

Prof. Theresa Calvet

Before it is too late and not wanting to frustrate one of my friends:

Hannah Arendt's Prologue to *The Human Condition*

Since 1986, whenever I gave courses and conferences in Brazil on *The Human Condition* (1958), I always opened Arendt's Prologue to her book, and read at the end of page 1, the following line which had been carved, she wrote, on the funeral obelisk for one of Russia's great scientists: "Mankind will not remain bound to the earth forever". Not a word on who was this great scientist, and though I had found out his name by pure luck searching when I got my first computer (a sort of detective work), no one seemed interested or curious (and I simply did not mention his name). But now, not knowing if I will ever end and publish my book on Arendt (my living conditions are quite deplorable and I don't see how they could change without some help), and because just by clicking on Google one could and would immediately find what took me much time so many years ago, I will finally not only give his name, Konstantin Eduardovich Tsiolkovsky (1857-1935), but the full epitaph he himself wrote and which was selected for the obelisk marking his grave in Kaluga:

"Man will not always stay on earth; the pursuit of light and space will lead him to penetrate the bounds of the atmosphere, timidly at first but in the end to conquer the whole of solar space" (in O'Neill, Gerard K. *The High Frontier: Human Colonies in Space*. New York: Bantam Books, 1978 [1977], p. 62).

