The Banality of Evil in Indonesia Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

English 2E

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Hour \_\_\_\_\_\_

**TO REVIEW:**

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| Summarize Arendt’s notion of the banality of evil. |
| What is the “only effective antidote” to the normalization of human wickedness, according to Popova? |

**Your task in this lesson**: Decide whether or not the phrase banality of evil aptly describes the perpetrators in the event you are going to learn about today.

**Our source text:** Clips from the controversial Academy Award-nominated film, *The Act of Killing*.

Film Clip #1 (1:38)

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| Write down 3 important facts about the historical background for the film, which recounts the 1965 military coup in Indonesia. |

**Facts about Indonesia**:

* Indonesia is the world’s third largest democracy.
* It has the largest Muslim-majority population.
* It is the tenth-largest economy in the world by purchasing power.
* It possesses the world’s greatest marine biodiversity and the second greatest terrestrial biodiversity.
* Indonesia borders the South China Sea, which has the world’s busiest sea lanes -- over $5 trillion in cargo and as much as 50 percent of the world’s oil tankers pass through the South China Sea every year.
* The United States was one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with Indonesia in 1949, following its independence from the Netherlands.
* Indonesia’s democratization and reform process since 1998 has increased its stability and security, and resulted in strengthened U.S.-Indonesia relations.
* The United States and Indonesia initiated in 2010 a Comprehensive Partnership to foster consistent high-level engagement on democracy and civil society, education, security, climate, maritime, energy, and trade issues, among others.

Source: US Department of State <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2748.htm>



The man featured in the film clips is named Anwar Congo. Remember, your assignment after viewing is to answer the following question: Does Anwar exemplify Arendt's concept of "the banality of evil" or not?

Film Clip #2 (2:20)

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| Briefly describe what happens in this scene. |

Film Clip #3 (2:23)

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| Explain why Congo says, "It's my mistake." |

Questions for Discussion

1. How does The Act of Killing build on Arendt's concept? Does Anwar exemplify Arendt's concept of "the banality of evil" or not?
2. How does the film deepen your understanding of the nature of humanity? The idea of the performance (i.e., re-enactment) of evil? The pleasures of evil? The trauma of evil?
3. Do you think that acts considered evil that are left unpunished draw society into a kind of moral vacuum?

For an extension of these ideas, read “Tribunal Finds Indonesia Guilty of 1965 Genocide; US, UK Complicit,” CNN, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/07/21/asia/indonesia-genocide-panel/index.html>, July 21, 2016.

In the space below (or on the back of this page), create a visual representation of your response to the main question of the lesson: Does the phrase banality of evil aptly describe the perpetrators in the 1965 Indonesian “Death Squad” activities? You may use a few words or phrases, but try to visually represent your thinking. Rely heavily on figures, shapes, and other visual cues to SHOW what you think.