To what extent is mankind the cause of its own misery?

Evil within in Western civilization

An attempt to save the world by Rosanne Jonkhout

Layout

To what extent can man oversee evil within?

'Rosanne is an impatient and fidgety little girl. She's smart, makes logical deductions, hears everything that is being discussed, it's not like she forgets anything. She doesn't forget assignments, she simply refuses to do them. Her self-image consists of 'I cannot, so I will not" and "I can do nothing, and I am nothing".'
Dr. E. Terlier, E. van der Meulen. 'Bär-Anneke van der Drift practice for children with behavioural problems, research report on Rosanne Jonkhout', 1999 (7 years old).

Limitations of people seem somewhat an obsession of mine. My own work is often about vulnerability, inadequacy or failure, and my theoretical research always bears this as a theme. This paradoxical research into blind spots of man and mankind reflect my fear of my own limitations, and my unawareness of them.

Especially as a child I was anxious and afraid of failure. My grandmother on the other hand, was a happy, flamboyant and spirited woman, always. Her strength and imperviousness served as a role model.

Even though as a child I did not always fully understand the use of the ceremony, the whole family would gather in front of the television to watch the Second World War commemoration from beginning to end every year. My grandmother would make a strong impression on me when I would suddenly hear her sobbing violently in those two minutes of silence.

When she heard people shouting, or cars racing by it seemed, almost like a personal insult to her. She would mutter about her fears on how there will be war again, 'as soon as people forget, and more and more people forget every year'. The terror of what the war did to my grandmother, made sure I secretly vowed to never forget the horrible things she had lived, before I even remotely understood what that meant.

That fact that people are having an increasingly hard time to sacrifice two minutes out of the year, so that they may reflect upon the horrors of the Second World War, quite frankly still both baffles and terrifies me. Like many people, I too have the urge to have everything under control. Everything must be learned and every bit of information and experience has to be caught. To forget is the enemy, things forgotten means things escape and are unlearned. Even the concept of 'not understanding', must be understood, as is the aim of my research.

As a schoolgirl I was determined, and it felt like a responsibility to ensure that the world does not lapse back into the same pattern of hatred, pain and sorrow. So that people like my grandmother never had a reason to cry again. I am under the impression that this research arose from this. Is it education, culture, surroundings or intelligence? I'll just stay in this illusion for a moment: I am, as it seems, still trying to save the world.

A respectful, horrified silence is the only civilized response.
- Adorno, in regard to Auschwitz

It is obviously no mistake that two of the three philosophers I chose, Adorno and Arendt, were Jewish and refugees in the Second World War. I will be proceeding this thesis along the lines of three great post-war thinkers: Theodor W. Adorno, Hannah Arendt and Martha Nussbaum as I attempt to deconstruct evil in the Western civilization.

Do we spread evil by mimicking each others behaviour? Does the smallest of evil in everyday life have a 'snowball effect' and evolve into disasters? Or does great evil, like wars for example, simply exist in the world like an energy beyond human understanding? The word 'evil' has the tendency to sound rather heavy and fierce. Evil can mean a big thing to which we distance ourselves from. This makes it easier to pass it off as though it doesn't apply to you. However, I am most interested in where evil starts. The 'little' evil that gives the first push on the snowball-effect. Where and whether large scale confrontations, wars and social problems can be led back to. Everyday evil; evil that is a responsibility to be in the hands of individuals. Events that we see in the news, and which we don't feel addresses us. Why we all seem to know so well, and love to tell other people right and wrong, but live in the world where the phrase NIMBY[i] exist. But maybe we are not so far removed as we would like to think ourselves to be. This thesis is a search for why we people harm and stagnate others, and (too often) ourselves. To which extend it has to do with stress, emotions or lack of intelligence. Whether you and me are inherently benevolent or malevolent, and part of harm that is inflicted on a daily basis, and to what extend we are aware of it. What are the limits in our understanding of acting rightly?

In a honest attempt to find an answer to the problem of evil, I will try to approach it from all possible angles. In the first chapter, I will research whether the evil we portray might be a projection, consequences of other events. If evil is merely a ripple effect. This by the means of psychoanalysis. In this chapter, I also attempt to state a solid structure to keep this dissertation grounded. In the following chapter, I briefly shine light on the history of evil. philosophical progress of the history of evil will reveal the way we understand it today. The existence and origins of evil itself will be questioned and inquiries are made to uncover whether evil might be something that is inborn, within our nature. I will examine, in chapters three and four, if evil is something we might consciously do with pleasure or something we do without understanding. Lastly, I will argue that the greatest evil may lurk in the most seemingly innocent and smallest places. I will attempt to provide an answer to the problem of evil.

Definition of terms

Our concept of right and wrong is based on a social structure that, albeit relative to change, we all need as to get a grip on how to function within our civilization. If we are to live in each other's vicinity as peacefully as possible, a structure is needed to make sure we understand each other and construct a body in which people will be judged fairly. For example; imagine if you were raised in an environment where your parents would blame you for something your little brother did, and at the same time would reward him for something good that you did. Even though -and maybe especially if- your parents would be aware of this, it would change your entire concept of right and wrong, if it could even exist at all. How would you even function without this concept? Since it is not clear to you what action is good, and which is evil, as you are neither punished for evil nor rewarded for good, you could be completely oblivious to the damage or injure you cause to yourself and people around you.

Since we live in a world where efficiency is maximised, just for the sake of this thesis I will refer to decisions one makes to disadvantage or impair themselves or others in any way, shape or form as 'bad choices'.

The Oxford English Dictionary gives this as a definition of the word 'evil':

> **EVIL**
> [MASS NOUN]
> 1 Profound immorality and wickedness, (especially when regarded as a supernatural force):
> his struggle against the forces of evil
>
> 1.1 A manifestation of this, especially in people's actions:
> the evil that took place last Thursday
>
> 1.2 Something which is harmful or undesirable:
> sexism, racism, and all other unpleasant social evils

Definitions are not invariable, and much like any truths, the content of the word evil is relative to time and place. An interesting similarity is that this definition by The Oxford English Dictionary follows the same development chronologically in definition as the historical philosophical discourse. Which is a treat that may seem highly logical but it could have just as easily not have fitted my agenda as well as it does. Because; before the period of Enlightenment, monotheism dominated Western civilization and evil was regarded as en masse supernatural, as the first line of the definition also states. Bad things that happened such as outbreaks of diseases and earthquakes, were considered to be at the hand of God as a punishment for our sins. The centre of gravity in the definition of evil shifted during the period of Enlightenment. As point 1.1 with regard to the definition above states; *especially in people's actions*; evil evolved into something at the hands of men, actions of which he himself was accountable for. Instead of being bystanders, from here on, the problem of evil was in the care of man, an enemy in need of defeat. Although evil was still something that was wild and uncontrollable, such as madness or physical assault.

Point 1.2; Evil didn't become a *social* problem until World War II, which I will get into in a later chapter.

There are still many ways to go from here, but I've chosen to probe into human development to discover if there are any reasons as to why we do bad things, and if evil may be provoked. A good first tool to tackle this is to start with psychoanalysis, which I will deduct in the following paragraphs.

Psychoanalytics

It is understood in psychoanalysis that in a person's childhood, the groundwork of impressions is laid upon which the structure of behaviour and understanding is built for the continuity of life. It is widely believed that conflict in these early stages of life can cause recurring issues in later life.

Example: Young Henry is rebelling in college because he does not respect the teachers. Since his parents (used to) physically abuse him; as a consequence, he does not trust authority figures.

The hypothesis that personality and behaviour are effected by experiences in childhood is one of the biggest tenets of psychoanalysis. The late Erik Homburger Erikson, one of the patriarchs in the field of development psychology and professor at Harvard and Yale, laid out five stages children go through to monitor their emotional health development.[II]

Trust	<->	Distrust
Independency	<->	Shame and doubt
Initiative	<->	Guilt
Diligence	<->	Inferiority
Identity	<->	Role confusion

These phases are in chronological order. Between birth and 18 months, the child is wanting to trust. From 18 months to three years of age, a child develops the need to do certain tasks autonomously, such as potty training. From three to five years old, we start to discover, question and play, thus first attempting to venture into- and understand the world. From six to twelve years old is when passion, skills and talents emerge, giving a sense of industry. From the age of twelve to eighteen is the phase for discovering our individuality.

According to Homburger, depending on experience, impressions or role-modelling, a child can slip into the negative counterpart of these phases. For example, if the child is not encouraged to do certain age-appropriate tasks on its own -such as eating with utensils as opposed to being fed- the child will develop self-doubt. This leads him to wonder why everyone else can use a fork, but not him, at which point he can feel ashamed of himself.

Three Phases of adolescence:

(20+ years)	Intimacy	<->	Isolation
(25 - 65 years)	Generativity	<->	Stagnation
(65+ years)	Wisdom	<->	Despair

After the adolescent leaves the home of the parents, it is often coupled with feelings of freedom and independence. This sudden realization of autonomy and the responsibility that it entails can cause a sense of fear. This is often when we transcend this need of a safety net into relationships. We want belong, fit in with our friends and be loved by a partner; validated as a person. Deficiency to any of these needs can result into isolation. This longing of belonging somewhere is at its greatest when we first have to get used to the idea of a life without our parents.

After a while of building our own lives, and standing on our own two feet we get to a place where we can really rally and forge successes towards our life's goals. When unproductive, one can develop feelings of stagnation and a lack of goals in life. This can cause anxiety and depression, amongst others. Provided the stages of intimacy and generativity were fruitful, the final stage as a senior is a time of reflection. If life goals were met, there is a feeling of fulfilment. If we perceived life to be unsuccessful we become displeased with life which can lead to depression and feelings of desperation.[III]

As a child you're open to interpretation and therefore more susceptible to changes in structures of thought, which is why it's said that you are more easily influenced in childhood. However, events may occur throughout one's entire life that can have an impact on later behaviour. It is known that when we are subjected to injustice, we behave in certain ways.

A lot of research on psychoanalysis on child development and psychology has been done by Anna Freud. She spent a lot of time researching through her father's work on defence mechanisms. The following are the five most prominent mechanisms.

Defence mechanisms[IV]
- Repression
- Projection
- Regression
- Reaction formation
- Sublimation

The word mechanism says it all. They are an automatic human response to deal with unpleasant circumstances. All these symptoms are signs of stagnation in personal development and can therefore already be categorized as a form of evil. Not to mention some of these mechanisms can cause individuals to lash out and disadvantage others.
        I will go over them quickly; Repression means suppressing the feelings, acting like they don't exist, forcing them into the unconscious.
Regression will lead the person into hiding in an earlier stage of development; comparatively, the psychological equivalent of going back in time.
Projection simply means to project the troubling feeling onto something that is not accepted in society, such as tics.
Reaction formation will cause an overcompensation to the opposite characteristics of a problem. A well-known example: when trying to convince someone of something whilst lying, and telling them too many details.
Sublimation is seen by Freudians as the most acceptable of all the mechanisms, an expression of anxiety in socially acceptable ways[V]. Think, for example, of sports, or forms of art, as an outlet for feelings of aggression.
        The reason why I find this important to include in my research is because defensive reactions and thinking can impair the mind from developing and learning.[VI] When defensive behaviour leads to impairment, it is by standards of this thesis, an evil being done to the self. In a search to man's limitations, this is a viable argument to include in the investigation. Defensive actions can cause inconsistent behaviour, called cognitive dissonance[VII]. This is thus an evil being inflicted on the individual's self, but it can spiral out of control to the point where the instability can cause harm to others as well.
        Are defensive reactions merely the lacking of more suitable behaviour? And, although this is commonly assumed (clinically diagnosable impediments aside for a moment) a vital question to keep in mind: *Is a limit really a bad thing*?

To be a good human being is to have a kind of openness to the world, an ability to trust uncertain things beyond your own control, that can lead you to be shattered in very extreme circumstances for which you were not to blame. That says something very important about the condition of the ethical life: that it is based on a trust in the uncertain and on a willingness to be exposed; it's based on being more like a plant than like a jewel, something rather fragile, but whose very particular beauty is inseparable from that fragility.
- Martha Nussbaum, in interview with Bill Moyers

Social causes of evil

After systemizing how to recognize evil that comes from inside ourselves, it is now essential to create a measuring unit for evils that approach from the outside.

An excellent way to do this is to involve Martha Nussbaum, since she is a bridge between sociology, politics and philosophy. Martha Nussbaum is a philosopher and professor of Law and Ethics at the University of Chicago, who wrote many books combining philosophy and politics in her ethics. She formed the Capabilities Approach as a way of systemizing human development as opportunities, based on personal and social circumstances. To give humans the freedom to reach their maximum potential of development and happiness, certain behaviours and freedoms are required. Nussbaum strived to create a model to such needs. To make sure no one takes matters into their own hands and deem themselves more important than another, each human needs the same chances for happiness and respect. Because naturally, we want to feel like we are just as worthy as anyone to feel happy; in other words, dignity. The Capabilities Approach creates a structure wherein an individual has the freedom and choice to shape their life to their desire. Before getting into it, on the following page are the ten categories to identify a personal right to freedom and the potential in preserving one's dignity.[VIII]

The Capabilities Approach[IX]:

1. Life.

> Being able to live to the end of a human life of normal length; not dying prematurely, or before one's life is so reduced as to be not worth living.

2. Bodily Health.

> Being able to have good health, including reproductive health; to be adequately nourished; to have adequate shelter.

3. Bodily Integrity.

> Being able to move freely from place to place; to be secure against violent assault, including sexual assault and domestic violence; having opportunities for sexual satisfaction and for choice in matters of reproduction.

4. Senses, Imagination, and Thought.

> Being able to use the senses, to imagine, think, and reason—and to do these things in a "truly human" way, a way informed and cultivated by an adequate education, including, but by no means limited to, literacy and basic mathematical and scientific training. Being able to use imagination and thought in connection with experiencing and producing works and events of one's own choice, religious, literary, musical, and so forth. Being able to use one's mind in ways protected by guarantees of freedom of expression with respect to both political and artistic speech, and freedom of religious exercise. Being able to have pleasurable experiences and to avoid non-beneficial pain.

5. Emotions.

> Being able to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves; to love those who love and care for us, to grieve at their absence; in general, to love, to grieve, to experience longing, gratitude, and justified anger. Not having one's emotional development blighted by fear and anxiety. (Supporting this capability means supporting forms of human association that can be shown to be crucial in their development.)

6. Practical Reason.

> Being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life. (This entails protection for the liberty of conscience and religious observance.)

7. Affiliation.

> - Being able to live with and toward others, to recognize and show concern for other humans, to engage in various forms of social interaction; to be able to imagine the situation of another.(Protecting this capability means protecting institutions that constitute and nourish such forms of affiliation, and also protecting the freedom of assembly and political speech.) - Having the social bases of self-respect and non-humiliation; being able to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others. This entails provisions of non-discrimination on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, caste, religion, national origin and species.

8. Other Species.

> Being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants, and the world of nature.

9. Play.

> Being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities.

10. Control over one's Environment.

> - *Political.* Being able to participate effectively in political choices that govern one's life; having the right of political participation, protections of free speech and association.
> - *Material.* Being able to hold property (both land and movable goods), and having property rights on an equal basis with others; having the right to seek employment on an equal basis with others; having the freedom from unwarranted search and seizure. In work, being able to work as a human, exercising practical reason and entering into meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with other workers.

It is important to state that Nussbaum created this list as another way to address responsibility for political figures and institutions to society. This list functions as a way to give insight on how human beings can maximize their potential.[X] Instead of focussing on gross national product (GNP) per capita, which measures only the averages[XI], Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach concentrates on what a person is able to do, making for a very targeted research on faults and a much more precise purpose of action.

The list is supposed to provide a focus for quality of life assessment and for political planning, and it aims to select capabilities that are of central importance, whatever else the person pursues. They therefore have a special claim to be supported for political purposes in a pluralistic society.[XII] A straightforward index that makes up quality of life, what every average individual should have right to, and for government and social institutions to strive for to defend these rights of human dignity.

This list was made for political bodies to use, however, for this thesis I will shape it to function as a connection to psychoanalysis. I'll be utilising it in order to measure a possible breach in personal dignity as a cause for pursuing evil. It is possible that an impairment to any one of the ten points can have a psychological effect. To breach personal dignity can have a powerful impact on an individual. This list could serve as a way to recognize the evil that is inflicted on others, which could also result in another (albeit subconscious) motive to do evil things. It may occur that if, for whatever reason, there is a failure to adhere to any one of the points of the Capabilities Approach, it would lead to feelings of unhappiness and frustration which causes further violation of a person's capabilities and would make an individual act out, thus making bad decisions and so on. But there are many different forms of evil, and they are well analysed by the Capabilities Approach.

Here are a few hypothetical scenarios as supporting tools in this thesis.

Picture a young woman in Bangladesh, pressured to marry at age sixteen. She marries a man that abuses her emotionally and physically, day in and day out. After years of this abuse to her and their children, the man comes home from work one day to find his wife hiding behind the door for him with a weapon. She's decided she has had enough, and murders him. Is it justice for this man? There is a clear infringement on the woman's third point of the Capabilities Approach; bodily integrity. As a result, she evokes the man's right on the first point; the right to a life or normal length, and not dying prematurely.

A mother wants nothing but the best for her daughter. She herself grew up extremely poor, with no access to education. She wanted her daughter to have the kick-start she never stood a chance of having herself; she therefore pushes her daughter to success, never allowing her to have any free time. Later, the daughter only knows how to achieve academically, and doesn't know how to handle alternative aspects of life, such as emotions of failure, hopelessness or relationships. *The road to hell is paved with good intentions;* there is a clear breach on the mothers part on 'senses, imagination and thought' to which she is denied a chance on education.[XIII] It causes her to deny her daughter a certain dignity; all three last points of the Capabilities Approach are violated here by depriving her of time to develop friendships or hobbies she, herself, chose to be passionate about.

An unemployed man in his thirties. He is living off income support and the exhausted efforts and resources of his family and friends, as he can't keep a job that accommodates his behaviour stimulated by his drug abuse. When offered help to deal with his problems he discards it, holding onto the notion that his broken childhood left too deep a wound to heal and to even attempt at being a functional adult within society. This is an intricate one; his dignity was violated in his childhood, which causes him to be a major burden to his loved ones, thus violating their capabilities.

Interestingly enough, evil need not necessarily be a chain reaction; imagine, for example, of a man falling in love with another woman than his wife. He ends up

overcompensating out of guilt and becomes obsessed with his wife to the point where it disrupts her social life. He goes through her personal stuff and keeps an eye on all her activities. Freud's defence mechanism (reaction formation) violates the wife's ninth point on the Capabilities Approach; the freedom to play.

A basic structure for the human thought-patterns has been clinically mapped out and there is a clearer view on why people make bad decisions from a psychoanalytic perspective. Now that a measuring unit is set up to identify evil as it happens, we can start to trace the stem back to its roots; *where* does evil come from and *why* does it even exist*?*

      This research leaves me with yet more and more questions. Do people still make bad choices if all their needs are met? You could state that when an individual checks all of Nussbaum's boxes, he would be truly content. If a society would function by the criteria of the Capabilities Approach, it insinuates the existence of the happiest citizens, a utopia even. Would such a society be possible? And if it was, would evil still exist? Or does human kind compulsively get in its own way? What could be the reason people would still make bad choices, do bad things?

As was just illustrated, evil does not have to originate out of other evil, and we do not only act evil when there is a case of psychological build-up that is the consequence of injustice: it can simply come into existence. Could it be that evil is something we are born with, that is in all of us?

      Or perhaps, the most important question in regarding this chapter: does any *one* individual have the right to justify by the events in your past, or anything for that matter, when their choices in life inflict harm onto others? Can there even be anyone to claim any gradient of harm (read: evil) to be just or unjust?

      Imagine the murder of a serial rapist. Separately from the discussion on whether or not he deserved it; does any one person have the god-like right to take a life? There can never be foolproof decisiveness on whether one person is more valuable than another. So if by this calculation murder is wrong, than this means that whatever gruesome acts someone may have done to you, you do not have the right to take a life. Logic would dictate not, and in solution to these difficult questions are obviously why man attempted to create entire structures of authorities; the government. This hypothesis can be permeated all the way to the playground; even though that bully stole your marbles, and pushed your head into the sandbox so many times, if logic dictates, you can never retaliate. For even if he deserves it, who are *you* to harm another? You cannot judge yourself better than him, because; can you really ever be so all-knowing as to whether you did or did not deserve it?

Does this mean that evil stops and starts with you?

Out of my answers there grew new questions, inquiries conjectures, probabilities - until at length I had a country of my own, a soil of my own, an entire discrete, thriving, flourishing world.
- **Nietzsche, 'On the Genealogy of Morals', p.17.**

Evil exists in all man

Evil was first thought to be something supernatural. Before the period of the Enlightenment, we did not question God's intentions. Whenever a bad thing happened, it was at the hand of God, punishing us for our sins. Since Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, human kind was doomed to a short, earthly life of pain and could not obtain eternal life without the mercy of God. Since then, human kind believed that every bad thing that happened to us, was to punish us for bad things we had done. As is the nature of autocracy, Providence ruled our thought. But it only takes so much, up to the point that we are shaken to the core. The 1755 earthquake in Lisbon made a deep imprint on man, and with a city completely wiped out, people started to first focus questions about divine Providence and original sin. Thus it is believed to be to (one of the) spark(s) that ignited into Enlightenment.[XIV] With so many innocent casualties, the injustice was overwhelming. We could not comprehend why God would be responsible for such a travesty. If God did not spare the innocent, it would mean that either he does not exist or he is irrational and illogical. And, if that, what point would there be to anything?

In Emile, Rousseau therefore came to the conclusion that if God were responsible for the earthquake, he would be incompetent; therefore nature must be autonomous. This left with moral evil; it is when nature and metaphysics were first separated. Natural evil wasn't something you would just wait to happen to you anymore, as now it was supposedly something you let happen, and therefore deserved. Man could actively work on bettering himself; man took evil out of the hands of God, and made it into his own responsibility[XV].

This notion by Rousseau is not disrespectfully meant, in contrary, God made everything, the way it is, so beautifully that God need not to look over our shoulder and intervene. God had become obsolete. Prayers and churchly services were not going to absolute you from evil, instead man needed love. A will to be good as to decide that certain choices were bad.

Everything is good as it leaves the hands of the Author of nature;
everything degenerates in the hands of man.
- Rousseau, Emile, first sentence

To understand the source of the problem of Evil, we can't go past Kant. Inspired by Rousseau (and Locke), Kant thought the responsibility in the problem of evil was in the hands of men as well. Although his idea of good and evil extended in a different direction.

Evil was something only found in the deepest nature of mankind, since nature itself is not essentially evil. Animalism is neutral, states Kant, the problem of evil is thus: humanity. Evil is something that a man can't prevent; it's something humanity inflicts on one another, by existing amongst each other. His idea of the tendency to do bad is not taught but inborn and is both still morally obligated to be good.

With this notion, Kant first split philosophy from theodicy.[XVI] Bad behaviour was now something to be inspected autonomously. Man turned his gaze inward before turning to God.

So why did we turn to God in the first place?

Nietzsche wrote that we started finding meaning in evils because suffering and pain without meaning would implicate that life was senseless. We know how to be punished; therefore pain must have meaning. Thinking it must be something that we have done to deserve it, leads to be the instigation- and original source of religion. The problem of evil emerged from those who had projected fears of their own worthlessness onto the world; but giving ideas of an eternal divine after-life, meant to condemn this world. The problem of evil was thus not given but created. This is why God had to die.[XVII] Nietzsche had wanted this, so we as humanity were to move on and completely reinstate new rules, laws and ways of thinking that weren't based on our current perceptions of good and evil. However, Nietzsche knew early on that the problem of evil is insolvable, for a longing to prove the world to be good taints us all. For even since we have killed Him, the vacancy left behind, left us wanting to fill this need with no less passion than before. This we do by means of trying to give one's own life a purpose, a meaning, which is exactly the problem of evil, we were trying so hard to deny in the first place.

Thus, the death of God is a requirement, however merely this is not enough as we still have a need to be a subjected to a larger whole. An entire reset on the way we see the world, is required. Freud also declared the problem of evil to be unsolvable. He said to even try is contradictory, for *'the wildest revolutionaries [are] no less passionately than the most virtuous believers'.*[XVIII] For even when we discarded God, we are still looking for a replacement, even if we might call it scientific development, to which we are now religiously addicted. Freud describes the need for a God, a lingering need for a father-figure to make us feel safe in the world after having grown into adults. Even more so; not only do we long for a form of paternalism, we fear a power greater than ours.[XIX]

According to Freud, we have animalistic urges that need to be suppressed for the sake of being accepted in society. It is not ideal since we are simply brutes; we are aggressive and violent, yet society gives us a conscious. The suppression may cause a whole other set of problems but society may be (one of) the best redemption(s) for our violent nature, as it helps us to behave better towards one other.[XX]

Now onto Adorno, as this is where Adorno really takes the stage. Contradictory to Freud, Adorno believed that it is society that is everything wrong in the world. Adorno thought, like Kant, that animalistic nature is essentially innocent, and that it is culture that cultivates evil. Society breaks one's connection to nature in every human being. For example: a child that keeps being subjected to regulations by his mother. Adorno states that these behavioural limitations (as for example, imposed by the mother figure) leave a wound on the individual separating his need to be accepted in a society, from his actual nature. We are all doomed, for there is no healing from this internal rip. No doubt inspired by Freud, Adorno thought the world filled with unpredictability and sheer mysteries through which we neurotically have to build structures to feel 'free' otherwise, when we lose the sense of control, the fear of the unknowing paralyzes us. We have to be calm and collected, if we want to function 'normally' amongst other people.

We have to seem normal and together to fit into society's standards. This act calls for an abundance of self-control, and we have to suppress a lot of emotions. Society is nothing but a bunch of rules, walls we put up in order to feel safe and in control of ourselves and nature. Everything has a structure, both outside (e.g. earth & space, life, physical- and formal science) and within (e.g. philosophy, social science). Herewith, humankind is obsessively inclined to systemize and categorize everything. Matters that we do not understand are shunned, for we cannot make sense of them. Hereby, we make a break from nature, and the more we try to categorize and dissect nature, the further we drift from true reconciliation with it.

Though we can never be fully reunited. For however hard we try, the structures originated by society functions like a bicycle we can never learn to un-ride. We are forever

subjected to them. And with the suppression of these fears, feelings of aggression and anger, in other words, the emotions that make up the animal within us, are built up inside and must come out, one way or another. Adorno stated that this is how anti-Semitism came into existence. We have all these feelings of fear, of which we don't know how to handle, thus we project them onto other subjects that we reason into legitimacy. For example; fear of people and things that differ from us, such as a different colour of skin, i.e. racism. We legitimize those feelings by saying they must have evil intentions. An example most commonly heard in western civilization; blaming groups of people on the basis of their heritage for things such as lack of employment.

The question with Adorno remains where the source of evil lies. Could this projection of illegitimate fears be counted as evil within ourselves that we have to fight? If we were to call this ability to unjustly project these fears 'evil', Adorno would say that evil does exists in all man, because it affects everyone within a culture, and there is no escape from it.

Although it would make sense if Adorno were of opinion that it is *society* that is the one who is evil in nature, and wrongdoing of human beings is the result of society. The exact answer Adorno would most likely give is that it goes hand in hand. Evil is something within us, that displays itself in contact with others. We make up society and even if you decide to live out the rest of your days in the wilderness from now on, completely shunned from any human contact, the culture you were raised in, the time, the geographical location and the family you grew up in, all determines the structures in the way you think, and there will be no relief from this fate. Only being born and left behind, away from any sign of humanity and civilization, will keep you from this internal rip from nature.

So, what is the solution, how do we fight this evil? Adorno would say we cannot. To convince yourself that you can, is deceit; there is no escape from the grip which society has upon you. Alas; the fighting and trying to make sense of it will only push you further away from your goal. The best you can do is make peace with the concept; realizing that there is no liberation from this will give you a momentary sense of truth, even though this is only mimicry. This is our fate, and like Kant, Adorno's opinion is we must bear it with dedication.

Unlike Freud and Kant, Arendt, in her early works, believed that human nature in itself is not inherently violent. However, there are a few exceptions where the desire for power can overthrow all logic and alter men in its deepest nature; where they cut down everything in their path, even innocent human beings. Kant and Adorno are both brushed and intersected in her opinion that totalitarianism is considered the most 'radical evil'. Arendt thought humanity to have a responsibility to be alert and ever critical as to not be subjected to totalitarian evil. Society in this is the biggest pitfall. After her attendance of the Eichmann trials, she would never speak of 'radical evil' again. 'It is indeed my opinion now that evil is never 'radical', that it is only extreme', as she writes in a series of letters with Geshom Scholem.[XXI] This surprising change of perspective will be further discussed in chapter four.

As an answer to one of the questions we discussed after the Capabilities Approach, Nussbaum responds: even if the basic needs of a person are satisfied, feelings of a negative nature can occur in humans, even resulting in vindictiveness toward one another. With this negative behaviour, humans violate their fellow human's basic rights. Nussbaum builds a predominant amount of her conclusions of evil from Kant's phrase of 'radical evil', however, concludes the hypothesis to be limited and incomplete. Nussbaum herself can't provide us with a satisfying alternative, because she finds it unclear as to where the urges to do evil derive. Perhaps the origins of evil are not to be uprooted; perhaps they just 'are', and explaining them would be as much a guess as any. Nussbaum continues with stating that Kant excluded varieties of evil such as ethnic and racial evil and the desire to humiliate just for the sake of hurting someone.[XXII] The latter may remind us of beastliness.

Furthermore, to realize our animal urges at least cause a contribution to the problem of evil, is to realize they may not be as neutral as Kant thought them to be. Animals have no

feelings of pity (or at least lack the luxury) in leaving their sick and elderly behind for the survival of the group. It is within our human society in which we create a conscious, which differentiates us from animals. This aspect of animalism plays a role in at least a small part; when the radical evil in us does show itself, the animal in us is all too happy to override our consciousness.[XXIII]

The differentiating factors between animals and humans are an area in which Nussbaum spent a great amount of time in studying. As stated, humans are the only species that get distracted by our affection of others. If an elderly elephant is unable to walk anymore, it gets left behind because it will otherwise endanger the safety of the herd. While I don't know about you, but even if in an emergency situation I would go back and carry my mother halfway around the world on the shoulders if I have to. This may sound like a heart-warming thing to do, but if it hinders in any way, it is by the standards of this thesis, actually an evil. This empathic notion in which we are even willing to risk our own survival, renders on stupidity.

Animals are instinctively drawn to survival as soon as they are born. In contrast, the human infant is the only species on earth that is helplessly dependent on others for its survival for such a period of time. Because infants are in need of being cared for, a sense of entitlement is nurtured, which accompanies us through life. Thus making the conversion to the feeling of superiority over other beings whenever we get the chance, not a very large one. This narcissistic need for subordination from others is evil in a very dangerous form within society, and one which Arendt and Adorno would agree on.

Much the same way that Nussbaum created the Capabilities Approach, Kant proposed his 'deontological moral system' as opposed to the postulated utilitarianism that has developed developing since industrialization in mid-eighteenth century. This was as to clearly deposit moral responsibility in the hand of the individual. So instead of saying 'murder is wrong', which is possibly problematic because radical evil tends to show itself outweighing the narcissistic needs before the society as a whole; saying 'don't kill' gives a much individually oriented strategy.[XXIV] In the first instance, there is referred to rules for society as a whole, but the latter proposes a boundary, which is your own duty to keep.

What counts is not what your road is paved with,
but whether it leads to hell.
- Susan Neiman. (2004: 275)

Conscious evil

The first association one generally has with the word evil nowadays may be pictures of psychopathic serial rapist or demonic and cold-blooded murderers. In other words; malice in its purest form. Especially the word 'radical' suggests connotations of rabid insanity -this is no surprise. Since before the Enlightenment, this would be how we would generally perceive evil. Though such intentional evil is not easily exposed, for the presence of supportive philosophical literature is meagre. Not unlike any other kind of extreme behaviour, we cannot fully grasp maliciousness due to its ridiculous nature, since it does not encompass logic. Evil behaviour with forethought rallies with the narcissistic, infantile entitlement we examined in the previous chapter. The need to steal or take it upon yourself to judge someone worthy of physical (e.g.) harm is both childish and arrogantly derived from frustration of not getting something you think you deserve.[xxv] However, conscious evil is conventionally not this excessive evil that terrifies us to core of our being. With the doubly underscored and blaring exception of terrorism.

Terrorism has a randomness to it that is frighteningly similar to the merciless forces of nature. Terrorists attack with malicious intent. The same way we stopped willing meaning into natural evils; terrorist attacks are so overwhelmingly outrageous that it is beyond the point of seeking meaning, and it therefore just as impossible to restrain.[xxvi]

Before the Enlightenment, evil was recognized and categorized by spiteful action and intend. But proposing this is actually not the case, is best illustrated by Rousseau with a hypothesis of the Fall, stating that *good-natured mistakes* made up evil, since Eve did not eat from the forbidden fruit with the intention of being rude; she was merely being curious. Rousseau considered this to be good news. Now, if you can overstep that feeling of slight disappointment of being kicked out of paradise over a mistake, the good news is that this means we can certainly prevent it. Kant thought that Rousseau's veiling evil behind mistakes was too easy. Like Adam and Eve being tempted to eat the forbidden fruit, it is in our nature to be inquisitive: whether evil appeared either from good-natured or malicious intention, it is only because the world, us included, was made this way. Therefore, if it is anyone's fault, then at least not ours.

Kant thought Rousseau's version of the Fall was also incomplete for another reason. This reason comes through with a straightforward story of his two shopkeepers. There is the shopkeeper that does not charge his costumers more than they should pay, as he fears getting caught, or because he wants his customers to keep coming back- as opposed to the shopkeeper whom does not cheat, as he wants to be good, simple because he believes in doing the right thing. There is no difference in the exterior behaviour, but only one is *genuinely good.*[xxvii] The first shopkeeper only cares about his own as priorities. So if Kant states only one shopkeeper as good, surely this does not necessarily qualify the first shopkeeper as evil per se? And if it does; how do we recognize the bad guy? Since this new measuring unit of evil is identified, we attempt and discover what evil intentions are on account of Kant's description of the shopkeeper. As lack of goodness was now discovered to exist even in seemingly honesty and good intentions, evil people are getting harder to identify.

Kant reminds us again this time to our individual duty as opposed to an answer to the problem of evil. It is just that we, as the human race, are radically evil. This is something in need of acceptance, if we want to minimize collateral damage as much as possible. Susan Neiman states with reference to Kant: 'To say that heroism is as ultimately inscrutable as villainy, because both depend on the mystery of freedom, is to be honest about your limits'.[xxviii] At this moment, Kant, Freud, Adorno, Arendt, they all stumbled over the same block. A clean-cut solution to address the problem of evil is as unmanageable as to come up with proof of the existence of God. As Kant stated: accept, and make the best of it. This is, however, not to be mistaken for idleness.

Subconscious evil

Disabilities with regard to intelligence or impairment to mental health fall under this chapter. Albeit interesting, this concept will not be covered in this thesis since I am not at all at home in the field of medical psychology or psychiatry (yet) making it a very vulnerable, sensitive and dangerous terrain. Maybe someday in my next thesis; the sequel.

In the previous chapter we discussed some of the associations, which are often paired with the word 'evil'. Especially the word 'radical' instigates connotations of rabid insanity and this is not at all unusual. As before the Enlightenment, this would be how would generally perceive evil in humans. During this time, fear was dominant, since we fear what we do not understand. Everything categorized as 'dirty' such as bodily excrements like sweat, urine, faeces, sperm, snot or blood provokes aversion on account of reminding us of our vulnerability and most of all, our mortality.[xxix] Everything painful, disgusting and strange is therefore frightening and discarded. One of these places to put our concerns was to blame them on something else. This is, for example, how the devil was invented. If you did something horrible, it was easier to blame the influence of something external than to face the fear of possible evil residing within yourself. What better way to explain cheating on your spouse uncontrollably then to say you were tempted by the devil? Everything that reminds people of behaviour not accepted by society's standards is not understood and triggered fear. Take, for example, a person whom is explicitly referred to as the 'town nutcase' (every town has at least one); someone who's extreme forms of behaviour not correspond with the rest, such as persons with mental issues or drug abuse problems. These individuals are usually regarded as uncivilized, for it reminds us of beastliness. This is why figures such as the devil are often depicted with deranged facial expressions, a sign of the incomprehensible; body parts of creatures, such as horns, fur, paws or hooves to symbolize beastliness; extremely thin or skeleton(-like) figure, representing a metaphor for death.

Kant states that avoiding your responsibility in your bad behaviour is a lack of proper judgement. However, it's possible people in that time simply did not know any better; it could have been uncharted territory. What if uncharted territory still exists? Perhaps the answers lie right in front of us, and there may be an entirety of terrains we are ignorant about. How would we even know it if there was? It seems saying there are no such blind spots, is a very self-righteous and conceited claim.

Attempting to answer these questions takes us back to the Enlightenment, with Alexander Pope's famous quote *'Whatever is, is right'*. [xxx] However, when the dawn broke on questioning God; with it brought a rain of 'what-ifs' which could not be stopped. Although peaceful and seemingly comforting his statement may be, Pope ruffled a few feathers; for to many, trying to make sense of the world, this comment seemed to come from a sycophant attempting to get on Gods good side with the hope that He was listening. This peace offering could not withstand for long because if; whatever is, is right, then there would be no need to do anything. The problem of evil would not exist. Rousseau claimed that evil indeed exists, and the existence of it confirms a blind spot in Gods vision. And although thinkers like Leibniz were confident that one day *all* the secrets in the world would be uncovered, Rousseau therewith concluded freedom to be the greatest gift from God and understood it to be our own duty to handle evil. This problem would then develop over time.

But Kant strongly disagreed. Critics say it's probably arrogant of us to think we will be able to fix evil, and it sure is blasphemy to condemn God's creation. The notion that we ought to study evil is pointless: it's a riddle we will never solve. All we can do is outline it. Kant would ultimately add that Leibniz ventures on a minefield with expressing a wish to be God.[xxxi] Stating there are no limits to human capabilities is actually saying you are able to be all knowing, therefore God[xxxii]. He states this is both not to be encouraged as much as it is to be banned completely. We are merely sentenced to be split in half and both halves are completely essential.[xxxiii] We will never rise above our limits but we have to try.

Foolish evil

Wrongdoing is often immediately associated with lack of judgment or thoughtlessness; stupidity. Stupidity is often seen as a lack in a person, a defect, a shortcoming. And why wouldn't we think that? A lot of words in different languages have Germanic origins where synonyms for stupid refer to an impairment, usually to the face.[xxxiv] The word 'dumb' has a Germanic origin, the German word being 'dumm', refers to being a 'mute'.[xxxv] There are origins leading back to blindness, as well as a great number of metaphors. Stupid is defined in various ways with various origins, boiling down to a limitation of thought, thus a defect.[xxxvi] But is foolishness really an impediment?

Before we ever started to doubt Providence, we thought of the world as it should be. Lots of treasures would have remained buried if we hadn't gotten so critical. But gold makes man greedy. Anyone who dares to take the stage in saying that perhaps, treasure was better left uncovered? Sure there were few village battles, swordfights here and there but the more we seem to invent objects of efficiency or make scientific discoveries, unlocking the beauty of nature, the more the purity of the world seems to deteriorate.

Intelligence and progress make for efficiency; an easier way to do everything. Although, it is questionable whether progress in technology or scientific discoveries are for the better of human kind. We can cure and manage the worst diseases, for our previous generations to rot away in retirement homes. Capitalism causes products to be available worldwide whilst tropical forests are being felled to the ground to provide this access. Revolutionary progress in the weapon-industry makes for a deeper resonating warning to silence threats, but atomic warfare can lead to entire countries being wiped out. The paradox of the military originally having been designed to keep us safe, though the expanding creation of weapons that not only kill hundreds of thousands (of innocent) people, but everything else on the world, animals and vegetation alike, seems to be counterproductive to the point of sheer stupidity. These aspects seem sufficient reason to argue that intelligence may actually very well be the stupidity in our society. Real danger comes with a sort of arrogance; now that we have gotten to the top of the food chain, we have become too ignorant to look over our shoulder.

Kant thought evil and good as opposites and we accommodate the intentions of both of them. Evil intentions take the leading role as the 'good' battles against it. All manifests in human freedom, as we can be as good or bad a person as we want to be.

This costs a lot of effort as you need to be alert of everyday evil, which has the tendency to sneak up on you if you get too self-involved. The difference between subconscious evil and foolish evil is that the latter is where the wrong choice is made against (possible) better judgement.

Adorno found it very necessary for an individual to contemplate about matters of life: 'The jungle is no sacred grove. It is obligatory to resolve difficulties, which derive solely from the comfort and ease of self-understanding. The distinction between the desire to write with a density appropriate to the depth of the object, and the temptation for the abstruse and pretentious sloppiness, is not automatic: a mistrustful insistence is always healthy. Precisely those who wish to make no concession to the stupidity of common sense must guard themselves against stylistically draping together thoughts which are themselves to be convicted of banality.'[xxxvii]

A quote about what Arendt says about the importance of the act of thinking:

'Thinking in its non-cognitive, non-specialized sense as a natural need of human life, the actualization of the difference in consciousness, is not a prerogative of the few but an ever-present faculty in everybody; by the same token, inability to think is not a failing of the many who lack brain power but an ever-present possibility for everybody – scientists, scholars and other specialists are not excluded. Everybody may come to shun that intercourse with oneself whose feasible and importance Socrates first discovered. Thinking accompanies life and in itself the de-materialized quintessence of being alive; and since life is a process, its quintessence can only lie in the actual thinking process and not in any solid results or specific thoughts. A life without thinking is quite possible; it then fails to develop its own essence- it is not merely meaningless; it is not fully alive. Unthinking men are like sleepwalkers.'

- Hannah Arendt, The Life of the Mind.[xxxviii]

As discussed in chapter one, Nussbaum and Kant share the opinion that animals have a first and foremost priority; to care for their continued survival. Humans are the only species that let emotions get in the way of its continued survival. Take a moment to contemplate the most extreme evil you know. What seems more intentional than the Second World War?

In her earlier works, Arendt thought totalitarianism to be radical evil, for it rages like a storm at the expense of its own species and the rest of the world. A big, well-oiled machine of evil with Hitler as the key to start the engine. Well, at the end of the Second World War, a searing hole of the reality of the situation left the world uneasy. Humanity sought revenge and needed someone to blame. As it turns out, Nazis did compose a very well structured machine indeed that, once sabotaged, proved very difficult to lay blame on anyone. An evil we have never witnessed before: Nazi's were intelligent, practising efficient forms of evil. After witnessing the trials of war-criminal Adolf Eichmann, Arendt never spoke of 'radical evil' again.

Adolf Eichmann was a German SS-lieutenant-colonel and head of the department of Jewish Affairs in the Gestapo. Eichmann was in charge and responsible for the deaths of unimaginable numbers of people in death camps. When he was caught in Argentina, the world turned its head to listen: more than Eichmann's fate was being decided, Arendt has said that the entire war was on trial.[xxxix] What Arendt witnessed, was not a man that seemed to be filled with hatred and anger at all. He was actually painfully boring. A man who never stopped to think whether his actions were moral, who just wilfully followed orders and cared about his own career above the lives of other people.

Arendt was frequently criticized as defending Eichmann, but this was misread. With astonishing little to go on regarding blame, it became apparent that by dividing tasks, the origin of evil was difficult to derive to one acute source. Arendt stated that an entire re-evaluation was needed, for a whole other level of evil became apparent: Radical evil targets the very moral distinctions itself. Working in an industry that is designed to exterminate people, hands were kept clean by assigning workers in death camps the task of executing the dirty work. It was unheard of: forcing Jews to collaborators of Nazi crimes. The Nazi's denigrated the prisoners in Auschwitz to the point where they were dehumanized to worthless objects.

Arendt is loosely stating that in some way or other, we are all guilty for what happened at Auschwitz, we could have all stepped in, and not remained innocent bystanders[xl]. We all have a duty to uphold human dignity.

Conclusion

What are the limits of human understanding?
Of course Plato thought the senses were the limit of human knowledge and should be discarded. But as it turns out, mistrusting the senses, moved way down the priority list. Adorno states that the deeper you search, the easier you get lost; which is the least bit comforting. Once sight of the overview is lost, is it possible to be conclusive? Is there point in taking the next step? Won't the original motive be lost? Does this mean that reading a dissertation may function better as a breath of fresh air in the problem of evil than reading whole books? Or am I kidding myself into this illusion while not even a few pages ago, I explained how Nietzsche warned so clearly about the idle hope for a purpose.

As it turns out, we might not be as almighty as we think ourselves to be. Evil can come from any direction. So now what? We have been unjustly treated, and are upset because of it. At the same time, we cannot treat other people with the same fate without infecting the world with more evil, or even bottle up these frustrations without committing evil to our own personal progress. We can't just stay dormant as so to avoid making any bad decisions either, and Kant taught us that we can't even trust our reliable shopkeeper anymore! Even trying to make sense of events, like Auschwitz is fruitless for we would have to use the same structures of thought, that was used to give birth to Auschwitz. After Auschwitz even the notion of fighting ignorance is no longer the comforting answer to the problem of evil anymore.[xli] How do we move forward?

The issue with the problem of evil is that there is not just one source. Evil is not to be exterminated, it only shatters. As when you finally corner the monster in your bedroom closet; it splinters into thousands of cockroaches, hiding in every crevice, in plain sight - Which is the moment you realize you should not have intervened at all. We ascertained that evil is like a fungus in our society[xlii], there is no uprooting it and if we can't finish it permanently, we are going to have to stay vigilant. Hiding from our limitations and stupidity will only make the problem of evil grow. If we want to avoid another Auschwitz, we cannot afford the luxury to hide from our moral duty as human beings. We can't blame the devil, or brush off our behavioural patterns at the hand of psychoanalysis. Using the past as an excuse for present choices, or as not to behave to the norm of a society, creates a rift through which evil seeps in. Which brings me back as to why the Second World War commemoration (and other awareness events) are so important.

Nature revolves around survival, evolving to adapt to ever changing factors to ensure the continued existence of the species in question. Mankind is the only deviation in that it continues to destruct itself and its kind. Self-destructiveness, in both as an individual or humanity as a whole, is our individual mission. The best solution is really to stay alert and open to problems that arise and exist, for the most dangerous evil is banality. We wish to be all-knowing; we wish to be god.[xliii] But if we weren't evil, or stupid, there would be no human freedom. It is better not to know; otherwise we wouldn't be able to question it. We need the answer to the problem of evil to stay a mystery, as it keeps us striving for the solution. We need it, to not be bad.[xliv]

Our faith is not scientific knowledge and thank Heaven it is not!'
- Immanuel Kant (1978: 2.2)

And he is completely right, because what will happen if science would solve all of life's questions. Imagine this as a world we would like to live in; being all-knowing means nothing to learn. Solving the problem of evil would mean the end of morality. The notion of human freedom depends on limitation.[xlv] Evil helps make sense of the world.

Which is a problematic conclusion. One the one hand, taking in knowledge is essential if our moral compasses are to evolve. And they need to evolve to keep making our heavily-flawed societies better. To prevent war. We also need critical thinking to get to this conclusion, but our future depends on not digging for an answer on some of the great questions of life. Is it possible to take the risk of not-knowing? The infinite ties that are made up of human life are so mindboggling intricate, so I hope we'll stay busy for a while. But if we *could* be able to uncovers the Universe's great secrets, I think we won't rest until we do.

This is still a very important topic today because society is still heavily flawed. A danger I think we are facing nowadays is when we believe we are reaching, or have reached, the end of development. Every corner can be reached fast by aircrafts, education is more affordable and available than ever before, and the internet supposedly has all the answers. A much discussed issue is 'the end of art'. A lot of people believe the end of art is near. It sounds logic, if you would assume a scientific approach to this. At some point everything will have been done; all possible combination of musical notes-, every conceivable movement of the body in dance- and all artworks will have been made and ideas will run out. It will then just be a repeating and combining of things that already exists. Art will be all grown up.

It is often said art is a reflection of society. And if the end of art is near, it should only seem fitting to say that it means the end of progress in society may be reached[xlvi]. Luckily, for us who find this statement leaves us unsaturated, end of art has been predicted multiple times in the history of human kind, and it has never stopped us before. It is obviously impossible to predict the next step of progress without being already in it. Much the same way you can't make up a new colour than one that already exists in de colour spectrum. With the internet providing all this information for free, and education being the most accessible since ever, expectations are high. The thought that we are reaching the end of all conceivable progress is also a dangerously problematic one. For it gives us the arrogance to turn a deaf ear to issues that are still relevant.

This is where I try to contribute as an artist. My works are real, often historic, footage that I use as a medium for a social issue. I don't make an artwork that has one statement as a message. I propose a problem and force the audience to deal with the challenge of **making sense of the artwork when actually they are trying to find a solution for a social problem**. People can then draw their own conclusion from there, or it may stimulate to an internal or shared discussion.

The project I am currently working on is about my great-grandmother; Mies Vonk-Kiepe (1891-1984).
Vonk-Kiepe was passionate about becoming a renowned writer, poet and philosopher, but was never successful. Alienated on both professional- and personal front by her inability to choose to commit to either one, leaves her falling between the cracks. Her life concluded in isolation, suffering and bitterness. This work is about a woman that had lived through great historic times, had opportunities for love and happiness, but could not see anything but herself and her own misery. This work is a manifestation of my frustration as to why this happens to people. We recognise ambitions and dreams; why do some work out, and others don't? Do these people not deserve to be successful? Can we save everyone from being forgotten?

Auschwitz offered a moral lesson about vigilance for anyone willing to hear.
- Susan Neiman (2004: 286)

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[XIII] Aswell as the, in this instant less relevant, point 10, 'control over one's environment'

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[xxxiv] Dutch: stom, dom, dwaas. English: dumb, stupid. German: dumm, stumm, dumb etc; ranging origins meaning deaf, mute, senseless, stunned, dizziness

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