

The Problem of Idleness: An Arendtian Justification of Universal Basic Income in the Face of Mass
Automation

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Political Science

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Abstract

This dissertation is concerned with a fundamental problem at the heart of Arendt's *The Human Condition*—namely, 'the problem of idleness'. This problem is related to the three types of human Arendt identifies as correlated to dominant activities in one's life, *animal laborans*, *homo faber*, and the acting person. It explores Arendt's predictions of an oncoming automation crisis, and the possibility of a corresponding crisis in the production—consumption cycle. The problem of idleness can be understood as the claim that if people are provided freedom from job-holding so that they may pursue other activities, they would likely turn to consumption to occupy their time. I claim that this problem of idleness is important in any consideration of an oncoming automation crisis, especially in relation to Universal Basic Income (UBI) as a solution to such a crisis. I claim that there is a hole in the UBI literature concerning this problem of idleness, and if left unaddressed it would result in both an ineffective UBI, and in a crisis of meaning for the general populace. This dissertation demonstrates what the problem of idleness is, why it is important, and what possible solutions exist. This contributes to the UBI literature by diagnosing and attempting to solve a gap in the literature which I argue would cause practical challenges in the implementation and stability of a UBI system. I also contribute to the Arendtian literature by problematizing traditional readings of Arendt, and offering a reappraisal of her thought on Marx, art, and the social.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my supervisor Robert Sparling for his unwavering support, guidance, and ability to push me to completion. His professionalism, care, and passion for the project ensured that it would become a work I am proud of. I would also like to thank Sophie Bourgault for her insights on Arendt, and her meaningful early support on the project. Jean-Pierre Couture also deserves a great deal of thanks for his work on the committee, his insightful and pressing challenges, and ultimately his support. There were also a great deal of people behind the scenes aiding me in the process. Whether by providing emotional support, someone to bounce ideas off, or grammatical insights, they all had a part to play. These people are my family, Ken Hicks, Amanda Hicks, Nazanin Zarepour, Sarah Bethune, Simon Monis, Amy Parker, Bruce McKenna, and Jasmine Van Schouwen. Enfin, je voudrais remercier l'Université d'Ottawa et l'École d'études politiques.

A Gap in the Universal Basic Income Literature

Introduction

There has in recent years been a rebirth of interest in a broad section of welfare policy schemes once written off as just that, schemes. In today's discourse the name most generally applied to these policy proposals is Universal Basic Income (UBI), and UBI is commonly mentioned in the same breath as the prospect of a looming automation crisis. This thesis will examine the phenomenological and existential side of the frequent proposal to solve a crisis of mass automation with the institution of UBI. It should be noted that the name UBI encompasses a wide breadth of literature dating back in some form or another to pre-Marxist socialism. Throughout its broad history it has weathered many titles, all with corresponding variances in their specific natures. Most of these are so dated that they pertain to a world nearly unreconcilable with that of today. However, we would do well to distinguish between a few of the prominent terms still used today. First, there is Milton Friedman's Negative Income Tax, in which a government pays the difference between a person's income and what is deemed by the government to be an appropriate minimum.¹ Second, there is Basic Income, which has become a popular term for welfare reformists, as it tends to signal a means-tested system designed to pay recipients a significant enough income that they exist above the poverty-line.² Third, there is a version, linked with an earlier proposal by Thomas Paine, that proposes a lump sum cash payment to each citizen upon them reaching adulthood.³ Thankfully this latter form is more commonly referred to as Stakeholding, and thus it is quite possible to differentiate from UBI variances.⁴ It should be noted, however, that this does not hold

¹ Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom: Fortieth Anniversary Edition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 192-194.

² However, as the term has grown in popularity it has become increasingly less tied to such a high level of sustenance. Further, while the goal is often or usually to make the recipients receive an income sufficient to get them over the poverty line, it is not always the case that the income itself (when not pared with other benefits or a job) is set at a high enough value to do so.

³ Thomas Paine, *Agrarian Justice, Opposed to Agrarian Law and to Agrarian Monopoly Being a Plan for Meliorating the Condition of Man, by Creating in Every Nation a National Fund ...* (Dublin, Philadelphia, London]: Printed for and sold by the booksellers, Printed by R.Folwell for B.Franklin Bache, Paris printed by Wadlard, London reprinted and sold by J.Adlard, 1797).

⁴ Bruce Ackerman and Anne Alstott, *The Stakeholder Society* (Yale University Press, 2008).

true for the Negative Income Tax, as in popular culture and media coverage, it is often confused with or undifferentiated from UBI. Thus, the reader should exercise caution in assuming too great a distinction between UBI and Basic Income. This distinction is often further confused by the term Guaranteed Basic Income, which can mean either UBI or Basic Income. There is also the concept of the dividend, which appears both in theory and practice, throughout the 20th century. As the name implies, this version is a Universal Income which tends to view citizens as shareholders (not to be confused with Stakeholding), often in relation to territory or raw materials, and seeks to return to the people some income from the use of said territory or resource. While it is inherently universal to the citizenry, there tends to be little discussion on the potential of each citizen's return being a sufficient income (whatever sufficient may entail). However, all these policies have one overarching problem.

This problem is not inherent to UBI, nor does it make UBI unfeasible. The problem is not evenly distributed among the literature either, with some approaches appearing far more vulnerable to it than others, with the occasional subsection of the literature, such as care theory, not having the problem to any great extent. This problem is the problem of the liberal presumption of free choice being fully possible and meaningful in a given society. As such, in this chapter we will address the UBI literature in two ways. First, we will make a broad criticism of liberal theory within the UBI literature with the aid of Kathi Weeks and Ronald Beiner. Second, we will examine the literature that is not liberal or that is liberal but does not fall victim to the problem we first address. The chapter will then proceed as follows: First, the chapter will provide a critique of the liberal approach to UBI and the concept of work in general. Second, the chapter will consider the literature on UBI that resists this problem, either because it is not liberal, or because it has otherwise found a way to avoid this issue. Third, the chapter will give an overview of the project including a breakdown of the arguments made in each chapter.

Within this thesis, I will argue that the champions of UBI ought not merely to think of freedom as liberal choice, and that activities and their worth must be taken into account, that we must consider what each activity is. This is inherently a perfectionist claim; however, I believe it is both Arendt's intention, and fully

necessary when considering the grand scope of change that an automation crisis could entail.⁵ I will argue that this is important by drawing upon Arendt's conception of automation, as well as some passages where she appears to endorse a program similar to that of UBI.⁶ Further, I will go into detail on what alternative activities to job holding exist, and how we may conceptualize them, including what broad reforms I view as necessary for achieving them. However before moving on to these further arguments, I should examine in the broadest of terms the basic relationship between societal structure and human activities. As such, my goal for the next part of this chapter is to explain this relation, and then, expanding upon it, again bring into the fold the importance of a UBI that promotes certain activities.

⁵ While I primarily consider automation and the automation crisis in Arendt's terms and understanding, I wish here to provide a brief overview of the texts I consulted that made me consider the issue of automation as relevant to today. Stuart Armstrong, Kaj Sotala, and Seán S. Ó Héigeartaigh, "The Errors, Insights and Lessons of Famous AI Predictions – and What They Mean for the Future," *Journal of Experimental & Theoretical Artificial Intelligence* 26, no. 3 (2014): 317–342; Brent Balinski, "Automation: The Enemy of Employment?," *Manufacturers' Monthly*, 2015; Yann Boutang, "Intellectual automation, death of employment and pollination income," *Multitudes* 58, no. 1 (2015): 17–26; Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee, *Race against the Machine: How the Digital Revolution Is Accelerating Innovation, Driving Productivity, and Irreversibly Transforming Employment and the Economy* (Lexington, Massachusetts: Digital Frontier Press, 2011); "Francesco Carbonero, Ekkehard Ernst, and Enzo Weber, "Robots Worldwide the Impact of Automation on Employment and Trade," *IDEAS Working Paper Series from RePEc*, 2018; Cynthia Estlund, "What Should We Do After Work? Automation and Employment Law," *The Yale Law Journal* 128, no. 2 (2018): 254–326; Carl Benedikt Frey and Michael A. Osborne, "The Future of Employment: How Susceptible Are Jobs to Computerisation?," *Technological Forecasting & Social Change* 114, no. C (2017): 254–280; Carl Frey and Michael Osborne, "Computers versus Humans," *Policy Options* 35, no. 1 (2014): 26–29; Lee King Fuei, "Automation, Computerization and Future Employment in Singapore," *Journal of Southeast Asian Economies (JSEAE)* 34, no. 2 (2017): 388–399; Iyanatul Islam, "Automation and the Future of Employment: Implications for India," *South Asian Journal of Human Resource Management* 5, no. 2 (2018): 234–243; Jon-Arild Johannessen, *The Workplace of the Future: The Fourth Industrial Revolution, the Precariat and the Death of Hierarchies*, First edition., Routledge Studies in the Economics of Innovation (Boca Raton, FL: Routledge, ©2019, 2018; Frederick Kile, "Artificial Intelligence and Society: A Furtive Transformation," *AI & SOCIETY* 28, no. 1 (2013): 107–115; Daniel B. Le Roux, "Automation and Employment: The Case of South Africa," *African Journal of Science, Technology, Innovation and Development* 10, no. 4 (2018): 507–517; Susan Lund and James Manyika, "5 Lessons from History on Ai, Automation and Employment," *Accountancy SA; Johannesburg*, April 2018, 24–25; Igor Markov, "Too Much Automation? [Two Books Reviewed]," *IEEE Design & Test of Computers* 29, no. 2 (2012): 96–98; K. Ramaswamy, "Technological Change, Automation and Employment: A Short Review of Theory and Evidence," *IDEAS Working Paper Series from RePEc*, 2018; Kaj Sotala and Roman V. Yampolskiy, "Corrigendum: Responses to Catastrophic Agi Risk: A Survey (2015 Phys. Scr. 90 018001)," *Physica Scripta* 90, no. 6 (2015): 1; Shaun Wilson, *The Struggle over Work: The "end of Work" and Employment Alternatives for Post-Industrial Societies*, Routledge Frontiers of Political Economy ; 60 (London ; New York: Routledge, 2004).

⁶ It is important to remember that while the majority of the automation during Arendt's time was replacing what she called muscle-power, she was primarily concerned with the computers replacing brain-power, and thus her conception of automation was actually a lot more in line with what faces us today, than what America was confronted with in the 1950s. That is to say, the automation Arendt foresaw is directly comparable to that which confronts us today. Hannah Arendt, "On the Human Condition," in *The Evolving Society*, ed. Hunton Mary (New York: Institute of Cybernetical Research, 1966), 213-219.

Orientation

As mentioned above, I claim that we need to institute UBI and other reforms as a reaction to automation, but also in order to promote certain activities. These activities are art, politics, and, perhaps, contemplation. However, I have not yet clearly expressed the underlying claim that the structure of a society can orient people towards or away from certain activities. I will explore this idea later to the extent that I will talk about Arendt's fear that we would be freed from labour and work at the very moment when our collective mindset no longer knew anything else. Indeed, the idea that societal structure informs individual movement, ability, thought and desire appears at the heart of the Arendtian distinctions between labour, work, and action, and also appears prevalently in her conception of the social and the totalitarian mindsets. Still, I would like to make my rather prescriptivist claim as clearly as possible. To do so I would like to bring Sara Ahmed's conception of orientation into conversation with Ronald Beiner's criticisms of liberalism, and Kathi Week's conception of the work ethic.

Ahmed, who in *Queer Phenomenology*, is interested in exploring the relationship between one's surroundings and one's interaction with them. She writes, to "be oriented is also to be turned towards certain objects".⁷ I would add that it is also to be turned towards certain actions; however, with this claim, I am not deviating from Ahmed, but merely adding emphasis. Later she writes, the "failure of work is not, then, 'in' the thing or 'in' the person but rather is about whether the person and the thing face each other *in the right way*. When things are oriented they are facing the right way: in other words, the objects around the body allow the body itself to be extended."⁸ This is to say that an "action is possible when the body and the object "fit"."⁹ Further, whether an action is possible, which is to say when the body and the object fit, is dependent upon what Ahmed calls the background:

We can think [...] of the background not simply in terms of what is around what we face, as the "dimly perceived," but as produced by acts of relegation: some things are relegated to the background in order *to sustain* a certain direction; in other words, in order to keep attention on what is faced. Perception

⁷ Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 1.

⁸ Ibid, 51. Original Emphasis.

⁹ Ibid.

involves such acts of relegation that are forgotten in the very preoccupation with what it is that is faced.¹⁰

To bring this to our current topic, we could say that we are currently oriented as a society towards salaried work. In doing so we have placed art, action and thought into the background as attention to them means less attention can be paid to salaried work. Further, action and the creation of art, and even others' non-salaried work (such as private care work) is relegated to this background but also sustains salaried work's dominance. One example of this could be the transformation of universities from institutions focused on thought and thinking into institutions increasingly oriented towards job-training. In Arendtian terms this would be the encroachment of the social, but in Ahmed's terms we can also see that this transformation places the original function of the university into the background. Further we could say that once someone has taken up a salaried position, attained in part by having a university degree, the years and effort to achieve the degree become the background for the work. In Marxist terms, we could call this ideology. That is, how social structure limits and directs our choices and actions towards objects. However, it works with equal clarity in Ahmed's phenomenological consideration.

How we are all (or at least most of us) oriented towards work is societal, "that is, we inherit the nearness of certain objects more than others, which means we inherit ways of inhabiting and extending into space."¹¹ Further, what "is at stake here is not only the relation between the body and 'what' is near, but also the relation between things that are near. [...] The nearness of the objects to each other is because they tend towards a shared action. Objects might be near other objects as signs of orientation, which shapes the arrangement of objects, thereby creating the shape of their gathering".¹² This gathering, it must be remembered, exists as both orienting and inherited as the "nearness of objects to each other comes to be lived as what is already given".¹³ As such, we could say that we have on a societal level inherited an orientation towards jobholding which we

¹⁰ Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 31

¹¹ Ibid, 86.

¹² Ibid, 88.

¹³ Ibid.

take as given, and which is facilitated by the organization of objects and structures in the background of our lives.

To place this both in Arendtian terms, and in relation to this thesis, if we are socially oriented towards jobholding, if the structure of our society enforces the mindset of *homo faber*, then what people will wish to do is work, something they no longer can do.¹⁴ As Kathi Weeks puts it, the “work ethic may invoke the ideal of individualism, but the subject of those ideals must be managed in accordance with the strict exigencies of capitalist production and reproduction”.¹⁵ As such, I will argue that in instituting UBI and other reforms, we must do so in a way that orients people towards the other activities. Of course, as Ahmed points out, “In order to become oriented you might suppose we must first become disoriented”.¹⁶ This disorientation would be for us an automation crisis. Notably Kathi Weeks points out, that while “work is expected to be the whole of life, colonizing and eclipsing what remains of the social” we have now, and have had, “the potentially drastic consequences of a weakening work ethic among yet another generation whose members, it is feared, will fail to be successfully interpellated.”¹⁷ While our orientations are to some extent inherited they can also be rejected. Ahmed notes (using the term ‘queer’ in its literal meaning as well as a term to denote LGBT individuals), that the “queer subject within straight culture hence deviates and is made socially present as a deviant”.¹⁸ As such, for her the gay person is queer insofar as they are not oriented towards the normative societal orientation that is the opposite sex. She expands on this in a way that is useful to us, writing that for “a life to count as a good life, then it must return the debt of its life by taking on the direction promised as a social good, which means imagining one’s futurity in terms of reaching certain points along a life course. A queer life might be one that fails to make such gestures of return.”¹⁹

¹⁴ This is true for two reasons. First, it presumes that in an automation crisis jobholding is no longer widely available. Secondly, however, it is true now insofar as work has been laborized and is now better understood as jobholding.

¹⁵ Kathi Weeks, *The Problem With Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 75.

¹⁶ Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 5. Interestingly, Ahmed considers the two definitions of queer as analogous to each other.

¹⁷ Kathi Weeks, *The Problem With Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 77.

¹⁸ Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 21.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

If we again place this in relation to work, we can imagine the life of a working person, having accepted the work ethic as described by Weeks, would imagine their life around the job: first, the training to receive it; second, the attainment of a position; third, a series of presumed promotions with corresponding increases in comfort; fourth children who you wish to see comfortable with their own jobs before; fifth, retirement (which is both a reward, and dreaded inactivity). A queer life, in this context, would be one increasingly experienced by people, either by force (they did not receive the permanent position or the presumed promotions), or by choice (they value other activities more centrally). In this regard, I am rather arguing for a queering or a reorientation from the normativity of the work orientation.

A Criticism of Liberalism

I would like to conclude this consideration of orientation by bringing Arendt back into it with the aid of Ronald Beiner's interpretation. In *What's the Matter with Liberalism* Beiner appeals to a return to a political theory that "can specify the basic moral and political needs of human beings, and a repudiation of the formalistic preoccupation with rights, interests, and rational preferences. The latter have been the staple of political philosophy."²⁰ That Beiner places Arendt as central to this project notably puts him in conflict with the modernist reading of Arendt so championed by Benhabib, which claims "Hannah Arendt's conception of politics and of the political is quite inconceivable, unintelligible even, without a strongly grounded normative position in universalistic human rights".²¹ Indeed, it is rather peculiar that Arendt could be championed as illiberal considering her support for rights and her work against totalitarianism. However, as Beiner notes, Arendt is illiberal in at least one, very important, way. Arendt claims a clear telos towards the good life. As such, Beiner argues that Arendt is among the most notable among recent theorists "that offer a genuine alternative to liberalism" through the promotion of a new republicanism.²²

²⁰ Ronald Beiner, *What's The Matter with Liberalism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University Of California Press, 1992), 7.

²¹ Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, *Modernity and Political Thought*; Vol. 10 (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1996), 194.

²² Ronald Beiner, *What's The Matter with Liberalism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University Of California Press, 1992), 35.

What remains most notable to me about Beiner's account of Arendt's anti-liberalism is his emphasis on the "allocation of priorities in a society", and the dynamics at work that make these priorities less connected to liberal free will than often emphasized.²³ He writes:

one may consider that Hannah Arendt's arresting presentation in *The Human Condition* of modern society as quintessentially, a society of laborers or a society of jobholders is an account of the modern regime, of the norm-enforcing ethos of modernity. By a jobholder's society, Arendt meant a society in which it is dictated that "whatever we do, we are supposed to do for the sake of making a living"; a society governed by the "trend to level down all serious activities to the status of making a living." As she puts it: "Even presidents, kings, and prime ministers think of their offices in terms of a job necessary of the life of society." Again, it is certainly wrong to conceive liberal society, as it is often conceived, as merely offering a neutral grid within which individuals can pursue their self-defined activities. Every society is shaped as the society that it is by an implicit ranking of activities as paradigmatically worthy of pursuit—or by the canonization of certain activities as supremely human, relative to other activities that are correspondingly stigmatized."²⁴

Above, Beiner succinctly states the central problem of this thesis to which we will return repeatedly: with the loss of jobs we face not only an economic problem, but a societal and existential one, and as such, any solution, such as UBI, which would solve this problem must also aim to solve its existential aspects. That is to say, a liberal approach to UBI in which one's worth remains tied to employment, and where jobholding is still the height of the hierarchy, will fail to resolve the central crux of the issue. If there is to be a major automation crisis which results in the loss of and non-replacement of a majority of our jobs, then we must find activities to occupy ourselves and provide worth and value to us outside of jobholding. As I will argue in this dissertation, Arendt has pointed out a few clear options to us in this regard including art, action, and thinking. While these are worthwhile, they will not necessarily be readily adopted without effort put in to providing them to the people, making them both materially available, and existentially desirable. As such, UBI must be instituted alongside other connected reforms to revalorize these activities.

The Problem in the Liberal Approach to UBI

It should then come as no surprise to the attentive reader, that the major issue with liberal oriented UBI is the same problem that Ronald Beiner identifies as a central problem in liberal theory: the liberal UBI

²³ Ronald Beiner, *What's The Matter with Liberalism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University Of California Press, 1992), 139.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 139-140.

discourse refuses to provide an alternative orientation for UBI than towards work, which is no longer a logical or desirable orientation in the face of automation. One of the largest and most influential proponents of UBI Philippe Van Parijs (who is not technically a liberal but cited as both a liberal²⁵ and a socialist²⁶ depending on the author) has been instrumental in supporting this orientationless, anti-perfectionist UBI, writing that “the shaping of our social institutions should be not guided by a specific conception of the good life, but by a coherent and plausible conception of justice”.²⁷ Notably, sometimes the implicit orientation towards work that Beiner points out is explicitly stated within the liberal framework, though it is never particularly acknowledged as such, like when Antony Painter and Chris Thoung write that if “you want to incentivise work at every level of income then Basic Income is simply the best system.”²⁸ Still, the majority of the liberal argumentation in favour of UBI argues in the name of either justice or freedom, and leaves unacknowledged the concepts of orientations, work ethics, or a telos.²⁹ Instead, the goal seems for many to (in their view) stretch the limits of liberal theory, proposing what they see as an attempt “to explore and defend a politics of unconditional universalism based on a Rawlsian ideal of *radical liberalism*”.³⁰

²⁵ Peter Vallentyne, “Libertarianism and the Justice of a Basic Income,” *Basic Income Studies* 6, no. 2 (October 1, 2011): 4.

²⁶ Erik Olin Wright, “Basic Income as a Socialist Project,” *Basic Income Studies* 1, no. 1 (2006): 1.

²⁷ Philippe Van Parijs and Yannick Vanderborght, *Basic Income: A Radical Proposal for a Free Society and a Sane Economy*, 1st ed. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2017), 99.

²⁸ Anthony Painter and Chris Thoung, *Creative Citizen, Creative State: The Principled and Pragmatic Case for a Universal Basic Income* (London, England: RSA: 21st Century Enlightenment, 2015), 6.

²⁹ Bruce Ackerman and Anne Alstott, *The Stakeholder Society* (Yale University Press, 2008), 2. ; Tony Atkinson, “What Can Be Done about Inequality?,” *Juncture* 22, no. 1 (2015), 32. ; Simon Birnbaum, “Radical Liberalism, Rawls and the Welfare State: Justifying the Politics of Basic Income,” *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 13, no. 4 (December 1, 2010): 495–516. ; Octavian Gruioniu, “The Universal Basic Income and a New Welfare State,” *Revista de Stiinte Politice*, no. 37/38 (January 1, 2013): 132–140. ; Harvey Stevens and Wayne Simpson, “Toward a National Universal Guaranteed Basic Income,” *Canadian Public Policy* 43, no. 2 (2017): 120–139. ; (Friedrich A. von Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty the Definitive Edition*, Friedrich A. von Hayak, 1899-1992. Works. 1989 ; v. 17 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011) ; Jennifer Mays and Gregory Marston, “Reimagining Equity and Egalitarianism: The Basic Income Debate in Australia,” *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare* 43, no. 3 (September 1, 2016), 9. ; Philippe Van Parijs, *Arguing for Basic Income: Ethical Foundations for a Radical Reform* (London ; New York: Verso, 1992). ; Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, “The Weight of the Poor: A Strategy to End Poverty (Reprinted with a New Introduction by Frances Fox Piven) New Introduction,” *New Political Science* 33, no. 3 (September 1, 2011): 271–284. ; Brian Powell, “Two Libertarian Arguments for Basic Income Proposals,” *Basic Income Studies* 6, no. 2 (October 1, 2011), ; Ville-Veikko Pulkka, “A Free Lunch with Robots – Can a Basic Income Stabilise the Digital Economy?,” *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research* 23, no. 3 (2017): 295–311. ; Peter Vallentyne, “Libertarianism and the Justice of a Basic Income,” *Basic Income Studies* 6, no. 2 (October 1, 2011). ; Jurgen De Wispelaere and Lindsay Stirton, “A Disarmingly Simple Idea? Practical Bottlenecks in the Implementation of a Universal Basic Income,” *International Social Security Review* 65, no. 2 (2012): 103–121. M. Zwolinski, “Classical Liberalism and the Basic Income,” *Basic Income Studies* 6, no. 2 (2011): 1–13.

³⁰ Simon Birnbaum, *Basic Income Reconsidered: Social Justice, Liberalism, and the Demands of Equality* (Springer, 2012), 8.

One of the most common conceptions of this liberal goal comes from the aforementioned Van Parijs, who promotes the concept of “real freedom”, which is related to justice by Van Parijs “as the very stuff that justice consists in distributing fairly”.³¹ Freedom is then defined as “involving not only the sheer right but also the genuine capacity to do whatever one might wish to do”.³² This “real freedom” is tied to the project of the “maximization of the minimum level of real freedom”, by which Van Parijs means “the maximization of what is received by those who receive least by way of material basis for the exercise of their real freedom”.³³ It has been argued elsewhere that this Real Freedom is opposed to capitalism, because capitalism “erects barriers to full realization of this value” (this explains the occasional treatment of Van Parijs as a socialist)³⁴. It has also been argued that it holds within it the promotion of the decommodification of labour.³⁵ However, it is more commonly read as arguing that “basic income is a ‘specific way of handling the joint challenge of poverty and unemployment.’”³⁶ As such, it is generally not seen as particularly anti-capitalist; it is rather an argument for “the possession of liberal liberties”.³⁷ Thus it appears as a somewhat Rawlsian argument in which freedom is distributed by justice, which changes in its degree of radicality depending on the interpreter, but is agreed on by most to be limited to capitalistic liberalism in its scope. Most notably for our purposes, this conception does not offer a solution to the question of societal meaning or orientation invoked by the possibility of a jobless, or near-jobless, future. Indeed, it appears to be a continued part of the problem, in that there remains no orientation outside of work to the project.

There is also reason to suspect that this conception has limitations in relation to what it can reasonably economically justify in relation to itself. For instance, Pateman suggests that this real freedom results in a UBI

³¹ Philippe Van Parijs and Yannick Vanderborght, *Basic Income: A Radical Proposal for a Free Society and a Sane Economy*, 1st ed. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2017), 104.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Erik Olin Wright, “Basic Income as a Socialist Project,” *Basic Income Studies* 1, no. 1 (2006): 4.

³⁵ Ibid, 9.

³⁶ Carole Pateman, “Democratizing Citizenship: Some Advantages of a Basic Income,” *Politics & Society* 32, no. 1 (2004): 93.

³⁷ Philip Pettit, “A Republican Right to Basic Income?,” *Basic Income Studies* 2, no. 2 (January 17, 2008): 3.

“of a partial character”.³⁸ This is because the focus lies primarily upon UBI as a means of handling unemployed and the impoverished, and as Pateman points out this goal requires a level of provided income that will be significantly lower than that justified by Pateman.³⁹ This is reinforced by Van Parijs himself who, while no doubt hopeful for a full basic income, proposes an option “which has our preference” at least in the here and now, that is a partial Basic Income and “makes no claim to being sufficient to live on”.⁴⁰ This then further problematizes it for our interest in an orientation that is not work driven, for there appears to be neither sufficient existential or material sustenance provided to recon with an automation crisis, nor does he appear to evince any political desire to move beyond jobholding.

Another swath of the literature justifies UBI through a classical liberal approach and a corresponding conception of freedom. Matt Zwolinski has argued that this concept of freedom promotes UBI because the alternative of discretionary “redistribution [...] threatens classical liberal values of freedom, privacy, and efficiency in ways that BI need not.”⁴¹ Others have fused the classical liberal freedom with a conception of nationality or citizenship, arguing that it “is up to each citizen—not the government—to decide how she will use her fair share of the nation’s patrimony.”⁴² We see this also in one of the earliest promotions of the idea, as John Stuart Mill argued that the “capital of the community may be owned in unequal shares by different members” on a basis of talent, but that first there must exist the “distribution of a certain minimum [...] first assigned for the subsistence of every member of the community”.⁴³ Jennifer Mays has also argued along these lines that UBI can promote freedom in a manner that appears to be the reverse of Pateman and Ballitoni’s concerns for the future of UBI. Mays claims that UBI’s unconditional nature “alone frees the system from any political or ideological pressures. This system engenders freedom [...] whereas politically or ideologically driven

³⁸ Carole Pateman, “Democratizing Citizenship: Some Advantages of a Basic Income,” *Politics & Society* 32, no. 1 (2004): 90.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 92-93.

⁴⁰ Philippe Van Parijs and Yannick Vanderborght, *Basic Income: A Radical Proposal for a Free Society and a Sane Economy*, 1st ed. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2017), 165.

⁴¹ M. Zwolinski, “Classical Liberalism and the Basic Income,” *Basic Income Studies* 6, no. 2 (2011): 9.

⁴² Bruce Ackerman and Anne Alstott, *The Stakeholder Society* (Yale University Press, 2008), 2.

⁴³ John Stuart Mill, *Principles of Political Economy: With Some of Their Applications to Social Philosophy*, Making of Modern Law: Legal Treatises, 1800-1926 (New York: DAppleton, DAppleton and company, 1864), 166-167.

systems [...] support conformity and regulation”.⁴⁴ Thus in this liberal conception of freedom we see support for redistribution contrasted with a perceived need to be free of government interference to the greatest extent possible.

UBI is then framed as naturally promoting freedom of the individual in direct opposition to the state, which allows it to be justified in opposition to existing welfare policies and result in what anthropologist James Ferguson calls a state that is “neoliberally ‘slim’ (in the sense of eschewing costly and intrusive government programs for engineering the conduct of those under its care)” while concurrently “carrying out a very substantial economic intervention (both redistributing resources and acting as a kind of direct provider for each and every citizen).”⁴⁵ From this, we must acknowledge the extent to which this version of UBI demands the destruction of existing state welfare structures including but not limited to unemployment insurance, socialized healthcare, old-age security, and public schooling. While it remains unclear as to the extent that these services would have to be slimmed, reduced, or canceled outright, for something as state-centric as UBI to be justifiable within the classical liberal framework, it must be noted that this view entails a dramatic restructuring of the state in a manner not commonly associated with progressive thought. Nor, due to its emphasis on individual will, does it consider or explore the potential ways of life UBI may open to possibility, and thus remains closed to any shift away from work that we may wish or *need* to see.

Discussion of the Non-Liberal Approaches

I have, until now, painted a fairly one-sided picture of the literature, and while the liberal discourse composes the majority of it, there are non-liberal proponents which deserve consideration. I would like to address (in this order) two groups of republican UBI theorists and a group I have labeled freedom from work theorists (those concerned with care, citizenship, and human flourishing). These are not perfect categories and there will certainly be an overlap with those concerned with citizenship and those concerned with

⁴⁴ Jennifer M. Mays, “Countering Disablism: An Alternative Universal Income Support System Based on Egalitarianism,” *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research* 18, no. 2 (April 2, 2016): 112.

⁴⁵ Bagg, Samuel. “The Dispersion of Power: Thinking Democratically in the 21st Century.” ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, (2017), 353.

republicanism. However, I have not placed the two together as I do not wish to place authors into categories that they have not self-identified with, and there are indeed those without a republican vision of government that still primary value UBI in its ability to improve active citizenship. The goal of this section will be to consider these perspectives on the basis of whether or not they provide an alternative orientation.

Within the UBI literature the republican argument can be broken down into two clearly defined categories of Pettitian republicanism and labor republicanism. The former of these two categories “construes freedom, not as the absence of interference by others, but as the absence of a certain sort of dominating control”.⁴⁶ Whereas the latter, builds upon this by promoting the “creation of new cultural, not just legal, relationships” which promote nondomination, but is also formatted in more positive terms as depending “upon spontaneous recognition of equal interdependence”.⁴⁷ As such, freedom is construed as “the individual free from domination and free to exercise will and judgment in new ways, together with others”.⁴⁸ Thus while the Pettitian framework is rather like the liberal framework in so far as freedom is theoretically possible with atavistic individuals, in Labor Republicanism the individual must be in cooperation with others to be free. Thus clearly distinguished from the liberal perspective. It should be mentioned that Pettit argues that his concept of republican freedom requires a level of engagement with others, as he states that one can “escape domination only to the extent that I occupy a protected position and am empowered against such control on the part of others”.⁴⁹ This, of course, raises the concern that, like classical liberal freedom, the Pettitian framework would privilege freedom from government over the continued existence of many useful current welfare programs. Further, while one can see that the requirements for freedom do create the necessity of a new or revived form of activity, it is in the service of ‘freedom from others’. This raises questions of its capability to further new societal structures. The Pettitian system retains at its core a fairly liberal attitude towards societal orientation and the hierarchy of activities. One can suppose that this is less the case than the self definitionally declared liberals, as a republican is likely to consider each citizen a part of government, and thus partly reject the

⁴⁶ Philip Pettit, “A Republican Right to Basic Income?,” *Basic Income Studies* 2, no. 2 (January 17, 2008): 4.

⁴⁷ Alex Gourevitch, “Labor Republicanism and the Transformation of Work,” *Political Theory* 41, no. 4 (2013): 610.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 610.

⁴⁹ Philip Pettit, “A Republican Right to Basic Income?,” *Basic Income Studies* 2, no. 2 (January 17, 2008): 4.

citizen/government dualism that perpetuates the classical liberal narrative, allowing for an increased importance of government and political action. Regardless, there appears little in the Pettitian framework that suggests a desire to distance oneself from the orientation of work, or to emphasize new modes of being, new orientations towards or away from activities except insofar as they are necessary for his conception of republican freedom.

In the Pettitian framework, the primary concern which drives the promotion of basic income is domination by the rich. Pettit writes that if “I am not assured a basic income, there will be many areas where the wealthier could interfere with me at tolerable cost, without their being confronted by legal prevention of that interference”.⁵⁰ (Pettit also treats republican freedom as a bulwark against domination within the household.⁵¹) However, notably, it is limited to a legal right.⁵² This legal right is occasionally argued to be fundamental. Indeed Guy Standing phrases it almost as a right to have rights when he claims that “the income should be seen as basic in the sense that, without it, other rights cannot be realized.”⁵³ As such, with Beiner in mind, we may be tempted to brand these republicans as liberals. I will not go so far as to do so. However, I think it is important to note that they are not predominantly interested in virtues or considerations of what is worthwhile; rather, they appear to be more focused on ensuring strengthened rights for an individualistic freedom.

Labour Republicanism, however, goes a step further and, in direct contrast to Pettit, claims that “it is wrong for Neo-Republicans to claim that “the property system . . . will not be a source of domination so far as it is the cumulative, unintended effect of people's mutual adjustments.”⁵⁴ As such, not only does it justify a basic income, but it searches for one that would help transform work with a conception of “Co-operation”, which is both “a systemic ideal of ownership and control and an ethical principle for the organization of the workplace.”⁵⁵ It then criticizes that “Pettit does not think the basic income ought to be substantial enough that

⁵⁰ Philip Pettit, “A Republican Right to Basic Income?,” *Basic Income Studies* 2, no. 2 (January 17, 2008): 5.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid, 5-6.

⁵³ Guy Standing, *A Precariat Charter: From Denizens to Citizens* (London ; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 317.

⁵⁴ Alex Gourevitch, “Labor Republicanism and the Transformation of Work,” *Political Theory* 41, no. 4 (2013): 607.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 607

individuals can withdraw from the labor market completely and indefinitely.”⁵⁶ Notably, there is a strong, near revolutionary, flavour to the labor republican ends, which if taken in whole directs us towards a near socialist understanding of the role of private property and its inconsistency with democracy. This seems to function very well as a justification for not only UBI but other redistributive measures, and as such is undoubtedly a strong transformative argument.⁵⁷ It is important to note, however, that these labour republicans appear to fall victim to Arendt’s earlier discussed claim that jobholding has become such a monolith of an orientation that people have trouble conceptualizing their worthwhile activities as anything but. For instance, these labour republicans seek a transformation of work instead of a disorientation from work. Still, despite these two conceptions of UBI ranging dramatically, both seem to outreach the liberal conception. The Pettitian one proposes it as a legal right instead of legislation, and the labor republican version proposes it as a way to drastically change a citizen’s interaction with work. The Labour Republican version is tied to the next body of literature we discuss which justifies UBI in relation to freedom *from work*.

Freedom from work is a term I am using to encompass a diverse range of generally Marxist and Feminist conceptions. As seen above, it can incorporate Republicanism as well as a group of apparently non-ideologically defined theorists who promote Utopian thinking.⁵⁸ Part of this is connected to what Guy Standing refers to as the Precariat, with some freedom from work thinkers emphasizing that the “gig economy disrupts ideas of a work–leisure relationship and its low pay contributes to rising economic inequality”, as within this economy it becomes “hard to see how non-work time can be assumed to be experienced as leisure time”.⁵⁹ This is more commonly phrased as “allowing humanity to ‘devote our further energies to non-economic purposes’”⁶⁰ or as the “freedom from the need to earn a living”⁶¹ and sometimes as “freedom from want”.⁶²

⁵⁶ Alex Gourevitch, “Labor Republicanism and the Transformation of Work,” *Political Theory* 41, no. 4 (2013): 599.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 591.

⁵⁸ Rutger Bregman, *Utopia For Realists: And How We Can Get There*, 1st ed. (London, England: Bloomsbury, 2017).

⁵⁹ Robert Snape et al., “Leisure in a Post-Work Society,” *World Leisure Journal* 59, no. 3 (July 3, 2017): 188.

⁶⁰ John Maynard Kenes, “Economic Possibilities for Our Grandchildren,” in *Essays in Persuasion* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1963): 361.

⁶¹ Alyssa Battistoni, “The False Promise of Universal Basic Income,” *Dissent* 64, no. 2 (2017): 57.

⁶² Patricia Schulz, “Universal Basic Income in a Feminist Perspective and Gender Analysis,” *Global Social Policy* 17, no. 1 (2017): 89.

Most definitively, Pateman defines it as “the freedom not to be employed”.⁶³ This is distinguishable from other conceptions of freedom as it is directly tied to a level of sustenance regardless of work, without necessarily being tied to a conception of cooperation (as in Labor Republicanism). Notably, it does have its ties to Republicanism, as Pateman elsewhere refers to her conception of UBI’s freedom, in a near Rousseauian manner, as “individual freedom as self-government”.⁶⁴ However, unlike Pettit, this concept seems to promote a UBI that would sustain a human life comfortably without employment, yet would not necessarily entail the co-operative ownership of work as Labor Republicanism promotes. It is also notable insofar as it promotes a UBI that is undoubtedly placed at a level high enough to not require paid-labor. It also benefits from having no necessary relationship with diminishing or increasing other pre-existing welfare measures. However, while it certainly opens up the possibilities of non-work oriented life, it does not explicitly offer or explore the possibility of a UBI geared towards other activities. It promotes humanity putting effort into non-economic activities, but does not suggest which activities, and instead leaves open the liberal freedom issue which we will find in chapter two to be of great worry. For now, it is sufficient to point out that freedom from work does not necessarily mean that we are free from economic activities, as we may find in late capitalism that a great deal of our economic activities are forms of capitalist consumption rather than production. As such, this group of thinkers appear promising, but still fall under the criterion that in light of our encompassing criticism raises concerns. The denouncement of work does indeed meet our criterion for the promotion of reorientation but provides little input into reorienting ourselves.

We now arrive at three interrelated concepts; Human Flourishing, Care, and Citizenship. I have placed these together as they appear the most promising with regards to exploring new potential orientations. Human Flourishing is a broad term here used to denote a state of human being existentially better or more rewarding than it currently is. Sometimes this is purely welfare in the physical sense of the term and sometimes accounts

⁶³ Samuel Bagg, “The Dispersion of Power: Thinking Democratically in the 21st Century” (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2017): 355.

⁶⁴ Carole Pateman, “Democratizing Citizenship: Some Advantages of a Basic Income,” *Politics & Society* 32, no. 1 (2004): 91.

for more normative ideas of flourishing. For instance, creativity⁶⁵ and happiness⁶⁶ are both promoted in this view. This concept of Human Flourishing has been defined elsewhere as referring “to the various ways people are able to develop their talents and capacities, to realize their potentials as human beings.”⁶⁷ It must, however, be noted that as a goal for UBI it does not promote any particular capacity or talent over any others and thus remains a problem in regards to our perfectionist concern about orientations.⁶⁸ Some versions of this could perhaps emphasize a broad category of activities and promote orienting society towards them. Depending on the importance one places upon flourishing, and its particular definition, be it more maximalist or minimalist, there could no doubt be a wide range of levels of UBI supported by it. Certainly, within this framework it would be far more possible to promote a full UBI instead of Van Parijs’ partial one, as the concern is no longer in relation to poverty or liberal freedom, but rather with the pursuit of an emotion or unlockable potential within the individual. Still, the vagueness of these emotions or potentials creates the possibility that in a workless world idleness would become a concern.

The most common variation on this human flourishing goal in the UBI literature is the concept of recognition and its interrelated concept of self-actualization. Here the concern is twofold: first, for a society in which all members are *recognized* as equally deserving of a base level of respect; and second, that the first criterion, plus economic ability, allows them the chance or ability to “earn esteem”.⁶⁹ The concept that underlies this theory of “recognition is that person’s need to have their individual identities ‘recognized’ in the same way they value themselves in order to flourish as human beings”.⁷⁰ This being said, as is implied through the term self-actualization, there is an implicit assumption that the goal is to let the world see a pre-existing nature, which can be differentiated from theories in which individual humans achieve something.⁷¹ This theory of recognition

⁶⁵ Anthony Painter and Chris Thong, *Creative Citizen, Creative State: The Principled and Pragmatic Case for a Universal Basic Income* (London, England: RSA: 21st Century Enlightenment, 2015).

⁶⁶ See, Birnbaum (2012), Shutt (2010), Snape (2017), Galbraith (1998).

⁶⁷ Erik Olin Wright, “Transforming Capitalism through Real Utopias,” *American Sociological Review* 78, no. 1 (2013): 4.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ R. Mulligan, “Universal Basic Income and Recognition Theory - A Tangible Step towards an Ideal,” *Basic Income Studies* 8, no. 2 (December 1, 2013): 159.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 154.

⁷¹ In other words, the ‘actualization’ implies an inner or inward truth which exists within each human as a human. Thus, any achievement humans achieve is the external expression of an inner truth. This can be distinguished from more phenomenological concepts of the self and activities in which the inner-self, if it is to exist at all, is unimportant or

tends to draw from the work of Axel Honneth, and owes its foundations to Hegel. While most of the work appears to focus on Honneth's contributions there remain some works which focus on it directly as a Hegelian problem, bypassing Honneth.⁷² Further, upon occasion, the concept is expanded to include liberal thinkers, such as Rawls, into the discourse. For instance, Roisin Mulligan cites the Rawlsian claim that “without self-respect, one is as good as socially paralyzed, for nothing seems worth doing”.⁷³ Kory Shauff even attempts connecting Hegel's theories of recognition and corporation to Van Parijs' theory of UBI, arguing it could provide meaningful non-waged work.⁷⁴ Sometimes the demand is interrelated with gender equality, in which the demand is for the “recognition of women's personhood and recognition of women's work”.⁷⁵ A prime example of recognition theory's incorporation of gender theory is Zuzana Uhde's incorporation of it into care theory in which it is tied to the material and immaterial recognition of those who choose to do care work when provided with liberal choice.⁷⁶ It should also be noted that recognition's stated opposite is, according to Jeff Jackson, exploitation.⁷⁷ This gives a somewhat of a fuller image of what it means. It also becomes clear why for these purposes it has been placed alongside citizenship. One may also be tempted to place it alongside republicanism. However, it should be noted that within Hegel's work, to be recognized is a requirement for his own Hegelian conception of freedom tied with actualization.⁷⁸ It must also be mentioned that while this recognition is required for Hegelian freedom, so too is freedom a prerequisite for it, in so far as the recognition must be given freely.⁷⁹ This actually appears as among the most promising frameworks to me in terms of creating new orientations, for despite not providing specific activities towards which we could become oriented,

indistinct. Instead, what humans achieve is what is attained through their actions, and not through dormant and varying degrees of potential. The reason such a distinction may be worth making, between these two theories, is that the former appears to harbor a suggestion of deterministic exceptionalism.

⁷² Jeff Jackson, “The Resolution of Poverty in Hegel's ‘Actual’ State,” *Polity (Basingstoke)* 46, no. 3 (July 1, 2014): 331–353.

⁷³ R. Mulligan, “Universal Basic Income and Recognition Theory - A Tangible Step towards an Ideal,” *Basic Income Studies* 8, no. 2 (December 1, 2013): 159.

⁷⁴ Kory Schaff, “Work, Freedom, and Community: Hegel's Normative Economics” (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2005): 179-188.

⁷⁵ Caitlin McLean and Ailsa McKay, “Beyond Care: Expanding the Feminist Debate on Universal Basic Income” (Glasgow: WiSE Research Centre, 2015): 9.

⁷⁶ Zuzana Uhde, “Caring Revolutionary Transformation: Combined Effects of a Universal Basic Income and a Public Model of Care,” *Basic Income Studies* 13, no. 2 (2018): 1-12.

⁷⁷ Jeff Jackson, “The Resolution of Poverty in Hegel's ‘Actual’ State,” *Polity (Basingstoke)* 46, no. 3 (July 1, 2014): 333.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 333-332, 337.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 339.

it does provide us the goal of esteem which we may chase. Problematically, in both Jackson and Mulligan's work there is no explicit assertion that this recognition be achieved by meaningful ends. For instance, at least with Mulligan's conception of Honneth, it does not appear to matter if one is recognized as worthwhile through their useful contributions to society or through expensive and lavish consumption of status symbols. I suspect that a less liberal and more Hegelian reading of Honneth would argue that this would not actually result in actualization. However, it remains important to note that we are not provided with explicit activities to orient ourselves towards.

As for citizenship, it appears as a concern for increasing democracy through the involvement of the citizenry. In this way, it is tied directly to Republicanism, but can find support outside of Republicanism.⁸⁰ For instance, Pateman uses T. H. Marshall's fairly liberal argument for economic citizenship rights: "To have to bargain for a living wage in a society which accepts the living wage as a social right is as absurd as to have to haggle for a vote in a society which accepts the vote as a political right."⁸¹ Others, such as Martin Luther King Jr. insisted that UBI is necessary if "democracy is to have breadth of meaning".⁸² Elsewhere the claim is made that a UBI would help counter act the "capitalist dynamics [that] subvert principles of democratic political equality".⁸³ As such, the primary concern of citizenship appears centered around the goal of providing to everyone "the necessary means to participate meaningfully in decisions".⁸⁴ This is in direct response to the growing concern that people are "having rights associated with citizenship whittled away, often without realizing it or realizing the full implications".⁸⁵ Depending on the specific definition of citizenship or democracy, how radical the resultant UBI is varies. However, it appears to always include a concern for the equal voice of the citizen in democracy. Again, we have here another strong possible orientation, that towards political action.

⁸⁰ See Painter (2015), Mays (2016), Standing (2014), Pateman (2004).

⁸¹ Carole Pateman, "Democratizing Citizenship: Some Advantages of a Basic Income," *Politics & Society* 32, no. 1 (2004): 93.

⁸² Martin Luther King, Jr., *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), 174.

⁸³ Erik Olin Wright, "Basic Income as a Socialist Project," *Basic Income Studies* 1, no. 1 (2006): 5.

⁸⁴ Erik Olin Wright, "Transforming Capitalism through Real Utopias," *American Sociological Review* 78, no. 1 (2013): 5.

⁸⁵ Guy Standing, *A Precariat Charter: From Denizens to Citizens* (London ; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 1.

Should this be made explicit enough, and the need to promote it actively acknowledged and followed through upon, I can see plenty of promise in this approach.

Lastly, we have Care. Here the concern is tightly knit with a concern for gender equality, as the main support for UBI among Care theorists comes from a desire to see care work, or domestic work, recognized as equal or deserving in the way that job-holding is. This relates to gender equality as “care work remains mainly female”.⁸⁶ As such, UBI “provides a means of valuing the proportion of care work which cannot be provided via state or market without discriminating against employed women”.⁸⁷ However, it is not merely a form of work that must be recognized or given compensation for. If so, other strategies may well exist that would better suit Care such as making its burden more equal. Instead, Care is often argued as something worthwhile that UBI would free people to be able to do.⁸⁸ This makes Care one of the most interesting possible orientations delivered within the UBI literature, as it not only justifies a level of sustenance that would be equivalent to a living wage, but also provides insight into one potential paradigm within which work or, rather, labour is replaced with a new primary use of our collective time.

Situating the Project in Relation to the Literature

It should come as no surprise that the primary way we may view our project is in relation to these last three categories of *human flourishing*, *citizenship*, and *care*. We should also emphasize an inherent connection to the concept of *republican freedom*. As I am interested foremost in exploring the possibilities that exist aside from work in a world where UBI has been implemented (these categories which examine UBI not only as enabling ideas such as liberty, justice, and freedom, but also in relation to human *activities*) are closest to my goal in this project. Of course, this is not to claim a lack of interest in liberty, justice, or freedom, but to ask ourselves of what actions and activities might be facilitate them, and be performed within them. Indeed, this is why we

⁸⁶ Patricia Schulz, “Universal Basic Income in a Feminist Perspective and Gender Analysis,” *Global Social Policy* 17, no. 1 (2017): 90.

⁸⁷ Caitlin McLean and Ailsa McKay, “Beyond Care: Expanding the Feminist Debate on Universal Basic Income” (Glasgow: WiSE Research Centre, 2015): 4.

⁸⁸ Juliana Bidadanure, “The Precariat, Intergenerational Justice and Universal Basic Income,” *Global Discourse* 3, no. 3–4 (December 1, 2013): 599.

align ourselves with *republican freedom*, because we have an interest in freedom and its relation to action, instead of passive freedom.

What I will attempt to do in the remainder of this chapter is to address several issues which can be conceptualized broadly around the question, *What should we do when we no longer have work enough for all?* Implicit in this are a few other questions, which we too seek to answer. The manner in which I have decided to attempt to work through these questions is by interpreting them through the works of Hannah Arendt. To the best of my knowledge this is a novel approach, with only one other text published (during the writing of this one) which speaks to the possibility of Arendtian UBI.⁸⁹ However, it is my belief that Arendt provides us with a rich guide towards thinking about work, postwork, human activities, the problem of idleness⁹⁰, and the dangers inherent in all of this.

It is notable that throughout the literature these questions of alternatives, though they do indeed appear, are generally treated as resulting from moving beyond labour, and as a result are rarely treated as inherent to the task of successfully moving beyond it.⁹¹ As such, it will be the primary argument of this text that the Arendtian critique of labour serves both as a caution against the reckless implementation of UBI upon a populace unprepared for an afterwards without job-holding, and that her larger works can function as an effective exploration of how to inhabit a post-work world, filled with a variety of activities once central to the human experience, but now no longer as appreciated as they once were. This combined with a re-reading of some of the more troublesome aspects of Arendt's concept of the social will aim to show that Arendt left behind an admittedly sketchy blueprint for a new society in which art, thinking, and, of course, action take precedence. Be that as it may, this line of argumentation must be careful not to exclude what remains of work

⁸⁹ Ville Suuronen, "Resisting Biopolitics: Hannah Arendt as a Thinker of Automation, Social Rights, and Basic Income," *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 43, no. 1 (2018): 35–53.

⁹⁰ A term which I will give full account of later, but for now can be understood as the Arendtian claim that consumption increases when labour decreases.

⁹¹ Notably, here I am only talking about those texts which proposed moving beyond labour. Certainly many of them attempt to reinforce labour and jobholding as the primarily orientation.

and labour as valiant pursuits, and in this line care work (which I will argue Arendt would conceive of as labour) should not be demeaned or underappreciated.

As for the choice of Arendt, and how Arendt will be approached, we may do well to briefly consider Kathi Weeks' *The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries*. In this text, Weeks argues for UBI. She begins by making the case that Weber's "protestant work ethic" can be interpreted through an anti-work lens, and can be extended and modernized as the historical circumstances changed leading into the current era via shifts in emphasis of the ethic, such as the shift from Fordist emphasis on work as providing for social mobility to our current era with its "emphasis on work as a practice of self-realization".⁹² Through Weeks' application of Weber's work as "a critical study of the present and its possible futures", she poses Weber as providing an idealist side to the materialist narrative of Marx.⁹³ Weeks successfully builds a reading of Weber's work ethic that furthers important questions regarding the phenomenological consideration of activities in flux, balance, and opposition to one another. Weeks then approaches Marxism's various relationships with work, arguing against "socialist humanism", "socialist modernization", and "Marxism's [historical] commitment to productivism".⁹⁴ At this point, much though certainly not all, of Weber's interest in idealism is put aside, as a more materialistic approach takes hold. This, interestingly, begins to occur as Weeks moves into the half of her book focused primarily on examining the future. She argues that by "pursing a more substantial alternation of wage relation, the demand for basic income attempts to address—rather than continuing to ignore or deny—the realities of post-Fordist work, to offer a measure of security in an economy of precariousness."⁹⁵ Yet, we should be careful not to argue that Weeks has given up her concern for other activities beyond work. Indeed, she takes time to consider the possibility of family being an adequate replacement for the work ethic, eventually arguing that "rather than fighting for shorter hours in the name of the family, I believe that a more compelling, broadly appealing demand and a richer, more generative perspective and provocation can be fashioned around the goals of

⁹² Kathi Weeks, *The Problem With Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 60.

⁹³ *Ibid*, 40.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 85, 83, 82.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 150.

freedom and autonomy”.⁹⁶ As such, we have here Weeks rejecting the telos of the family or the household as being sufficiently broad enough a space (with its related activities housed within) to properly bolster an anti or post-work movement.

Weeks continues, arguing that the “demand would be for more time not only to inhabit the spaces where we now found a life outside of waged work, but also to create spaces in which to constitute new subjectivities, new work and nonwork ethics, and new practices of care and sociality.”⁹⁷ This raises pertinent questions as to what these spaces which are outside of work look like, and if they are not the family, or rather not merely the family, what activities are to be found within them. Is the answer leisure, and how do we reconcile increased leisure with its current overwhelming relation to capitalist consumption? These questions go mostly unanswered in Weeks’ text, and I believe part of the reason why they do is an early distancing from one of the major authors on the subject of human activities. I am, of course, speaking about Hannah Arendt, whom Weeks acknowledges early on for distinguishing between work and labour. According to Weeks’ reading of Arendt’s work, this distinction places distance between “both labour and work on the one hand, and the legitimate business of the political on the other, renders it less useful for my purposes”.⁹⁸ This “refusal to distinguish between work and labour” she acknowledges as a “wager of sorts” which she hopes will “amplify the critique of work as well as to inspire what I hope will be a more radical imagination of postwork futures”.⁹⁹

This is certainly a noble attempt at shaping a future. However, I worry that this attempt backfires, for while Weeks successfully avoids the valorisation of living labor, which she worries might be brought about by such a distinction, she arguably has given work such a large breadth of meaning that it again becomes difficult to talk about alternatives. Indeed, at times it feels like Weeks’ interest in exploring new subjectivities proves too immaterial because, unlike family, there is no tangible activity to which they apply. This may be why the

⁹⁶ Kathi Weeks, *The Problem With Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antinwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 174.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 15.

⁹⁹Ibid.

need for “new work ethics” appears, because if work is defined too broadly as near synonymous with activity, it becomes impossible to think past, except as inactivity or contemplation, a state the human mind cannot easily comprehend remaining in enjoyably for too long. Weeks is certainly onto something in her discussion of opening spaces for freedom; however, I am concerned that her emphasis on the work ethic and the “prescription of a politics”¹⁰⁰ she arrives at, which cumulates in the demand to “get a life”, proves, like much of the literature, too broad and unoriented to avoid the concerns regarding idleness and consumption that I will raise in the next chapter.¹⁰¹ If Weeks, as well as the majority of the literature, has consciously or unconsciously arrived where she does, at hope, but with few alternative activities, through the non-division of work and labour, then perhaps we had best play the other side of the wager.¹⁰² As such, we will use Arendt’s distinctions between work and labour, to arrive at our own critique of job-holding. We will remain steadfast to Arendt, and attempt to discover if on the other side of her critique of job-holding, we might find activities to explore in our new spaces of freedom.

Overview

In chapter one I have provided an overview of some of the academic literature that surrounds the conception of Universal Basic Income (UBI). This included an emphasis on the ends which each UBI attempted to achieve. After providing this overview an argument was made about the insufficiency of the literature. This argument will again be taken up in the final chapter. However in the first chapter, the argument is that an overall liberal conception of the ends of UBI, which emphasized states of being such as freedom, happiness, and justice, leaves too much unanswered in relation to the phenomenological and existential questions of what it means to be in a society with a scarcity of work, and which activities humanity would come to be occupied with.

¹⁰⁰ Kathi Weeks, *The Problem With Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antinwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 227.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, 231.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, 187.

In chapter two, the problem of such a 'states of being' focused approach to UBI is explored. This is done through an examination of Arendt's conception of automation and consumption, as well as a comparison between her and Marx, drawing into question the antagonism that is commonly read as existing between the two. I argue that Arendt predominantly sides with Marx in a shared anticapitalist view, but disagrees with Marx on the question of property and has more mixed feelings than Marx does, in her reading of him, regarding the disappearance of labour. It is this latter point of contention that will bring UBI back into the fold. For it would appear for Arendt that work, and to some extent labour, will be lost to automation, and that this both provides space for new freedom, while also posing a major risk. This risk as she perceives it is that we have so embraced, as a society, the ethos of the *Homo Laborans* (what elsewhere might be called the Work Ethic) that if automation continues we will be left with insufficiently meaningful orientations through which we could enjoy this new freedom. That is, that if something like UBI was implemented, we would turn to consumerism at an increased, perhaps even exponential, rate. This would in turn further decrease the stability of the world, as everything became a consumable. However, this is not to say that Arendt is fully disparaging on the subject of the emancipation of humanity from work. As we will see in chapter two, her tone is a mix of dread and hope.

It is because of this hope that the second half of chapter two is devoted to alternative possibilities to consumption. The argument is essentially that the end of work holds potential for good and bad. It is bad if the work ethic of *homo faber* has become so prevalent that we respond to the loss of work only or primarily with an increase in consumption. However, it can be good if we occupy ourselves with other parts of the *vita activa*, which could provide for what in chapter one we have referred to as human flourishing and better citizenship. Thus, in the second half of chapter two we explore other aspects of the *vita activa*, and briefly the possibility of the *vita contemplativa*. This begins with a somewhat lengthy consideration of art. The length is justified, as it contests Arendt's placement of art within work, and attempts to show that her conception of art can be broadened and separated from work. This is important for two reasons. First, it makes her conception of art far more in line with to modern conceptions of art and removes the notably constrained understanding of it

she implies.¹⁰³ Second, removing art from work allows it to be seen as it is, non-automatable, unlike the rest of work, and permits it to stand alongside the other parts of the *vita activa* that resist automation. This, I argue, is both more true to Arendt's conception of art, and also avoids an uncomfortable chopping or division of work into the un-automatable and the automatable. It also avoids the uncomfortable division between things fabricated by cognition and things fabricated by thinking, that in Arendt's current formation of her theory of art already awkwardly permeates the discussion. Further to this, I suggest that thinking, and political/civic engagement might prove to be other non-automatable activities.

The third chapter then deals with the political, and its sister, the social. This chapter functions in two ways. First, it argues for a reinterpretation of one aspect of the social/political divide. I argue that the separation of economics from politics, and its resignation to the social, does not remove from political debate all matters that concern money, but only a specific style of approaching these matters. I argue that this division is one between what is currently knowable to us and what is debatable to us. Further, I suggest that this boundary exists not only for the sake of the independence of the political, but also for the maintained health of the social. When political questions are treated as provable, and when social questions are treated as debatable, there is a breakdown in democracy. In addition to this, I claim that what is social and what is political is not decided by issue, but by how the issue is addressed, drawing on Arendt's claim that each issue has two sides, and thus refuting claims that any issue involving economics belongs in the social.

The second purpose of this third chapter is to examine what it is to be political for Arendt, so that we can more clearly see what is left for those politically inclined to do in an increasingly automated world. To do this I take inspiration from Arendt's *On Revolution* and reexamine her conception of politics and founding, eventually arriving at the claim that the revolutionary spirit that begins a state is a founders spirit, and that a republic should never be complete in founding itself, but is instead contentiously and continuously refounded as laws are reexamined, struck down, made anew, or reinterpreted; founding is never complete so long as new issues arise for which new laws must be made. As such, I argue that that the political life remains not only viable

¹⁰³ An understanding, I argue is out of line with the rest of her writings on artistic matters.

but vital to the functioning of a post-automation future for Arendt, which lies in direct contradiction with her fear of a post-automation future in which the state exists only as socialized (near automated) administration, with a public with no world, only intent upon continued and continuous consumption.

At this point in chapter three, I begin to parse out what an Arendtian UBI might necessitate. I have an understandable hesitancy to be too prescriptive both because I do not wish to risk the prescribing of social/economic cures in what is otherwise a political work. As such, in chapter three I restrain myself to the claim that many, most in fact, social services must be maintained, and that education should be both made more widely available and changed to better prepare people from the intellectual demands of a non-working world, rather than to educate towards work as is increasingly the practice today. Instead, I argue for a reinvestment in civic education as well as the arts. I will argue that the future must be more explicit in its freedom than to merely give liberal choice, and I will argue that activities must be taken into account, that we must consider what each activity is, and that we must eschew an increase in consuming as a solution. Further, I will go into detail on what alternative activities exist, and how we may conceptualize them, including what broad reforms I view as necessary for achieving them.

The Problem of Consumption

Introduction

Our goal here is to reconsider the relationship and classification of the *active* components of Arendt's conception of the human condition. I specify active as just as within Arendt's *The Human Condition* we are primarily unconcerned with the inner life of the mind or soul. I am focused on the common claim that *The Human Condition* is a book of explicit "hierarchy" which degrades the nature of labour and work in the name of valorizing action.¹⁰⁴ While I do not fully problematize this assumption insofar as I allow for action's continued valorization, my concern is primarily to recast this conception of hierarchy as a balance. In doing so, I align myself closer with the interpretations of Ronald Beiner and Onur Ince, in which Arendt's conception of life is closer to a balance than a hierarchy.¹⁰⁵ This view is then in direct opposition to the aforementioned conception of Arendt as deeply fearful of the social in and of itself, an argument best made by Hanna Pitkin, throughout her book *The Attack of the Blob*.¹⁰⁶ It is my belief that labour, work, and action for Arendt should be in a harmonious balance with each other, with none of the three categories overreaching into the other. It would bring Arendt little joy to see action lord over labour and work. In the same way, she is deeply concerned with the unbalanced modern power of labour. Our secondary goal is to examine the economic and material aspects of Arendt's thought (such as property, physical labour, wealth, work and art) to challenge traditional conservative readings of Arendt which view her as primarily opposed to the writings of Karl Marx. Through a consideration of Arendt's classificatory system in *The Human Condition* as well as this reconsideration of Marx's role, I will propose a reading of the labourization of work and the growth of labour as both extremely worrisome for Arendt and potentially freeing. We will then consider this problem and its potential solutions through an Arendtian lens. This will include asking questions about the nature of automation and the potential loss of

¹⁰⁴ See Mary Dietz, "Feminist Receptions of Hannah Arendt," in *Feminist Interpretations of Hannah Arendt* (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 25; Kathleen B. Jones, "Queer(y)ing Hannah Arendt, or What's Hannah Arendt Got to Do with Intersectionality?," *New Political Science* 37, no. 4 (October 2, 2015): 470; Rita A. Gardiner, *Gender, Authenticity and Leadership: Thinking with Arendt* (Houndsmills, Basingstoke Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015): 168.

¹⁰⁵ Ronald S. Beiner, "Hannah Arendt on Capitalism and Socialism*," *Government and Opposition* 25, no. 3 (1990): 359–370; Onur Ulas Ince, "Bringing the Economy Back In: Hannah Arendt, Karl Marx, and the Politics of Capitalism," *The Journal of Politics* 78, no. 2 (April 2016): 411–26.

¹⁰⁶ Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, *The Attack of the Blob: Hannah Arendt's Concept of the Social* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

productivity. We will then re-approach Arendt's classificatory system, including a lengthy recasting of the nature of art, in an attempt to find an Arendtian solution to the problem I argue as central to her relationship with Marx within *The Human Condition*. This reconsideration of art takes the length it does for several reasons. First, this consideration is in contrast to Arendt's own statements on art, and instead extrapolates from and builds upon her framing and consideration of the subject. Second, this reconsideration is of paramount importance because of what it reconsiders. As we are primarily concerned with what activities in Arendt's schema are salvageable and which will succumb to automation, whether her schema is correct is highly worth considering, especially so if an aspect of it insists something is automatable when it is salvageable. This is argument in the section on art is that art is distinct from work and is, unlike work, non-automatable.

The Role of Property

Let us consider Arendt and the role of property in the private realm. As we will be using Steven Klein as one of our primary interlocutors on the subject of Arendtian welfare, we would be well served to consider our conception of Arendtian property in relation to his. In Klein, we have much to agree with specifically in relation to his conception of private property. Primarily, we can agree with the assertion that "Arendt attempts to recover a more fundamental worldly, and so mediating, significance of property over and against its reductive association with economic instrumentality and material needs."¹⁰⁷ We see this assertion in the work of Beiner too when he claims that for Arendt "property gives individuals a meaningful stake in a world that is thereby experienced as common."¹⁰⁸ This can be reinforced with the often overlooked Arendtian claim that:

Property does not strengthen but rather mitigates the unrelatedness to the world of the labour process, because of its own worldly security. By the same token, the process character of labouring, the relentlessness with which labour is urged and driven by the life process itself, is checked by the acquisition of property. In a society of property-owners, as distinguished from a society of labourers or jobholders, it is still the world, and neither natural abundance nor the sheer necessity of life, which stands at the centre of human care and worry.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Steven Klein, "Fit to Enter the World?: Hannah Arendt on Politics, Economics, and the Welfare State," *American Political Science Review*, 108, no. 4 (2014): 862.

¹⁰⁸ Ronald S. Beiner, "Hannah Arendt on Capitalism and Socialism*," *Government and Opposition* 25, no. 3 (1990): 364.

¹⁰⁹ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 116-117.

While Beiner employs this quotation to consider the worldliness or physicality of property, let us place worldliness in a bracket to be discussed later in this chapter, and in the meantime consider his following claim that for Arendt modern “social economy disrupts [...the public-private] correlative relation not just by subverting the possibility of a genuine public realm, but also by undermining the material conditions of genuine privacy.”¹¹⁰ Yet Beiner glosses over what ‘genuine privacy’ is and instead continues to discuss the economic conditions of property owning, its relationship with citizenship, and re-appropriation. We would do well to pause and consider privacy.

Klein, in agreement with Beiner, considers privacy to be paramount to the Arendtian conception of property. He points out that Arendt identifies the Greek conception of privacy defined as deprivation of the public sphere, as of the utmost importance with the “conception only as the ‘privative’ trait of privacy”.¹¹¹ Yet he makes a few claims we would here like to contest beyond this point. First he argues that this private character of property allows it to continue as the “domain of ‘force and violence.’”¹¹² Second, he claims that “the private signifies those aspects of the human world that escape our capacity for both conceptual and literal production and mastery”.¹¹³ Firstly, this conception relies too heavily on a statement Arendt made regarding the Eleusinian Mysteries that I believe was intended for historical context, and second it is a contradiction. It is contradictory in so far as it claims first that the household is a realm of “force and violence [...] required to master necessity” and second that “the private signifies those aspects of the human world that escape our capacity for [...] mastery.”¹¹⁴ Clearly the household cannot be defined by both containing mastery and the things that cannot be mastered, or else mastery (and/or non-mastery) cease to be a meaningful way of speaking of the realm.¹¹⁵ Notably, Klein argues that this is not a contradiction insofar as he claims that this was Arendt attempting to correct the Greeks: her “non-privative trait of privacy captures aspects of property neglected by the ancient

¹¹⁰ Ronald S. Beiner, “Hannah Arendt on Capitalism and Socialism*,” *Government and Opposition* 25, no. 3 (1990): 364.

¹¹¹ Steven Klein, “‘Fit to Enter the World’: Hannah Arendt on Politics, Economics, and the Welfare State,” *American Political Science Review*, 108, no. 4 (2014): 856–869, 862.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ This is true unless all other realms are either of mastery or non-mastery, and the private is the only that contains both.

Greek understanding of the private mastery of necessity.”¹¹⁶ This still appears to me a contradiction as the private’s relationship to necessity and mastery is a defining trait. To correct this defining trait to also include its opposite negates it as a defining trait. I would argue the reverse that Arendt upholds the private as a realm of necessity, of mastery and knowing, and that with her commentary on the Eleusinian Mysteries she attempted not to correct the Greeks, but to historically contextualize them.

To address this let’s first look at its latter half, the claim that the private contains within it a non-private, and that the non-private aspect of the private which is “common to all” does not include mastery.¹¹⁷ Arendt draws heavily upon history, and often bolsters her argument with historical claims. Yet so too does she often provide historical facts to contextualize her statements so that they are not universalized. For instance, in an example I will take up later in this text, Arendt speaks of the nature of the citizen of the French Revolution so that her statements are not misconstrued as applying to all persons. It is often the case with Arendt that it can be difficult to parse out which statements are intended to hold true to this day, but rely on historical data, and which are intended as historical accounts of a time and place. Here however, it would appear that Arendt intended the latter, because her subsequent footnote, which Klein cited, is in relation to the claim that “the privative trait of the household originally lay in its being the realm of birth and death”, speaks unassertively of the mysterious Greek rituals surrounding birth and death known as the Eleusinian Mysteries.¹¹⁸ She notes that it “seems as though the Eleusinian Mysteries provided for a common and quasi-public experience of this whole realm”.¹¹⁹ We have further reason to suspect that this private non-private is historically contained, not universal, later in the footnote where she explains that in this time birth and death were things which everybody could participate in, “but nobody was permitted to talk about”.¹²⁰ As birth and death by Arendt’s time were no longer confined to the household and the mysterious Eleusinian rituals were certainly no longer being performed, we can be fairly certain that these lines are intended purely as historical. Klein argues that because life and death

¹¹⁶ Steven Klein, “Fit to Enter the World?: Hannah Arendt on Politics, Economics, and the Welfare State,” *American Political Science Review*, 108, no. 4 (2014): 862.

¹¹⁷ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 63

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, 62.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, 63.n61.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*.

are unknowable mysteries and therefore not masterable, henceforth the private realm cannot be thought of as the realm of force and violence.¹²¹ To consider the realm of the unknowable as devoid of force and violence runs into an essential problem—as things are increasingly knowable, it is thus unconvincing to conclude that the private realm cannot be a realm of force and violence simply on the basis of mystery.

Thus, if we are concerned with the ramifications of force and violence within the private, then we had best look elsewhere than the Eleusian mysteries. What is best to consider if we wish to address the rather antifeminist connotations of Arendt's statements regarding the household is again historical change.¹²² I will not make the claim that dominance within the household is limited to a particular historical epoch. Indeed, it seems very clear in Arendt that the household requires violence defined as “the prepolitical act of liberating oneself from the necessity of life for the freedom of world.”¹²³ We have no qualms with the claim that fabrication and labour exist with an “element of violation and violence”.¹²⁴ What we wish to place into historical terms is “the power with which the *Paterfamilias*, the *dominus*, ruled over his household of slaves and family”.¹²⁵ This accurate portrayal of ancient Greek life is too easily presumed to be a universally valid statement about the nature of the household within Arendt, and while it is true that legally a parent still rules their children until adulthood, we have good reason to dismiss this relationship of domination's continued existence between man and wife as the presumed norm or as a good.¹²⁶

We must remember that here Arendt is speaking of a time when the woman was not a citizen, and thereby not legally protected from violence. Indeed, the private sphere is not the public, and the public sphere is that most associated with citizenship as it is where the citizen does that which defines them. One does not stop being a citizen upon coming into the household. Indeed, Arendt bemoans the “conversion of the citizen

¹²¹ Steven Klein, “Fit to Enter the World?: Hannah Arendt on Politics, Economics, and the Welfare State” 108, no. 4 (2014): 862.

¹²² If we are concerned with full citizenship, and not merely male citizenship, and thereby universal basic income, and not merely male basic income, then we had best be concerned that there exist grounds upon which all adult members of the household can find themselves free of mastery, and not merely the men.

¹²³ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 31.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, 139.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, 27: emphasis in original.

¹²⁶ This is not to deny the continued existence of patriarchy, but to acknowledge the legal strides made in the protection of women, their increased autonomy, and their recognition as persons.

of the revolution into the private individual of nineteenth-century society” through which we can draw the conclusion that the conceptions of personhood change throughout history for Arendt.¹²⁷ The private woman of ancient Athens, who could be dominated by her husband within the private realm, has markedly different circumstances from the late-20th or 21st century Western woman. This is especially so insofar as the modern woman is now seen as being capable of having a role and identity outside of the labour of childbirth. This is of extra significance because it was the Athenian perspective that a woman lived for this labour which kept her a noncitizen.¹²⁸ This is a perspective that Arendt rejects, citing this view of women as against action in her discussion on Jesus and Paul’s perspective on women.¹²⁹ Thus, despite the historical transition from the citizen of the revolution to the private individual, we have no reason to presume that citizenship is not intact within the household, and possessed by women. Indeed, Arendt argues that the private “social order, [is] “no longer formed by the royal household of an absolute ruler” and although it has “lost its personality’ it has not lost the ability to rule.”¹³⁰ In fact, with the aid of Patchen Markell we can expand on what a more modern household would look like, for one part of the non-private private remains intact. While we hold that birth and death are not inherently private like Arendt claims that they once were in ancient Greece,¹³¹ we accept that “walls (whether of stone or law)” that function “not only to enclose and separate the private and the public; it is also to connect the private to the public”.¹³² Thus, we have at the very least a physical aspect of the nonprivate private as the facades of homes and potentially as the laws which distinguish the household. Thereby, as we conceptualize the walls as having both an inner and outer face, so too can we conceptualize the person as a connection between the private and the public, as one does not stop being a citizen upon entering a private dwelling. As such, while Arendt had “sworn a holy oath not to touch women’s liberation” in her work, we can

¹²⁷ Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Renguin Classics, 1963), 131.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, 72n.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, 8n.

¹³⁰ Patrice D. Douglass, “The Claim of Right to Property: Social Violence and Political Right,” *Zeitschrift Für Anglistik Und Amerikanistik: A Quarterly of Language, Literature and Culture* 65, no. 2 (2017): 149.

¹³¹ I would argue that regardless of their “proper” place, birth and death are now primarily social affairs, dealt with in part by the household, but also by a bureaucracy and medical system.

¹³² Patchen Markell, “Arendt’s Work: On the Architecture of The Human Condition.(Critical Essay),” *College Literature* 38, no. 1 (January 1, 2011): 26.

see clearly how the modern wife would not shelve her citizenship status as an equal upon entering a household anymore than a patriarch did in ancient Athens.¹³³

Let us consider what Arendt means by property and what the defining aspects of it are. Knowing that Arendt appears to make property-ownership a necessity for civic life and thereby action, we must have a clearer understanding of what constitutes property ownership.¹³⁴ We know that the slave cannot enter politics, for a slave owns no property, yet what of the modern apartment renter?¹³⁵ Property ownership may prove harder to parse out than in ancient times. Not only do many of our citizens not own the household within which they reside,¹³⁶ but others, not always overlapping, have such great debts that the question of freedom again must be posed.¹³⁷ Thankfully, we can partially limit these later concerns. At the very least, we can shelve them in relation to property, as Arendt distinguishes wealth from property, the former “reckoned in terms of earning and spending power, which are only modifications of the twofold metabolism of the human body” and thus intrinsically connected to consumption.¹³⁸ This wealth can provide consumable objects “a limited permanence that outlasts their immediate instrumentalization—what Arendt calls their value”, however, ultimately, this wealth and its corresponding value cannot amount to property.¹³⁹ Indeed, for an object to acquire value it must enter into the market, a public space.¹⁴⁰ As such, this value is in near opposition to property insofar as property places reliance in its definition on its privacy. Arendt goes as far as to state, “the body becomes indeed the quintessence of all property because it is the only thing one could not share even if one wanted to. Nothing, in fact, is less common and less communicable, and therefore more securely shielded against the visibility and

¹³³ Kathleen B. Jones, “Queer(y)ing Hannah Arendt, or What’s Hannah Arendt Got to Do with Intersectionality?,” *New Political Science* 37, no. 4 (2015): 463.

¹³⁴ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 32.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹³⁶ Though notably Arendt points out that at least for Plato private property was not necessary for the household’s protection. She does not appear to agree with him, despite later agreeing with Proudhon that private property within capitalism is theft. *Ibid.*, 30, 67.

¹³⁷ I wish to acknowledge that debt servitude was also an issue in ancient society, but I do not feel that this fact in any meaningful way limits the question of debt in our modern world.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 124.

¹³⁹ Steven Klein, “Fit to Enter the World?: Hannah Arendt on Politics, Economics, and the Welfare State,” *American Political Science Review*, 108, no. 4 (2014): 860.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

audibility of the public realm”.¹⁴¹ Thus it might very well be that one’s private wealth or home-ownership is divorced from the freedom that is necessary to enter into the public, namely that it may be enough that each person owns themselves. This is to say while there must certainly be a criteria for citizenship, it may not be ownership in the modern conception of the term.

Yet, we should not be too quick to draw this conclusion, for we may fall too far down the path of what Arendt referred to as “the conscious attempt to divorce the notion of freedom from politics, to arrive at a formulation through which one may be a slave in the world and still be free.”¹⁴² Indeed, we can and should presume a certain level of impediment to freedom in our current era, as “Arendt fully embraces Marx’s fierce critique of capitalism”¹⁴³ stating that the “unbridled” nature of capitalism “has led everywhere to unhappiness and mass poverty”.¹⁴⁴ Indeed, as Ronald Beiner points out, Arendt views the entirety of the capitalist production system as a vicious process of gradual expropriation of property.¹⁴⁵ As such, we must ask ourselves what the importance of this expropriation is. According to Beiner, the import lies in the fact that “Human beings need property in order to provide some measure of stability over against the flux of ‘the life process’.”¹⁴⁶ Yet again, here we are faced with a property that seems more synonymous with a stable home than necessarily home ownership. While an unstable unregulated renting agreement might once have left those under one in a situation of extended uncertainty, certainly most modern renters aided by the modern legal system, renter’s rights, and strict contracts, are no longer so under their landlord’s thumb that their subjugation legally affects their civic rights. Indeed, Arendt, a renter herself during her stay at 317 West 95th Street, knew well the ability of the renter to engage within politics. It was during her stay at this apartment that she did some of her most public-action, that is, her engagement with the Zionist movement, which she later famously distanced herself from.¹⁴⁷ It

¹⁴¹ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 112.

¹⁴² Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Six Exercises in Political Thought*, Meridian Book ; M151 (Cleveland: World PubCo, 1961), 147.

¹⁴³ Ronald S. Beiner, “Hannah Arendt on Capitalism and Socialism*,” *Government and Opposition* 25, no. 3 (1990): 360.

¹⁴⁴ Arendt, *On Revolution*, 209. Notably she makes an exception for America the 1950s. It is questionable how meant this exception is, however, as she appears to have some significant criticisms of capitalism and the social on p.60.

¹⁴⁵ Ronald S. Beiner, “Hannah Arendt on Capitalism and Socialism*,” *Government and Opposition* 25, no. 3 (1990): 367.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 366.

¹⁴⁷ Elizabeth Young-Bruhl, *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT.: Yale University Press, 2004), 164, 173, 298.

must, however, be noted, that while Arendt was undoubtedly active during this period, she also felt homeless, writing “Lucky is he who has no home; he sees it still in his dreams” in a poem.¹⁴⁸ It should be mentioned that home is here a translation of Heimat. We should stress that this is less likely to do with the admittedly economically struggling Arendt family and more likely an outpouring of grief for Europe, as Heimat is better translated to homeland than to home.

Yet, perhaps these concepts are not too disconnected. Beiner argues that for Arendt property gains its importance as it is an active force “bolstering the imperilled sense of rootedness and stability among increasingly deracinated individuals within these societies, with the idea in view that this in turn will help to strengthen possibilities of less feeble citizenship.”¹⁴⁹ Thus we could make the argument that for Arendt there is a direct correlation between Heimat and home-ownership insofar as they both provide a rootedness to the world. Indeed, this reading would work well with her argument that both 20th century state-socialism and capitalism function as expropriating forces, whereas she diverges from both state-socialism and capitalism in arguing for an alternative of re-appropriation, and a re-rootedness.¹⁵⁰ Thus in her reading of Marx, Arendt argues that his desire for a “classless and stateless society” was not born out of utopian thinking, which is to say it was not based on a no-place, but it was “conceived in accordance with Athenian democracy, except that in communist society the privileges of the free citizens were to be extended to all.”¹⁵¹ Arendt places Marx’s project and her own by extension in direct opposition to 1950s state-socialism, and capitalism, as the desire is not of expropriation but of a return to and a modernization of rootedness.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid,188.

¹⁴⁹ Ronald S. Beiner, “Hannah Arendt on Capitalism and Socialism,” *Government and Opposition* 25, no. 3 (1990): 376.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 131.

The Modern Slave

It remains too common to read accounts of Arendt where she is seen as attacking Marx violently. For instance, Stewart Ranson characterizes *The Human Condition* thus: “Her principle targets are Plato and Marx”.¹⁵² Certainly it is true that Arendt takes issue with Marx, yet it is too simplistic to place her amongst the Anti-Marxists of her time, for it ignores the “Marxist and social democratic elements in Arendt’s work”.¹⁵³ This is perhaps a failure caused by what Marie-Laure Ryan calls the Principle of Minimal Departure. This suggests that when we are reading we “reconstrue the world” as the “closest possible to the reality we know. This means that we will project onto the world of the statements everything we know about the real world, and that we will only make those adjustments which we cannot avoid.”¹⁵⁴ Ryan here is speaking of fiction, yet it is not unreasonable for us to apply this criticism for reading more generally. The past is gone and exists now no more for us than in objects or reconstructions of it. As such, we are occasionally, as with Homer’s “wine dark sea”, left to consider that even the most basic assumptions one might make about the past, the colour of sea/wine, is not certain.¹⁵⁵ For instance when reading Arendt’s statements upon high levels of taxation, the reader is liable to presume a shared definition of high-taxation despite the drastic shifts that have occurred in levels of taxation over the last forty years. Zaretsky makes such a claim in relation to Arendt’s readership when she claims, “It [Arendt’s Marxist affinity] is also missed by scholars who do not appreciate the near-universal anti-capitalism of intellectuals in Arendt’s time.”¹⁵⁶ As such, it would serve us well to spend some time recounting areas of agreement between Marx and Arendt.

We could choose to center upon Marx and Arendt’s mutual hatred of the bourgeoisie. For instance, Margaret Canovan described “Arendt as “strikingly prejudiced” against the bourgeoisie, whereas George Kateb

¹⁵² Stewart Ranson, “Remaking Public Spaces for Civil Society,” *Critical Studies in Education* 53, no. 3 (October 1, 2012): 250.

¹⁵³ Eli Zaretsky, “Hannah Arendt and the Meaning of the Public/Private Distinction,” in *Hannah Arendt and the Meaning of Politics*, ed. Craig Calhoun and John McGowan, vol. 6, Contradictions of Modernity (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 208.

¹⁵⁴ Marie-Laure Ryan, “Fiction, Non-Factuals, and the Principle of Minimal Departure,” *Poetics* 9, no. 4 (1980): 406.

¹⁵⁵ John Noble Wilford, “Homer’s Sea: Wine Dark?,” *The New York Times*, December 20, 1983, sec. Science.

¹⁵⁶ Eli Zaretsky, “Hannah Arendt and the Meaning of the Public/Private Distinction,” in *Hannah Arendt and the Meaning of Politics*, ed. Craig Calhoun and John McGowan, vol. 6, Contradictions of Modernity (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 209.

describes her as displaying a “persistent animosity” toward it.”¹⁵⁷ However, perhaps it would be better to address Marx and Arendt’s agreement on wealth, labour, and consumption.¹⁵⁸ Let us begin with wealth, as it is notable that despite the aforementioned wealth/property distinction belonging to Arendt, it is equally important to acknowledge that she considers “the idea that ‘privacy in every sense can only hinder the development of social production’” as central to Marx’s work although “not an invention of” Marx.¹⁵⁹ Of course, this “anti-conservative” nature (in the traditional sense of the term to conserve) of social production was one that “Marx was correct in” but unfortunately “tended to relish”.¹⁶⁰ As such we see a concern with modern neoliberal and neoconservative economics where she criticizes “modern advocates for private property” who “unanimously understand it as privately owned wealth, and nothing else”, writing in a note that “I must confess that I fail to see on what grounds present-day liberal economists [...] can justify their optimism that the private appropriation of wealth will suffice to guard individual liberties”.¹⁶¹ Further, like Marx, Arendt thought capital accumulation entailed a perpetual alteration of our conditions of existence—she termed this wealth production, or the “life process of society” and “capital accumulation” to use Marx’s terms, “remains bound to the principle of world alienation” and as a process it “can only continue provided no worldly durability and stability is permitted to interfere”.¹⁶² As such, we can already see a connection to Marx’s concept of “productive consumption” and “consumptive production”.¹⁶³ Within this mindset then, expropriation via the transition of property into wealth “always requires some attenuation or elimination of worldly, stabilizing mediations of economics activities, because such mediations are always, to an extent, beyond the reach of market forces and of instrumental economic imperatives.”¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁷ Eli Zaretsky, “Hannah Arendt and the Meaning of the Public/Private Distinction,” in *Hannah Arendt and the Meaning of Politics*, ed. Craig Calhoun and John McGowan, vol. 6, *Contradictions of Modernity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 209.

¹⁵⁸ It should be noted that here we are making no claim that Arendt and Marx are in total agreement, or even that one’s reading of both will align. The claim should be considered as limited to that the characterization of Arendt as fully hostile to Marx is mistaken.

¹⁵⁹ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 67

¹⁶⁰ Ronald S. Beiner, “Hannah Arendt on Capitalism and Socialism,” *Government and Opposition* 25, no. 3 (1990): 366.

¹⁶¹ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 66, 67n.

¹⁶² *Ibid*, 255-256.

¹⁶³ Ronald S. Beiner, “Hannah Arendt on Capitalism and Socialism*,” *Government and Opposition* 25, no. 3 (1990): 361.

¹⁶⁴ Steven Klein, “‘Fit to Enter the World’: Hannah Arendt on Politics, Economics, and the Welfare State,” *American Political Science Review*, 108, no. 4 (2014): 864.

There is another interaction between Marx and Arendt that must draw our attention. This is on the subject of labour. It is well agreed upon that the nature of labour is a source of disagreement between the two. Some, such as Seyla Benhabib, consider that “Arendt’s basic critique of Marx is that Marx collapses the distinction between work and labor.”¹⁶⁵ Yet while Arendt does indeed spend significant time criticizing Marx for not making this distinction explicit, it cannot be said that she holds that he fails to make the distinction at all, for indeed she argues that her concept of work is present within one of Marx’s conceptions of labour specifically in his conception of *vergegenständlichen*, that is, to reify. She notes that Marx distinguishes between how animals “produziert unter der Herrschaft des unmittelbaren Bedürfnisses”, that is, produce under the domination of immediate need, which Marx distinguishes from how humans “selbst frei vom physischen bedürfnis produziert und erst wahrhaft produziert in der freiheit vom demselben.”¹⁶⁶ Arendt uses this distinction between animal and human production to claim that Marx “introduces an altogether different concept of labor, that is, [he] speaks of work and fabrication”, furthering her claim by pointing out that the “same reification is mentioned in *Das Kapital*” when Marx says that the work “ist vergegenständlicht und der Gegenstand ist verarbeitet.”¹⁶⁷ As such, she acknowledges that while Marx “actually defined man as an *animal laborans*” he had within his writings a conception of ‘work’ that Arendt criticizes him for not making explicit.¹⁶⁸

With this then we open up the possibility of Arendt considering Marx as a friendly interlocutor. People seem too eager to read into Arendt’s psychology while writing *The Human Condition*, writing off good passages as lip service or half meant.¹⁶⁹ Yet if we would stay clear of this, and do our best to consider what is written at face value not becoming overly concerned with her presumed psychology, we might see a more sympathetic Arendt. Certainly she criticizes Marx, especially his “dictum that ‘violence is the midwife of very old society pregnant with a new one’” and his “innermost belief that history is ‘made’ by men as nature is ‘made’ by God”¹⁷⁰,

¹⁶⁵ Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, Modernity and Political Thought; Vol. 10 (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1996), 132.

¹⁶⁶ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 102n.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, 102.

¹⁶⁹ Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, *The Attack of the Blob: Hannah Arendt’s Concept of the Social* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Christopher Holman, “Dialectics and Distinction: Reconsidering Hannah Arendt’s Critique of Marx,” *Contemporary Political Theory*; London 10, no. 3 (August 2011): 334.

¹⁷⁰ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 228

a belief she thought encouraged “his followers to put themselves at the service of compulsive processes”.¹⁷¹ Yet, if we are to believe her prose, as I’ve argued we must, then we must remember how she begins her section on labour:

In the following chapter Karl Marx will be criticized. This is unfortunate at a time when so many writers who once made their living by explicit or tacit borrowing from the great wealth of Marxian ideas and insights have decided to become professional anti-Marxists, in the process of which one of them even discovered that even Karl Marx himself was unable to make a living, forgetting for a moment the generations of authors whom he has “supported.”¹⁷²

She later quotes Rousseau, saying “Certainly, I shall avoid the company of detractors of a great man. If I happen to agree with them on a single point I grow suspicious of myself”.¹⁷³ As such, we see here a greater distancing of herself from Marx’s detractors than from Marx himself. Certainly she criticizes him, yet she appears earnest enough in her respect for his thoughts and those who have been aided by them. What derision does appear here appears primarily aimed at the Chicago School, which she appears to view as power hungry and also as turncoats, as many of them had once utilized Marx. It should also be noted that, as Eli Zaretsky points out, the animosity that does exist between Marxists and Arendt has largely been resolved with the evolution of Critical Theory towards Arendt’s point of view, as “Arendt did not reduce capitalism to economic terms, as the Marxists of her day did; rather she analysed it as a political and ideological force.”¹⁷⁴ As such, much of this schism between Arendt and Marxists must be viewed historically.

If we continue with our analysis of Arendtian labour, we would do well to look upon the central conflict between Marx and Arendt which is unresolvable, the argument on the nature of labour, in which Marx welcomes automation and Arendt views it with a mix of excitement and dread. First, we must acknowledge that there is a twofold modern issue of labour identified in Arendt. On one hand, the “modern age has carried with it a theoretical glorification of labor and has resulted in a factual transformation of the whole of society

¹⁷¹ Margaret Canovan, *Hannah Arendt: A Reinterpretation of Her Political Thought* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992): 84.

¹⁷² Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 79

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Eli Zaretsky, “Hannah Arendt and the Meaning of the Public/Private Distinction,” in *Hannah Arendt and the Meaning of Politics*, ed. Craig Calhoun and John McGowan, vol. 6, Contradictions of Modernity (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997): 218.

into a laboring society.”¹⁷⁵ This conception becomes problematic for many left-wing Arendtians as the distinction, between public/private, work/labour, and social/public, become misunderstood, and these are often fallen back on as non distinct entities and spaces within the world, such as when Benhabib writes, “The only defensible way to draw the distinction between the social and the political was an attitudinal one.”¹⁷⁶ While we must shelve this discussion of the social for discussion in its own chapter, for the time being let us agree with the concern that this, like “some of the most influential attempts to salvage Arendt on the social”, does so “by appropriating her thinking for either the deliberative democratic or radical democratic view” of politics.¹⁷⁷ Instead, we should consider a more literal reading of Arendt, in which labour has overgrown its place like a creeping rhizome plant either strangling other plants above ground or creating a suboptimal environment underground, physically occupying the space once reserved for work or politics.

Again, here though, we get into the common misconception that this overgrowth is akin to “a hierarchical system”, a subject again better addressed in our chapter on the social.¹⁷⁸ Still, it is important for us to remember that overgrowth is a concern Arendt has in relation to all areas of life. While it is true that, perhaps due to her era, Arendt’s primary concern is the laborization of work as well as the socialization of the political, so too is she concerned about the overgrowth of the political. The political is not the be-all and end-all to be valorized above all, but a space that is currently undervalued in relation to labour and the social. We see this most clearly within politics’ relation to truth, where it becomes “all-important [...] for politics to ‘respect its own borders,’ and truth and truthfulness lie outside its borders rather than within them”.¹⁷⁹ Just as with bringing together labour and work, with truth and politics “trying to bring the two together inevitably corrupts both”,

¹⁷⁵ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 4.

¹⁷⁶ Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, Modernity and Political Thought ; Vol. 10 (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1996), 165.

¹⁷⁷ Steven Klein, “‘Fit to Enter the World’: Hannah Arendt on Politics, Economics, and the Welfare State,” *American Political Science Review*, 108, no. 4 (2014): 857.

¹⁷⁸ Kathleen B. Jones, “Queer(y)ing Hannah Arendt, or What’s Hannah Arendt Got to Do with Intersectionality?,” *New Political Science* 37, no. 4 (October 2, 2015): 470.

¹⁷⁹ Ronald Beiner, “Rereading ‘Truth and Politics,’” *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 34, no. 1–2 (2008): 127

as according to Arendt truth is the undebatable, and politics is the realm of debate. Thus one is risking introducing the concept of debatable truth.¹⁸⁰

On the other hand, however, Arendt is concerned with labour as “a fundamental aspect of the human condition” being deeply “at stake” where a “rebellion against it” based in the “wish to be liberated from labor’s “toil and trouble,”” becomes an increasingly possible reality.¹⁸¹ This dynamic between labour as the most overgrown aspect of the human condition, and as the currently most vulnerable aspect of it appears to me the greatest of the many undermined orientations of Arendt’s work.¹⁸² Yet, this idea is one that Arendt attributes to Marx, in which “the revolution [...] has not the task of emancipating the laboring classes but of emancipating man from labor” for “only when labor is abolished can the ‘realm of freedom supplant the ‘realm of necessity’”.¹⁸³ This proves problematic for Arendt, but not because she questions the oncoming emancipation from labour, but because if one follows Marx and defines “man as an *animal laborans* and then leads him into a society in which this greatest and most human power is no longer necessary” we become “left with the rather distressing alternative between productive slavery and unproductive freedom”.¹⁸⁴ As such, Arendt is deeply troubled by the “advent of automation, which in a few decades probably will empty the factories and liberate mankind from its oldest and most natural burden,” labour.¹⁸⁵

Labour’s Relationship to Happiness

Despite the frequent noting of her use of the term housekeeping raising concerns of the denigration of labour “traditionally identified with the women’s domain”¹⁸⁶ or the “the existential superiority of action

¹⁸⁰Ronald Beiner, “Rereading ‘Truth and Politics,’” *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 34, no. 1–2 (2008): 127.

¹⁸¹ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 4.

¹⁸² Here I am using the term orientation as in Sara Ahmed’s *Queer Phenomenology* as involving “different ways of registering the proximity of objects and others” shaping “not only how we inhabit space, but how we apprehend this world of shared inhabitance” Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 3.

¹⁸³ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 104.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 105.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 4.

¹⁸⁶ Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, *Modernity and Political Thought*; Vol. 10 (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1996), 135.

(plurality) over labor (life) and work (worldiness),¹⁸⁷ Arendt places a great deal of emphasis on labour, insisting that there “is no lasting happiness outside the prescribed cycle of painful exhaustion and pleasurable regeneration” that is labour.¹⁸⁸ She argues, “whatever throws this cycle out of balance—poverty and misery where exhaustion is followed by wretchedness instead of regeneration, or great riches and an entirely effortless life where boredom takes the place of exhaustion and where the mills of necessity, of consumption and digestion, grind an impotent human body mercilessly and barrenly to death—ruins the elemental happiness that comes from being alive.”¹⁸⁹ In this quotation Arendt places human happiness, a subject of utmost importance, squarely within the bounds of labour. While the term *lasting* appears to allow for joy and exuberance, even satisfaction within work and action,¹⁹⁰ consistent happiness for Arendt can only be found in labour, the act people place mostly lowly on her supposed hierarchy.

It must, however, be noted that Jordan McKenzie argues effectively that for Arendt happiness is a reflective, afterwards-state that is imposed upon a time-place only after it has finished. He argues, “life experience occurs on the blank space between past and future, and as we cannot properly reflect on our circumstances in the present, we are ill-equipped to comprehend its meaning”, and thus happiness is meaning that is added after.¹⁹¹ As such it is a little difficult to comprehend how this cycle, which appears to leave little room for reflection can be happiness. This is especially so given that happiness for Arendt “is a specific emotion that can be distinguished from joy in the moment and is instead a form of positive reflection”.¹⁹² However, it would appear that this moment of reflection is found within the cycle of labour for “the viewpoint of man, who always lives in the interval between past and future” has a standpoint which “is not in the present as we usually understand it but rather a gap in time which ‘his’ constant fighting, ‘his’ making a stand against past and future, keeps in existence.”¹⁹³ We must comprehend the total loss of labour for Arendt as a near catastrophic

¹⁸⁷ Mary Dietz, “Feminist Recaptions of Hannah Arendt,” in *Feminist Interpretations of Hannah Arendt* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 24.

¹⁸⁸ Arendt, *The Human Condition*: 108.

¹⁸⁹ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 108.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 107.

¹⁹¹ Jordan Mckenzie, “Is There Such a Thing as Happiness in the Present? Happiness and Temporality,” *Journal of Classical Sociology* 18, no. 2 (2018): 155.

¹⁹² *Ibid*, 157.

¹⁹³ *Ibid*, 159.

loss of happiness. This interpretation is not widespread, and some have argued that for Arendt “happiness is always ahead, never experienced in the endless cycle of labor/consumption”.¹⁹⁴ This hardly seems the case. Above I have demonstrated that happiness is intimately tied with labour according to Arendt and not always ahead, but instead in an interval between past and future.

Still, it is important that we are not considering the total loss of labour, for that is not what automation entails for Arendt. As for Arendt, necessity, which we addressed above in relation to happiness and is made of the activities of labour and consumption, is twofold of labour and consumption. Thus the “danger that the modern age’s emancipation of labor will not only fail to usher in an age of freedom for all but will result, on the contrary, in forcing mankind for the first time under the yoke of necessity” which was “already clearly perceived by Marx”.¹⁹⁵ Thus the “Emancipation from labor, [which] in Marx’s own terms, is emancipation from necessity” would “ultimately mean emancipation from consumption as well”.¹⁹⁶ However, as Arendt notes the “development of automation” only does away with the labouring side of necessity “so that eventually only the effort of consumption will be left”.¹⁹⁷ This would result for Arendt in two problems: first, the “serious social problem of leisure, this is essentially the problem of how to provide enough opportunity for daily exhaustion to keep the capacity for consumption intact”¹⁹⁸ and the more environmental problem where we are faced with the “limitation imposed by the capacity to consume, which remains bound to the individual” making the “problem therefore [...] how to attune individual consumption to an unlimited accumulation of wealth.”¹⁹⁹ We would be best to read this somewhat darkly, as the problem of *animal laborans* and not as a problem Arendt wishes to solve, for she is concerned that “our whole economy has become a waste economy, in which things must be almost as quickly devoured and discarded as they have appeared in the world, if the process is not to come to a sudden catastrophic end.”²⁰⁰ This problem of the *animal laborans* is not one that Arendt wishes to

¹⁹⁴ Chiara Giaccardi, Monica Martinelli, and Cesare Silla, “Out of the Great Recession: The Conditions for Prosperity Beyond Individualism and Consumerism,” in *The Crisis Conundrum: How to Reconcile Economy and Society*, ed. Mauro Magatti (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017): 178.

¹⁹⁵ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 130.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, 131.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, 131.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, 124.

²⁰⁰ Ibid, 134.

solve, because to solve this problem would be to find a way to consume at a breakneck speed, or as she puts it, at a pace attuned to “an unlimited accumulation of wealth”.²⁰¹ To solve this problem would be to rid the world of its durability entirely. Further, she is deeply concerned that the “easier life has become in a consumers’ or laborers’ society, the more difficult it will be to remain aware of the urges of necessity” and we will “no longer be able to recognize its own futility”.²⁰² She believes that the “danger of future automation is less the much deplored mechanization and artificialization of natural life than that, its artificiality notwithstanding, all human productivity would be sucked into an enormously intensified life process” which would “only make more deadly, life’s chief character with respect to the world, which is to wear down durability”.²⁰³

Thus, we can conclude that for Arendt the Marxist goal she identifies as the emancipation *from* labour, which will only be partly completed via automation, is dangerous primarily in that due to our inescapable need to consume, and due to the ability of consumption to be itself an activity that sustains consumption, our life process will become exacerbated to create a heightened consumptive process which wears down the world with an immaculate speed. If we wish to look for signs of this in modernity they are already readily identifiable in a consumerist culture far more exacerbated than in Arendt’s time, financed through debt, much to the chagrin of environmentalists. As such, despite a continued unfortunate insistence upon the “lowly status of nature and the ‘life process’ in Arendt’s thinking” which is apparently most evident and “comes through with particular strength in her critique of Marx”, environmental thinkers such as Finn Bowring “argue for a more conservationist’ reading of Arendt.”²⁰⁴ Further, there is increasing attention to an Arendtian opposition to the “political individualism, which conflated the ideal of the citizen into the reality of the individual consumer.”²⁰⁵

²⁰¹ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 134.

²⁰² *Ibid*, 135.

²⁰³ *Ibid*, 132.

²⁰⁴ Finn Bowring, “Arendt after Marx: Rethinking the Dualism of Nature and World,” *Rethinking Marxism* 26, no. 2 (April 3, 2014): 278.

²⁰⁵ Chiara Giaccardi, Monica Martinelli, and Cesare Silla, “Out of the Great Recession: The Conditions for Prosperity Beyond Individualism and Consumerism,” in *The Crisis Conundrum: How to Reconcile Economy and Society*, ed. Mauro Magatti (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 165.

Finding Our Voice Beyond The Wish

Yet Arendt is not entirely pessimistic about the future. As Claudia Lenz has pointed out, it is possible to view Arendt's "debate about labor as an opportunity to assess the value of gainful employment as something that has become an end in itself," and to ask once again "the question of the good life-the life worth living-and to move the subsequent political questions into the focus of public concern."²⁰⁶ For indeed, this move to be liberated from labour is the "fulfilment" of a "wish".²⁰⁷ Indeed, how could it be wholly bad when automation appears to do away with "violence", the "prepolitical act of liberating oneself from the necessity of life"²⁰⁸, which *was* only assurable through owning property "because it assured with reasonable certainty that its owner would not have to engage in providing for himself the means of use and consumption and was free for public activity".²⁰⁹ This was a freedom he "willingly sacrificed" if instead "the property-owner chose to enlarge his property" at which point he became "voluntarily what the slave was against his own will, a servant of necessity".²¹⁰ Here she shared with Marx and Smith what she perceived as a "contempt for the "menial servants" who like "idle guests...leave nothing behind them in return for their consumption."²¹¹ Then, as this automation is liberation²¹², it is met by Arendt with a certain degree of cautious hope, as she states that the "emancipation of labor and the concomitant emancipation of the laboring classes from oppression and exploitation" definitely means "progress in the direction of non-violence", though as noted before, not necessarily "progress in the direction of freedom".²¹³ Yet for Arendt it is labour that until automation could "be eliminated only by the use of servants", this "burden of biological life weighed down and consumed the specifically human life-span between birth and death."²¹⁴ The burden was made "all the heavier since none of

²⁰⁶ Claudia Lenz, "The End of the Apotheosis of 'Labor'? Hannah Arndt's Contribution to the Question of the Good Life in Times of Global Superfluity of Human Labor Power," *Hypatia* 20, no. 2 (April 1, 2005): 145-6.

²⁰⁷ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 4

²⁰⁸ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 31.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 64-65.

²¹⁰ *Ibid*, 64-65.

²¹¹ *Ibid*, 86.

²¹² And notably it is liberation not only of the worker's body, as one might assume of 1950s automation, but is an automation more in line with today's AI and computer driven automation which "adds the release of human brain power". *Ibid*, 149n.

²¹³ *Ibid*, 129.

²¹⁴ *Ibid*, 119.

the so-called “loftier desires” have the same urgency”, and by knowing that what was “forced upon man” may now be eliminated.²¹⁵ Indeed, for Arendt the “question is not so much whether we are the masters or the slaves of our machines, but whether machines still serve the world and its things”.²¹⁶ As such, it would appear that the primary concern for Arendt again lies in the cycle of necessity, and whether this automation can be world-building or at least in the service of world-building, or whether through a society of labourers freed from labour the consumer society will remove all permanence from this world. As such it is *not* automation and the potentiality of being freed from the laborious side of necessity that is fearsome, but rather that it this freedom that appears to a society that knows nothing else but labour. Arendt bemoans that this fulfillment of our wish to be freed from labour “like the fulfillment of wishes in fairy tales, comes at a moment when it can only be self-defeating”.²¹⁷

In this way, we humans are not unlike *The Little Mermaid*. Our wish is fulfilled, given the agency of legs, or in our case the agency of freedom from labour, but deprived of exactly what makes this new agency meaningful, our voice.²¹⁸ Indeed, it is speech for Arendt through which *animal laborans* and *homo faber* “could be redeemed from its predicament of imprisonment”, for “the interrelated faculties of action and speech” allow “that meaning should have a place in this world.”²¹⁹ As *The Human Condition* holds as its “central theme” the question of “What are we doing”, let us consider what may be an Arendtian answer to “our newest experiences and our most recent fears”.²²⁰ No doubt, such a solution will involve speech, and certainly natality insofar as it reminds us and indeed allows us to be “capable of new beginnings” introducing “a radical novelty, that enriches plurality, [and] breaks the automatism of time and the fruitless circle of labour/consumption”, into this world.²²¹ But let us first go through, systemically, the potentiality of work as a potential activity which may survive

²¹⁵Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid, 151.

²¹⁷ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 4.

²¹⁸ Ibid, 236.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Ibid, 5.

²²¹ Chiara Giaccardi, Monica Martinelli, and Cesare Silla, “Out of the Great Recession: The Conditions for Prosperity Beyond Individualism and Consumerism,” in *The Crisis Conundrum: How to Reconcile Economy and Society*, ed. Mauro Magatti (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 183.

automation, and provide us meaning in a world without labour, and then do the same for art (as distinct from work), and lastly for political action and speech.

First then, one might hope that *homo faber* will save us through work. This consideration need only be brief, as there is little disagreement on Arendt's conception of work as increasingly labourized. Further, if work is labourized, then it can hardly save us from emancipation from labour or function as a substitute for the void left *by* labour, because once transformed into labour its task becomes as automatable as labour's task. For, much like in Marx's consideration of alienated labour, Arendt's labourization of work begins with the shift from the craftsman, the ultimate *homo faber*, to the less skilled factory worker. She writes that there "can hardly be anything more alien or even more destructive to workmanship than teamwork, which actually is only a variety of the division of labor and presupposes the 'breakdown of operations into their simple constituent motions.'"²²² Indeed, Arendt ties this directly with Marx, claiming that the labourization of work, when the "fabricators themselves" stop encountering each other "as persons" but "become proprietors, "owners of their labor power" is the point at which "Marx's famous self-alienation, the degradation of men into commodities, sets in".²²³ In this setting "where production consists primarily in preparation for consumption, the very distinction between means and ends, so highly characteristic of the activities of *homo faber*, simply does not make any sense" as such, the "free disposition and use of tools for a specific end production is replaced by rhythmic unification of the laboring body with its implement", thus nullifying work as distinct from labour.²²⁴ Therefore, what we are represented with here is not a work that functions as work, as an object that is created for permanence in this world, but the factory style creation of consumable objects, stripped in their use if not in their form of this object-permanence.

Further, one should be careful not to reduce this conception of labourized work merely to the factory floor. What is most important here is how the goods are produced, through labour (or as Marx would say, alienated production) and how the goods are treated (as consumable). As such, there is no reason to suspect

²²² Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 161

²²³ Ibid, 162.

²²⁴ Ibid, 145.

that Arendt views office work, or even some modern creative work as any less labourized. Indeed, she insists that the “commodities the entertainment industry offers are not “things”—cultural objects whose excellence is measured by their ability to withstand the life process and to become permanent appurtenances of the world [...] they are rather consumer goods destined to be used up, as are any other consumer goods”.²²⁵ We can draw from this that the labourization of work far outstrips the mere creation of objects by hands, but includes all tasks broken down too greatly until they’ve become repetitive, and until the end products are consumable and non-lasting. As such, work cannot be the solution to the possibility that the modern age “may end in the deadliest, most sterile passivity history has ever known.”²²⁶ That is, it is no solution to the loss of labour in our labour-society for it itself has been transformed into labour and thus will also be lost.

What we are then left with as potential solutions to sterile passivity, to what Arendt earlier called the problem of leisure, are speech, action, and art. While we must acknowledge that art is considered part of work within *The Human Condition*, we will (in the next section) address why art can be perceived as independent of work within Arendt. We must consider the relationship between income and play, as Arendt makes this distinction, and because it is notable that of our three remaining activities art is the only one that has been even slightly professionalized. We must, however, acknowledge that plenty of art is done as hobby, that is as play.

This, of course, leads to the question of how hobbies fit into Arendt’s schema. Hobbies appear to be defined by Arendt as a category, or perhaps a space, where meaningful but not economically valuable activities are placed within modern labourized society. It does not appear as a positive space, but as a forced demotion. She writes disdainfully,

Whatever we do, we are supposed to do for the sake of “making a living”; such is the verdict of society, and the number of people, especially in the professions who might challenge it, has decreased rapidly. The only exception society is willing to grant is the artist, who, strictly speaking, is the only “worker” left in a laboring society. The same trend to level down all serious activities to the status of making a living is manifest in present-day labor theories, which almost unanimously define labor as the opposite of play. As a result, all serious activities, irrespective of their fruits, are called

²²⁵ Hannah Arendt, “Society and Culture,” *Daedalus* 89, no. 2 (April 1, 1960): 282.

²²⁶ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 322

labor, and every activity which is not necessary either for the life of the individual or for the life process of society is subsumed under playfulness.²²⁷

Within this quotation, we are provided a few interesting thoughts which will shape our understanding not only of the nature of the hobby and its place in modern society, but in further understanding the labour/work departure that is the subsumption of work into and by labour. We see that making a living as the centrality of one's actions is inherently connected with labour, but that it also distorts our evaluation of what we do that does not provide economic benefit. That is to say, labour as a sustaining force of day to day life becomes all important to such an extent that even, for example, further education is considered play if it remains intrinsically unconnected to future prosperity. As such, professional artists, apparently the last workers, are the only people allowed a reason for doing what they do, which while tied to income no doubt is not purely in the service of income. Interestingly, in another work arguably on the subject of the loss of labour in a labouring society, *The Affluent Society*, John Kenneth Galbraith argues that during the loss of labour we have created a “New Class” of people whose labour is unimportant but is esteemed. He writes, “the children of the New Class are carefully indoctrinated in the importance of finding an occupation from which they will derive satisfaction—one which will involve not toil but enjoyment.”²²⁸ As such, labourized work is supposed to offer joy, satisfaction, even happiness in and of itself. Thus, the importance was shifted from the importance intrinsic in the act, to the importance of making an income via the act. No matter how important the act is from “the standpoint of “making a living,” every activity unconnected with labour becomes a “hobby”.”²²⁹

A hobby, then, for Arendt, is the belittling term given by *animal laborans* to all things not labour, and thus presumably done for the fun of them, as play. Yet notably we must not read Arendt as deriding the import of activities that are now called hobbies, for indeed, is it not the nature of the Athenian citizens that they do politics not for income? Instead, what Arendt seems to find deplorable is the status of hobby. This is why Arendt writes, what “is especially note-worthy in this context is that Marx, who had no inkling of this

²²⁷ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 127

²²⁸ John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society*, 251.

²²⁹ Arendt, *The Human Condition*: 128.

development, expected that in his utopian, laborless society all activities would be performed in a manner which very closely resembles the manner of hobby activities.”²³⁰ Of course, this quotation alone tells us nothing of Arendt’s opinions on hobbies, as indeed, we have no reason to suspect this a positive, or for that matter negative, depiction of Marx’s dream. What is most notable about it is simply that the Marxist goal of a labourless society, which as previously mentioned, appears to be completable via automation, results in activities of individuals that are untied from earning a living in a manner that recalls Arendt’s aforementioned statements on Marx’s affinity for Athenian democracy. I have already discussed how the loss of labour is for Arendt an extremely dangerous loss, filled with the potential of catastrophic consumption brought on by a society which only knows labour as the good, having subsumed all other meaning under the playfulness of the hobby, and thereby becoming a silent actionless, sterile, borderline apocalyptic society incapable of enjoying the fulfillment of a millenniums’ long wish to be free of necessity. However, insofar as Arendt is sympathetic towards Athenian democracy, we can see a sympathetic desire for Marx’s labourless society which itself Arendt believed inspired by Athenian democracy. It is a desire that appears foiled by how history has progressed, with the subsumption of other societal orientations under the umbrella of play. Yet, it is a desire nonetheless.

Art: An Introduction

Whether this wish is fulfillable for Arendt must come later in the chapter. For the moment, however, let us concern ourselves primarily with that which as its primary goal does not make a living. I will begin with a rather lengthy discussion of art, as it is the least considered of our remaining categories (art/action/speech). It is important to establish what art is because separating work from art allows us to conceptually separate the automatable aspects of what Arendt called work from the non-automatable aspects of what she called work. In doing so we also are made more aware of what activities are automatable and a plethora of ones which are not, which I believe would otherwise be overlooked or left unacknowledged. Such knowledge is paramount to any meaningful solution to the problem of idleness and consumption brought on by the loss of labour and labourized work. In *The Human Condition*, Arendt places art at the end of the chapter entitled “Work”. The

²³⁰ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 128n.

discussion of art is short, but dense with art reoccurring throughout her writings often in a central and pivotal role. She returned to the concept of art in *Between Past and Future*, as well as in her 1960 article “Society and Culture”, and in *The Life of the Mind*. Other lesser known writings, such as her lectures on Brecht and Broch at Kenyon College in 1948 and 49 respectively, shed light on her understanding of the subject. Yet there appears a tension in Arendt’s conception of art, or perhaps more accurately by her placement of art under the domain of work. This unease is explored masterfully in Markell’s discussion of the topic in which he argues that work relates to labour and to action “as the fraught conjunction of two different pairs of concepts”.²³¹ Work relates to labour as use objects, and to action as art.²³² However, this could very well muddle a concept of work and its place in the world, thereby hampering the “disclosing quality” of words so valorized by Arendt.²³³ This fraught conjuncture may, perhaps, be smoothed if we distinguish the process by which something becomes a use object from the process by which art is created. Thus, one of our goals in what follows will be to examine the differences Arendt draws between art and use objects, as well as between what Arendt calls artwork and what is today celebrated as art. Through this process of comparison, we will see that Arendt made a slight mistake when she failed to distinguish between the process of fabrication and the two processes which create art: that of judgement and that of *art*. This latter, a process, it will be shown, is inherent to her own conception of art.²³⁴

On Judgement

This process of *art* differs from judgment, by which the person recognizes the object as having an aesthetic value (whether it is beautiful or ugly).²³⁵ Judgement is the process through which an object is selected *as art*, or, more accurately, *as beautiful*. As such, it cannot also be the process by which art comes into this

²³¹ Patchen Markell, “Arendt’s Work: On the Architecture of The Human Condition,” *College Literature* 38, no. 1 (2011): 18.

²³² *Ibid*, 27.

²³³ Hannah Arendt, “Hannah Arendt on Hannah Arendt,” in *Hannah Arendt: The Recovery of the Public World*, ed. Melvyn A. Hill (New York: StMartin’s Press, 1979), 323.

²³⁴ For the sake of the ease of the reader, we will distinguish the process of art from the noun by italicizing the verb form. It should be noted that this distinction does not exist within Arendt’s own work.

²³⁵ Anna Selmezi, “Art/work: Fabricating Freedom Or, Thinking about Instrumentality in Relation to Political Art,” *Parallax* 22, no. 2 (2016): 223.

world. That is to say, judgement brings art into the public world, but does not explain why some objects are to be brought into the public world and others not. Further, while this relationship between judgement and art may serve sufficiently for art-work, it does not prove adequate for all that we conceive of as art.²³⁶ There is much that has long been considered art that would not fall under the purview of art-work. Arendt speaks of “composing a melody” and its inherent relation to art, but not the act of conducting a symphony, which we too would call art. This activity has no other place except art in Arendt’s schema of labour—work—action.²³⁷ If conducting a symphony is not an art-work, then it must exist outside of Arendt’s human condition (an impossible proposition). For while we may be tempted to think of it as a job-holding task, such as in projecting a film, to do so would be to ignore the creative freedom that allows the trained ear to distinguish one conductor from another when they are conducting the same piece.

Yet, before we rescue the symphony from oblivion, let us ensure that judgement is not *only* what makes art.-Arendt was determined, against the standard reading, to derive from Kant’s aesthetic judgement “a general ‘faculty of judgment’ that, while not political in and of itself, would be on the side of politics.”²³⁸ This judging requires both thinking and communication, but does not privilege genius or intellect, instead privileging the appeal of each action, or object, to the spectator who judges.²³⁹ It is this presumed equality, or potential equality of taste, that allows for a level of equality among the spectators in a way that judging based on intellect would not. Of course, this equality of taste, or in Kantian terms Arendt, *The Human Condition*: common sense, is not necessarily common, but can only be presumed so, making it thus an “*as if* agreement” through which “a thinking individual comes to perceive herself as part of the plurality of the *polis*.”²⁴⁰ Judging then becomes for Arendt “a truly human praxis oriented towards past events, including the creation of works of art.”²⁴¹ This, however, is not the creation of the work of art.

²³⁶ Bernard Flynn, “The Places of the Work of Art in Arendt’s Philosophy,” *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 17, no. 3 (1991): 226.

²³⁷ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 169.

²³⁸ Jae Emerling, “An Art History of Means: Arendt-Benjamin,” *Journal of Art Historiography* 1 (2009): 8.

²³⁹ *Ibid* 7-8.

²⁴⁰ Selmeczi, “Art/work: Fabricating Freedom Or, Thinking about Instrumentality in Relation to Political Art”, 224.

²⁴¹ Emerling, “An Art History of Means: Arendt-Benjamin,” 10.

For while we could conceive that anything is art if it is judged by the collective to be so and accepted as such, we can see clearly here that judging is something done to art, and is not that process that makes art itself. While it may be that good art must be judged to be beautiful, it would appear that art is not less art if it is not judged beautiful. It may only be bad art, which is not the same thing as being less or not art. Likewise, this judgment cannot be confused with value, as art is “not exchangeable” and thus defies “equalization through a common denominator such as money”.²⁴² Instead, this judgement creates a structural break between the past and the future, allowing within this break “the creation of a world”.²⁴³ The art-judgment process provides art the necessary asylum that makes it possible to “forget ourselves, our cares and the interests and urges of our lives, so that we will not seize what we admire but let it be as it is”.²⁴⁴ Thus, aesthetic judgement cannot be the primary part of the creation of art. Nor is judgement the sovereign domain of art. There exists not just political judgment, but judgment of all things, for everything “must appear, and nothing can appear without a shape of its own; hence there is no thing that does not transcend functional use”.²⁴⁵ Instead, Arendt places art under the control of the *homo faber*, the fabricator of the world, and all worldly objects. She writes:

if mortals need [*homo faber*’s] help to erect a home on earth, acting and speaking men need the help of *homo faber* in his highest capacity, that is, the help of the artist, of poets, of historiographers, of monument-builders or writers, because without them the only product of their activity, the story they enact and tell, would not survive at all.²⁴⁶

Of course, while this is indeed something that art does, it is not the inherent purpose of art. Art need not concern itself with actors. It does just as well with inanimate objects as subjects, or with no physical subject at all (as is the case with much modern art). Likewise, some things which Arendt might not allow as art, such as the interpretation of a symphony by a great conductor, are as quickly gone from this world as action or labour. At very least, Mary McCarthy believed that perishables still amounted to Arendtian art. She explained,

²⁴² Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 167

²⁴³ Emerling, “An Art History of Means: Arendt-Benjamin,” 10.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 173.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

“a birthday cake, elaborately decorated, is experienced not *just* as a cake to be consumed, and we almost have the sense that it *ought* to be preserved”.²⁴⁷

The Traits of Art, And the Judgement Exception

Still, let us consider what Arendt does say is inherent to art-work. As we have just established, she first says that it is fabricated. Second, she claims that these objects are objects without use, and third, she claims that these useless objects are produced due to thought, which she differentiates from cognition. As it is their fabricated nature we have set ourselves to look most critically upon, let us first deal with the latter two arguments, neither of which is necessitated by fabrication.

Art is without use. It is not that art has no purpose, but that it is wholly without physical utility towards the creation of another thing in the world. Things that are art are “strictly without any utility whatsoever and which, because they are unique, are not exchangeable”.²⁴⁸ Furthermore, for Arendt “the proper intercourse with a work of art is certainly not using it; on the contrary, it must be removed carefully from the whole context of ordinary use objects to attain its proper place in the world”.²⁴⁹ Laikwan Pang reiterates this in practical terms when taking an Arendtian approach to the artifacts (including artworks) left behind by the 2014 Hong Kong protests. The difficulty lay in the job of the archivists, “struggling with the issue of which works to be treated as transcendental ‘arts’ that should be collected and restaged and which works to be treated as “things” created out of boredom, or due to frustration”.²⁵⁰ We see in Pang a note of recognition that it is indeed partly through judgement that we decide what is art and what is not. Indeed, as these art-works “were so overwhelmingly defined by the [Hong Kong] occupation” none had any use left, if they had had any before, and were prime examples of how for Arendt often “art is the artifact”.²⁵¹

²⁴⁷ Ronald S. Beiner, “Hannah Arendt on Capitalism and Socialism*,” *Government and Opposition* 25, no. 3 (1990): 362.

²⁴⁸ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 167.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁰ Laikwan Pang, “Arendt in Hong Kong: Occupy, Participatory Art, and Place-Making,” *Cultural Politics* 12, no. 2 (2016): 160.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*

To this extent and this extent only can judgement create art out of use-objects (artifacts now removed from their purpos) and be provided a new role by the thinking of the spectator. This role of art as artifact, while in line with Arendt, is not in line with the concept of *art* which this article proposes. However, that this exception should exist, that art can sometimes be art because it is an artifact, should not be seen as weakening the existence of the *art* process, but only places it as one among two ways in which art becomes art. As we shall see, it is not the dominant factor.

She writes in an essay on Walter Benjamin, “inasmuch as collecting can fasten on any category of objects [not just art objects] ...and thus, as it were, *redeem the object as a thing* since it now is no longer a means to an end but has its intrinsic worth” we can understand a “collector’s passion as an attitude akin to that of the revolutionary ...*collecting is the redemption of things which is to complement the redemption of man.*”²⁵² Thus any discussion of an object revitalized by judgement as art *must* be undertaken with the utmost caution and care. It cannot be presumed that any or indeed most items resurrected are art-works. This again brings into question if we can at all consider judgement a process of creation of art.

It is, however, interesting that art is useless. For indeed, according to Arendt art belongs to the world of *homo faber* who “judges and does everything in terms of ‘in order to’.”²⁵³ In fact, Arendt goes as far as to declare “utilitarianism, the philosophy of *homo faber*”.²⁵⁴ She writes, “fabrication chiefly fabricates use objects” where “the finished product again becomes a means” and that this philosophy applied to life results in “the limitless instrumentalization of everything that exists”.²⁵⁵ Thankfully, because “of its uselessness, the work of art transcends and contests the means-ends relationship that characterizes the world of work.”²⁵⁶ We must then ask why would the *homo faber* ever create something as useless as art. Why does *homo faber* create an “existence finalized toward appearance” which “is not a characteristic of the world of work but rather of the

²⁵² Arendt quoted in, Emerling, “An Art History of Means: Arendt-Benjamin,” 4-5.

²⁵³ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 154.

²⁵⁴ Her italics. Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 157.

²⁵⁶ Flynn, “The Places of the Work of Art in Arendt’s Philosophy,” 219.

world of action”²⁵⁷ Why is it that “the world of action is threatened by the attitude of making but not by its product”—art.²⁵⁸ These are the questions that plague our and any consideration of Arendtian art.

What then of thinking? That thinking is parasitic to the life process is a fact well known by Arendt who asserts, “its process permeates the whole of human existence so intimately that its beginning and end coincide with the beginning and end of human life itself”.²⁵⁹ Note that she claims that it permeates the process, and is not the process nor an inherent part of the process. It is the cognitive process by which life’s needs are met, by which all ‘productive’ things are done, and which is truly necessary for survival.²⁶⁰ Thought, on the other hand proves completely useless. It “has neither an end nor an aim outside itself” and “does not even produce results”.²⁶¹ Thought for Arendt is “the source of art works,” and is “manifest without transformation or transfiguration in all great philosophy”.²⁶² In this it differs greatly from cognition “by which we acquire and store up knowledge,” and is chiefly manifested in the form of the sciences.²⁶³ Cognition is focused and “always pursues a definite aim, which can be set by practical considerations as well as by ‘idle curiosity’.”²⁶⁴ However, just like its chief relation, fabrication, “once this aim is reached, the cognitive process” comes to an end.²⁶⁵ Thus we can see cognition and not thought as inherent in the fabrication process.

The Problems of Fabrication

It is high time we properly address fabrication. This is how Arendt believes art is made. Art-work to her is itself the result of the same process that makes the ladder or the hammer. Instead of directly defining here fabrication, we shall show, through a series of its roles, its incompatibility with art. This is not to say that fabrication is a flawed concept, because it proves inapplicable to the art it is supposed to encompass, as indeed

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 171.

²⁶⁰ Ibid, 170.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 170.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

it is exactly what happens when an object of sustained utility is created.²⁶⁶ It is only that the process of bringing art into this world must inherently differ from fabrication in enough ways that when the rules of art are applied to fabrication, or fabrication to art, they ring untrue.

First, let us examine her claim that the “actual work of fabrication is performed under the guidance of a model in accordance with which the object is constructed.”²⁶⁷ This is near indisputable when one considers a use-object. In fact, the required use of the object necessitates a certain level of a modeling, as otherwise when completed, the object may not perform its utility. However, to say that such a model applied to a Jackson Pollock would seem near absurd. Quite simply, art is not the following of a model from start to finish, or a necessary conception of how it will be when completed. Arendt’s genealogical method, which she termed ‘pearl-diving’, does not merely seek to return definitions to that which they were at their beginning, but to trace their changes over time. Art today cannot be said to be accurately portrayed by the ancient definition of art as craftwork. Process artists like Pollock, Eva Hesse, or Robert Morris²⁶⁸ are simply too involved in the process of art for the idea of an end result, a model to be achieved, to have any significance. Moreover, the end result, the art-work, is not of paramount importance to process art, the art for them is the process, not the result. This can be further noted through and in 20th and 21st century artists’ attempts to design their art to avoid monetization and collection, however unsuccessfully.²⁶⁹

Further, for Arendt this model “whose shape guides the fabrication process, not only precedes it, but does not disappear with the finished product, which it survives intact, present as it were, to lend itself to an infinite continuation of fabrication.”²⁷⁰ To imagine this being true of an art-work is not impossible. Certainly, it is the case for some of Andy Warhol’s work. Likewise, it is debatably true for printmaking in general. However, to suggest this of a book or painting is immediately recognizable as false. Perhaps, one could broaden the term ‘model’ until the general idea of book, painting, or a subject matter may be considered a model. Yet,

²⁶⁶ The use of the phrase “sustained utility” here is to differentiate the products of fabrication from the products of labourized work.

²⁶⁷ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 140.

²⁶⁸ Himself heavily interested in phenomenology.

²⁶⁹ Examples of this include movements like the Arte Povera in 20th century Italy, as well as Viennese Actionism.

²⁷⁰ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 141.

to suggest that one can make a second painting in the same manner that one can make a second walking cane shows the idea as preposterous.

So too, does the assured end-nature of fabrication not fit artists' conception of art. Arendt says of fabrication that in "the process of making [...] the end is beyond doubt: it has come when an entirely new thing with enough durability to remain in the world has been added to the human artifice."²⁷¹ While this is not immediately untrue of art from the perspective of the judge, it does not apply to the process, of which only the author of the process can surely speak.

While it may be possible to find an artist who claims that when they begin a painting they know exactly how it will look at the end, and that the results do end up looking thus, the reader would surely regard the statement with suspicion. In this way art is much more akin to action than fabrication, both of which "may have a definite beginning, never [...] have] a predictable end".²⁷² It is this contradiction between *art* and fabrication that when not clearly distinguished leads otherwise skilled theorists to conclude, "it is not just action but also work [...] that would be disfigured if it were seen merely as the rote execution of a plan given in advance".²⁷³

An Introduction to the Art Process

Let us then consider whether the artist is master. For Arendt *Homo Faber* is the only type of man who can truly claim this role. He is both "master of all nature" and "master of himself and his doings".²⁷⁴ The *laborans* is "subject to the necessity of its own life" and the man of action and speech "remains in dependence upon his fellow men".²⁷⁵ However, this freedom is not fully known by the artist. Indeed while the artist may create it in private, the last act of the artist "it seems, is to show his work in public—that is, to surrender it, figuratively or literally, to its users and judges", thus qualifying the artist's absolute sovereignty through the necessity of the

²⁷¹ Ibid, 143.

²⁷² Ibid, 144.

²⁷³ Markell, "Arendt's Work: On the Architecture of The Human Condition," 36.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

inclusion of the public.²⁷⁶ If we consider our other prime example, the conductor of a symphony they did not write. This artist both produces and displays their art in the same instant. It is a performance, and there is no sovereign space or time.

It is also notable that within the course of the work chapter Arendt changes the nature of the fabricated object, which is exactly what allows us to reconsider the role of automation in relation to these objects. For use-objects and fabrication in general at the beginning of the chapter she focuses on “physical durability”, but in the section on art she replaces the concept with permanence, “which is a function of the “memorability” of tangible things”.²⁷⁷ However, both these traits, it will be shown, are not necessarily inherent to art, though the later as Arendt has shown is a trait of art-work.

It is high time the central concept of this section be introduced. Arendt writes thought, “although it inspires the highest worldly productivity of *homo faber*, is by no means his prerogative; it begins to assert itself as his source of inspiration only where he overreaches himself, as it were, and begins to produce useless things”.²⁷⁸ For as the reader will recall, she has already denoted cognition, not thought, as the cognitive process which corresponds to the fabrication process. However, it must be noted that *use* is a difficult term to define in relation to Arendt. It is no doubt tied to the means-end category of the *homo faber*; however, it also appears physically defined, in that use is related to ware and depletion, as we will come to see. Still, it is never effectively dealt with in Arendt, and while I suspect a definition could be arrived at, it remains outside the scope of this project. I instead trust for now in the reader’s socialized conception of use, insofar as we can conceptualize in our daily professional and personal interactions that one can be used or not used. If we accept that thought creates art, and not cognition, *and* we accept that the fabrication process has many definite differences from the art process, then we begin to see room for a process that creates art that is not fabrication. Yet she is correct to write, “what makes the thought a reality and fabricates things of thought is the same workmanship which [...] builds other durable things of the human artifice”.²⁷⁹ Is it then possible for there to be a process of art

²⁷⁶ Ibid, 32.

²⁷⁷ Ibid, 36.

²⁷⁸ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 171.

²⁷⁹ Ibid, 169.

creation that *is not* fabrication, and can that process be more inclusive and true to art than Arendt's limited artwork concept?

In German, Arendt's native tongue, the word for art, *Kunst*, also means fake or trick. Supposedly, the root of this double meaning is that art is an imitation of the world, and not the world itself.²⁸⁰ It is proposed here that artwork is brought into the world through a fake fabrication process. Just as thinking is parasitic to the life process, so too, and perhaps due to this parasitic nature, the process of *art*, which Arendt refers to as the "reification" of thought, is parasitic of the other processes.²⁸¹ Notice here that "other processes" is said and not fabrication. This is because once we are free of art being defined as the fabrication of thought the possibility is opened up not just of art-work, but art-labour, and art-action.

Art is not missing from Arendt's work. It is only muddled. In "The Achievement of Herman Broch" she writes of the modern novel that the intention is "to involve the reader in something which is at least as much a process of thought as of artistic invention."²⁸² It is, of course, unnamed, but here she is discussing *art*. It is given the title of artistic invention. Likewise in "Society and Culture", Arendt writes despairingly of "those who no longer write books but fabricate them, who manufacture"²⁸³ Again, here is *art* under a different name. If art is fabricated, and books are works of art, as she claims in *The Human Condition*, then it is meaningless to say that they are no longer written but fabricated, for to write *is* to fabricate. Thus, if we accept her critique of cultural malaise, laid out in "Society and Culture", then we can read her as conceiving of art as a distinct activity.

Likewise, her critique of the entertainment industry, which is not art-labor, is reliant on a difference between *art* and fabrication. For as the reader will recall, fabrication has a model which outlasts the product, and can be used to make more products. However, when the entertainment industry takes cultural products and creates "cheap reproductions" by altering them, whether they be "rewritten, condensed, popularized" or

²⁸⁰ Likewise, we could consider the root of the English word and its connection to artifice, or the French word of the same spelling. Further, there exists the Spanish and Portuguese word "artificio", as well as, the Norwegian "Bokmål" and "Nynorsk", all of which connect art with trickery.

²⁸¹ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 169.

²⁸² Hannah Arendt, "The Achievement of Hermann Broch," *The Kenyon Review* 11, no. 3 (1949): 476.

²⁸³ Hannah Arendt, "Society and Culture," *Daedalus* 89, no. 2 (1960): 284.

“transformed” the result is the “deterioration of culture”.²⁸⁴ Again this is something the product of fabrication can withstand, but not the product of *art*.²⁸⁵

We can also see that, while she called *homo faber* the only sovereign human, the artist is not sovereign. As we saw before, art is judged, and it must be judged if it is not to be a mere hobby. Thus, unless you account for *art* you arrive with the difficulty of “the natural phenomena that she had originally sought to exclude from the very *possibility* of public appearance” dependent on it, else it become hobby.²⁸⁶ As such, we see here an understanding of art as public forced private, which we earlier identified as what for Arendt is the true reason for her distaste for the hobby.

Patchen Markell has noticed much the same problem as that with which this chapter deals. Markell’s work is enlightening in how it addresses the differences between art and work, and thus *art* and fabrication. Markell’s greatest contribution is in relation to Arendt’s section “The Location of Human Activities”, in which she states, “each human activity points to its proper location in the world”.²⁸⁷ In this section Arendt illustrates that all activities, by the nature of them, have a location in relation to a public/private dichotomy. She uses goodness as an example of this, as an extreme example, which “must go into absolute hiding and flee all appearance if it is not to be destroyed”.²⁸⁸ If this is true, then art must have a space in the world. Markell rightly notes that it would make no sense for art to be with the fabricated world in private, and notes that art not only must but already in Arendt *does* have its own zone:

Arendt would even give this zone of relation between work and action a name: with characteristic idiosyncrasy, she would call it “culture”, using the term to refer neither to the old-fashioned anthropological idea of a coherent body of beliefs, practices, and meanings, nor to the idea of a “high” culture under threat from the rise of mass society, but simply to the activity of attending to, judging, and caring for the “things of the world” in their appearance.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁴ Hannah Arendt, “Culture and Politics,” in *Reflections on Literature and Culture*, ed. Susannah Young-ah Gottlieb, Meridian (Stanford, Calif.) (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007): 181-182.

²⁸⁵ I am not here making any claim towards the validity of her conception of the deterioration of culture. I have included this claim because it further annunciates the distinction I am attempting to show within her work.

²⁸⁶ Markell, “Arendt’s Work: On the Architecture of The Human Condition,” 32.

²⁸⁷ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 73.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid* 75.

²⁸⁹ Markell, “Arendt’s Work: On the Architecture of The Human Condition,” 32.

In this way, if we are to conceptualize the private as the household, as Arendt frequently does in her Greek tradition, the area that is “art has become, in effect, the exterior face, visible in public”.²⁹⁰ We can understand the *place* of art within the public/private dichotomy as existing on the border between the two.

Still, however, we have not laid out exactly what *art* is. We are aware it is a parasitic process, which mimics or alters other processes so that their end result is art. Further, we know that this is the result of thinking, however, this process still requires a more in-depth examination. Arendt writes, “men of action and the lovers of results in sciences have never tired of pointing out how entirely ‘useless’ thought it—as useless, indeed, as the works of art it inspires.”²⁹¹ This *is* our connection. It is the root source of thought, versus cognition, intelligence, or the demands of the life-process, that gives the result of the process its lack of utility. Thoughts, like the Good, are “unrelated to this world which man creates as his home on earth” and “if they were to constitute a man-made environment for the human animal, this would be a non-world”.²⁹² Thus, when thought is harnessed to an activity “a human capacity which by its very nature is world-open and communicative transcends and releases into the world a passionate intensity from its imprisonment within the self.”²⁹³ Of course, the price of this reification is the dead letter, but what we must realize is that works “of art are thought things, but this does not prevent their being things.”²⁹⁴

Yet here we run into a problem. Art, while it may have its own location, does not have its own process in the same way labour, work, or action do. The sheer variety of what we call art proves this and it is not something Arendt overlooked. For, while she primarily insisted on artworks, and their involvement in fabrication, she admitted that even in this strict limitation fabrication as the art process had its limits: “Poetry, whose material is language, is perhaps the most and least worldly of the arts” for “a poem is less a [fabricated] thing than any other work of art”.²⁹⁵ As mentioned throughout this section, Arendt herself solves this problem with the claim that thought can replace cognition in the fabrication process, and that when this occurs, the end

²⁹⁰ Ibid, 34.

²⁹¹ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 170.

²⁹² Ibid, 168.

²⁹³ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 168.

²⁹⁴ Ibid 169.

²⁹⁵ Ibid, 169-170.

result is an art-work. What Arendt fails to see, is that there is no reason thought could not appropriate labour and action from their own sources and thus with them produce useless versions of them as art. And indeed, it will be shown that this does happen. As such, *art is the process by which thought appropriates and transforms either labour, work, or action so that it may reify itself as art in the world.* The telltale sign that *art* has occurred is if the labour, fabrication, or action does not fully meet the qualifications inherent to labour, work, or action.

Art and Art-Work

This section need not be lengthy as much of its subject matter has already been covered in the section devoted to the problems of fabrication. However, it is worthwhile to state that many of the issues inherent in fabrication are not necessarily as untrue of art-work as they are of art in general. For instance, the work of a classical sculptor or painter is much more likely to have something akin to a model than say the work of Chris Burden, whose performance, depending on the piece, is either art-labour or art-action rather than art-work.²⁹⁶

It is best now to discuss what the relationship between use-objects and art-works is. For indeed, Arendt points out, everything “that is, must appear, and nothing can appear without a shape of its own; hence there is in fact no thing that does not transcend its functional use.”²⁹⁷ Yet it would be a mistake to mistake everything for art. Throughout her writing Arendt maintains the distinction between things, “whether it is a use object, a consumer good, or a work of art”.²⁹⁸ These things have use, and therefore are not art. We can consider that they have a primary use, and function as art in a secondary use (or lack thereof). However, as the reader will recall from earlier in this discussion, art cannot be art until it is removed from its use, or if it does not have a use to begin with. Thus, while things may be displayed and thus be judged to have a beauty or an ugliness, they are not art. They may be made into art by becoming an artifact. Still, as long as they maintain a use, they are primarily a product of cognition, and any thought which has snuck in is secondary. However, the object may

²⁹⁶ Burden is a twentieth century artist most famous for his 1970s performance art, such as “Shoot” where his assistant shot him in the arm, and “Trans-Fixed” where he was crucified on top of a Volkswagen Beetle. His later works shifted his focus to mechanized sculpture.

²⁹⁷ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 173.

²⁹⁸ Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, Enlarged ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 1978), 209.

be art if cognition is secondary to thought, as Arendt writes, “an object is cultural to the extent that it can endure; its durability is the very opposite of functionality, which is the quality which makes it disappear again from the phenomenal world”.²⁹⁹ Likewise, she insists that “we distinguish between use objects and art works, both of which possess a certain permanence ranging from ordinary durability to potential immortality in the case of works of art”.³⁰⁰ Thus we cannot confuse all objects for art-works simply because they have a shape.

It is this potential immortality that makes art works “superior to all other things [...] they are the worldliest of all things”.³⁰¹ Here, however, we must give a word of caution. For this potential immortality *is* true for all art, but is only ensured by the physicality of art-works. That is to say, it is the fabrication process, not *art* that provides the durability that can translate to immortality. *Art* only provides the uselessness of the creation, it is up to the process that *art* appropriates to decide how the art is manifested. Art is made unique by its uselessness, and is made useless by the parasitic nature of *art*, and it is this uselessness when applied to things that makes their durability potentially immortal. This art will not be worn down by use, of which it does not have. We cannot presume the same of art-labour or art-action as neither of their processes result in durability. Thus, neither of their processes made useless will result in durability. However, despite the lack of durability, the uniqueness inherent in art³⁰² ensures that it has the potential to be immortal regardless. However, this immortality is similar to that of action, in that it relies on art-work to record its occurrence.

Art and Art-Labour

That *art* should find a way to transform labor into art is truly remarkable. To refresh the reader’s memory, “labour is the activity which corresponds to the biological process of the human body, whose spontaneous growth, metabolism, and eventual decay are bound to the vital necessities produced and fed into the life process by labour. The human condition of labour is life itself”.³⁰³ Thus, that the life process could be coopted into art is surprising, and fairly, although not completely, new to these last two centuries in western

²⁹⁹ Ibid, 208.

³⁰⁰ Ibid 209.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 167

³⁰³ Flynn, “The Places of the Work of Art in Arendt’s Philosophy,” 217.

culture. Yet, as these last two centuries have also seen the labourization of work, it should not be surprising that they have also seen the *art* of labour.³⁰⁴ Indeed, in a fascinating turn of events, we have witnessed the *art* of labourized work, such as when South African factory “workers decided to manufacture a car for Mandela, recasting themselves as artists”.³⁰⁵ In doing so, they committed an act without utility, insofar as Mandela had no need of a Mercedes, and engaged in the artistic “capacity to ignore the reality of the social inequality and nurture desires that lie beyond the concerns of the world”.³⁰⁶ Without the concept of *art* that is buried within Arendt’s philosophy, such acts would shed “light on the limitations of Arendtian delineations”.³⁰⁷

I do not believe that this concept of art is Arendt’s intended meaning, as indeed, she would not have included it within the section on fabrication, but would have devoted to it its own section. Instead, this concept is a reconstruction, a position that is Arendtian and derived from her work, but not explicitly what she meant to convey. This concept of *art* shows not the limitations, but the power of thought to coopt the worldly and create the useless. However, as with the factory we are still discussing fabrication, even if it is labourized fabrication, we had better look towards the labour process in its purity. These are the activities that are continuous, and thus mimic the life process, from which they do not escape.³⁰⁸ However, if such an activity, that was as constant in its requirements as the life process were shown as useless to the life-process, done for beauty’s sake, then would it not be art-labour? To explore this, let us look to Pang’s article on Arendtian art applied to Hong Kong’s occupation art. Pang argues that it was a continuous and conscious art-labour when occupants transformed the public toilet, “a ‘non-place’—a space that cannot be defined as relational or historical or concerned with identity” into “a piece of installation art, demonstrating conviviality and serendipity” by cleaning it, and personalizing it, and “turning it from a standardized, cold, and transitory site into a cozy common room, filled with cleansers, lotions, face masks, small decorations, and sanitary napkins”.³⁰⁹ We can conceptualize this art-labour found in the task of cleaning a bathroom, as never complete, and this

³⁰⁴ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 125.

³⁰⁵ Selmeczi, “Art/work: Fabricating Freedom Or, Thinking about Instrumentality in Relation to Political Art”, 226.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 102-103.

³⁰⁹ Pang, “Arendt in Hong Kong: Occupy, Participatory Art, and Place-Making,”: 157-158.

seems intrinsic to the art. Thus, the art work is consumed as quickly as it is created, and is maintained only through repeated *art*.

Another example of such a phenomenon can also be drawn from the Hong Kong occupation arts. During the occupation roadside flower beds were farmed in and potholes were planted in. By doing this this art “disrupted the continuity of time and the order of the original site “naturalized” by the dominant ideology. They directly participated in the social transformation and each work could be seen as an end in itself’.³¹⁰ These “useless” crops and flowers are here directly presented as art, and the sight, or judgement, of them creates the same disruption between past and future that we have previously discussed as inherent in judgement. Yet due to their biological nature this is art for which the *art* must be continuous, thereby making it art-labour. Of course, it could now be claimed that the bathroom and the plants did not outlast the occupation, thereby bringing into question their status as art. However, while it is true that they did not outlast the occupation, they did indeed last long enough to be preserved in art-work, in so far as Pang’s work, as well as the other documentation is art-work, including this piece. To this extent, these art-labours have been deemed beautiful enough to preserve, and thus, have the potential immortality of all art.

To turn our gaze to more traditional art forms, let us consider dance. It is difficult to say whether dance belongs to art-labor or to art-action, however it clearly is not an art-work. Once it is complete, it has no physical permanence except what is created by other forms. For the time, I am tentatively placing it within art-labor. This categorization is primarily due to its rehearsed nature. The case could be made that each independent performance is an art-action, however, various dance recitals are not commonly talked about as being different in this manner. One might ask whether you have seen said dance, but not what specific recital you went to, unless the asker is wondering if they were at the same performance as you. Generally, it is not a discussion of difference. Likewise, the non-public rehearsals, that are surely necessary, might very well count as hobby. Thus, as in dancers’ relation to their body, and the requirements of physical training as well as learning the dance, we

³¹⁰ Pang, “Arendt in Hong Kong: Occupy, Participatory Art, and Place-Making,”: 158.

can likely conceptualize dance as another form of art-labor. Thus, even if one rejects “modern art”, we can still see art-labor in the traditional arts.

Art and Art-Action

We thus arrive at art-action, which may be the most elusive of the three to find examples of, as it is so uncommon that we find an action with no effect on the world that is still great enough to warrant the permanence of being preserved and documented in an art-work. For safety’s sake, we will restrict our discussion to the non-explicitly-political so that it is not confused with action. Indeed, Arendt already may be criticized for overly aestheticizing politics. We need not confuse the matter any further by choosing actions which may or may not be art-actions as well as political-actions. It is my suspicion that these two cannot interact, that there are useless actions which are beautiful, and that there are political actions that are great, which can then be made beautiful through being recorded in art-work. I suspect this because political actions seem to inherently have *use* in a way that thinking cannot.

Further, it is more difficult to say what is without utility in the realm of action. With labor it was simple enough to say that labour that did not sustain life was useless. With work, Arendt had already provided us with the most literal meaning of useless: the product produced was without utility. However, with action it becomes difficult to tell what exactly the use is, as it functions as an end in itself.³¹¹ It may very well be that all which today is understood as art-action is actually action and is political, not artistic in nature. To this subject alone an entire paper could easily be devoted. However, to hazard an informed guess at what art-action may be, let us look at a few of the arts of Christ Burden. If we consider his two most famous art-actions, *Trans-Fixed* and *Shoot*, (the former of which involved him being crucified onto a Volkswagen and the latter of which had him shot by an assistant in the hand) we can see two brief things resembling action, reliant on observance, and yet so absurd that they may well be meaningless. Further, as they are interactions only between Burden and his assistants, it is difficult to tell whether this is sufficient action to be political action, especially as this action was explicitly planned. However, if performance art is not art-action, it is difficult to say exactly *what it is*. It is not

³¹¹ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 206.

tioned in any way to the life process, nor does it mimic it. Likewise, nothing is produced by it, except by documentation of it, which is art-work, and not the action itself. Perhaps the absurdity of nailing oneself to a Volkswagen speaks itself to the difficulty of finding activities which could be art rather than action. Of course, it could be action, however, to distinguish the two requires more thought, and would certainly make an interesting subject for future research.

Summary of Our Consideration of Art

We have identified inherent contradictions between Arendt's conception of fabrication and her conception of art-work which she claims is the result of fabrication. I then rejected Markell's claim that the work chapter is not a chapter defining work but separating labour and action, leaving work in a flux between the two (between use-object and art). I then proposed that a process may exist other than fabrication that creates art. I explored the possibility that this process might be judgement. This exploration proved to have some use, as it appeared that some art may be created by an object being removed from utility and becoming an artifact. However, as we discovered that more than art could be an artifact, this too proved inconclusive as defining of art. We have allowed in our thought that some art may be identified as art by becoming an artifact. We then followed the useless nature of art as defined by Arendt to its root in the nature of thought as opposed to logic or cognition. This resulted in the hypothesis that thought has its own process, one given the name of *art*, through which thought appropriates and changes the other processes until they appropriately produce things (*art*) as useless as thought itself. As thought and art appeared independent of labour, work, or action, we postulated that art may have its own realm, which Markell has already identified in Arendt as culture. In order to test our hypothesis about the existence of *art* we approached work, labour, and action in turn and applied their processes to existing art. We concluded that *art* can be perceived appropriating both labour and fabrication, and may appropriate action. The latter of these, it was decided, could not be claimed definitively without greater study than the scope of this section could provide.

In doing so, we have not only problematized Arendt's conception of art, but have sought to explain why art effectively resisted both the subsumption under playfulness that has befallen all other meaningful but

not income-creating activities, as well as why it has resisted labourization when fabrication has not. It is notable that a possible answer to why it resists fabrication is not only that it is a different process, one derived from thought instead of cognition, but that thought is such an inherently useless thing that when labour approaches art the result is not the labourization of art but the art-labour. This should not be overstated, as in our earlier discussion of labourization we saw that there does appear to be a form of labourized artwork in what Arendt identified as the entertainment industry. Perhaps, we can still claim that art resists labourization in so far as Arendt insists that the artist has avoided the Sophie's Choice of placing the worth/meaning of the act on 'making a living' or being subsumed under playfulness and the hobby. Either way, we can at this point assert with a level of confidence that (1) art is distinct from labourized work (2) art is distinct from work (3) this distinction from work allows it a level of safety from labourization, and that (4) it represents a valid and worthwhile source of meaningful activity against the sterile end of history that Arendt appears to see in the fulfillment of the wish to be free of labour at the moment of labour's victory over other parts of the human condition. In fact, we can see that we have hope this meaning can be resurrected and provide meaningful activity, though perhaps not economic activity else it risks labourization.

Action and Speech

Despite our lengthy consideration of art, what is no doubt paramount to any discussion of post-labour possibilities within Arendt must be action and speech. Indeed, as Seyla Benhabib writes, "there seems to be something in the bare fact of being born that undergirds a miraculous human power of action thereafter to bring forth the new and unexpected into the world – even in the face of such seemingly hopeless difficulties".³¹² This concept of natality, the "symbolic process in which freedom is rooted," through which being born, bringing a new presence into the world, proves that "we are capable of new beginnings" and "introduces a

³¹² Seyla Benhabib. "In Search of a Miracle: Hannah Arendt and the Atomic Bomb." In *Politics In Dark Times: Encounters with Hannah Arendt*, 253.

radical novelty, that enriches plurality.”³¹³ This “breaks the automatism of time” and appears paramount to any hope we have of avoiding the passive sterility that may otherwise await us.³¹⁴ For Arendt, it is “precisely because we have been brought into the world by others [that] we can give birth to something new, with gratitude towards the past and hope for the future.”³¹⁵ Indeed, not only may action and its sister natality prove to bolster the world against the listlessness left in being labourless laborans; they may even prove, if harnessed right, to be a grand flourishing of democratic participation that surpasses even Arendt’s dear Athenian democracy. As Margaret Canovan points out, “action has always had to compete with labour for human attention. The precarious spaces of freedom enjoyed by groups of free men for short periods of human history were made possible only by the violence with which they forced slaves or serfs to cater for their material needs and leave them free to act”.³¹⁶ Thus, with labour mastered, or more accurately, outsourced to the machines, we can see a potential for a rebirth of action, not only among an elite but among all, as people are here then freed from labour. One must be concerned with a corresponding increase in consumption, as it is one of the few activities left available within the possibilities of a labouring society. It is then with the possibility of a rediscovery of action and art as a meaningful set of activities for society to be oriented towards that we are then provided not only a solution to the ozymandian sterility of this possible future but also the environmental impact of increased consumption and consumer society. This later point is of course uncertain, however our previous consideration of the interplay between labour and consumption appears most pertinent to a labouring society.

Of course, we are not currently in a position where action could easily reclaim its place as an activity considered valuable, for it has suffered “denigration” according to Arendt by the likes of Adam Smith and others who in their animal laborans mindset view action as “unproductive”, which is to say they attempt to evaluate action by a criterion intended and best suited for labour and work.³¹⁷ Indeed, it must be remembered

³¹³ Chiara Giaccardi, Monica Martinelli, and Cesare Silla, “Out of the Great Recession: The Conditions for Prosperity Beyond Individualism and Consumerism,” in *The Crisis Conundrum: How to Reconcile Economy and Society*, ed. Mauro Magatti (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 183.

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ Ibid, 184.

³¹⁶ Margaret Canovan, *Hannah Arendt: A Reinterpretation of Her Political Thought* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 149.

³¹⁷ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 207

that action and speech here avoid the threat of labourization as they lie “altogether outside the category of means and ends; the “works of man” is no end because the means to achieve it—the virtues or *aretai*—are not qualities which may or may not be actualized, but are in themselves “actualities.”³¹⁸ For definitionally action is the “only activity which goes on directly between men without the intermediary of things or matter” and “corresponds to the human condition of plurality, to the fact that men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world”.³¹⁹ Thus, just as thought, in its useless nature, protects art from use and thereby from work (and by extension from its labourization), so too does action and speech’s nature as existing without ends, as actualities in and of themselves, and as the actions as being unmitigated by role or object, prove too far removed from anything resembling labour to presumably be labourized. Certainly, there are not currently any signs of the labourization of action.

Notably, this continued independence of action and art from work and labour is not merely coincidental but a symbiotic relationship in which they are nearly fully dependent upon each other. Art is distinguished “from both consumer goods and use objects” and these “products” of action and speech” help “constitute the fabric of human relationships and affairs” with their reality dependent “entirely upon human plurality, upon the constant presence of others who can see and hear and therefore testify their existence”.³²⁰ Of course, art can never fully capture the greatness or exact meaning of an action, for both these things “can lie only in the performance itself and neither in its motivation nor its achievement”.³²¹ It is this, the greatness and novelty of actions, which serves to offer a chance at the revitalization of the world. Arendt goes as far to say that action is a “miracle-working faculty”; it is the “miracle that saves the world, the realm of human affairs from its normal, “natural” [in the sense of necessity] ruin” for only “the full experience of this capacity [to speak and act] can bestow upon human affairs faith and hope”.³²² As such, political actors are able “to *take care* of the world rather than treat it as a disposable means for the achievement of convenient and circumstantial

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ Ibid, 7.

³²⁰ Ibid, 95.

³²¹ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 206.

³²² Ibid, 247.

ends”.³²³ As such this “solidarity born of unique distinctness, spontaneity, and new beginnings (natality)” which Arendt refers to as politics “sets off an existential experience that is profoundly different from either the singular collectivity of animal laborans’ repetitive labor or the collective singularity of homo faber’s instrumental work”³²⁴ It is these qualities which not only mark action as great or more accurately give action the ability to be great but which make action unconquerable.

Action, through its spontaneous nature, shucks the dourly conventions of each day, and rises up in each human, each person, dissolving the unknowable inner life of the personality and providing a truth in so far as it can be perceived. It thus becomes known among peers, friends, and before humanity, and proves unconquerable—inalienable indeed—but with incalculable indiscreetness it provides us the “task and potential greatness of mortals” to our “ability to produce things—works and deeds and words—which would deserve to be and, at least to a degree, are at home in everlastingness”.³²⁵ These intergenerational, comfortingly consistent, knowns produced out of the unknown allow us and those around us to find our place “in the cosmos where everything is immortal except” ourselves.³²⁶ These actions, speeches and items provide people an opportunity to achieve what was Alexander the Great’s greatest achievement, to “prove themselves to be of a ‘divine’ nature” and humanity by “their capacity for the immortal deed” and with “their individual mortality notwithstanding, attain an immortality of their own.”³²⁷ As such, it stands not only as that which maintains the world as a place for humans, but acts itself as an active force against the unworldliness of consumption, battling against it and providing a home for us on this little blue marble among the stars—a home Arendt is afraid we may no longer want.³²⁸

³²³ Finn Bowring, “Arendt after Marx: Rethinking the Dualism of Nature and World,” *Rethinking Marxism* 26, no. 2 (April 3, 2014): 285.

³²⁴ Mary Dietz, “Feminist Receptions of Hannah Arendt,” in *Feminist Interpretations of Hannah Arendt* (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 31.

³²⁵ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 19.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*

³²⁷ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 19.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

The Possibility of Thinking

We have until this point roughly discarded thinking from our consideration of that which has not been labourized and will not become labourized. This is because it makes up the *vita contemplativa* and not the *vita activa* and, as such, does not seem to solve the problem of the second side of labour, consumption. The reason it does not provide a solution to the problem of consumption is not because contemplating is a consuming activity, but rather because it is not inherently an exhausting one, and is instead marked by “a passivity [...] where mental activity comes to rest”.³²⁹ Arendt states that the reason the loss of labour would correspond to an increase in consumption is because consumption would become both the exhausting thing and the thing that is consumed to solve the exhaustion; contemplation does not provide the necessary “daily exhaustion”.³³⁰ This is a presumption that appears to run through much of Arendt that activity alone can solve the “concomitant serious social problem of leisure”, which remains twofold as “how to provide enough opportunity for daily exhaustion to keep the capacity for consumption intact”, which in turn prevents the consumptive side of the labour/consumption balance from increasing its “devouring character” which would “wear down durability” of the world.³³¹ In short, thinking has seemed too weak a bulwark against the consumptive drive.

It must, however, be acknowledged that Arendt’s seeming early hostility towards the *vita contemplativa* which colours much of *The Human Condition*’s tone appears in latter years to have mellowed. Indeed, the very existence of *The Life of the Mind* appears to be a shining example of it. So too can it be seen in the importance placed upon thinking in her consideration of Eichmann. In fact, much of Arendt’s criticism of totalitarianism and totalitarian actors has been tied to thinking or not thinking. As Ashley Biser points out, Arendt even claimed that Heidegger’s Nazism was the direct result of a philosopher wrongly leaving the *vita contemplativa* for the *vita activa*. This statement while probably overly generous to Heidegger, does much to cement the notion of the contemplative life as a viable and (at least in the case of Heidegger) sometimes preferable alternative to

³²⁹ Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*. 6.

³³⁰ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 131-132.

³³¹ *Ibid.*

politics.³³² This can be partly understood as the distinction between thinking and willing, in which willing requires the ending of thinking insofar as the mind's process switches to willing.³³³ As one must will to consume, however briefly, it would appear that the contemplative life holds some amount of difference from the labourous life, and therefore the contemplative life exists as a potential break from consumption.

We should not wholly and definitively say that simply because Heidegger's great folly was acting, and Eichmann's was not thinking, in turn means that thinking is the opposite of totalitarianism. In a letter quoted by Jeffery Newman in an address to young Rabbis, Arendt wrote, "I suspect that philosophy is not altogether innocent in this fine how-do-you-do. Not of course that Hitler had anything to do with Plato . . ." ³³⁴ Thus, we should temper our claim that thinking is our saving grace against the fascist machine, even though there remains throughout Arendt's work plenty of argumentation supporting its ties to morality. It would seem that Arendt harboured some suspicion towards thinking. I am not here making any definitive claim about the good or danger of thinking, but instead simply trying to show that Arendt's own thought on the subject was rather inconclusive. Further investigation is clearly necessary, though such a project would be necessarily far reaching and outside the scope of this work.

Two issues remain. The first is simply put. We must be careful in our formulation of these issues to not fall into the mindset of *Homo Faber* and his means-ends thinking. While this small section is concerned with the question of whether the *vita contemplativa* can effectively function as a bulwark against consumption, it is paramount that we not conceive of it as good only insofar as it does so. For our goal is not merely to solve the problem of idleness but to find worthwhile pursuits outside of job-holding which our society could and can orient itself towards. The second issue is the unavoidable question of if thinking as an activity is something distinct enough from life to be a proper way of life. It is true that there are, in Arendt's phrasing, professional thinkers, but perhaps the professional aspect makes it job-holding and therefore indistinct from labourized

³³² Ashley N. Biser, "Calibrating Our 'Inner Compass': Arendt on Thinking and the Dangers of Disorientation," *Political Theory* 42, no. 5 (2014): 524.

³³³ Susannah Young-Ah Gottlieb, "Reflection on the Right to Will: Auden's 'Canzone' and Arendt's Notes on Willing," *Comparative Literature* 53, no. 2 (2001): 141.

³³⁴ Jeffrey Newman, "Hannah Arendt - Thinking In Circles," *European Judaism: A Journal for the New Europe* 34, no. 1 (2001): 52.

work? Alternatively, are we not already thinkers? Is thinking something we cannot orient ourselves further towards because we are already naturally oriented towards it. To this first question the answer seems to be that whether it is labourized or not does not matter for it is just as easily unlabourized provided (through UBI) there is sufficient sustenance to sustain it. It would seem that those inclined towards a contemplative life will live their life contemplatively regardless of economic benefit, though they may not do so as their primary activity. The bigger question is whether and to what degree is thinking a viable activity as a primary activity for a great amount of the population, and as our second question asks, to what extent is this thinking distinguishable from living one's life. Indeed, Arendt holds that "all true living is thinking".³³⁵ For Arendt, "thinking, like learning, is not a dry, book-bound process, but a living interchange between people."³³⁶ Yet while it is a process that near all of us know, in that we have entered into dialog with ourselves, Arendt still claims that thoughtlessness is a primary problem of our era, and arguably the central problem addressed in her work.³³⁷ As such, while thinking may be true living, it would seem that just as for Arendt with acting so too is it with her for thinking, that some societies privilege the activity more than others.

Indeed, Justin Pack has argued that *The Human Condition's* narrative of the loss of the *vita activa* in our modern age is only half of the story, and that "while action and thinking are very different things, they were both pushed into obscurity by the desire for knowledge."³³⁸ In this narrative Socrates' death not only inspires in Plato a hatred of the *vita activa* but of persuasion too, which is the result of thinking. Plato instead begins to privilege knowledge and its counterpart cognition, and this privileging of knowledge and authority that Plato begins in earnest becomes lodged in our societal continuity.³³⁹ If this is so, then we can agree with Pack's goal of "disturbing the automation of the modern machine" and exploring ways in which thinking can become viable without its economically beneficial counterpart, cognition.³⁴⁰ Indeed, we may view the restructuring of universities, to be discussed in chapter three, as part of this process. As we will discover in chapter three, there

³³⁵ Jeffrey Newman, "Hannah Arendt - Thinking In Circles," *European Judaism: A Journal for the New Europe* 34, no. 1 (2001): 49.

³³⁶ Ibid, 50.

³³⁷ Justin Pack, "Arendt's Genealogy of Thinking," *Continental Philosophy Review* 50, no. 2 (2017): 152.

³³⁸ Ibid, 155.

³³⁹ Justin Pack, "Arendt's Genealogy of Thinking," *Continental Philosophy Review* 50, no. 2 (2017): 156-161.

³⁴⁰ Ibid, 163.

is significant import in education, civic or otherwise, and thus we should be wary not only in light of Arendt's warnings in "The Crisis In Education" but also Pack's, that academia is turning "into the paradigmatic example of an institution running at high speed with highly efficient, smart cognizing people that are too often nonetheless remarkably thoughtless."³⁴¹

With all of this considered, we must give sufficient attention to the act of thinking in designing an Arendtian system of UBI. Whether thinking is or is not effective at stopping increased consumption remains unknown. However, this is most likely of minor concern. Even if thinking were unable to prevent increased consumption, it is unlikely that enough members of the society would take up thinking as their primary activity for this to cause great concern. What is more likely is that thinking will and can serve as one of our long-forgotten virtues towards which some of us can orient ourselves in a jobless society. It does not appear viable as something an entire society can orient itself towards, in the way that civic engagement may, but it appears at very least a choice that will be both real and pleasurable to those who wish to peruse it in a jobless world.

The Annual Income

We are not out of the preverbal woods yet. For indeed, if action, speech, thinking, and art hold within them the potentiality to save us from the full-automation nightmare Arendt predicts that as labour and labourized work cease and we are potentially launched into an era of sterile time, we will still be left with a significant problem. This problem is the problem of sustenance and existence: how, in an existing capitalist economy with mass automation, can people have the financial security necessary for devoting their lives to art, speech, or action as the ancient Athenian citizens did?

The answer is no doubt uncertain. However, what I would like to propose here as one tenable solution can be found in a simple though often overlooked paragraph of *The Human Condition*. Shortly after calling the labour movement "the only organization in which men acted and spoke *qua* men—and not *qua* members of society"³⁴², she launches into a rather unusual (for Arendt) valorization of a potential new public space:

³⁴¹ Ibid.

³⁴² Justin Pack, "Arendt's Genealogy of Thinking," *Continental Philosophy Review* 50, no. 2 (2017): 219.

“If for a time it almost looked as if the movement would succeed in founding a new public space with new public standards, the spring of these activities was not labor—neither the laboring activity itself nor always the utopian rebellion against life’s necessity—but those injustices and hypocrisies which have disappeared with the transformation of a class society into a mass society and with the substitution of a guaranteed annual wage for daily or weekly pay.”³⁴³

While generally unremarked upon, Seyla Benhabib refers to this passage as evoking a “curious optimism about the formation of a future mass society that will guarantee an annual minimum wage”.³⁴⁴ Indeed like Benhabib we are left rather perplexed. There is no way to “know exactly which society Arendt was referring to as having substituted an ‘annual wage’ for daily or weekly pay”, for indeed in “no capitalist society, or even in statist, mixed economies, has the practice of a guaranteed annual wage taken hold”.³⁴⁵ However, it is most notable that Arendt connects this guaranteed annual wage with the birth of a new public sphere, and indeed one connected to, yet fully distinct from labour. As such, it may be that the concept of a guaranteed annual wage (Benhabib appears to interpret it as a form of Universal Basic Income or citizen’s income) could prove to be the Arendtian solution to the economic aspect of the labour/automation crisis.

If it is indeed Arendt’s view that a guaranteed income has within it the power to aid in the formation of a new public sphere, then it must be worth examining whether such a form of income (UBI) is permissible within Arendt’s broader philosophy. The following chapter will focus on (1) whether a form of UBI could be made justifiable within Arendt’s broader political and moral thought, and (2) in what ways the demands of the valourization of action, speech, and art, (3) as well as the demands of philosophy shape a potential system of UBI. What we will be looking for, then, is viability and shape. This will require a re-examination of Arendt’s conception of the Social and her thoughts on the welfare state and other welfare provisions. As such, much, though certainly not all of the next chapter will draw heavily upon *On Revolution* as it is the work of hers most focused on the subject.

Before we begin this consideration of the possibility of an Arendtian UBI let us first summarize what we have established thus far. First, we established that property for Arendt is primarily determined not by the

³⁴³ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 219.

³⁴⁴ Seyla Benhabib. *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt. Modernity and Political Thought*; Vol. 10. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications; 1996, 144.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

category of ownership but by that of privacy. From there we considered worldliness and the possibility of an improved citizenship. Second, we reconsidered Arendt's relationship with Marx, casting it in a more positive light than is common, and showing a shared concern for the labourization of work. We then continued this comparison between the two and discovered in both authors a similar Athenian interest in the hobby, that is, in activities not done to make a living. Third, we contrasted Marx and Arendt's conception of the end of labour, showing Marx's enthusiasm and Arendt's mixed feelings on the subject centered upon her apprehension in relation to consumer society. Fourth, we theorized that art, action, and speech may prove a partial solution to Arendt's concerns with the death of labour within a labouring society. Fifth, we examined Arendt's conception of art, problematizing her declaration that it was formed through fabrication, and bringing to light the ways in which she distinguished it from the fabrication process. Sixth, we showed how art and action are interrelated and how they both, alongside speech, function as a force against consumption. Seventh, we proposed that in a society where art, action and speech are done not to make a living, but as Athenian citizens did such things, freely, a possible solution to the economic problem of having nothing by which to make a living could be found within what Arendt termed a guaranteed annual income. We then proposed interpreting this term, alongside Benhabib, as a form of Universal Basic Income.

Chapter 3: Rereading the Social

Introduction

To an Arendtian there is one concept which looms not for its insights, but for the confusion and frustration it causes. I am, of course, speaking about what Arendt termed the social. Moruzzi calls the interaction between the public and the social an “impossible relationship”.³⁴⁶ Philip Walsh insists this distinction between the public and the social will “provoke and challenge” Arendtians,³⁴⁷ and Margaret Canovan called the concept of the social an “unsuccessful effort to fuse ‘two separate strands of meaning’ of the word”.³⁴⁸ The social is one of Arendt’s broadest concepts, and in the most broad of terms it can be understood as the new space which has emerged in the modern era between the classical spaces of the household and the public, holding aspects of both within it. The social is broadly treated as a negative evolution within our history, although within this chapter I will partly problematize some of the negatives of it. In Chapter Two I promised we would return in this chapter to two issues.

The first is simply a reconsideration of Arendt in relation to class politics. The second can be summed up by a quotation we have used already, Benhabib’s claim that “only defensible way to draw the distinction between the social and the political was an attitudinal one.”³⁴⁹ While we will come to address Arendt’s relationship with class politics, I would like first to delve into this second problem. Too often in an attempt to derive a clear and crisp meaning of the social, authors alter the concept from that provided in the text in an attempt to achieve greater clarity or cohesion. Examples of this are common and far-reaching, such as the “attitudinal” claim of Benhabib or Pitkin’s psychoanalytic attempt to analyse the social as a symptom of a supposed “regression fantasy” latent within Arendt’s psyche,³⁵⁰ despite presumably full awareness that Arendt

³⁴⁶ Norma Claire Moruzzi, *Speaking through the Mask: Hannah Arendt and the Politics of Social Identity*, Psychoanalysis and Social Theory (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2000), 14.

³⁴⁷ Philip Walsh, “Hannah Arendt on the Social,” in *Hannah Arendt: Key Concepts*, ed. Philip Hayden (London ; New York: Routledge, 2014), 124.

³⁴⁸ Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, *The Attack of the Blob: Hannah Arendt’s Concept of the Social* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 17.

³⁴⁹ Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, Modernity and Political Thought; Vol. 10 (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1996), 165.

³⁵⁰ Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, *The Attack of the Blob: Hannah Arendt’s Concept of the Social* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 230-239.

said that the inner-self “has no identity; it is fragmented, discontinuous, indistinct, and most certainly uninteresting”.³⁵¹ It is thus surprising that Pitkin would feel the need or desire to understand the concept through such means. Indeed, it is rather invalidating of Arendt. Is it not? If Arendt placed forward the concept and explained it as best as she felt she could, then the idea that its meaning cannot be retrieved through a reading of Arendt, but that its meaning can be retrieved at least in part through psychoanalysis suggests two things: first, it suggests a disinterest in Arendt’s self-understanding of the concept. We have shown above, she certainly would not have appreciated or understood it herself as symptomatic of her psyche. Second, it suggests that the social is Hannah Arendt’s mistake. This criticism is not to reject Pitkin’s findings, at very least not completely. Indeed, we will find it useful later to consider the social in relation to homogenized thinking as she does within her book *The Attack of the Blob*. Instead, it is to suggest that there is an aspect of the social which Pitkin’s analysis does not place sufficient emphasis upon, which for our purposes becomes highly important.

With this in mind, let me say here that I have no space within this chapter to launch us into the book-length discussion which would be necessary to fully unpack the social, nor do I believe that for this particular project it is necessary to do so. There are two reasons for this: first most simply, that only one aspect of the social need greatly concern us, that is the economic aspect, as our concern is primarily the animosity Arendt appears to feel towards economic decisions within politics, as that directly affects the feasibility of an Arendtian version of UBI. As such, we can leave the more sociological sides of the social to other works. As mentioned above, we will touch upon them slightly, and perhaps even find them highly in favour of UBI. Our second reason is a belief espoused by Arendt in various places, but perhaps expressed nowhere as succinctly as in a personal remembrance by Elizabeth Kamarck Minnich, ironically enough, within her review of Pitkin’s book on the subject. She writes, “Hannah Arendt once observed to me, when one more clever graduate student had gleefully pointed out a contradiction ‘eat the very heart of Kant!’ that there is a contradiction at the center of the thinking of all great philosophers. That, she said, is why they kept thinking, and the difference between

³⁵¹ Bonnie Honig, “Towards an Agonistic Feminism: Hannah Arendt and the Politics of Identity,” in *Feminist Interpretations of Hannah Arendt* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 140.

them and all the rest is that they did not betray their contradiction.”³⁵² I include this quotation for much the same reason Minnich does in her review, that some aspects of a thinker’s published thought can sometimes be unreconcilable with themselves, and that this does not necessarily diminish the importance of the thoughts. As such, we should be able to take the social seriously without a fully complete picture of it.

Before moving on, however, let us briefly use Walsh and Benhabib’s breakdown of the social into its component parts, so that we can be clearer about what it is exactly that we are focusing on when we say that we are concerned primarily with its economic aspects. In his chapter on the subject, Walsh identifies three key meanings of the term, the social. The first, which is what we will broadly use when we mean the economic understanding of the term is understood “as the transformation of everyday life for a large portion of the population, beginning around the end of the eighteenth century, from relatively unstructured, locally and communally coordinated, needs-based production to routinized, specialized, atomized and market-oriented labour”.³⁵³ Benhabib, who also uses a three tiered approach to understanding the social agrees upon this first meaning, and simplifies it, arguing that in this meaning “the rise of the social is better named the rise of a commodity exchange market”.³⁵⁴ As such, we can rather read Arendt as offering a phenomenological history of how the public and private spaces we exist in have changed in their appearances towards us. This meaning is, unsurprisingly, clearly drawing on Hegel and Marx in its conception of a progressing history and could even be argued to exist alongside and bolstering Marx’s own conception of history; where he provided an analysis of the material change, and Arendt provided an equally pertinent analysis of the changes of appearance.

Second in Walsh’s list is what he calls the “transvaluation of labour”.³⁵⁵ Here he argues that “Arendt ties the “rise of the social” directly to the increasing extent to which labour has become the dominant mode of

³⁵² Elizabeth Minnich, review of *The Attack of the Blob: Hannah Arendt’s Concept of the Social*, by Hanna Pitkin, *Ethics* 110, no. 3 (2000): 632.

³⁵³ Philip Walsh, “Hannah Arendt on the Social,” in *Hannah Arendt: Key Concepts*, ed. Patrick Hayden (London; New York: Routledge, 2014), 130.

³⁵⁴ Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, *Modernity and Political Thought*; Vol. 10 (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1996), 25.

³⁵⁵ Philip Walsh, “Hannah Arendt on the Social,” in *Hannah Arendt: Key Concepts*, ed. Patrick Hayden (London ; New York: Routledge, 2014), 133.

human activity in the modern era”, that is, what we have elsewhere called the labourization of work.³⁵⁶ In order to define it, he writes, the “increasing extent to which people *experience* their activities in terms of labour – that is, in terms simply of the reproduction of their physical lives – aligns with the increasing dominance of the category of the social”.³⁵⁷ In the language we have thus far used, we have less emphasized the phenomenological *experience* aspect, and rather simply talked about tasks which were once work having been compartmentalized. The primary example of this is the treatment of fabrication within capitalist production where it has become labour. For us, it has been less important that the activity be *experienced* as labour, so much that the activity has been changed, perverted if you will, into labour. Insofar as we make this distinction our reading is more in line with the labourization of work being akin to Marxist alienation from production, than it is the traditional phenomenological reading. That said, there is no great difference between the Marxist and phenomenological readings, as one will surely agree that if an activity is changed materially the experience of it phenomenologically too will be changed. If one is reading a book and water is spilt on it, we can speak both of a change in the phenomenon of reading and a change in the materiality of the book, neither of which excludes the other. As such, this second category of Walsh’s appears to us, based on our earlier look at Arendt’s affinities with Marx, simply a phenomenological counterpart to his first category.³⁵⁸

Walsh’s last category or meaning of the social also greatly concerns us, but in only one aspect. He claims that the “final meaning of Arendt’s conception of the social concerns its dependence on and contrast with the political.”³⁵⁹ Insofar as this is a differentiation between political and economic matters, this will be of utmost importance for us.³⁶⁰ However, we should here address it in relation to Benhabib’s subcategories. It should be mentioned that for Behabib these are not subcategories but once combined with the concept of

³⁵⁶ Philip Walsh, “Hannah Arendt on the Social,” in *Hannah Arendt: Key Concepts*, ed. Patrick Hayden (London ; New York: Routledge, 2014), 132.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 133.

³⁵⁸ As such, this category greatly concerns us, but will not be discussed in great detail in this chapter, due to its inclusion in the previous.

³⁵⁹ Philip Walsh, “Hannah Arendt on the Social,” in *Hannah Arendt: Key Concepts*, ed. Patrick Hayden (London ; New York: Routledge, 2014), 135.

³⁶⁰ It should be noted that I am currently using “political and economic matters” as short form for a dichotomy which we will flesh out in much greater detail in the coming pages, but for the moment is best left abbreviated to this simplistic phrase, else we run the risk of running this paper off of its proverbial rails.

historical economic change compose the entirety of the social. I am choosing here to place them within our consideration of the relationship between the social and the political. However, as both Pitkin and Benhabib have demonstrated, there is ample room for them to be interpreted as primary, defining categories of the social. It simply so happens that these are the least important aspects of the social to our project of exploring the possibility of Arendtian UBI. These are when the social “refers to aspects of mass society” and when “the social refers to sociability, to the quality of life in civil society and civic associations.”³⁶¹ I do not mean here to claim that this is at all unimportant, but this side of the social does not appear the immediate impediment to our project that the economic side of the social does. Notably, these two categories are composed in Pitkin’s argument very differently, where “by ‘the social’ Arendt means a collectivity of people who—for whatever reason—conduct themselves in such a way that they cannot control or even intentionally influence the large-scale consequences of their activities”.³⁶²

This chapter will primarily focus upon the relationship between politics and the social insofar as the social is that which Arendt would have wished to be kept out of politics. As such, it becomes paramount to us to uncover whether UBI is social in which case an Arendtian UBI becomes untenable or rather if it is instead political in which we should encounter no troubles promising an Arendtian UBI. Just as Benhabib used Arendt’s earlier work instead of the more standard texts to bolster her argument and provide insights into Arendt not normally approachable through the central texts alone, so too shall we rely on some of Arendt’s lesser approached works to bolster our claims. Most notably, we will utilize Arendt’s later works, specifically her considerations on thinking, as well as a panel she gave at York University. I will then show how the version of the social/political split that we arrive at through these works can be read fairly prominently within *The Human Condition* and *On Revolution*.

I will make the claim that the divide between the social and the political, which often appears as the divide between politics and administration, should be to Arendt the divide between what can be known and

³⁶¹ Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, Modernity and Political Thought; Vol. 10 (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1996), 23.

³⁶² Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, *The Attack of the Blob: Hannah Arendt’s Concept of the Social* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 16.

what can only be thought about. That is, it is the divide between decisions upon which we are reliant on our conscience and the conscience of others to tell us if they are right, and the decisions which can be verified as right or wrong *as* fact. Just as when, earlier in this text, we attempted to refute the view that there is a hierarchy within Arendt between labour, work, and action, so too will we again attempt to reduce the hierarchy between politics and the social. We will not go as far as to say that they are fully equal, for it is clear that Arendt believes one to require the courage that the other does not, and that she values this courage very highly. We will suggest that the blurring of the lines between the social and the political is not only bad for the political sphere but also for the social sphere. In this regard, we will find ourselves in broad agreement with Benhabib that Hannah Arendt was indeed a ‘reluctant modernist’. We will do so not by weakening the barriers between the spheres of life, but by strengthening them, though also while equalizing the spheres’ presumed hierarchy.

This task will be carried out continually with reference to what is both our goal and our testing ground of these ideas, an Arendtian UBI. However, our initial question, whether Arendtian UBI is social or political, will appear not as meaningless but as inconsequential. Arendtian UBI, like most of any questions raised in the modern public sphere, has both social and political elements to it. It will be shown that the strongest version of Arendtian UBI will be a UBI founded upon the very notion that the social ought not transgress into the political and that the political ought not transgress into the social.

Before continuing, I would like to very briefly address the one essay of Arendt’s that the following argument does not work especially well with. This essay is “Reflections on Little Rock”. In “Little Rock” Arendt appears to argue that prejudice is social, whereas discrimination is political, and that attempts to use political/legal means to make the populace behave as if it were not prejudiced will not solve prejudice. As such, she comes out against the desegregation of most, but not all, parts of society. Instead, she argues for a greater focus on the removal of anti-miscegenation laws. I would argue that in this essay Arendt breaks several of her own rules, like her rule of standing in solidarity instead of pity, and her own conception of the social.³⁶³ She thinks from a position of pity, and ends up producing a division which while somewhat in line with her thoughts

³⁶³ Hannah Arendt, “Reflections On Little Rock,” in *Responsibility and Judgment*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken, 2003): 193.

on education, becomes within the work heavily self-contradictory, as when she allows for segregated resorts, but not segregated hotels, which she calls “public services”.³⁶⁴ It is my suspicion that the reason “Little Rock” is so conflicted is due to the tension between founding and re-founding that comes from the integration of persons of colour into society. For instance, much of the worse argumentation is vaguely based on republican conception of a demos, yet due to the complications of jim crow laws, who exactly the demos are appears almost in flux within “Little Rock”. The demos is further complicated within the piece by the appearance of the federal government as an external source of power acting upon the demos and not representative of the people of “Little Rock”. I would also argue that this demos-derived conflict is what confuses the conception of the social. Prejudice is social, which makes little sense as it is neither administrative or economic; it is not even quantifiable. Yet, because the demos is taken in “Little Rock” to be mean the people of Little Rock, and often only the white people of Little Rock, and the state appears as a force acting on the demos instead of through or of the demos, then the highly political nature of prejudice must be called social if the essay is to maintain any form of cohesion (something I would argue it still fails at doing). There is much to say about “Little Rock” and I have not the space here, however, I would argue that this self-contradictory piece, which is widely regarded as Arendt’s worst opinion, should not stand in the way of a line of analysis that works for the rest of her body of work.

Thinking and Knowledge

When it comes to the subject of a thinker’s meaning, I believe it is best to start and trust most deeply in their own statements on the issue. Hannah Arendt is no exception to this rule, and it would appear to me that we should place some significant trust in her own reply to questions raised about “the very sharp distinction that Hannah Arendt makes between the political and the social”, as Mary McCarthy put it at a conference panel.³⁶⁵ In this exchange, Richard Bernstein and Mary McCarthy work together *almost against* Arendt in an attempt to derive from her an explanation of what is political upon the exclusion of the social. They take her

³⁶⁴ Ibid, 207.

³⁶⁵ Hannah Arendt, “Hannah Arendt on Hannah Arendt,” in *Hannah Arendt: The Recovery of the Public World*, ed. Melvyn A. Hill (New York: StMartin’s Press, 1979), 315.

to task, with Bernstein exclaiming, it is “not good enough to answer Mary McCarthy’s question by saying that in different times we have to look at exactly what comes into the public realm. It’s a question of whether you can dissociate or separate the social and the political consistently now.”³⁶⁶

What follows is an important distinction that does not suggest a hierarchy between public and social, but rather proposes that things have their *proper* place.³⁶⁷ It is here that Arendt suggests that not everything can be decided politically, but that there is room for socially made decisions. She says, “I think that is certain. There are things where the right measures can be figured out. These things can really be administered and are not then subject to public debate. Public debate can only deal with things which—if we want to put it in negatively—we cannot figure out with certainty.”³⁶⁸ She argues that the “best” place to put a bridge is a matter of public debate, for ‘best’ has many implications (whether the goal is increased mobility of the populace, and movement for whom, and by what means, and how this movement will affect which neighbourhoods, and which populations.) It is a matter of debate with no objectively correct answer, but only at best correct answers based on what the desired outcome is. This desired outcome, evident in so far as it is *desired*—for desire indicates that we are not discussing knowing but wanting, feeling, and willing—may itself be a matter of public debate. Arendt, however, bemoans that instead of such a subject being debated, it is treated as if it is knowable, and thus the task is instead given to “research committees”.³⁶⁹ Still, we are provided here with a very real description of a decision suited to politics. She then reinforces this example with a second example of an activity which is fully political, saying, we “have the last remnant of active citizen participation in the republic in the juries” where citizens answer “questions [that] are somehow *really* debatable”, with a jury that is “aware that there are *different viewpoints*, from the two sides of the court-trial, from which you could look at the issue.”³⁷⁰ Here we have a clear definition of politics *as* that which is *truly* debatable.

³⁶⁶ Ibid, 316-317.

³⁶⁷ Proper in a near Victorian sense, in that some subjects are proper or improper for discussion in certain places.

³⁶⁸ Hannah Arendt, “Hannah Arendt on Hannah Arendt,” in *Hannah Arendt: The Recovery of the Public World*, ed. Melvyn A. Hill (New York: StMartin’s Press, 1979), 317.

³⁶⁹ Hannah Arendt, “Hannah Arendt on Hannah Arendt,” in *Hannah Arendt: The Recovery of the Public World*, ed. Melvyn A. Hill (New York: StMartin’s Press, 1979), 317.

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

Arendt then provides a clear example of that which can be relegated to the social. She says, on “the other hand, everything which can really be figured out, in the sphere Engels called the administration of things—these are social things in general. That they should then be subject to debate seems to me phony and a plague.”³⁷¹ This seems, to me, the most telling statement of the Arendtian conception of the social that exists. Not only do we have a clear distinction between the social as that which can be figured out, and the political as that which cannot be figured out (and thus must be debated), we have more than that! We see here not merely a crisp distinction between the political and the social, but also that Arendt was not arguing for the dominance of politics, but instead its importance. Arendt believed deeply in the value of political debate, a thing which during her era appeared to be disappearing, and she spoke passionately and truly for this underdog in an attempt to restore it from a millennium of impeachment and raise it to its former glory. Still, we see that if one were to treat everything as political (which is to say as debatable) it would not only be phony, but a plague upon us. If one were to take what is knowable—things about which debate would be inappropriate (established facts such as climate change, vaccines’ effectiveness, or a politician’s own on-the-record statements)—and attempt to treat them as debatable instead of the knowable things they are, this would be a dark scourge upon humanity. To put it in less heated terms, the confusion of what is knowable and what is debatable (which is to say the confusion of the social with the political) is dangerous not only because it threatens debate, but also because it threatens knowledge itself.

Some of the participants at this conference burst in rather uncharitably, regardless of if their strawmanning was the result of what Benhabib calls “hermeneutic uncharity”³⁷² or merely honest confusion. C. B. Macpherson asks, “Are you telling us what a jury or a town meeting can handle is political, and everything else is social?”, to which Arendt quickly explains that that was not at all her statement, and that these were what she calls “examples”.³⁷³ Jumping on this word, Albrecht Wellmer insists that Arendt, “give one example in our time of a social problem which is not at the same time a political problem”, giving his own opinion quickly, “a

³⁷¹ Ibid.

³⁷² Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, Modernity and Political Thought; Vol. 10 (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1996), 23.

³⁷³ Hannah Arendt, “Hannah Arendt on Hannah Arendt,” in *Hannah Arendt: The Recovery of the Public World*, ed. Melvyn A. Hill (New York: StMartin’s Press, 1979), 318.

distinction between the social and the political in our society is impossible to draw”, before allowing her to respond with another example.³⁷⁴

Arendt chooses to discuss the matter of public housing. She explains that the “social problem is certainly adequate housing. But the question of whether this adequate housing means integration or not is *certainly* a political question”, for with “every one of these questions there is a double face. And one of these faces should not be subject to debate.”³⁷⁵ I think Arendt does herself a disservice here. While she does very smartly point out the ‘double face’ of each question, she overlooks that determining what ‘adequate’ is *is* also a political question. Following her own logic, the social question would be providing, implementing, and maintaining this housing, and ensuring that it remains adequate. However, it seems rather political to decide what we are calling adequate; is it adequate for survival or for flourishing? Once this has been decided politically, the exact numbers and measurements become social.

But where, one may ask, are these distinctions within her written work? Indeed, you will not find this definition, between knowable and debatable as grounds for the social and the political, within *The Human Condition*. One may point to small passages in *On Revolution* that suggest it, such as, in the heart of her discussion on Robespierre she writes that the political realm during The Terror was “overwhelmed by the cares and worries which actually belonged in the sphere of the household, and which, even if they were permitted to enter the public realm, could not be solved by political means, since they were matters of administration, to be put into the hands of experts, rather than issues which could be settled by the twofold process of decision and persuasion.”³⁷⁶ However, it exists in fully display within her later work. While one may be tempted to interpret this as a softening of Arendt’s views, from a thematic standpoint it makes perfect sense. *The Human Condition*

³⁷⁴ Ibid. I would like to disclose my hesitancy to include this blow-by-blow, as I do not wish to appear uncharitable to either Macpherson or Wellner. However, I have decided to include their somewhat uncomfortable behavior for two reasons. First, that if these remarks are partly the result or manifestation of sexism, what in today’s parlance would be called mansplaining, then to remove them might also be to hide them. Secondly, if we are to take the remarks at face value, and not ill-will, it may be that readers have the same misunderstanding, and thus might feel that it has been addressed by the inclusion of this conversation.

³⁷⁵ Hannah Arendt, “Hannah Arendt on Hannah Arendt,” in *Hannah Arendt: The Recovery of the Public World*, ed. Melvyn A. Hill (New York: StMartin’s Press, 1979), 318.

³⁷⁶ Arendt, *On Revolution*, 81.

and to a slightly lesser extent *On Revolution* are books about activities. Whereas, Arendt's later works are on the life of the mind, that is to say, they are increasingly about thinking, and thus also about knowing and debating with oneself. As such, it makes sense that Arendt's social/political distinction again appears here, as the difference between knowledge and thought is not apparent within the action itself but only within the mind of the actor. That is to say, that the difference between thinking and knowing is not a difference that exists within the external world but in our heads.

Arendt makes the distinction early on within *The Life of the Mind*. She says, "thinking aims at and ends in contemplation, and contemplation is not an activity but a passivity, it is the point where mental activity comes to rest".³⁷⁷ She then, not unlike in her labourization of work, depicts thinking as being phenomenologically changed with "the rise of the modern age," when "thinking became chiefly the handmaiden of science, of organized knowledge," and "thinking then grew extremely active".³⁷⁸ In this modern age a distinction then was made, according to Arendt by Kant, who once again "made room for thought, and he had not 'denied knowledge' but separated knowledge from thinking".³⁷⁹ At this point, we get fully Arendt's claim that appears to be her very distinction between the social and the political. Indeed, we get the very first mistaking of the political for the social: "The reason neither Kant nor his successors ever paid much attention to thinking as an activity and even less to the experiences of thinking ego is that, all distinctions notwithstanding, they were demanding the kind of results and applying the kind of criteria for certainty and evidence that are the results and criteria of cognition".³⁸⁰ To drive this point home, she restates it with even more clarity. Placing the following in full italics she writes, "*The need for reason is not inspired by the quest for truth but by the quest for meaning. And truth and meaning are not the same.*"³⁸¹ Meaning is debatable, truth is not. She elsewhere repeats, in a lecture, "We owe to Kant the distinction between thinking and knowing, between reason, the urge to think and to

³⁷⁷ Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind: The Groundbreaking Investigation On How We Think*, One-Volume Edition (New York: Harcourt, Inc., 1978), 6.

³⁷⁸ Ibid, 7.

³⁷⁹ Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind: The Groundbreaking Investigation On How We Think*, One-Volume Edition (New York: Harcourt, Inc., 1978), 14.

³⁸⁰ Ibid, 15

³⁸¹ Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, 15.

understand, and the intellect, which desires and is capable of certain, verifiable knowledge.”³⁸² We see this distinction again, later in the same lecture, with thinking being within the capacity of every citizen, and often being ignored by social minded people (such as social scientists and scientists):

Thinking in its noncognitive, nonspecialized sense as a natural need of human life, the actualization of the difference given in consciousness, is not a prerogative of the few but an ever-present faculty of everybody; by the same token, inability to think is not the "prerogative" of those many who lack brain power but the ever-present possibility for everybody scientists, scholars, and other specialists in mental enterprises not excluded - to shun that intercourse with oneself whose possibility and importance Socrates first discovered.³⁸³

As such, we can clearly see not only a distinction between thinking and the search for knowledge, between what is debatable and what can be verifiable truth, but we also see thinking connected with the lay person, the citizen. We also see it distinguished from the social scientist and other scholars who search for knowledge, and as such are social insofar as they do so. Through these passages we can see that the insights Arendt gave on the nature of the social in her 1972 York University conference were not absent from her published works. Instead they existed where few thought to look for them. Though whether they were looked for some scholars did find at least an inkling of this distinction. For example, Pitkin points out “whenever members of that collectively, in whatever way, begin to take effective charge of the overall resultants of what they are doing, the social ipso facto disappears. This the social precludes politics not causally but logically, by definition.”³⁸⁴ This is far from a clear understanding of the difference between the form of public action which is the assertion of unknowables, and the collective working together towards knowledge, however, it does, at very least appear to acknowledge a logical difference between the two.

Some scholars like Walsh have interpreted her roughly along these lines: “Although Arendt never uses the explicit binary of ‘politics’ and ‘Administration’, the idea resonates closely with her vision of how the social can invade the political in modern societies in the form of the ascendance of bureaucracy. Bureaucracies treat political question and issues *as if* they were questions concerning routinized activities associated with the life-

³⁸² Hannah Arendt, “Thinking and Moral Considerations: A Lecture,” *Social Research* 51, no. 1–2 (1984): 12.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, 35–36.

³⁸⁴ Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, *The Attack of the Blob: Hannah Arendt's Concept of the Social* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 197.

process.”³⁸⁵ Of course, we here know that Arendt *did* explicitly use the binary of politics and administration, at very least within her discussion of the politics/social divide at this conference as well as within *The Human Condition*.³⁸⁶ Further, while Walsh is correct to identify the commonly cited issue of the ascendance of the social and, its interconnected brother, bureaucracy, this interpretation does not fully grasp the two-sidedness of the issue: politics can also invade truth. As such, Walsh takes Arendt’s warning that political questions should not be treated as questions of administration, but misses her warning that questions of administration should not be treated as political.

We see this throughout the literature, with the social’s intrusion into the political being far more noted than any problem which may arise from the social being mistaken for political. It has been argued that the “essential problem with the social is that it takes away from the autonomy of the political—action for the sake of self-disclosure, revelation of a principle, etc.—and reduces it to an activity within the mean-ends framework”, and while this is true, it is only one side of the problem.³⁸⁷ The reason this problem is viewed so one-sidedly is no doubt a problem of Arendt’s place within history, which skewed her own framing of it. For with the Soviet Union looming on the borders of Europe it seems only natural that Arendt would overemphasize the “communistic fiction” where what “we traditionally call the state and government gives place here to pure administration” which we know, from our discussion on knowing and thinking, means the treating of all that is debatable as if it is knowable.³⁸⁸

It must be noted that it is not merely the spectre of communism that leads Arendt to these unbalanced statements upon the social. It is also the “two-party system” of the United States and representative government at large, which to Arendt “has by no means enabled the citizen to become a ‘participator’ in public affairs. The most the citizen can hope for is to be ‘represented’, whereby it is obvious that the only thing which can be represented and delegated is interest, or the welfare of the constituents, but neither their actions nor their

³⁸⁵ Philip Walsh, “Hannah Arendt on the Social,” in *Hannah Arendt: Key Concepts*, ed. Patrick Hayden (London ; New York: Routledge, 2014), 137.

³⁸⁶ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 45.

³⁸⁷ Serena Parekh, *Hannah Arendt and the Challenge of Modernity: A Phenomenology of Human Rights*, Studies in Philosophy (New York, N.Y.) (New York: Routledge, 2008), 46.

³⁸⁸ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 43-44.

opinions”.³⁸⁹ She further writes, “representative government has become oligarchic government”.³⁹⁰ Notably, the causation, however, is not quite yet presented as thinking, for Arendt has not yet come to the conclusion that thinking is done in solitude³⁹¹ and instead still believed that opinions “are formed in a process of open discussion and public debate, and where no opportunity for the forming of opinions exists, there may be moods—moods of the masses and moods of individuals, the latter no less fickle and unreliable than the former—but no opinion.”³⁹² It is notable that Arendt’s concern for the overgrowth and melding of the social with the political holds true of both representative democracy and non-democracy.

Before moving on, I would like to return one more time to the 1972 conference. I would like to return to it for two last considerations. First, let us reconsider Arendt’s statement on administration, that “everything which can really be figured out, in the sphere Engels called the administration of thing—these are the social things”.³⁹³ Second, I wish to consider how Arendt chooses to conclude her statements on the housing issue by stating, to “make a decent amount of property available to every human being—not to expropriate, but to spread property—then you will have some possibilities for freedom even under the rather inhumane conditions of modern production [...] what we *will* have to do, by and large, is experiment.”³⁹⁴ Before moving to address the first quotation again, I would like to briefly remind the reader of the property/wealth distinction we made in “The Problem” chapter, and that they should not interpret this claim about property as one might with any other thinker.

This first quotation, on the administration of things, seems to suggest to me something very clear in regards to UBI. It would appear that UBI, like Arendt’s housing, is a concept with a double face. It cannot be denied that the bureaucracy that would no doubt need to exist, in however minimal a form as one may desire, to administer UBI correctly would inherently be social. So too, it would appear that the determining of the

³⁸⁹ Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1963), 260.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 261.

³⁹¹ Hannah Arendt, “Thinking and Moral Considerations: A Lecture,” *Social Research* 51, no. 1–2 (1984): 34.

³⁹² Arendt, *On Revolution*, 260–261.

³⁹³ Hannah Arendt, “Hannah Arendt on Hannah Arendt,” in *Hannah Arendt: The Recovery of the Public World*, ed. Melvyn A. Hill (New York: StMartin’s Press, 1979), 317.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 320–322.

amount UBI should be set at, the source of funding for the UBI project, and even the presumed increases or decreases in the dollar amount of UBI given to each citizen are all issues of the social. That is to say, they are issues ‘which can really be figured out’ and to pretend otherwise would be to Arendt ‘phony and a plague’. There is no getting around this, nor should there be. Indeed, have we not witnessed the minimum wage, originally intended to provide each citizen not merely a living wage but a decent wage, become perverted into a mere living wage by decades of insufficient increases *because* these increases were mistaken for political matters when they were in fact social? Is it not true that the true political questions of a minimum wage are if one should exist, and if it should be a living wage or a decent wage? It is not true that these political questions have not been raised in recent years, for the modern opponents of the decent minimum wage speak and vote only on its social aspects (at what numerical level it should be set at)? Further, have we not witnessed time and time again the Canadian Parliament and the American Congress vote to give themselves a pay raise? Is this not the very blurring of the social with the political that Arendt warned about, and do we not, we proponents of UBI, wish to avoid for UBI the same fate that has befallen the minimum wage? If the answer to these questions is yes, then it must be clear to the reader that the political questions are two: do we want a universal basic income, and what expectations do we have of it?

The social questions which accompany these questions are those best suited for bureaucrats, and thus in my reading of Arendt must be left out of politics. As such, we can conclude that the debatable and thus political questions that go into *founding* a universal basic income must be decided politically, and are of politics, but the maintenance of the UBI system, however uncomfortably, cannot be a voting issue. Secondly, I would like to briefly address our second quote. It has been placed there simply to remind us that Arendt supported the government redistribution of property, and thereby, may very well have supported UBI provided it was towards the ends of Arendtian freedom and provided that we were willing, like her, to experiment.

Founding and On Revolution

I would like to draw attention now to my use of the word *founding* in the above paragraph as, indeed, a primary concern for Arendtians is what remains political after the founding of the state has been completed. It

is notable that this word, founding, appears to be what distinguishes the social from the political in nearly all aspects of monetary or economic political decisions. It seems fine to found something that involves economics but dangerous to vote continually upon the specifics. It is further noteworthy that founding and writing of laws has, even by the critics of Arendt's concept of the social been maintained as a key political activity allowed for by Arendt.³⁹⁵ What seems to be the issue then, at least in part, is Arendt's conception of founding. For indeed, the criticism is once we have founded our country and made our laws, what is left to do politically? The answer, I believe, lies in Arendt's considerations of founding, and as such, we should devote some time towards an examination of her book on the subject, *On Revolution*, for not only is it the place where Arendt speaks most freely on the subject, but it is also where we find the most problematic portrayals of the social.

Let us begin with the concept of founding, as it is my belief that it will shed even more positive light upon the potentiality of Arendtian UBI. It should first be remembered, however, that this consideration of Arendtian UBI, as discussed in "The Problem" chapter, presumes first a situation of high levels of automation. While the following remarks will not hinge upon this claim, this claim remains pertinent to any discussion of widespread republican democracy, and thus it should not be forgotten. Further, it is paramount that the reader recall that we have already established Arendt's claim to the undemocratic nature of representative democracy in its current state. For indeed, the founding father with whom Arendt has the most sympathy in *On Revolution*, Thomas Jefferson, foresaw this event. He claimed, according to Arendt, that "the people must either sink into 'lethargy, the forerunner of death to the public liberty', or 'preserve the spirit of resistance' to whatever government they have elected, since the only power they retain is 'the reserve power of revolution'."³⁹⁶

Indeed, it is this first option with which Arendt charges the people of the United States. She laments their "failure to remember that a revolution gave birth to the United States" and bemoans that when "we were told that by freedom we understood free enterprise, we did very little to dispel this monstrous falsehood".³⁹⁷ What Jefferson proposed to save America, what he called the "salvation of the republic" (of which Arendt

³⁹⁵ "Hannah Arendt on Hannah Arendt", in *Hannah Arendt: The Recovery of the Public World*, Melvin Hill ed. (St-Martin's Press, 1979), 315.

³⁹⁶ Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1963), 229.

³⁹⁷Ibid, 208-209.

writes so passionately), is the “ward system” which would “incorporate the townships which so obviously were the original models of his ‘elementary republics’ where ‘the voice of the whole people would be fairly, fully, and peaceably expressed, discussed, and decided by the common reason’ of all citizens” and which Arendt saw as “the salvation of the revolutionary spirit”.³⁹⁸ Arendt expels a love of these “little republics” which she says Jefferson expected “to permit the citizen to continue to do what they had been able to do during the years of revolution, namely, to act on their own and thus participate in public business as it was being transacted from day to day.”³⁹⁹

I mention this here not merely tangentially but as a suggestion that Arendt, like Jefferson, saw hope in the potential of a never-ending revolutionary spirit, in a free public, free definitionally because of their engagement. To this extent, Mary McCarthy’s statement about what is to be done in politics once we are done founding the country and writing our laws is revealing of McCarthy’s and by extension America’s confused relationship with law-making. What she misses in Arendt is that for Arendt countries should never be finished founding themselves, and laws should never be done being written. This is why she so proudly quotes Jefferson, who “perceived this seemingly inevitable flaw in the structure of the republic”, as saying “We have not yet so far perfected our constitutions as to venture to make them unchangeable’, he added at once, clearly in fear of such possible perfection, ‘can they be made unchangeable? I think not’”.⁴⁰⁰

It is not at all ridiculous to consider the creation of UBI an act of founding; we may even wish to view it as furthering the founding of a new era of republicanism and a rebirth in different clothes of the Jeffersonian ideal of the ward system. At very least, as discussed near the end of “The Problem” chapter, it may very well be that the combination of UBI and the Arendtian-republican conception of politics as an action serves as the foundation for a newly politically-engaged republic. Indeed, it may be that UBI serves as the very necessity to bring forth proper politics, for Arendt argues that it is only in “a society under the sway of abundance, conflicting group interest need no longer be settled at one another’s expense, and the principle of opposition

³⁹⁸ Ibid, 242.

³⁹⁹Ibid, 243.

⁴⁰⁰ Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, 225.

is valid only as long as there exist authentic choice which transcend the objective and demonstrably valid opinions of experts.”⁴⁰¹ The argument here is that it is wholly possible that the social security of UBI would prove at very least a boon towards decreasing the conflict between group interests, itself the result not fully of a society under the sway of abundance but of an economy under it, and a society very much in need of its security. We should not overstep our claims here, in relation to founding, for while we can within Arendt’s framework consider UBI a part of the founding and the writing of laws that appears as a continuous process in Arendtian politics, we cannot call it a continued revolution. Although UBI may preserve the revolutionary spirit, “the Revolution [is] in fact concerned [with] a new form of government rather than a mere reform of it or a mere supplement to the existing institutions.”⁴⁰² Whether UBI could facilitate revolution, however, is an open question far too large to deal with in the parameters of this work.

It is these questions of little republics, council systems, founding and law-making, which Arendt argues must be central to the revolution and which she is so concerned that the Marxist and socialist tradition leave out. Her concern was that, as one commentator put it, “the introduction of the poor onto the public stage was the ruin of the French Revolution. This was so because instead of founding freedom (which for Arendt is the task of all revolutions and what made the American Revolution great), the revolution aimed at eliminating necessity.”⁴⁰³ This is true, though it requires some nuance. It is true that within *On Revolution* the social is placed in opposition to the founding of freedom, and that this is largely attributed to the introduction of poverty onto the political stage. However, I would argue that it is too simplistic a reading of Arendt to argue that she thought a state must be founded without consideration for the poor or without measures dealing with poverty. Indeed, as we have shown, these issues are not only social: they have political aspects in their enactment, even if the housekeeping aspect of them must be social.

Instead, there appears to be two key limitations on Arendt’s concern with the problem of poverty within founding. First, though not foremost, is the concern that poverty can appear such a large issue that the

⁴⁰¹ Ibid, 264.

⁴⁰² Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, 247.

⁴⁰³ Serena Parekh, *Hannah Arendt and the Challenge of Modernity: A Phenomenology of Human Rights*, Studies in Philosophy (New York, N.Y.) (New York: Routledge, 2008), 46.

equally important issues of founding and law-making are ignored. This is what she charges Marx with, writing that the “failure of the revolutionary tradition to give any serious thought to the only new form of government born out of revolution can partly be explained by Marx’s obsession with the social question and his unwillingness to pay serious attention to questions of state and government.”⁴⁰⁴ Like so many of Arendt’s critiques of Marx, this too reads as a critical yet kindly concern. She no doubt admires Marx for his interest in revolution, and thus the revolutionary spirit she holds so dearly, but she bemoans that he and his followers have paid so little attention to what happens when the smoke clears. This is why, only a page earlier, she is so concerned with the Marx-inspired Soviet failure to focus on founding, which led (remembering her distinction between violence and power) to “a swift disintegration of the old power, the sudden loss of control over the means of violence” and an attempt to create “a new power structure which owed its existence to nothing but the organizational impulses of the people themselves.”⁴⁰⁵ Because founding was ignored as a serious problem “when the moment of revolution had come, it turned out that there was no power left to seize”.⁴⁰⁶ As such we are not presented perfectly with an ‘*if poverty then no founding*’ argument, but are instead shown historically that one particularly dominant strain of revolutionary thought concerned with the social and with poverty has undervalued founding.

Second in our list of key limitations is the concern that poverty has been attitudinally corrupted. That is to say, there are multiple ways in which one can be concerned with poverty, and Arendt holds that it is compassion or rather pity which is “the perversion of compassion” that has led again and again to terror.⁴⁰⁷ It is “Pity, taken as the spring of virtue” that “has proved to possess a greater capacity for cruelty than cruelty itself”.⁴⁰⁸ It is this compassion, this pity, with which she charges Rousseau, who adopted it in a particular self-reflective bourgeois attitude. He noticed that “the plight of others aroused his heart” but as a result he “became involved in his heart rather than in the suffering of others”.⁴⁰⁹ Such a criticism might prove a death knell for

⁴⁰⁴ Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, 250.

⁴⁰⁵ Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, 248-249.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 249.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 78.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 79.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 78.

our project of Arendtian UBI, for if we cannot pity the poor without leading to terror, surely we cannot enact legislation out of pity.

This is not the only way to address the problem of poverty. Arendt, borrowing heavily from Marxist vocabulary, provides us on the same page a second attitude through which to properly engage with the poor, solidarity. She writes, “solidarity, because it partakes of reason, and hence of generality, is able to comprehend a multitude conceptually, not only the multitude of a class or a nation or a people, but eventually all mankind” and although “it may be aroused by suffering, is not guided by it, and it comprehends the strong and the rich no less than the weak and the poor” and thus “solidarity is a principle that can inspire and guide action” whereas “compassion is one of the passions, and pity is a sentiment.” These are unsuitable for politics, and they lean towards terror.⁴¹⁰ We must not underemphasize the importance of her inclusion of solidarity as a properly political motive, a way to enact legislation that deals with issues of poverty, for it is motivated by awareness of suffering but, unlike pity, is not blind to the power dynamics of the rich and powerful, nor is it self-righteous or self-congratulatory in the manner of pity.

As such, we have two major, yet oft overlooked, limitations on Arendt’s statements in relation to the inability of a revolution involving the poor to form a proper new government and not slide into terror. First, we have the fact that the lack of concern for founding within Marxist revolutions is for Arendt not a direct result of the social or poverty itself but a direct result of Marx’s own personal disinterest in founding, government, or statecraft. Second, we should probably acknowledge that plenty of historical revolutions involving the poor have been the result of compassion and not solidarity. At very least, this is what she charges Rousseau and the French Revolution with. She also provides us another, more Marxist, political mindset, solidarity, which appears for Arendt to be a valid manner in which to engage with issues of the poor. Indeed, Arendt writes that it was “the Parisian Commune” which “contained the germs, the first feeble beginnings, of a new type of political organization, of a system which would permit the people to become Jefferson’s ‘participators in government’.”⁴¹¹ Further, it must not be forgotten that Arendt’s loathing of the Bolshevik party

⁴¹⁰ Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, 79.

⁴¹¹ *Ibid*, 236.

comes not from a high ground of representative democracy but from how “the Bolshevik party emasculated and perverted the revolutionary *soviet* system”.⁴¹² This further reinforces the potential for an Arendtian republican vision of the role of UBI in a mass-automation scenario not unlike the one which Arendt herself predicted, for it is not socialist theory (or the soviet system) Arendt takes issue with but the totalitarian changes made to it in the Soviet Union.

It should be clear at this point that the social is a more nuanced concept than it is often treated as, and saying that “Arendt defines the social as the rise of the household and its activities (and problems) into the public realm, so that all private matters are now of concern to all people” is an over simplification that hopefully we have here unpacked in some detail.⁴¹³ However, it must be noted that we have thus far abstained from any discussion of the social as mass society. There is some truth to the claim that in “Arendt’s analysis, the bursting of the masses into the free space of the political (a space defined as free because it is cleared of social necessity and social demands) is a transgression of elemental boundaries.”⁴¹⁴ It cannot be denied that for Arendt when the impoverished masses of the French Revolution “appeared on the scene of politics, necessity appeared with them, and the result was that the power of the old regime became impotent and the new republic was stillborn; freedom had to be surrendered to necessity, to the urgency of the life process itself.”⁴¹⁵ However, let us take a moment to examine the context of this passage.

First, and most notably, the form of poverty that Arendt is talking about here is not the poverty widely known today. It is not a poverty that exists even amongst the most wretched of the western world. Arendt defines not mere poverty but a soul crushing poverty that I suspect is defined partly in relation to her experience living in Gurs concentration camp, for she insists poverty “is more than deprivation, it is a state of constant want and acute misery whose ignominy consists in its dehumanizing force; poverty is abject because it puts men under the absolute dictate of their bodies, that is, under the absolute dictate of necessity as all men know

⁴¹² *ibid*, 239, 249-250.

⁴¹³ Serena Parekh, *Hannah Arendt and the Challenge of Modernity: A Phenomenology of Human Rights*, Studies in Philosophy (New York, N.Y.) (New York: Routledge, 2008), 45.

⁴¹⁴ Norma Claire Moruzzi, *Speaking through the Mask: Hannah Arendt and the Politics of Social Identity*, Psychoanalysis and Social Theory (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2000), 18.

⁴¹⁵ Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, 50.

it from their most intimate experience and outside all speculations”); this is a poverty akin to the most desperate starvation, a dehumanization itself the result of abject inhumanity.⁴¹⁶ Thereby, in Arendtian terms, what we are speaking about alleviating when we are talking about UBI is most likely what she calls deprivation rather than what she calls poverty.

It should also be noted that she places the solution of Robespierre, that “everything which is necessary to maintain life must be common good and only the surplus can be recognized as private property” in direct opposition to her preferred “premodern political theory, which held that it was precisely the citizens’ surplus in time and goods that must be given and shared in common”.⁴¹⁷ This latter statement far more reflects the mindset behind UBI, insofar as it is the distribution of taxable surplus. Furthermore, if politics is the aim, few are in Arendtian poverty, and plenty of people remain in a state of deprivation, then UBI might serve to make people more prepared for politics. I hold that “the modern age had emancipated this subject class to the point where it might recover its ability to act”, the emancipation of course being from “the condition of misery—which by definition can never produce ‘free-minded people’ because it is the condition of being bound to necessity”.⁴¹⁸ This claim is, of course, not original to Arendt, but is actually one Arendt derives from Marx when “he concluded that freedom and poverty were incompatible”.⁴¹⁹

Let us recap what we have argued up to this point: first, that the distinction between the social and the political can be best understood as between the debatable and the knowable. This is a divide which is not attitudinal in the sense of Benhabib. Although it exists only in the mind, it must be brought into practice through proper separation of institutions and thereby spheres. Second, we have argued that the act of founding welfare state provisions such as UBI must be a political act as must be the debate about what these provisions are intended to accomplish, yet the maintenance of these provisions is a social issue not to be touched by further legislation. Third, we have examined what it is to found in the Arendtian sense, argued that founding is an unending task, and that it ideally is done in a continuous republican manner, not unlike the Jeffersonian republic

⁴¹⁶ Ibid.

⁴¹⁷ Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, 50.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid, 53.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid, 52.

or the soviet councils. Fourth and lastly, we have addressed the traditional concern that the political disallows questions of poverty. In response to this concern we have responded with the promotion of solidarity. We have also argued that the criticism of the social question automatically affecting the success of founding is in part a criticism of Marx and Marxism rather than completely inherent in founding. We have also re-examined Arendt's definition of poverty, finding it distinguished from deprivation, and that in response to Robespierre's terror Arendt promotes the commonality of not all that is not surplus, but that which is surplus. From this all we can conclude that the Arendtian conception of the social is in no great way opposed to UBI, and may very well promote it as a viable way to make a citizen's surplus common, as well as a way to revitalize Arendt's republican conception of civic duty as freedom.

The Shape of Arendtian UBI

In what follows, we will briefly examine what we have thus far claimed about Arendt and how this would best shape a UBI system. In doing so, we will address some of Pitkin's concerns, as well as Arendt's own concerns about the nature of consumerism and capitalism. By its nature this will be the most speculative part of this work. This is unavoidable as no version of Arendtian UBI has ever been implemented nor means tested. As a result, we will do our best to limit our claims and remain closely tied to Arendt's concerns with regards to modernity. This is not to suggest that more, larger, claims could not be made regarding Arendtian UBI. However, in true Arendtian fashion, these are issues of debate, and therefore for the public, so we should be careful not to be too prescriptivist on the matter. Our subsequent discussion will then be broken down into three areas: first, a very brief discussion on the legislative/founding place for UBI, second, a consideration of the requirements of education, and third, the connected issue of citizenship.

Let us then begin, very briefly, with a consideration of UBI in relation to founding. We have already discussed at some length the possibility that instituting UBI is a form of founding, and we have drawn the distinction between the knowable and the debatable. It appears that Arendt held that today or rather "under modern conditions, the act of foundation is identical with the framing of a constitution, and the calling of

constitutional assemblies.”⁴²⁰ This would seem to suggest that if we truly want to found UBI the place for such a measure is in no mere law, bill, nor act, but in the amendment process. This functions in two ways. First, it recognizes the establishment of UBI properly as an act of foundation. Second, considering today’s legislative system, enshrining something in the constitution seems as safe a place as one may place a political thing which has social aspects, to prevent it as best one can from bringing its social aspects into the political. It further must be remembered that to meet the criteria Arendt would place upon the social/political distinction, and to prevent UBI’s social aspects from becoming political, the social aspects of it *must* be left untouchable by politicians, which is to say, they must either be enshrined in the constitution, or the corresponding constitutional amendment must be made so clear in its language that politicians have no option but to leave the mathematics to the bureaucracy.

We should also remember, as we pointed out in “The Problem” chapter, that this proposed UBI would not exist for mere material benefit but to further a greater political landscape, moving us towards a rebirth of the “form of government [where] such decisions are made, and this life is conducted, within the framework and according to the regulations of a constitution which, in turn, is no more the expression of a national will or subject to the will of a majority than a building is the expression of the will of its architect or subject to the will of its inhabitants”, that is to say, a truly republican government.⁴²¹

As an immigrant to the United States, Arendt had great respect for her new land, actively seeking out all the relevant knowledge she could and praising its founding fathers in *On Revolution*. However, Arendt had her own shining city on a hill, and it was not America, for which she mourned the loss of the freedom it had so bravely claimed unto itself. Instead, Arendt saw with reverence a more literal city, ancient Athens. Yet, though one might read arguments to the contrary, she did not romanticize it. There is a tendency in our world today to read praise as uncritical, that appreciation of aspects equals an unsaid but heartfelt admiration of the whole. Those, like Arendt, who held rather pessimistic views of human nature appear more than most to be prone to their praise being misconstrued. Arendt has no blind spot for the truth that Athens’ polis, and indeed

⁴²⁰ Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1963), 116.

⁴²¹ Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, 208-209: 155-156.

all emancipated life, has been achieved “by means of violence, by forcing others to bear the burden of life for them.”⁴²² This is “the core of slavery, and it is only the rise of technology, and not the rise of modern political ideas as such, which has refuted the old and terrible truth that that only violence and rule over others could make some men free.”⁴²³ To Arendt, this is the dark core truth of human history: freedom is great, but has never before not been on the backs of the vast majority. Yet even this sorry state is preferable, for Arendt, to the majority of human history in which there was no freedom at all.⁴²⁴ In this she sympathizes with John Adams and Saint-Just, whom she quotes in sympathy, “The world has been empty since the Romans and is filled only with their memory, which is now our only prophecy of freedom.”⁴²⁵ However, Arendt held a sceptical and cautious hope for the future. She viewed widespread automation as probable, and saw in it potential freedom, a possibility threatened by heightened consumption.⁴²⁶ Thus we must ask, what, given widespread automation, must UBI and any corresponding welfare look like?

First and foremost, it seems reasonable that that an Arendtian UBI would be aimed, like the original version of minimum wage, at providing a decent wage instead of a mere living wage. This is likely, because *if* the central object of society is an orientation towards politics, and politics is unenterable in a state of poverty, and hard to enter into in a state of deprivation, *then* the state-provided income (UBI) which allows for a politically oriented society *must* be sufficient enough for a decent wage (that is one that would not leave the receiver in a state of deprivation).

Secondly, we must consider education, both in its relationship to the social and its relationship to UBI. This is where we must begin to consider the negative aspect of the social, not the social as distinct from the political, but the social as a negative monstrous force as best shown in Pitkin’s *The Attack of the Blob*. We have thus far shelved this meaning of the social, as it does not appear to be what Arendt is discussing when she makes the social/political distinction. As we have seen, in the social/political distinction, the social appears just

⁴²² Ibid, 104.

⁴²³ Ibid.

⁴²⁴ Ibid, 188.

⁴²⁵ Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, 188.

⁴²⁶ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 130-131.

as much at threat from the political as vice versa. The social, as in the social mindset, to which Benhabib and Pitkin direct themselves, is another thing, though an interrelated thing. The connection, which is why they share the same nomenclature, appears to be the result of education, or lack thereof, and this is made explicit in a few places. Where the two (the rise of the poor, and of economics, and the mindset of the social) are connected is within a passage from *On Revolution*, where Arendt writes, when “in America and elsewhere, the poor became wealthy, they did not become men of leisure whose actions were prompted by a desire to excel, but succumbed to the boredom of vacant time, and while they too developed a taste for ‘consideration and congratulation’, they were content to get these ‘goods’ as cheaply as possible, that is, they eliminated the passion for distinction and excellence that can exert itself only in the broad daylight of the public”.⁴²⁷ This is why, the “founders of the republic” focused intently on “the question of education, which was of great importance to them, not, however, in order to enable every citizen to rise on the social ladder, but because the welfare of the country and the functioning of its political institutions hinged upon education of all citizens.”⁴²⁸ As such, it is clear that for Arendt, it is not inherently problematic that the poor became welcomed into politics, but that the American education system had failed the poor. It has educated them (if it has taught them it at all) in the service of economic betterment, and not towards citizenship. It is this that is to be blamed for the mass society, the ‘social attitude’ that Arendt condemns confusingly by the same name as what plays a clear role as a bulwark against the social mindset (a phrase we will use to distinguish it from the social as that which is knowable). However, notably, this aspect of education’s interaction with the social is often overlooked. It is noticeably absent from Pitkin’s work. Likewise, its mention in Benhabib is negligible and primarily concerned with the questionable statements Arendt made regarding the desegregation of the American school system.⁴²⁹ And all this despite the clear and continuous connections Arendt draws between the miseducation of Americans and the social, writing in “Society and Culture” that “America has been only too well acquainted with the barbarian philistinism of the *nouveau riche*, but it has only a nodding acquaintance with the equally annoying cultural and educated philistinism

⁴²⁷ Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, 60.

⁴²⁸ *Ibid*, 62.

⁴²⁹ Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, *Modernity and Political Thought*; Vol. 10 (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1996), 136.

of a society where culture actually has what Mr. Shils calls ‘snob-value,’ and where it is a matter of status to be educated.”⁴³⁰ Again and again we see education and politics as the opposite of entertainment and mass social culture within Arendt. In “Society and Culture” she writes, that it “is as though the futility inherent in entertainment had been permitted to permeate the whole social atmosphere, and the often described malaise of the artists and intellectuals is of course partly due to their inability to make themselves heard and seen in the tumultuous uproar of mass society, or to penetrate its noisy futility.”⁴³¹ Pitkin does indeed bring these aspects into play, but leaves their relationship to education largely out of the picture. Indeed, is this not a mere inversion of the same sentiment which caused Arendt to bemoan that the poor had become wealthy but not properly educated towards civic life?

It seems to me that we have come full circle again back to the problem we addressed in “The Problem” chapter, when our concern was consumerism, when it was the “social problem of leisure” which was “the problem of how to provide enough opportunity for daily exhaustion to keep the capacity for consumption intact” that plagued our thoughts, for indeed we were troubled both by what people would do in the case of automation. Was it to be deadly idleness or revolution which would occupy them when they were left with nothing else? And what would even more consumption do to the physicality of the world?⁴³² Is not the solution, as Arendt claimed the founding fathers of the revolution knew, not education? Is it not clear that the social problem, that is mass society, the inability to control one’s own life (as Pitkin likes to frame it), resolved by education, though not mere education, but proper education *towards* politics, which itself serves as a solution to the social?

If it is so, then alongside UBI, there must be a significant public pressure towards higher education, and education in its proper form towards civic engagement. I have little doubt that what it means to educate people towards the civic can and will prove a great area of debate, and thereby a great area of politics. Further, it is undoubtable that Arendt’s own insights, such as in “The Crisis In Education” will prove helpful towards

⁴³⁰ Hannah Arendt, “Society and Culture,” *Daedalus* 89, no. 2 (April 1, 1960): 280.

⁴³¹ *Ibid*, 283.

⁴³² Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 131.

resolving these questions. However, we sadly do not have the space nor the proper structure to here launch into this politics. As such, we must only suggest that an Arendtian educational policy would require the reduction of university fees, or even the complete removal of fees for students at a university.

Lastly, to the question of current welfare state apparatuses, it is no secret that Arendt held some very hostile views on the welfare state of her own era, and it is further true that these welfare state apparatuses remain, though not intact, to this day largely the same, if changed for these times. It seems only logical that with the onset of UBI such structures such as employment insurance and welfare payments would no longer be needed. Much the same can probably be said of food stamps, for while certainly some private charity will remain necessary for those who cannot manage their own funds, or have fallen upon addiction and other money-eating issues of consumption, it is hopeful that the majority of people now on such assistance programs would find themselves lifted out of their situation by a UBI paying a decent wage.⁴³³ What must remain, and in the case of the USA will need expanding, however, are those welfare services such as socialized medicine, education, building inspectors, fire departments, and all those other organizations which keep the country safe and clean. Indeed, even if one could make the claim that a sufficiently decent UBI could pay for education or medicine, this may prove to be a truly un-Arendtian statement, for it seems to me that these must not be replaced by UBI. If they were, lifetimes would be consumed by the sheer weight of organizing themselves, rendering free-time, the prerequisite to action, no longer truly free, but a time of private or social organization of the sustenance of life.

What is meant by this is simple. It is no secret that the Arendtian description of the social involves the claim that we use “nation-wide administration of housekeeping” to organize and limit the demands on any one person.⁴³⁴ In *The Human Condition* this is part of the root of the confusion between the public and the private, as we have “blurred” the dividing line, with the social as administration, which is to say, the social as the knowable. Of course, as we discussed at the start of this chapter, this results in a deep confusion between what

⁴³³ Of course, for psychological and physical reasons this may not prove to be the case for all people in such programs, but it remains an arguable statement for the majority.

⁴³⁴ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 28.

is truly political (debatable) and what can be known, and thus is social (knowable). However, it must be noted that the social is also how we have partly mastered necessity (the other part Arendt attributes to automation, as discussed in “The Problem” chapter), for now we have the national economy which allows for “the collective of families [to be] economically organized into the facsimile of one super-human family [which] is what we call “society”.”⁴³⁵ It is through this act, that we no longer each individually have to deal with the economic issues of health and education (as well as plenty else) and are thus more free to be active citizens. That is, the social partly takes on “the prepolitical act of liberating oneself from the necessity of life for the freedom of world”.⁴³⁶

Conclusion

What we have done here has been a reconsideration of the social not upon loose metaphorical or attitudinal lines, but through an upholding of rigid distinction between the social and the political. However, we rejected previous interpretations that categorized entire issues (such as public housing) as exclusively social or political: most if not all issues have both a public and a social face. The public face is that which is debatable, and the social face is that which can really be found out for certain. We also discovered that the social has a place within society and is not merely to be dismantled, for indeed, just as treating political issues as social robs people of their choices and treats them as a mass, so too does treating social issues as political pollute the social.

From there, we examined the idea that the most debatable side of any issue is always in the founding of the subject of it. This is perhaps not surprising as the social has always been associated with *housekeeping* and it may even be that the act of *housefounding* would be a political act. As such we examined the very apparently social issue of Universal Basic Income (UBI) and discovered that it too played by this logic: that the founding of it would not only be political, but might even be a constitutional issue, and that it must be hotly debated what the purpose of this income would be, and at levels of sustenance it should be set. It must however be noted that we unsurprisingly discovered that it had social aspects, such as the dollar amount needed to obtain this level of sustenance, how best the funding for it would be appropriated, and the maintenance of this level

⁴³⁵ Ibid, 28-29.

⁴³⁶ Ibid, 31.

of sustenance as the economy changes and grows (or shrinks). It was then stressed that these social aspects *cannot* be left to politics, just as its political aspects cannot be left to the social.

Afterwards, we considered the concept of mass society, and how there appears to be a relationship between the social as mass society and the improper system of education. That is to say, the problem of the social lies not in the amount of money or sustenance provided to a people but in the existence of the civic/educational mindset in the nouveau riche and other no longer destitute citizens. These people were not provided the education necessary to gear them toward a proper appreciation of what it means to be engaged in civic society, which is to say in politics. In an attempt to resolve this, we proposed that alongside Arendtian UBI there must a dramatic removal of all fees pertaining to the pursuit of higher education. It must be stressed that this is likely insufficient, and that a change in the structure as well as the cost of education is most definitely required.

Lastly, we very briefly examined the problem of necessity and of dominating it so that we may enter the civic life. I reminded the reader that it is the demands of necessity that historically kept the poor out of politics. Indeed, as we saw in *On Education*, it is possible for the impoverished to enter politics simply by demanding entrance. However, the physicality of their suffering overtook politics because those physical demands had not been resolved, and thus the state sought to resolve them. As such, it is not some attitudinal mindset that kept the public and private separate. Indeed, this is hardly phenomenologically a strong argument. What kept them out of politics is that until the revolution they were too poor and too desperate to have time to engage in politics. It is for this reason that we have strongly suggested that significant chunks of the welfare state remain intact, or else politics might again wrongly turn to melding the political with the social. Further, it may simply be that were the welfare state to be fully dismantled the average citizen would be too busy with the demands of day to day life to enter politics, for necessity would be thus thrown back upon them. Thus, the welfare state must largely be maintained, even in a post-automation world, or else the citizenry might find itself too encumbered by necessity to be a newly active political citizenry. We could, however, presume that while maintained, the welfare state would change its form and due, to the universal nature of UBI, might very likely change its relationship to the citizenry; it may treat them less like objects and more like people.

Conclusion

I began this dissertation with a broad critique of the literature on Universal Basic Income. I argued that in the face of a danger so societally shifting as a mass automation crisis the solution (and I do believe Universal Basic Income is part of that solution) must be perfectionist in vision. I aligned myself with Ronald Beiner's critique of liberalism and Kathi Weeks' desire for "the prescription of a politics", in favour of the perfectionist prescriptions which I view as necessary in times of such cataclysmic change. I sought to provide more explicitly a statement on what in such tumultuous times is both meaningful and safe from the onslaught of automation as Arendt saw it. In doing so I have gone farther than much of the literature, including Weeks who avoided "burdening life with a fixed content", for to solve the problem of idleness and consumption what other activities are available to us must be made explicit to us so that we may remember, rediscover and participate in them anew for the preservation and good of society.⁴³⁷

What I have done up until this point is as follows. I have contested the traditional anti-Marxist reading of Arendt, and argued that she belongs among the many critical commentators who draw inspiration from Marx's thought, but who have not confined themselves to Marxist study. Through this contestation I

⁴³⁷ Weeks, *The Problem with Work*, 233.

have sought to light a shared concern for the labourization or alienation of work, as well as Arendt's belief that both her and Marx shared an aspiration towards a new form of government partly inspired by Athenian democracy.⁴³⁸ However, I have also pointed out that Marx and Arendt diverge in their thought on the ramifications of automation. I show that in Arendt's reading of Marx, he is excited for the possibility of a communism brought forth by automation. Arendt too, is hopeful about the potentialities within an automation crisis, but so too is she deeply concerned that due to the proliferation of the work ethic, what she terms the mind-set of *homo faber* and *animal laborans*, freedom from jobholding at this point in history would be self-defeating. Her concern, and one that I share, is that the world has forgotten the meaningful activities that exist outside of the production-consumption cycle. As such, she believes that were production, or rather jobholding, no longer the primary use of our time, we would only increase our consumption, and we would do so in a way that threatened both the world of man and the natural environment. This desire to explore meaningful activities outside of production and consumption I suspect is one of the central reasons she wrote *The Human Condition*. It is my argument that this exploration and revival of other meaningful human activities must not remain confined to academic works and must play an active role in shaping how a future system of UBI is both designed and implemented.

As such, our concern is now very different than that of, say, Bertrand Russell's day, when the primary concern preventing the implementation of UBI was "that efficient work would be impossible without the economic stimulus, that if the wage system were abolished men would cease to do enough work to keep the community in tolerable comfort."⁴³⁹ Due to the increasing perception that there is or will soon be an overabundance of work, the argumentation for UBI is very changed. Where once Russell argued that UBI was an incentive to change work, writing that "If men had to be tempted to work instead of driven to it, the obvious interest of the community would be to make work pleasant", now our concern is if people are too attached to work.⁴⁴⁰ Our concern is also very different from that fifty years past Russell's writing on the

⁴³⁸ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 131n82.

⁴³⁹ Bertrand Russell, *Proposed Roads to Freedom; Socialism, Anarchism and Syndicalism* (New York: H. Holt, 1919), 93.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 100.

subject, when Martin Luther King Jr. phrased the pressing concern driving an interest in UBI in the following way: we had “come to the point where we must make the nonproducer a consumer or we will find ourselves drowning in a sea of consumer goods.”⁴⁴¹ While King’s worry about a capitalist crisis of overproduction remains important, the solution of increasingly consumption through UBI is not a solution at all for us. Instead, we are, through Arendt, concerned with the exact opposite side of the same rough problem, namely, that capitalism could, either through some debt scheme, or a limited and liberal form of UBI, very well make the nonproducer a consumer, and that this would see us all collectively drowning in a sea of consumer goods. As such, King’s concern reveals itself to be primarily one of the maintenance of the capitalist production economy, at the cost of the world and the individual. For in King’s concern, we are drowning in unbought consumer goods. In our version, we are drowning in bought consumer goods. The goods do not simply disappear upon being bought, and that is the problem; they must be consumed and thus discarded.

Indeed, we find ourselves in closest proximity of concern to that of John Kenneth Galbraith, who wrote, if “the modern corporation must manufacture not only goods but the desire for the goods it manufactures, the efficiency of the first part of this activity ceases to be decisive. One could indeed argue that human happiness would be as effectively advanced by inefficiency in want creation as by efficiency in production.”⁴⁴² Notably too, Galbraith is one of the few authors who make an argument similar to Arendt’s work/labour distinction. However, unlike with Arendt, who distinguished between labour which corresponded to necessity, and work which corresponded to the production of worldly objects, Galbraith’s distinction relies on how taxing the work is. He argues that there is the traditional production of the working class, and a new class which has replaced the leisure class, but is much larger. For this class “work has none of the older connotation[s] of pain, fatigue, or other mental or physical discomfort”.⁴⁴³ In doing so, Galbraith rejects “the grand homogeneity of work” and insists that this new class does not provide meaningful production, but instead, mixes leisure with its work, and as consequence, its work becomes a source of

⁴⁴¹ Martin Luther King, Jr., *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), 172.

⁴⁴² Galbraith, *The Affluent Society*, 213.

⁴⁴³ *Ibid*, 248.

enjoyment.⁴⁴⁴ Galbraith allows that many people may not actually enjoy their work in this new class, but that membership in it requires that one pretend to.⁴⁴⁵ It is in contrast to the solution of the continued creation of the ‘new class’ that Galbraith argues instead for a “minimum income” to provide “essential decency and comfort” once technology has advanced so that even with the new class, we are left with “a surplus of those who still merely work.”⁴⁴⁶ This is as far as my sympathies with Galbraith’s argument go, as he chooses to write off the concerns I have stated above about idleness in favour of a liberal choice to be idle, writing that “The idle man may still be an enemy of himself. But it is hard to say that the loss of his effort is damaging to society. Yet it is such damage that causes us to condemn idleness.”⁴⁴⁷ Indeed, it may not be the loss of his production that is damaging to society, but as I argued extensively in chapter two, that the loss of his orientation may prove most catastrophic. Thus, we cannot “obviously view an increase in voluntary idleness with some equanimity.”⁴⁴⁸ For, after all, if we agree with Arendt, this idleness would not be true idleness but quickly redefined by corporations as extra time the individual should devote to consuming, an economization which would be most welcomed by an individual who knows no other meaningful activities. Interestingly, this consumption of idleness by profit is an argument made in the positive by Paul Frankl who argued that “while machines had made more time for leisure, it was necessary to find new ways for its most profitable use.”⁴⁴⁹ However, I believe I have explained explicitly enough in chapter two the dangers of this idea so that I do not need here to devote time to disputing Frankl. Instead, we find ourselves in broad agreement with Frankl’s contemporaries, John Hobson, and our aforementioned friend Bertrand Russell, who both expressed concern that automation was tied to and did “encourage passive consumption, and apathy in leisure”.⁴⁵⁰

This is why I spend such a lengthy part of chapter two concerned with the other parts of the *Vita Activa*, and also briefly considered the *Vita Contemplativa*. When one recognizes the Arendtian problem of idleness, it becomes paramount to direct our full attention to what may solve the problem. If action, art, and

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid, 248-250.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid, 251.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid, 239, 253.

⁴⁴⁷ Galbraith, *The Affluent Society*, 215.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid, 219.

⁴⁴⁹ Robert Snape et al., “Leisure in a Post-Work Society,” *World Leisure Journal* 59, no. 3 (July 3, 2017): 186.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid.

maybe thought, are what stand between us and a destructive exponential growth of consumption, then those things need to be taken seriously. This is why it is inspiring to see so much of the literature arguing that UBI will increase “our ability to have a sense of security so we can pursue our ambition, and our ability to contribute to supporting one another, innovating, and developing the creative potential of society”,⁴⁵¹ arguing for a UBI that emphasises providing us “means to choose between meaningful goals”.⁴⁵² It is also promising that UBI can and has been framed as providing a solution to the problem of the “substantive exclusion from the productive sphere and from politics” of many under recognized and undervalued individuals.⁴⁵³ However, this inclusion of some of the *Vita Activa* as a possible outcome of UBI, given liberal choice, is, as I have argued, highly insufficient.

It remains paramount that we not merely offer liberal choice and pray that people within this liberal UBI framework naturally condemn the “waste economy” that “our whole economy has become”, that it somehow allows us “not to come to a sudden catastrophic end”.⁴⁵⁴ There may be some slight truth to this, as Arendt allows that we have not yet brought fully “into existence the ideal of the *animal laborans*” for she warns that “if the ideal were already in existence and we were truly nothing but members of a consumers’ society, we would no longer live in a world at all but simply be driven by a process in whose ever-recurring cycles things appear and disappear, manifest themselves and vanish, never to last long enough to surround the life process in their midst.”⁴⁵⁵ If this quotation sounds as though it already too closely resembles the state of our politics, of our economics, and of our buying habits, then the reader will surely see how liberal choice in UBI is insufficient to ward off Arendt’s concerns. She writes, the “danger is that such a society, dazzled by the abundance of its growing fertility and caught in the smooth functioning of a never ending process, would no longer be able to recognize its own futility—the futility of a life which ‘does not fix or realize itself in any

⁴⁵¹ Anthony Painter and Chris Thoung, *Creative Citizen, Creative State: The Principled and Pragmatic Case for a Universal Basic Income* (London, England: RSA: 21st Century Enlightenment, 2015), 4.

⁴⁵² R. Mulligan, “Universal Basic Income and Recognition Theory - A Tangible Step towards an Ideal,” *Basic Income Studies* 8, no. 2 (December 1, 2013): 161.

⁴⁵³ Juliana Bidadanure, “The Precariat, Intergenerational Justice and Universal Basic Income,” *Global Discourse* 3, no. 3–4 (December 1, 2013): 555.

⁴⁵⁴ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 134.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid.

permanent subject which endures after [its] labour is past.”⁴⁵⁶ Any attempt to solve this crisis, through UBI or otherwise, cannot do so effectively if it remains tied to the liberal conception of the maximalization of freedom of choice as it is defined. Action, art, and thought *must* be promoted.

In chapter three, I turned our attention to the structural aspects of an Arendtian UBI. Here the concern became what broad structure UBI would take if it was shaped by Arendt’s philosophy. The ensuing discussion centred upon two interrelated aspects of Arendt’s thought. First, I concerned myself with an aspect of Arendt’s concept of the social, a realm she claimed had emerged in the modern era as distinct from the political sphere (which the social threatened with its apparently increasing growth) as well as with its confusion with the political. The social in my reading of it can be divided into two concerns. The first is Arendt’s insistence that economics be kept out of politics, and the second is what Hanna Pitkin called ‘the blob’, which is Arendt’s concern with mass movements, behaviour, and culture. I say that these two are interrelated because it appeared to be Arendt’s belief that economics was in politics *because* the animal laborans mindset was in it. Interestingly this is directly related causally to Arendt’s concept of automation. She writes, the “rather uncomfortable truth of the matter is that the triumph the modern world has achieved over necessity is due to the emancipation of labor, that is, to the fact that the *animal laborans* was permitted to occupy the public realm; and yet, as long as the *animal laborans* remains in possession of it, there can be no true public realm, but only private activities displayed in the open. The outcome is what is euphemistically called mass culture, and its deep-rooted trouble is a universal unhappiness, due on one side to the troubled balance between labouring and consumption.”⁴⁵⁷ As you can see, there is undoubtably a relationship between the oncoming automation Arendt sees and mass culture, which, at least in this quotation, is framed in such a way that the solution again appears to be the other aspects of the *vita activa*. I mostly shelve this side of the discussion, due in part to the fact that it mostly furthers an argument I have already made in chapter two. Instead, in chapter three I examine what it is for the *animal laborans* to be in politics. That is, I look at the claim that the social has invaded the political.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid, 135.

⁴⁵⁷ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 134.

In the question of the social's invasion of the political I reframe the question from the traditional conservative reading. Instead of the social being a monstrous force that has taken over the political, I view it much like I view the *vita activa's* historical changes, as a matter of proper balance. I view the social as a new sphere that is distinct from the political sphere, but not inherently bad. Instead, I rely on a reading of Arendt that suggests that the social is only bad insofar as it is where it should not be, in the political. In doing so, I also show how the confusion of the two is also bad for the social, that is, it is harmful for the social to be treated as political. My conclusion from this examination is that the distinction between the social and political is not dissimilar from the distinction between episteme and techne. Through a comparison of the social in *The Human Condition* and Arendt's distinction between the debatable and the knowable that appear in her later works, I argue that these distinctions relate to one another, and that the social is what is knowable, and that the debatable is the political. I also argue, using Arendt's own attempts to explain the concept at a conference, that this is not in reference to specific issue, that no one issue is fully political or fully social, but that different aspects of each should be related to one sphere or the other and treated in kind.

The second half of chapter three is devoted to providing at least a partial answer to the question of what people are to do in politics. Indeed, I partly answer this with the first half of the chapter insofar as I provide a more clear distinction between the social and the political, allowing for many issues, such as the question of public housing, to be included in politics. However, in the second half I address it more directly, with an examination of how Arendt conceptualized founding. I argue that founding is not, or should not be, a once-off act for Arendt, but rather, in keeping with the Jeffersonian Republic and the pre-USSR soviets, a continuous act of forming and reforming the state through political action and decision making. This allows me to consider the place of UBI within the state. I argue that it must be considered a pre-political given, insofar as it should be made part of the state, and not merely one of the state's laws, through the enshrining of it in the constitution. I also argue that its economic value must be set outside of politics, for to decide and redecide its economic value via political debate would be to treat its social aspects as political. This, I show is both dangerous to it, and against Arendt's theory of the social, because it would be to treat the social as

political. I then conclude chapter three with a consideration of the necessity of education and civic education as part and parcel of the creation of a UBI.

Interestingly, this insistence that UBI is both a social precondition for proper politics, and itself a thing which must be founded politically, makes it very similar to some of the more rights-based arguments, where UBI is not merely the means to the achievement of a right (say economic freedom), but is a right in and of itself. This is the phrasing Pateman tends to employ in her discussion of the topic, writing that a “basic income as a fundamental right can more reasonably be compared to the suffrage”, and that “basic income is a right that [...] exists over a citizen’s lifetime”.⁴⁵⁸ However, I am hesitant to put it in such terms, both due to our previous critique of liberal theory, but also due to Arendt’s own consideration of rights, and the right to have rights. This problem of the right to have rights is aptly described by James Ingram when he writes that the “problem was that the rights philosophers attributed to nature or reason had no political counterparts. In practice, human rights ended up being rights people had after all their other rights had been taken away—in the end, no rights at all.”⁴⁵⁹ As such, the idea of arguing for basic income as a human right seems to not be the most sturdy of argumentative foundations for Arendt. Still, it should not be denied that founding UBI in a constitution would in a way render it into a right. Importantly though, for us this is a secondary or even tertiary result, and not the impetus. We have not made the argument that a person has a right to UBI, or that a person has a right to what UBI may provide. Instead, our argumentation has been concerned more materially, with how people exist within the physical world, and what they do in this world. In these increasingly illiberal times, I believe this is a better framing as it allows for the argument to be made without a significant reliance on any presumed inalienable, human, or god given, right common to person or citizen. That it does in fact provide this right is, of course, important, but one need not agree with what are today too often written off as lofty ideals. While I do not wish to reject the language of rights entirely, my thesis’ argument could be rendered completely cogent to a steadfast consequentialist, who is unconcerned with

⁴⁵⁸ Carole Pateman, “Democratizing Citizenship: Some Advantages of a Basic Income,” *Politics & Society* 32, no. 1 (2004): 94.

⁴⁵⁹ James D. Ingram, “What Is a ‘Right to Have Rights’? Three Images of the Politics of Human Rights,” *American Political Science Review* 102, no. 4 (2008): 403.

human dignity, and is instead primarily concerned with the limiting of societal unease and the repercussions of such unease in an automation crisis. Lucian Butaru appears to agree with me on this point, writing that “it would appear that the enlightened segment of today’s elites seem to be inclined to favour a risk-reducing approach” by accepting some social transformation.⁴⁶⁰ I suspect that such a person would rather allow for the problem of idleness to take hold and the ensuing consumption crisis. However, it remains important that this argument both allows for and valorises meanings and meaningfulness outside of rights, while also holding for those who have become most disenchanted with striving for the forms of meaning I believe an Arendtian UBI could foster. In this way, my Arendtian formation of UBI differs from what Jennifer Mays and Gregory Marston have no hesitancy proclaiming to be the “ethical justification as a philosophical foundation of basic income”.⁴⁶¹ For them this ethical justification is an “underpinning conception of a "good society," which is one that is concerned with the fair distribution of burdens and benefits within that society.”⁴⁶² Instead, my concern for a good society is one derived from a conception of good activities and good behaviours, instead of fair or just distribution of resources.

Nick Srnicek and Alex Williams are correct when they write that “the demand for UBI [...] is subject to competing hegemonic forces. It is just as open to being mobilised for a libertarian dystopia as for a post-work society—an ambiguity that has led many to mistakenly conflate the two poles.”⁴⁶³ It is precisely this dichotomy that is central to the problem of idleness. However, it is my belief, contrary to that of Srnicek and Williams whose work remains dependent upon liberal choice, that there is more to this dichotomy than economic levels of set income, and dry but pertinent questions of economic value. What is central to this concern is also the political question of meaning and its relational question of the availability of meaning. This latter question, as I have sketched out, is one of recovering those meanings, but also one of ensuring that they are available to the citizenry. I have indicated with the corresponding crisis of consumption why it is pertinent

⁴⁶⁰ Lucian Butaru, “Towards A Universal Basic Income. A Evolutionary Approach,” *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai. Studia Europaea* 62, no. 3 (2017): 96.

⁴⁶¹ Jennifer Mays and Gregory Marston, “Reimagining Equity and Egalitarianism: The Basic Income Debate in Australia,” *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare* 43, no. 3 (September 1, 2016): 20.

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*, 20.

⁴⁶³ Nick Srnicek and Alex Williams. *Inventing the Future: Postcapitalism and a World Without Work*. Verso Books, 2015, 119.

to address this crisis of consumption, not only for people's sense of meaning such a crisis would affect, but for the worth of our world and our natural planet as well. As such, my work is not grounded in the value of the individual, but instead on the value of the world, which has an inherent relation to the activities of the citizenry. I have also hinted at the possibility that the loss of meaning provided by work would be existentially upsetting for the majority of people, and that such a loss could certainly be translated into revolutionary change. I agree strongly that UBI is both an important choice that may or may not be made, and that if it is made, how it is made and what form it will take is of equal importance. A UBI that is not accompanied by and structured for a rebirth of the meanings and orientations found within the rest of the *vita activa* will result in existential and economic crisis.

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