows the opening that makes for appearance, including the appearance that occurs in thinking. Significantly, just such an understanding of the

event is already present in Heidegger – and, in his later thinking, in a quite explicit fashion. Not only does it occur in his discussions of place and space, and the Fourfold (*Das Geviert*), but also in his own notion of the event – the *Ereignis* – as precisely a bounded, yet open realm, that gathers and releases.⁴⁷ Indeed, while the *Ereignis* harks back to the *Augenblick* itself (the two are, in fact, etymologically linked: *Ereignis*, and its verb form *sich ereignen*, derive from an older term ‘eräugnen’, meaning to see or be seen, which, like *Augenblick*, contains a reference to the eye – *Auge*), it also connects more directly with the topological character of Heidegger's later thought. Joseph Fell puts the point directly: "Heidegger's terms 'Event' (*Ereignis*) and 'Place' (*Ort*) mean the same".⁴⁸ The event, whether understood in the terms used by Heidegger or Arendt, is essentially a happening of place.

Immediately prior to the discussion of the question regarding the place of thinking, Arendt explores the question that underpins much of her inquiry in *The Life of the Mind* – the question that she tells us emerged for her out of the Eichmann trial – namely: what might be the connection between the absence of thinking and evil?⁴⁹ Here Arendt provides what is perhaps her most succinct account of the nature of thinking, and although it continues to use language that is ambiguous as to the placed character of thinking (Arendt describes thinking as, for instance, "the dematerialized quintessence of being alive"⁵⁰), she also explicates thinking in terms that are themselves simplicity suggestive of its placed character. This is especially so when one considers Arendt's emphasis on thinking, which she characterises here as elsewhere in terms of the "two-in-one" dialogue with one's self, as essentially tied to plurality – a plurality present in thinking in the form of the difference that arises within my own self.

...the specifically human actualization of consciousness in the thinking dialogue between me and myself suggests that difference and otherness, which are such outstanding characteristics of the world of appearances as it is given to man for his habitat among a plurality of things, are the very conditions for the existence of man's mental ego as well, for this ego actually exists only in duality. And this ego – this I-am-I – experiences difference in identity precisely when it is not related to the things that appear but only related to itself.⁵¹

There are some additional oddities about the discussion in which this passage appears (including in some of the brief references to Heidegger that occur here). If we focus on just this issue of difference and identity, however, then not only does it connect directly to the way the later Heidegger talks about the *Ereignis* (which both gathers and differentiates), but it also implies a certain topology that belongs to it. The interplay of difference and unity – including the very possibility of a standing out of the self in relation to itself and to the world – can only occur within the openness of place. Indeed, the very displacement that might be thought to be required by the possibility of thinking as a separation within the unity of the self is nonetheless itself a particular mode of placement. The way place – and so also space – appear here, even though seemingly unrecognised by Arendt, is evident elsewhere, not only in the topology found in Heidegger, but also in Kant, where it underpins the idea that representation is always spatial, and perhaps even in Levinas where otherness is itself understood in terms of an essential exteriority.⁵²

In fact, not only the two-in-one character of thinking, but the characteristic features of thinking to which Arendt draws attention elsewhere can all be derived from the topological – and so also event-like – character of thinking. The disruptive character of thinking is a consequence of the rupture that occurs in the very opening of the world that is the happening of place; the manifold experiences in which thinking is manifest arises out of the essential plurality that is opened up in place – place being itself both a differing and a gathering; the withdrawal of thinking results from the way in which the opening of place is also a separating out – a standing out – at the same time as it is a relating to. Thinking is itself a mode of being *in place* in which the placed character of that being, and the bounded openness that therefore belongs essentially to it, is itself brought into view and so is brought potentially into question. In thinking we come to recognise our own place, as we come to recognise ourselves, and in "coming out of hiding", as Arendt puts it, we also come into the space of thinking.

In Arendt, as Birmingham points out, the event-character of thinking, which we can now see also entails its *placed* character, is itself tied to *natality* – to having the character of being born, of having a beginning – and in being so tied the

character of thinking as itself generative is brought to the fore. Natality, which is no merely temporal concept (any more than is the *Augenblick* or the *nunc stans*), already brings its own connection to place since to be born is to come into the world in a certain way – it is to come into a place in the world, and so to belong to a place (which, in one important sense, is precisely to be *native* to it, is *to have been born there*). Moreover, although the comparison is certainly not Arendt's, such a conception both of thinking and of the 'time' that belongs to thinking (the 'gap', the 'moment', 'the standing present', the 'event'), and in which it is also located, is suggestive of the Platonic *chora*, the 'womb', 'matrix', or 'receptacle', that is itself a mode *of place*, understood as that which *gives room to*, and so supports and sustains, the emergence of thing into being.⁵³ Such a connection reinforces the topological character of Arendt's account of thinking, but it is also indicative of a topology that belongs to natality itself – *a topology of natality* – that is itself brought out precisely through ideas at issue in Arendt's focus on the *Augenblick* or 'moment'.

Although directing attention to the connection between Arendt's account of thinking and the idea of natality, Peg Birmingham notes that Arendt does not herself make any connection between natality and the idea of the *Augenblick*. In explicating this connection herself, Birmingham looks particularly to Heidegger, as well as to the way in which natality is understood in Arendt as involving not merely the fact of physical birth – our first birth – but also a second birth *in language*. Birmingham's argument is that these two births are inseparably tied together, in spite of Arendt's tendency often to insist on their separation. In arguing thus, Birmingham advances a view of natality according to which being born is a matter both of one's physical *and* linguistic entry into the world – "to be born, to be a mortal, is to have been welcomed, to have been given a name ... the 'second birth' is never simply laid over the first. Instead, both births happen at once."⁵⁴ As Birmingham sees it, the temporality of the *Augenblick*, the gap between past and future in which thinking is located, is also tied to natality in a way that implicates language. Language, the capacity for articulation, is always grounded in what already is, and yet it always retains the potential for radically new forms of articulation – for saying what has not been said before. Thus Birmingham claims that "the temporality of the *Augenblick* is

the moment in which a speech without prior authorization nevertheless can assume authority in the course of its saying".⁵⁵

The way language figures here – in Arendt's own account, as well as Birmingham's development of it – is especially significant for the inquiry into the topology of thinking. Language has a topology, and a spatiality, that belongs essentially to it – one might even argue that the connection evident in the very word 'topology' is itself expressive of a fundamental connection between place and language. This is especially clear in Heidegger, for whom language is also tied to the *Ereignis*, to the event that is the happening of place. Language is that by means of which, Heidegger tells us, we are able to find our place in relation to the *Ereignis* – one might even say, using a typically Heideggerian locution, that the event and language are the 'same'.⁵⁶ Relating this directly to the notion of the *Augenblick*, the moment, in Arendt, one might say that the 'gap' that is at issue here is a gap that is held open by language itself – much as Heidegger himself claims that it is language that "holds open the realm in which man, upon the earth and beneath the sky, inhabits the house of the world".⁵⁷ The topology of thinking is thus also a topology that belongs to language, and is reflected in the character of language as that which sustains the possibility of any and every 'between', in which the openness of world first emerges.⁵⁸ As a mode of *topos*, language is given first and foremost in its concrete instantiations – in speech and text – which although always given in their own singular situatedness, are nevertheless not restricted to that situation alone. The event of speaking and writing is one in which meaning is opened up and new horizons of understanding emerge – language is itself given generative, initiatory, liminal. Here the natality that is tied to language is evident as a natality that is also tied to the very character of *topos* – for it is indeed only in and out of place, a place held open by language is the same way as language takes form in place, that anything can come forth, can appear, can emerge as new.

In arguing for the close entanglement of physical and linguistic natality, Birmingham argues against Arendt's sometime tendency to treat the two as separable – the birth in language as a more abstract and disembodied version of the birth of the body. Birmingham's emphasis is on the two as one: that we can be given over to birth or to death, that they can be salient elements in the very structure of

our life and being, is dependent on our emergence into language. It is language that opens up the space of human being and its boundedness by birth and death and its place in the world, and so to enter into the world.⁵⁹ Birmingham's argument, and the tendency in Arendt that she aims to counter, runs analogously to my own, if from a different direction: in both cases we are concerned to argue for a much closer relationship between what otherwise appear in Arendt as the situated and the displaced, the concrete and the abstract.

VIII. Placelessness, Evil, and the Absence of Thought

One might argue that in arguing for the topological character of thinking, I have merely shown that thinking has a place and even a space that belongs to it, but that this does not show that there is any place that belongs to thinking – consequently that Arendt's claims that thinking has no place and that where we are when we think is nowhere has not been shown to be false. Yet it is only on the basis of our concrete situatedness in the world, our *being-placed*, which also means our facticity and our finitude (appearing in Kafka's parable and Nietzsche's allegory as the concrete placement of the protagonist on the path and before the doorway) that allows for the possibility of thinking, and so also for experience of the moment that Arendt takes as essential to thinking. That situatedness is both temporal *and* spatial – but as such it is essentially topological, a placing into place that allows the genuine entry into world, as well as the engagement with self and with other. The space, the *topos*, in which thinking finds itself, is nowhere other than in the world in which we already find ourselves. It is thus that we seek places that allow us the silence and solitude for contemplation and even when, like Socrates, we find ourselves an 'inner' space in which we can distance ourselves from our immediate surroundings, where we do this is nowhere apart from the place in which we already stand. The place of thinking, and the spaces in which thinking finds room for itself, are not places separated from the world in which we are already present ; those places and spaces are always given within the place of our prior being in the world and never entirely remove us from it. Indeed, that they do not is itself a condition for the very possibility of thought. It is not thinking that is nowhere, in fact, but the lack of thinking. The thoughtless that is

evident in Eichmann's case – the thoughtless that Arendt argues makes for the possibility of evil – remains oblivious to its place, and as such, it never finds the space that is necessary to confront itself, to recognise others, nor even to acknowledge the world. Such lack of thinking, and the possibility of evil that it engenders, arises precisely out of a failure to attend to the place of thinking.

Rather than being nowhere when we think, we are always *somewhere*, but that somewhere cannot be understood as if it were some simple location – as if our thinking belonged to some point in a system of coordinates. The 'where' of thinking, the proper place of thinking, is the original place in which the world itself opens to us. To think is to come back to that place – it is indeed to return and to remember – and so to attend and respond to what lies before us. Not to think is to fail to attend and respond to what calls us to think, to fail to turn back to the place of thinking – it is to forget, although in such a way that the forgetting, and with it the possibility of remembrance, is itself forgotten. Eichmann represents just such a failure of thinking of the most extreme kind, but Eichmann's failure is not unique. In the contemporary world, which is increasingly a world of displacement, and of the effacement of place, the failure of thinking, even if manifest in more mundane ways than in Eichmann's case, appears as the rule rather than the exception. It is evident in the meaningless sloganizing that dominates current political discourse; in the empty hyperbole of advertising and entertainment; in the hollowed-out language of management and bureaucracy (a language that itself subverts the very language of the ethical to which it so often makes appeal).⁶⁰ "Most thought-provoking in our thought-provoking time" says Heidegger "is that we are still not thinking."⁶¹ Yet in a world that is indeed characterised by displacement and the effacement of place, such a lack of thinking is surely an inevitable consequence of that very displacement. Thinking is a form of placing, and of attending to place; it is also a returning to and a finding of oneself – though never a finding of oneself alone. To think is to come back to the place in which thinking itself begins, which is also the place in which we find our own beginning – the place in which, it might be said, we are ourselves born into the world.

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- ¹ See Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, Vol I (San Diego: Harcourt, Brace and Co, 1971), pp.197-200.
- ² On the prioritization of time in Heidegger's *Being and Time*, see my *Heidegger's Topology* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2006), esp. pp.102-126.
- ³ See for instance, *Heidegger and the Thinking of Place* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2012).
- ⁴ See my 'We Hyperboreans: Notes Towards a Nietzschean Topography', in Julian Young (ed.), *Nietzsche: Individual and Community* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp.xx-xx.
- ⁵ See Arendt, 'Walter Benjamin 1892-1940', in *Men in Dark Times*, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1968), pp.176 & 194.
- ⁶ See Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, I, p.71
- ⁷ See Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, I, p.197 – the story from Xenophon, to which Arendt alludes, is repeated by Rüdiger Safranski in direct response to the question, as he puts it, "Where are we actually when we think". Safranski uses the story in order to contrast Socrates with Heidegger – the latter being described as "a particularly place-bound philosopher", Safranski, *Martin Heidegger: Between Good and Evil*, trans. Ewald Osers (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1990), pp.276-277.
- ⁸ The assertion of the placelessness of thinking also appears to be partly based in the idea of the generality of thought – which, although not listed separately here, is itself suggested by the three features just enumerated – and so to derive from thinking's character as transcendent, as well as hidden and withdrawn.
- ⁹ Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, I, p.201
- ¹⁰ See Malpas, *Place and Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp.19-26.
- ¹¹ See the discussion in Jeff Malpas and Günter Zöller, 'Reading Kant Geographically: From Critical Philosophy to Empirical Geography', in Roxana Baiasu, Graham Bird and A. W. Moore (eds.), *Contemporary Kantian Metaphysics: New Essays on Space and Time* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, in press, 2011), pp.146-166.

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- ¹² See especially 'Art and Space', in *The Heidegger Reader*, ed. Günter Figal, trans. Jerome Veith (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2009), pp.305-309.
- ¹³ See *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), especially §§19-21. Heidegger's account of equipmentality does involve notions of position (*Platz*) and region (*Gegend*), but these tend to operate within the framework of a larger spatial frame. Other notions do start to draw upon a more topologically oriented mode of analysis, but it is one that remains somewhat obscure and not entirely coherent – see Malpas, *Heidegger's Topology*, pp.126-146. Peg Birmingham treats Heidegger's account of existential spatiality as essentially an account of Dasein's *embodiment* – see Birmingham, *Hannah Arendt and Human Right* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University press, 2006), pp.29-30. This is an intriguing reading that does offer a different perspective on the Heideggerian account of space (body and place are themselves linked) although it is also complicated by Heidegger's own remarks concerning the problematic status of the body (see eg. *Being and Time*, H108).
- ¹⁴ *The Life of the Mind*, p.6; see also 'Personal Responsibility under Dictatorship,' in *Responsibility and Judgment*, ed. J. Kohn (New York: Schocken, 2003), p.45.
- ¹⁵ See, for instance, Donald Davidson 'The Myth of the Subjective', in *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), pp.39-52.
- ¹⁶ See Malpas, *Place and Experience*, pp.169-171.
- ¹⁷ See Eugene T. Gendlin, 'Time's dependence on space: Kant's statements and their misconstrual by Heidegger', in Thomas Seebohm & Joseph Kockelmans (eds.), *Kant and phenomenology* (Washington, DC: Center for Advanced Research in Phenomenology & University Press of America, 1984), pp. 147-160; see also Malpas, 'Heidegger, Space and World', in Julian Kiverstein and Michael Wheeler (eds), *Heidegger and Cognitive Science* (London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2012), pp.309-342.
- ¹⁸ Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, I, p.202.
- ¹⁹ Kafka, 'He: Notes from the Year 1920,' in *The Great Wall of China: Stories and Reflections*, trans. Willa and Edwin Muir (New York: Schocken Books, 1946), p.141

(the passage in question is the very last in the series of brief stories, notes and aphorisms).

- ²⁰ See *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (New York: Viking, 1968), see esp. pp.7-14.
- ²¹ *Between Past and Future*, pp.14-15; see also p.227, note. Peg Birmingham also refers (*Hannah Arendt and Human Rights*, p.17) to the essay 'No Longer and Not Yet' in *Essays in Understanding 1930-1954*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1994), pp.158-162, as another instance in which Arendt's invokes this Kafkaesque notion of temporality. In the latter case, however, there is no direct reference to Kafka's parable, and the essay (which is actually a review of the English translation of Hermann Broch's *Death of Virgil*) deploys the idea of the 'no longer and not yet' in a way that connects only partially with the way past and future are dealt with in *The Life of the Mind* or in *Between Past and Future*, and in a way that seems deliberately ambiguous – so, for instance, the idea refers to the 'empty space' that has arisen in the twentieth century with the loss of historical continuity (p.158), to the past and the future as exemplified in the work of Proust and Kafka (p.159), and also to the 'no longer alive and not yet dead' (p.161).
- ²² See Arendt, *Between Past and Future*,
- ²³ *The Life of the Mind*, I, p.210; the same line is repeated, along with the passage in which it is embedded, in *Between Past and Future*, p.13.
- ²⁴ *Between Past and Future*', p.13.
- ²⁵ Birmingham, *Hannah Arendt and Human Rights*, p.17-23.
- ²⁶ Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, I, p.204.
- ²⁷ See Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, 'The Vision and the Enigma',
- ²⁸ Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, p.204; quoting from Heidegger, *Nietzsche*
- ²⁹ Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, I, p.210.
- ³⁰ Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, I, pp.85-86.
- ³¹ The lengthy discussion of Heidegger in the second Volume of *The Life of the Mind* deals primarily with the issue of humanism.
- ³² See Heidegger, 427 n. 13; *Being and Time*, 499 n. xiii.

³³ In early Heidegger, transcendence names the capacity of Dasein to move beyond itself in the direction of world – transcendence is thus tied to projection and to existence. It is a term Heidegger later abandons because of what he takes to be its subjectivist associations – transcendence, and so the opening of world, seems to be something that is brought about by Dasein (see the discussion in Malpas, *Heidegger's Topology*, pp.155-175). Yet there is nevertheless a sense of transcendence that remains throughout his work and that relates simply to the idea of the openness and inexhaustibility of the world itself. Finitude might be said to remain transcendent in this sense just inasmuch as finitude, while it does not bring about the openness of world, is given over to such openness in virtue of its own finite character.

³⁴ See Malpas, *Heidegger's Topology*, esp. pp.39-126.

³⁵ See Heidegger, *Being and Time* H329, see p.377, n.2 (in the Macquarie and Robinson translation).

³⁶ Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, I, p.201.

³⁷ Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, I, p.211.

³⁸ The question of metaphor, which can here be dealt with only in passing, actually opens up into a much larger set of issues. Part of the difficulty of Arendt's discussion is its extensive reliance on metaphor and allegory – not only the stories from Kafka and Nietzsche, but also in the manner of Arendt's own development of and commentary on those stories. Earlier on in *The Life of the Mind* Arendt argues that thinking is essentially reliant on metaphor, and yet she also warns against it: "It would be tempting to believe that metaphorical thought is only a danger when resorted to by the pseudo-sciences and philosophical thought, if it does not claim demonstrable truth, is safe in using appropriate metaphors. Unfortunately this is not the case ..." (*The Life of the Mind*, p.113). One is tempted to say that in her discussion of the place of thinking, Arendt lacks control of the metaphors that she employs – that in fact her argument operates too much in the realm of metaphor or, at least, without sufficient regard to the various metaphors that are in play. Metaphor becomes a particularly important issue in relation to place and space precisely because they are so ubiquitous in our

thinking. This has led some authors, notably Mark Johnson (*The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1990), to claim that the most basic metaphors are indeed those that are drawn from our spatialized and embodied existence, but Heidegger, who frequently, and increasingly explicitly in his later thinking, draws upon spatial and topological images, also denies that they are to be understood metaphorically. In striking contrast to Arendt, Heidegger rejects the use of metaphor, rejecting also the metaphorical character of his recourse to the spatial and topological (this is most famously the case in his insistence that the idea of language as 'the house of being' is no mere 'transfer' of the image house onto being. If we read Arendt's analysis of thinking with an eye to Heidegger's rejection of metaphor, then we are forced to attend much more closely to the topology that seems so strongly present in Arendt's very language. On the larger question of metaphor, language, and place see my 'Poetry, Language, Place'.

³⁹ See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H369.

⁴⁰ Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, p.205.

⁴¹ Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?*, trans. J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p.244.

⁴² Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?*, pp.234-236.

⁴³ See Malpas, 'The Remembrance of Place', in Azucena Cruz-Pierre and Don Landes (eds), *The Voice of Place: Essays and Interviews Exploring the Work of Edward S. Casey* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. 63-72

⁴⁴ Heidegger, *Basic Concepts*, trans. Gary E. Aylesworth (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1998), p.78).

⁴⁵ See Malpas, *Heidegger's Topology*, pp.263-266; see also 'Poetry, Language, Place'.

⁴⁶ Malpas,

⁴⁷ See Malpas, *Heidegger's Topology*, pp.213-230.

⁴⁸ Joseph Fell, *Heidegger and Sartre: An Essay on Being and Place* (New York: Columbia, 1979), p.221

⁴⁹ See *The Life of the Mind*, pp.179-193; see also pp.4-5, where she briefly discusses this in relation to Eichmann.

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- ⁵⁰ *The Life of the Mind*, p.191.
- ⁵¹ *The Life of the Mind*, p.187.
- ⁵² For more on the topology of identity and difference see my discussion in *Rethinking Dwelling*,
- ⁵³ See Plato, *Timaeus*, 48E-51A in F. M. Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology. The Timaeus of Plato translated with a running commentary* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1937), pp.177-180
- ⁵⁴ Birmingham, *Hannah Arendt and Human Rights*, p.33.
- ⁵⁵ Birmingham, *Hannah Arendt and Human Rights*, p.32.
- ⁵⁶ See Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, pp.37-38.
- ⁵⁷ Heidegger, 'Hebel—Friend of the House,' trans. Bruce V. Foltz and Michael Heim, in *Contemporary German Philosophy* 3 (1983), 100–101.
- ⁵⁸ See Malpas, 'Poetry, Language, Place', forthcoming.
- ⁵⁹ Such that one might say, although Birmingham does not, that if there is any priority at all here, it is a priority that belongs to our birth into language – it is only thus that our birth and death as physical beings is opened up to us.
- ⁶⁰ See my 'The Demise of Ethics', *Research in Ethical Issues in Organizations*, 8 (2012), pp.29-46 for more on the ethical decay that characterises contemporary intuitional structures in particular.
- ⁶¹ *What is Called Thinking?*, trans. F.D. Wieck and J.G. Gray (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), p.6