

The Idea of Beginnings

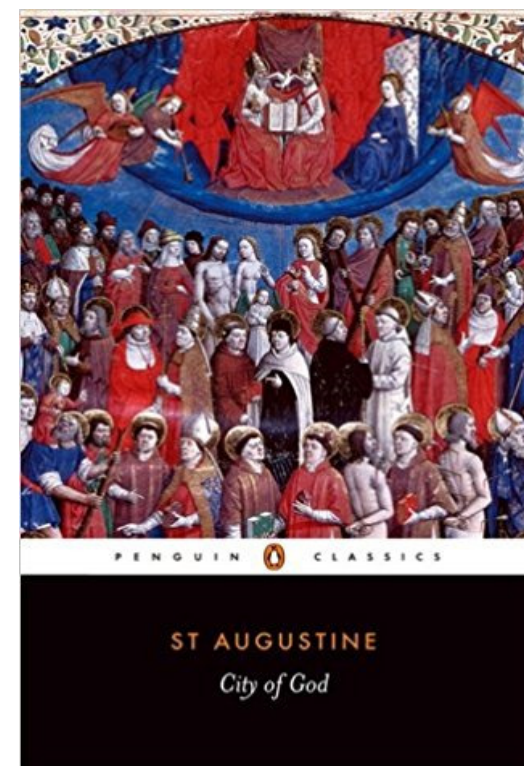
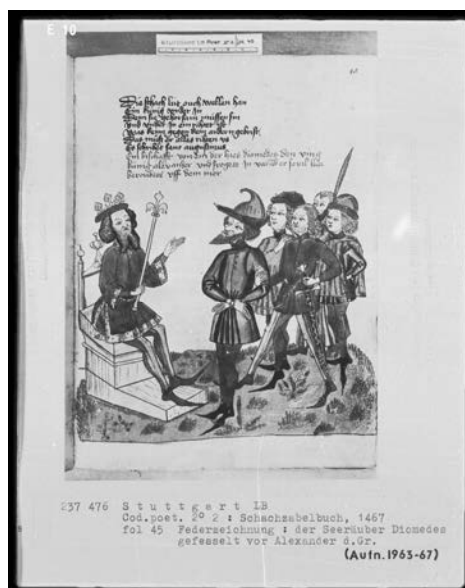
فكرة البدايات





Pirates and Emperors

القراصنة والأباطرة



Originally published: 426 CE

Definition



Beginning (Oxford dictionary)

1.0 The point in time or space at which something begins.

- 'he left at the beginning of February'
- 'they had reached the beginning of the street'

1.1 The first part or earliest stage of something.

- 'the ending of one relationship and the beginning of another'
- 'she had the beginnings of a headache'

1.2 The background or origins of a person or organization.

- 'he had risen from humble beginnings to great wealth'

Problems of our modern age (مشاكل عصرنا الحديث)

- Loneliness/Alienation (عزلة)
- Disconnect between past and future (الفصل بين الماضي والمستقبل)
- The desire for a solid place of belonging in the world is part of what it means to be human
الرغبة في الانتماء للوطن في هذا العالم , يعد جزء من انسانيتنا
- Automation (الآلي)
- Purposelessness (بلا هدف)
- Hyper-connectivity and the dying of reflection
- How to **engage** with these problems?
 - Realisation that humans are not born for food and work
 - Connecting one's biography to history
 - Elevating one's sense of role in the world
 - Reconceptualising modern problems



استقطاب الافراد في المجتمعات الحديثة (The pull of the modern individual)



عدمية/الإنكارية (Nihilism)
النسبية (Relativism)
تهرب من الواقع (Escapism)



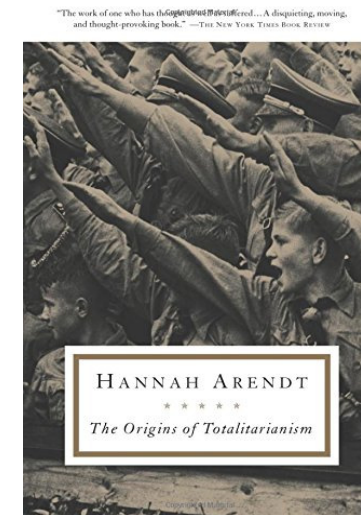
تعصب ديني (Fundamentalism)
قومية (Nationalism)
فاشية (Fascism)



Hannah Arendt and the fate of the public realm

“The ideal subject of totalitarian rule is not the convinced Nazi or the convinced Communist, but people for whom the distinction between fact and fiction (i.e., the reality of experience) and the distinction between true and false (i.e., the standards of thought) no longer exist.”

— Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*



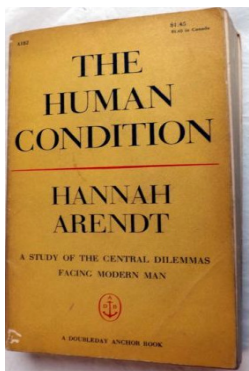
First published 1951



Arabic translation 1993



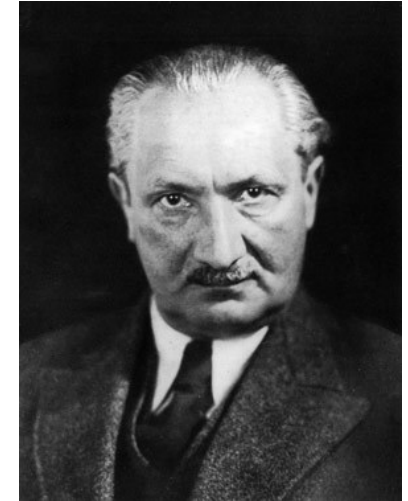
*Hannah Arendt
1906-1975*



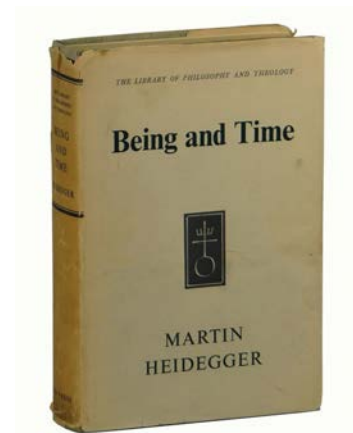
First published 1958

Existential awareness of Natality and Mortality

Birth-oriented (natality)	Death-oriented (mortality)
Love of the world	Being in the world
Love	anxiety
Memory	expectation
Embraces plurality as the foundation of the human condition	Being with others is an inauthentic mode of being
Freedom linked to consciousness of natality	Freedom linked to consciousness of mortality
Oriented towards the public	Oriented towards the self



*Martin Heidegger
1889-1976*



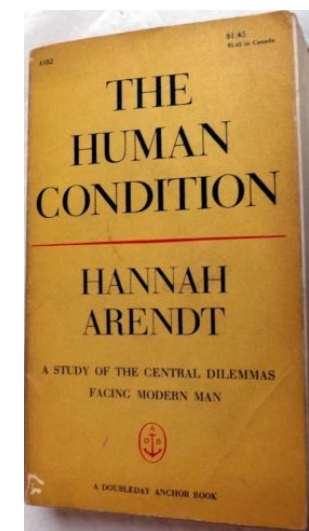
First published 1927



Vita Activa



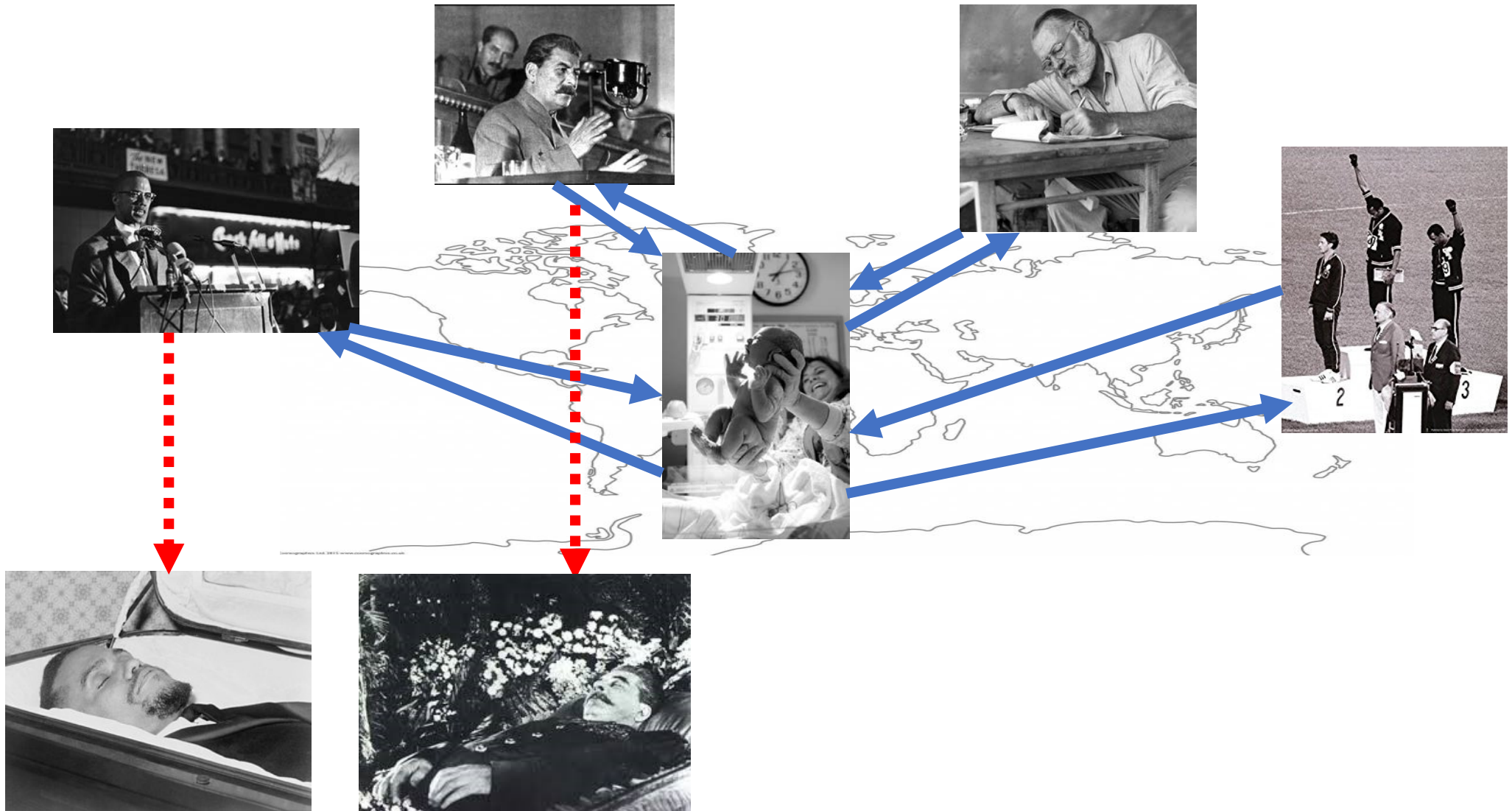
Translated into Arabic 2015



First published 1958

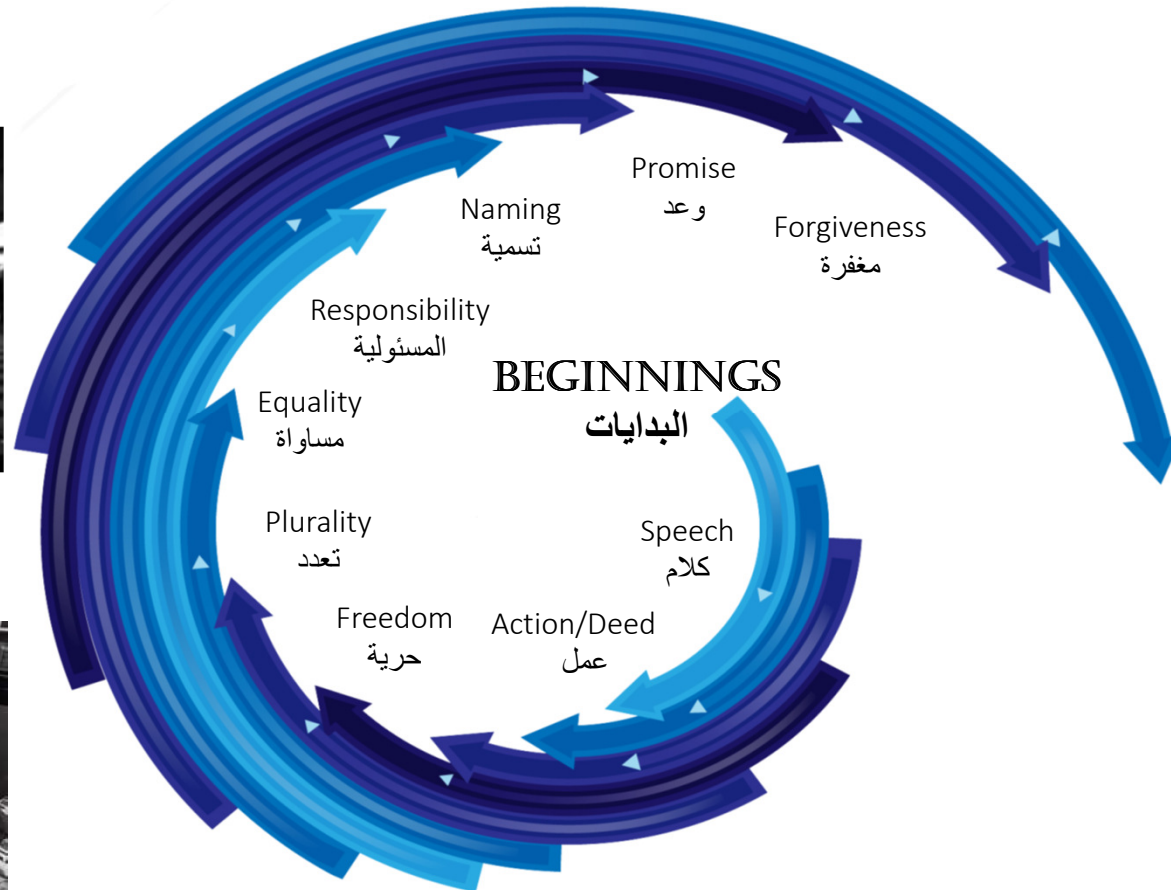
Amro Ali

Re-enacting one's birth





Components of a Beginning in Arendtian Thought مكونات بداية فكر أرندت



Amro Ali



Defects of beginnings: irreversibility and loss of control
(عيوب البدايات: عدم الرجعة وفقدان السيطرة)



PROMISE (وعد)

FORGIVENESS (مغفرة)

PUNISHMENT (عقاب)



Martin Luther King Jr. 1963 historical address



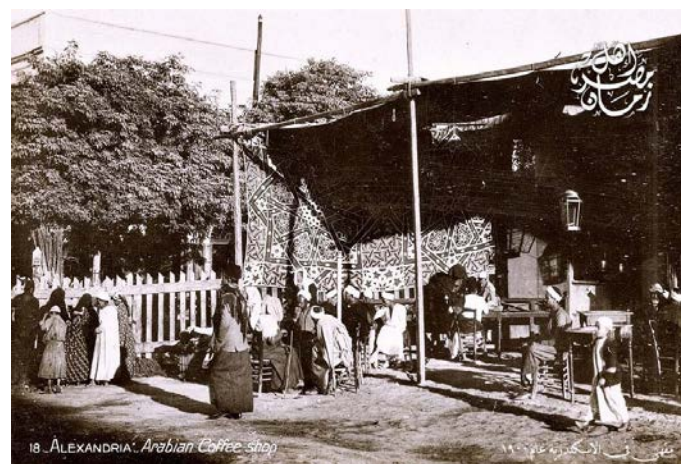
South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (1996-98)

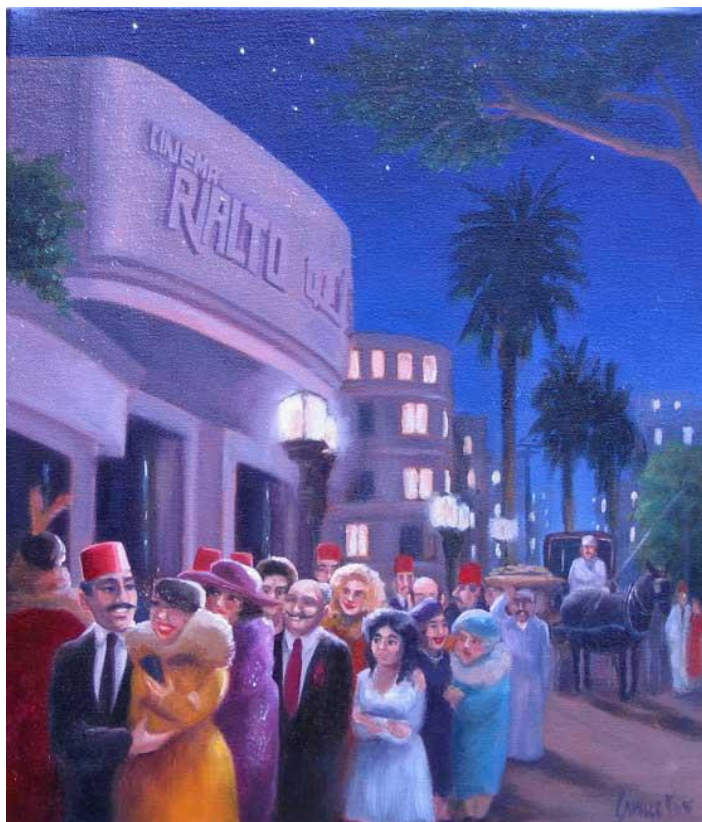


Nuremberg Trials (1945-46)











Edward Said
1935-2003

Can a beginning and the process that follows be seen as separate?

“A beginning not only creates but is its own method because it has intention.”

- When life events are constructed in narration form, then storytelling, becomes a powerful medium to think about envisioning individuals acting together in a pluralistic capacity. The narrator and listener come to understand themselves as having collectively shared an experience that in retrospect comes to be considered a beginning.
- Stories promote communication to situate the individual's identity and being by linking to the past and future in order to understand the next steps to take.
- “An intention, therefore, is a notion that includes everything that later develops out of it, no matter how eccentric the development or inconsistent the result.”
- A beginning contains more than action, it is also “a frame of mind, a kind of work, an attitude, a consciousness”
- Arendt ascribes uncertainty and voidness to beginning, while Said gives certainty to beginning. Yet they both agree on the ferocious unpredictability in the processes that arise out of beginnings.

Notes From Underground (Fyodor Dostoevsky)

“I am a sick man. ... I am a spiteful man. I am an unattractive man. I believe my liver is diseased.”

1984 (George Orwell)

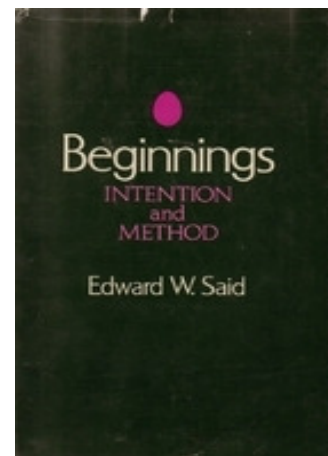
“It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen.”

A Tale Of Two Cities (Charles Dickens)

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times”

Moby Dick (Herman Melville)

“Call me Ishmael.”



First published 1975



Origins are not the same as Beginnings

Beginnings البدايات	Origins الأصل
Recognised as a beginning	Divine (lays claim to truth)
Associated with fragile human endeavours	Associated with genealogy, set of values, authenticity and nobility
Recognisable date	Difficult to date and contest
Historical	Historically indetermined
Requires creating, imagining or recognising a beginning	Ambiguous as it is narrowed down to decades or centuries, rather than years.
“radical severity and verify evidence of at least some innovation – of having begun.”	Often regresses to pursuit of absolute origins
a causal relationship between beginning and “making or producing difference.”	can produce novelty or “startling unexpectedness,” but origin cannot enforce novelty.

The illusion of the New Year as a new beginning



Antonio Gramsci

“You end up seriously thinking that between one year and the next there is a break, that a new history is beginning; you make resolutions, and you regret your irresolution, and so on, and so forth. This is generally what’s wrong with dates.” (Gramsci, “Sotto la Mole,” 1 January, 1916.)



The End

