

“Interdisciplinary Arendt: Pluralism - Promise – Problems,” University of Aberdeen, 22nd – 25th August 2023

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In August 2023, Aberdeen University gathered a group of Hannah Arendt scholars to discuss current political and philosophical issues, with regard to which Arendt is an inspiration for today – but also sparks criticism. The occasion for this rich and thought-provoking meeting was the fiftieth anniversary of the two semesters that Arendt spent at University of Aberdeen 1972 – 1974, where she also delivered the Gifford lectures, which resulted in the publication of *The Life of the Mind* (1977/78). The conference was organized by Dr Helen Lynch (The School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture), Dr Hanifi Baris (Centre for Citizenship, Civil Society and Rule of Law), and Prof Michael Brown (School of Divinity, History, Philosophy and Art History). Hence also the unusual diversity of foci throughout the conference: with panels ranging from Early-Modern Arendt, Phenomenology and Thinking, Judaism and Identity Politics, Arendt and the Internet: Public Speech, Performance and Identity, to Post-humanism and the Human Condition, The Totalitarianism Question, Arendt's Eichmann, Violence and the Public Life, and Problematic Arendt: Empire, Race & Gender. The event consisted of close to 30 contributions presented by speakers from 13 countries. The opening lecture was delivered by Ronald Beiner (Toronto), and keynote lectures by Juliet Hooker (Brown University), Sharon Achinstein (Johns Hopkins University), and Katherine Sophia Belle (Pennsylvania State University) followed, with the closing session taking place in Aberdeen Town House.

The scholarly quality of this event was superb, conjoining so many relevant topics and addressing problems, to which we cannot find easy solution but which nevertheless need critical reflections – in this case, with or against Arendt. Kirsty Lawie's guiding tour through Old Aberdeen and the medieval campus of Aberdeen University added a special air to the conference with its intense but steadily interesting program.

List of speakers:

- Sharon Achinstein, Johns Hopkins University, USA: John Milton and Hannah Arendt: Lying and the Absence of Thought.
- Hanifi Baris, University of Aberdeen, UK: Democracies of the Future: Indigenous Contributions to Democracy and Decolonising Hannah Arendt's Council System.

- Ronald Beiner, University of Toronto, Canada: What Hannah Arendt Has Contributed to a Philosophy of Judgment.
- Kathryn Sophia Belle, La Belle Vie Academy, USA: The Continued Relevance of Hannah Arendt and the Negro Question.
- Marieke Borren, Open Universiteit (Amsterdam), Netherlands: Arendt and Critical Phenomenologies of Embodied Resistance: Between the Politics of Precariousness and We-Can.
- Anne Caldwell, University of Aberdeen, UK & Robert Cohen, King's College London, UK: On Identity and Nationalism: Arendt, Jewishness, and Zionism.
- Nicole Dewandre, University of Cambridge, UK: The wonder of natality and plurality.
- Robert Eaglestone, Royal Holloway, London, UK: Hannah Arendt and Memory.
- Katarzyna Eliaz, Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland: Ambiguities of Arendt's anti-totalitarian politics.
- Zeynep Gambetti, Bogazici University, Turkey: Arendtian reflections on necessity (or the lack thereof) in late capitalism.
- Juliet Hooker, Brown University, USA: Heroic Action, Mourning, and Democratic World-Building.
- Gulshan Khan, University of Nottingham, UK: The political emerging out of the social: re-imagining Arendt's problematic conceptual distinctions.
- Helen Lynch, University of Aberdeen, UK: 'Once, Twice, Three Times A Lady': citizenship, identity and gender in Milton's Arendtian public sphere.
- Christopher McCorkindale, University of Strathclyde, UK: Hannah Arendt and the law.
- Hanna Meretoja, University of Turku, Finland: Non-Subsumptive Conception of Storytelling.
- Dana Mills, independent scholar: Performing equality - the freedom to move.
- Jenny Pearce, London School of Economics, UK: The Speechlessness of Violence and Arendt's Freedom as Public Participation.
- Rosalia Peluso, University of Naples, Italy: Arendt and Dante.
- Alicja Pietras, University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland: The Hope Against Totalitarianism. Some Remarks on History and Human Agency.
- Bjoern Quiring, Trinity College Dublin, Eire "The Worst Is Not as Long as We Can Say 'This Is the Worst'": The Uses of Shakespearean Tragedy in Hannah Arendt's and Karl Kraus' Representations of Nazi Germany.
- Maria Robaszkiewicz, Paderborn University, Germany: Sharing the World. Some Reasons for Excluding Exclusionary Feminisms.
- Frisbee Sheffield, University of Cambridge, UK: Dialogue and Moral Considerations.
- Liesbeth Schoonheim, University of Berlin, Germany: Arendt in the Anthropocene: Some Notes on Care for the World and Despair at its Future.
- Hans Teerds, Federal Institute of Technology in Zürich, Switzerland: The Architecture of Appearance.

- Andrea Timár, Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary: “Post-pandemic Arendt”: The Politics of Contagion in Thomas Mann’s Death in Venice.
- Alana Vincent, Umeå University, Sweden: When the Political Becomes Personal: The Arendt-Scholem Correspondence after Eichmann.
- Michael Weinman, Indiana University, USA, Arendt's Aporetic Augustine: “Weimar Syndrome” and Value Pluralism.