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### Monday Night 01.31.05 -- screening The Specialist + Eichmann in Jerusalem -- 01.31.05

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Monday Night 01.31.05 -- screening The Specialist + Eichmann in Jerusalem

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**\*\*free and open to all\*\***

more info online will be added  
<http://www.16beavergroup.org/monday/archives/001434.php#more>

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#### 1. About this Monday night

What: screening + reading  
Where: 16 beaver str. 4th floor (directions below)  
When: Monday Night 01.31.05 @ 19:30

This Monday we will be screening 'The Specialist' a Documentary by Eyal Sivan and Rony Bauman, and reading an excerpt of Hannah Arendt's 'Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil'. It will be mainly a screening, so please do not feel overwhelmed to have to read everything in advance.

We are interested in the film as well as the book in relation to the question of nation building and possibly the construction of the nationalist subject.

This in conjunction to an invitation for us to participate in 'Patriot' at the Contemporary Museum in Baltimore this April.

" 'Patriot' is about the connection between lands and people. Why has nationalism, prophesied by figures as diverse as Karl Marx and Arjun Appadurai as obsolete, re-emerged in a seemingly robust and aggressive form today. How is today's patriot and citizen constructed? More specifically, how is that nation-subject relationship gendered? While not striving to be immediately topical, the exhibition hopes to provide a set of structures for understanding how the nationalist subject is formed in the U.S. and beyond."

we will be creating a reader for 'Patriot'. so if you have any ideas for texts please let us know.  
[info@16beavergroup.org](mailto:info@16beavergroup.org)  
or we will talk in person this monday

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#### 2. About THE SPECIALIST

Directed by Eyal Sivan

FRANCE, 1999  
128 MINS.  
IN ENGLISH, HEBREW, GERMAN & FRENCH  
WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES  
KINO INTERNATIONAL

On May 11, 1960, 40 years ago, Adolf Eichmann, a leading player in the Holocaust, is captured by the Israeli Secret Service in Argentina, where he has been living for ten years as "Ricardo Klement." One year later he is put on trial in Jerusalem, seated in a bullet-proof glass box, and tried for "crimes against humanity." To record the historic trial, the Israelis hire noted American documentarian Leo Hurwitz who shoots 350 hours of videotape, from which filmmakers Eyal Sivan and Rony Bauman have constructed THE SPECIALIST (now on 35mm film).

SS Lieutenant Colonel Eichmann, a specialist in the transportation of freight via railroad, gives the classic excuse that he was just following orders. Philosopher Hannah Arendt says of this little man who wears glasses and a quizzical expression, who seems no more brutal than the family accountant: "His normality is much more terrifying than all atrocities together." He personifies "the banality of evil."  
<http://www.filmforum.com/archivedfilms/specialist.html>

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#### 3. Final Cut on Final Solution?

by Stuart Klawans

Since you presumably know the basics about the Holocaust--if you don't, I would suggest that a movie review

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is no place to learn them--I will jump to the main question about The Specialist , a new documentary that focuses on the trial of Adolf Eichmann. What can we gather from this film that isn't in the books?

The answer lies in the way The Specialist was made. It is based exclusively on footage shot at the trial, which began on April 11, 1961, continued through sentencing on December 15 and was videotaped in its entirety. Such comprehensiveness was unusual but not surprising. Having organized an event that was, in the most sober sense of the term, a show trial, the Israeli government made a complete record of what was shown, which was nothing less than the full scope and logistics of the Holocaust.

To carry out the videotaping, the government hired Leo Hurwitz, an American whose professional credentials were impeccable and also distinctly left-wing. (A one-time member of the Film and Photo League, Hurwitz had collaborated on pictures such as Native Land .) He placed four concealed cameras in the courtroom and connected them to a control booth, where he could give instructions to the camera operators and edit in real time from the feeds. The result was some 500 hours of videotape--an invaluable historic document, which the Israelis almost immediately abandoned.

Not only were the tapes left to deteriorate in an uncatalogued heap, with the rights to them sold piecemeal--a frequent fate of film and television footage--but the material was eventually made inaccessible. When the young Israeli filmmaker Eyal Sivan learned of the tapes in 1991 and asked to see them, he was informed that this footage didn't exist.

This wasn't a complete lie. When Sivan and writer Rony Brauman at last got their hands on the tapes, they estimated that a third of the footage had decayed so badly that it could no longer be viewed. Even so, I wonder if something beyond mere bureaucratic incompetence was at work in the general disappearance. During these years, the Israeli government had been holding on to another document from the trial: Eichmann's memoirs, an 1,100-page manuscript composed in jail. Knowing that written material can be quoted, misquoted, excerpted, paraphrased, recombined, framed and reframed, the Israelis decided to lock up the manuscript. They did not allow it to emerge until the last of February 2000, as evidence to be used by the historian Deborah Lipstadt against the Holocaust denier David Irving. Given that the Israelis were so cautious with Eichmann's memoirs, I would guess they felt just as uneasy about the uses to which the videotapes might be put. Such materials, too, can be framed and reframed, and with far more force than the written word, since people think of moving images as objective.

But in The Specialist , Sivan and Brauman make no pretense of objectivity. They are sophisticated people; as a filmmaker, Sivan has been concerned with the politics of memory and with the Israelis' attempts to write the Palestinians out of history, while Brauman, as a past chair of Médecins Sans Frontières, knows something about the relationship between relief efforts and the news media. The two filmmakers seem to have noticed the irony inherent in the "complete record" of the Eichmann trial, which is not complete at all but rather the semi-rotted remains of whatever Leo Hurwitz selected from whatever could be seen from four distinct viewpoints. It might have been possible to conceal how these materials, with their blind spots and damage, fall short of the implied goal, which is omniscience. Instead, Sivan and Brauman have chosen this very inadequacy as their theme.

On the one hand, in a movement toward greater coherence, they have departed from the sequence of the hearings to construct a chronology of Eichmann's role in the Holocaust. The film takes you fairly smoothly from the 1930s, when Eichmann became a "specialist" in the forced emigration of Jews, to 1945 and the conclusion of his work in sending Jews, Gypsies, Poles and other undesirables to the death camps. On the other hand, the filmmakers have worked against this coherence by choosing for our attention everything in the hearings that was flawed and faltering, as if to make us see how a trial, or a history, is formed from a mass of fallibilities.

So here's what you can gather from The Specialist : Eichmann wipes clean a pair of eyeglasses and then tries to put them on, forgetting that he is already wearing a pair. While waiting for a translation to come through his headphones, he pulls his mouth leftward in a grimace. Answering a question, he rises and snaps to attention, then sits, rises again to answer, sits, rises again. "How did he look?" the prosecutor asks a witness, who is meant to place Eichmann at the scene of a massacre, only to receive the brusque reply, "He looks better than he ought to." A man in the audience begins to shout and is ejected. A judge expels a puff of air. Another judge, having just watched film footage of Auschwitz, covers his face with his hands. When the lead prosecutor, Gideon Hausner, is rebuked for introducing extraneous evidence, he responds by accusing judge Moshe Landau of not understanding the case. More shouts from the audience; more people ejected. Eichmann, sifting through piles of documents, stands in his glass booth and talks and talks and talks and talks, while different security guards appear and disappear behind him. What was his role at the Wannsee Conference? He merely wrote up the minutes, he says. Hausner, with more anger than forensic sarcasm requires, rounds on him and shouts, "Were you an SS lieutenant colonel or a stenographer?"

"It was German bureaucratic language," Eichmann snaps with a waspishness of his own, when asked at another point about an order he had signed. "'I' doesn't mean Eichmann. I wasn't writing private letters." As if to test this proposition, the filmmakers have his image fade away.

The Specialist is more or less a compilation of such breakdowns and missteps, their indecorum emphasized by a multitude of manipulations of image and sound. (The filmmakers have even placed the ghostly faces of spectators and witnesses--digital "reflections"--on the surface of Eichmann's glass booth.) Were I to make up an overall meaning for these pictures, I would be stepping in it myself. And so I will--because a respect for human mess is something else to be gathered from this film.

Eichmann had no respect for mess. The most efficient of men, he placed all his faith in meaning rather than facts. "Meaning," in his case, was his sworn duty as an officer; "facts," both human and mechanical, were mere instruments to be pushed around. The Specialist , in its very materials, resists this impulse to resolve away the particular. It resists the impulse as found in Eichmann himself; and it resists the impulse as expressed in the trial, which was less concerned with judging an individual than with using him for a larger purpose.

Am I establishing a moral equivalence? God forbid. There is a saving grace to be found in the trial, as Sivan and Brauman show in the remarkable sequence they choose as their climax. Late in the film, the judges, bypassing both the prosecutor and the Hebrew language, are moved to question Eichmann directly, in German. They don't try to make a point; they apparently have nothing to prove. They want to know him , the person whose "I" was supposedly irrelevant. How had he managed to go on, if he felt repugnance at his orders, as he claims? Is he testifying to some form of mental reservation? "I don't have to reveal my conscience," he complains; but when pressed, he replies, "It's possible to have a conscious split state."

For a moment, the specialist has become human, to the great interest of the men assigned to judge him. And then, being Eichmann, he blows it. "Remorse," he says, "is for little children."

<http://www.thenation.com/doc.mhtml%3Fi=20000508&s=klawans>  
April 12, 2000

#### 4. War Criminal in a Glass Box: Eichmann Trial 40 Years Later

By ELVIS MITCHELL

new documentary, "The Specialist," comes at an interesting time in the culture. The producer and director, Eyal Sivan, has compiled and assembled black-and-white footage of the trial of the SS officer and war

this Saturday --  
11.20.04 -- Threering  
Workshop-- Bateson  
Conference

Monday Night --  
11.15.04 -- Art After  
Abu Ghraib? --  
Presentation/Discussion  
-- w/ Yates McKee --  
For More Years Series

Tuesday/Wed Night  
11.09.04 -- Field Trip to  
Cooper Union + Pace  
University

Friday 10.29.04 -- MIT  
Symposium -- Bio-art,  
Biotech, and Bio-politics

criminal Adolf Eichmann, and his film is the grimmest possible precursor to the occasionally frivolous "Court TV," which plays on the current fascination with watching the judicial process grind exceedingly slow, and exceedingly fine.

Adolf Eichmann, chief architect of Hitler's "final solution," on trial in Jerusalem in 1961.

This year brings the 40th anniversary of Eichmann's capture; the trial opened in Jerusalem a year later, in 1961. "The Specialist" is an amazing document, if only for the spectacle of watching Eichmann, seated in a glass box with two armed guards, take in the trial. The box exaggerates Eichmann's own natural remove, and as he primly cleans his eyeglasses, it is hard to separate his demeanor from his appearance: the sharp features, the thin, almost lipless mouth that suggests the horrifying stereotype of dispassionate cruelty.

Mr. Sivan and his co-writer, Rony Brauman, have sifted through 350 hours of tape shot by the American documentary filmmaker Leo T. Hurwitz, who was commissioned to film the trial, and found the most dramatic footage. A scene in which the courtroom is darkened and film evidence of atrocities is projected is both low-key and unsettling. Reflections of those atrocities play across Eichmann's box, and he stares ahead in detachment, peering through the shadows, as the images are described by the prosecutor: "A dead man on an electrified fence."

Eichmann emerges as a different kind of "Specialist": the title refers to his self-proclaimed "expertise" at "emigration." His attempts to explain his position -- he calls himself "weak and powerless" and actually utters the line "I'll simply obey orders," which might seem worthy of a laugh if it weren't so repugnant -- are delivered in the same deadpan he uses throughout.

Mr. Sivan's editor, Audrey Maurion, must deserve some credit as well. The "Specialist" filmmaking team shows the prosecutors, led by the cool Israeli attorney general, Gideon Hausner, whose expression is bemused contempt whenever Eichmann speaks, make their case with a startling lack of courtroom theatrics. As the horrors pile up, their dignity in the face of Eichmann's cold lies seems admirable, even as roiling stereo effects thunder on the soundtrack to create an aural current of discord. There is enough drama here that "The Specialist" doesn't require any extra emphasis. (Another minor quibble: the subtitles are sometimes hard to see against the black-and-white background.)

When Hausner, addressing the judges, says that Eichmann "was born human but lived like a beast in the jungle" and proves this truth, point by point, the movie succeeds on much quieter -- and more frightening -- terms.

#### THE SPECIALIST

Produced and directed by Eyal Sivan; written (in English, Hebrew, German and French, with English subtitles) by Rony Brauman and Mrcq. Sivan; archival footage by Leo T. Hurwitz; edited by Audrey Maurion; music by Yves Robert, Krishna Levy, B\_eatrice Thiriet and Jean-Michel Levy, and ``Russian Dance" by Tom Waits; released by Kino International. At the Film Forum, 209 West Houston Street, South Village. Running time: 128 minutes. This film is not rated.

WITH: Adolf Eichmann, Moshe Landau, Benjamin Halevy, Gideon Hausner and Robert Servatius.

<http://www.nytimes.com/library/film/041200specialist-film-review.html>

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5. L'horreur Eichmann  
Par Dominique Vidal

<http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/1999/04/VIDAL/11909>

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6. Eichmann in Jerusalem – an excerpt

To download reading  
Go to

<http://www.16beavergroup.org/pdf/eichmann.pdf>

Eichmann in Jerusalem  
A Report on the Banality of Evil  
By Hannah Arendt

Penguin Books

We chose the first part, because it relates  
P4-20  
I – The House of Justice

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7. Evil: The Crime against Humanity  
by Jerome Kohn, Director, Hannah Arendt Center, New School University

Hannah Arendt at the University of Chicago, undated. Courtesy of the Hannah Arendt Trust.

In 1963 Hannah Arendt said that she had "been thinking for many years, or, to be specific, for thirty years, about the nature of evil." (see Grafton document in Eichmann file ) It had been thirty years since the Reichstag , the German parliament, was burned in Berlin, an event followed immediately by the Nazis' illegal arrests of thousands of communists and others who opposed them. Though innocent of any crime, those arrested were taken to concentration camps or the cellars of the recently organized Gestapo and subjected to what Arendt called "monstrous" treatment. With his political opposition effectively forestalled, Hitler could establish as a matter of policy the Jew-hatred that in his case was obvious to anyone who read Mein Kampf (My Struggle), the diatribe he dictated in prison and published in 1925. Which is to say that with the consolidation of Nazi power anti-Semitism ceased to be a social prejudice and became political: Germany was to be made judenrein , "purified" by first demoting Jews to the status of second class citizens, then by ridding them of their citizenship altogether, deporting them, and, finally, killing them. From that moment on Arendt said she "felt responsible." But responsible for what? She meant that she, unlike many others, could no longer be "simply a bystander" but must in her own voice and person respond to the criminality rampant in her native land. "If one is attacked as a Jew," she said, "one must defend oneself as a Jew. Not as a German, not as a world-citizen, not as an upholder of the Rights of Man."  
The year was 1933. Within a few months Arendt was arrested, briefly detained for her work with a Zionist organization, and, when the opportunity presented itself, left Germany abruptly. After her stay in France and upon arriving in America in 1941, she wrote more than fifty articles for the German-Jewish weekly Der Aufbau addressing the plight and duty of Jews during World War II. 1Arendt first heard about Auschwitz in 1943, but with Germany's defeat in 1945 incontrovertible evidence of the existence of Nazi "factories" of extermination came to light, and at that time information concerning slave labor installations in the Soviet Gulag also gradually emerged. Struck by the structural similarity of those institutions Arendt turned her

attention to the function of concentration camps under totalitarian rule. Her analysis has to be read to be fully appreciated and only a few indications of its power and originality, and fewer of its subtlety, can be given here. (see *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, chapter 12, "Totalitarianism in Power"; "Concluding Remarks" from the first edition of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*; "Social Science Techniques and the Study of Concentration Camps"; "Die Menschen und der Terror" ["Mankind and Terror"])

The camps haunted Arendt's writing until Stalin's death in 1953. Then, after she published *The Human Condition* in 1958, a theoretical study of the three activities of active life (labor, work, and action) and her career in the modern age, and embarked on an analysis of the American, French, and Russian Revolutions, the camps reappeared on the horizon of her thought when she attended the trial of Adolf Eichmann (the chief coordinator of the transportation of Jews to the death camps) in Israel in 1961. In one way or another the Nazi camps played a major role in the controversy that followed the publication of Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil in 1963, and, although she ceased to write directly about them after 1966, it is fair to say that what she called the "overpowering reality" of totalitarian concentration camps lay behind her preoccupation with the problem of evil, a concern that lasted until the end of her life.

As was her wont Arendt offers an "elemental" account of the development of bureaucratically administered camps in which whole segments of populations were interned, and it is against that background that the unprecedented evil of the role of the camps in totalitarian systems of domination becomes manifest. Concentration camps were not invented by totalitarian regimes but were first used in the late nineteenth century by the Spanish in Cuba and the British during the Boer War (1899-1902). The equivocal legal concept of "protective custody"--referring to the protection either of society from those interned or of those interned from "the alleged 'wrath of the people'"--which has always been used to rationalize and justify their existence was invoked by British imperial rule in India as well as South Africa. In World War I enemy aliens were regularly interned "as a temporary emergency measure," (see "Memo: Research Project on Concentration Camps") but later, in the period between World Wars I and II, camps were set up in France for non-enemy aliens, in this case stateless and unwanted refugees from the Spanish Civil War (1936-39). Arendt also noted that in World War II internment camps for potential enemies of democratic states differed in one important respect from those of World War I. In the United States, for instance, not only citizens of Japan but "American citizens of Japanese origin" were interned, the former maintaining their rights of citizenship under the Geneva Conventions while the latter, uprooted on ethnic grounds alone, were deprived of theirs by executive order and without due process.

Although the containment and brutal elimination of political opposition was a factor in the camps established during the revolutionary stages of the rise to power of totalitarian movements, it is in the post-revolutionary period, when Hitler and Stalin had become the unopposed leaders of huge populations, that Arendt brought the camps into focus as entirely new phenomena. Their newness consisted in the determination of so-called "objective" enemies and "possible" crimes, and is borne out by the fact that not their existence but the conditions under which the camps operated were kept hidden from the German and Russian populations at large, including most members of the regimes' hierarchies. She called the knowledge of what actually transpired in the camps the true secret of the secret police who in both cases administered them, and she wondered, disturbingly, about the extent to which that secret knowledge "corresponds to the secret desires and the secret complicities of the masses in our time."

To continue reading, go to...

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/arendhtml/essayc1.html>

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#### 8. Hannah Arendt – A letter

from the Hannah Arendt papers at the Library of Congress  
Correspondence---Scholem, Gershom Gerhard---1963-1964, n.d. (Series: Adolf Eichmann File, 1938-1968, n.d)  
<http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=mharendt&fileName=03/030170/030170page.db&recNum=32>

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#### 9. About Hannah Arendt

The following are two book reviews about Hannah Arendt and her Ideas.

##### Book 1

Hannah Arendt  
An Introduction  
John McGowan

Hannah Arendt was one of this century's leading political theorists and most controversial public intellectuals. Her work challenges received opinions about politics and cherished conceptions of modernity. Firmly locating Arendt's ideas in the context of our times, John McGowan here offers a clear, concise overview of Arendt's work and its continuing importance.

The book is organized around three central Arendtian themes: the unfolding of identity through political action, the modern assault on a richly pluralistic world, and the effort to comprehend evil. Arendt was both a commentator on the events of her time (from totalitarianism and the Holocaust to the Vietnam War) and a sophisticated political theorist. McGowan lucidly explains the theoretical and philosophical convictions that stood behind her various--and often controversial--interventions in contemporary affairs. He explores the new ways of thinking that Arendt's work opens up regarding current issues such as human rights, identity politics, and participatory democracy. A concluding chapter connects Arendt's thought to contemporary social theory and today's political debates.

Briskly written, McGowan's book serves Arendt's complex thought well while also rendering it accessible, demonstrating the unity of Arendt's career and the continuing relevance of her concerns.

[http://www.upress.umn.edu/Books/M/mcgowan\\_hannah.html](http://www.upress.umn.edu/Books/M/mcgowan_hannah.html)

##### Book2

Hannah Arendt and the Meaning of Politics  
Craig Calhoun and John McGowan, editors

Afterword by Martin Jay

Is politics really nothing more than power relations, competing interests and claims for recognition, conflicting assertions of "simple" truths? No thinker has argued more passionately against this narrow view than Hannah Arendt, and no one has more to say to those who bring questions of meaning, identity, value, and transcendence to our impoverished public life. This volume brings leading figures in philosophy, political theory, intellectual history, and literary theory into a dialogue about Arendt's work and its significance for today's fractious identity politics, public ethics, and civic life

For each essay--on the fate of politics in a postmodern, post-Marxist era; on the connection of nonfoundationalist ethics and epistemology to democracy; on the conditions conducive to a vital public sphere; on the recalcitrant problems of violence and evil--the volume includes extended responses, and a concluding essay by Martin Jay responding to all the others. Ranging from feminism to aesthetics to the discourse of democracy, the essays explore how an encounter with Arendt reconfigures, disrupts, and revitalizes what passes for public debate in our day. Together they forcefully demonstrate the power of Arendt's work as a splendid provocation and a living resource

Contributors: Richard Bernstein, Anthony Cascardi, Susan Bickford, Kim Curtis, Lisa Disch, Nancy Fraser, Martin Jay, Steven Leonard, Kirstie McClure, Dana Villa, and Eli Zaretsky.

Craig Calhoun is professor and chair of sociology at New York University. John McGowan is professor of English and comparative literature at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

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