

THE MANIFESTATION OF FREEDOM AS A “PRODUCTIVE POLITICS”

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Abstract

Yasemin Sarı, “The Manifestation of Freedom as a 'Productive Politics'”

This thesis aims to provide an insight to the concept of freedom through an integration of Marx's and Arendt's systems. The investigation will begin with Arendt's distinction between the concepts of labor and work in order to come to a criticism of Arendt's criticism of Marx regarding the concept of labor. The next step will be an explication of the concept of world as a man-made world of things with which the human beings come into relation in instrumental terms, and as a space of appearance which provides the possibility of transcending necessity and utility. This analysis will be used to expound upon Marx's notion of self-alienation and Arendt's notion of world-alienation which will then be linked to Marx's analysis of the fetishism of commodities in order to bring Arendt and Marx together in their critical approach to the instrumentalization of necessities. The last part will be devoted to an attempt of reading Arendt's concept of political action through Marx's concept of self-actualization in order to join the human capacities of action and production. In the end, it will be argued that this integration reveals what I call “producing meaning,” which brings about the manifestation of freedom as a productive politics.

Tez Özeti

Yasemin Sarı, “Üretken bir Politika' olarak Özgürlüğün Tezahürü”

Bu tez Marx'ın ve Arendt'in sistemlerinin birleştirilmesi üzerinden özgürlük kavramına bir anlayış sağlamayı amaçlamaktadır. İnceleme, Arendt'in Marx eleştirisine bir eleştiri getirmek üzere, Arendt'in emek ve iş kavramlarının ayırımından başlayacaktır. Sonraki adım, dünya kavramının, insanların araçsal şartlarla ilişkilendiği insan-üretimi bir şeyler dünyası ve de zorunluluk ve yararlığı aşmasına olanak kılan bir görüntü mekanı olarak açıklaması olacaktır. Bu analiz, Marx'ın kendine-yabancılaşma kavramının ve Arendt'in dünyaya-yabancılaşma kavramının incelenmesi için kullanılacak, sonrasında da Marx'ın meta fetişizmi analizine bağlanarak, Arendt ve Marx'ı, zorunlulukların araçsallaşmasına karşı eleştirel yaklaşımlarında bir araya getirecektir. Son bölüm, Arendt'in politik eylem kavramının Marx'ın kendini-gerçekleştirme kavramı üzerinden okunması girişimine ayrılacaktır. Sonunda iddia edilecek olan, bu birleşmenin benim “anlamın üretilmesi” dediğim nokta üzerinden üretken bir politika olarak özgürlüğün tezahürünü ortaya çıkardığıdır.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is concerned with the concept of freedom, or more specifically the following questions derived from the concept: What is freedom? What is the relationship between freedom and the human being? What is the relationship between freedom and action? In general, what does freedom mean? How is freedom found? Or better, where is freedom found? Although these questions may seem separate, they are interrelated.

The concept of freedom has posed many problems throughout the philosophical tradition, especially regarding the relationship between free will and determinism. However, Arendt asserts that it was not such a problem in the ancient Greek tradition, for freedom was the very condition of a specific kind of experience: the experience of political action pertaining to the public realm. Thus, her contention that “the *raison d'être* of politics is freedom,”¹ the reason of its being.

The focal point of this thesis is limited to the freedom of action, and does not include freedom of the will or freedom of choice. Experiencing what she calls the phenomenon of “the rise of the social,” which she takes as the destruction of the distinction between the private and the public realms; Arendt aims to recover the freedom experienced through political action in the public realm, for she claims that the private realm is grounded on necessity. Perhaps motivated by some of her

¹ Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: eight exercises in political* (New York: Viking Press, 1968), p. 146.

shackling life experiences, she seeks to emancipate politics, by trying to keep it from turning into an experience of fabrication whose inherent characteristics lies in the means-ends category, thus, in violence.

The destruction of the distinction between the public and the private realms leads Arendt to criticize Marx due to his *glorification of labor*. In other words, for positing the most degraded human activity which pertained to the private realm – the activity of labor - as the activity which produces the human being – thus founding freedom on the ground of necessity. However, Marx's labor theory reveals more than Arendt is convinced it can. His concept of labor, his analyses of alienation and the fetishism of commodities will be the backbone of my criticism against Arendt's criticism of Marx, which will pave the way to bring the two philosophers together at the point of their common criticism of the instrumentalization of necessities. In the end, Marx's concept of self-actualization will be used as the focal point of this integration in order to investigate what can come out from it once it becomes the human being's manifestation of freedom.

The general ground of this thesis will be to investigate the relationship between the human being and the concept of freedom through Marx's and Arendt's systems. This will be both an ontological and political investigation insofar as it will be concerned with the human being as an agent in the political sphere and as situated in the world. Here, the human being will be put forth as both an actor and a producer, or, as an active producer.

The specific question I would like to answer goes as follows: Can the Arendtian political action be integrated with the Marxian self-actualization – which in turn would become the manifestation of freedom?

The manifestation of freedom through political action stands at the end of a long road, although its condition as human plurality may be manifest to us in our everyday experience. Arendt starts her journey from the beginning, distinguishing between the three activities of the human being's life, which she lists as labor, work and action. In regard to this, the first chapter will deal with her distinction between the concepts of labor and work, in order to show that her criticism of Marx is based on the way in which she distinguishes between these two activities. The aim will be to reveal that, in fact, her criticism does not hold, since what Arendt refers to as work coincides with what Marx explicates as labor: the human capacity of production.

The human capacity of production is the basis of erecting a world. Everything that provides the stability of the world is a result of human production, that which is different from what nature provides. The world is where human beings dwell and reveal their togetherness. Thus, the second chapter will deal with the two senses of the world Arendt uses; firstly, as the man-made world of things with which the human beings come into relation in instrumental terms, and secondly, as the space of appearance which provides the possibility of transcending necessity and utility. The two-fold characteristics of the world presents both the in-order-to relations and the for-the-sake of which human beings are in the world; however, at times, the meaning of the latter is concealed by the instrumental mentality of human beings which stems from and results in the human being's alienation.

This is how the Arendtian ontology of the world will be related to Marx's notion of self-alienation and Arendt's notion of world-alienation in order to reveal the basis of the latter in the former; for both reveal a loss – the loss of the objectivation of the self, and the loss of the objective world through the return to the

self. When this is accomplished I will analyze Marx's fetishism of commodities and this will be the way in which I will attempt to bring Arendt and Marx together in their critical approach to the instrumentalization of necessities.

I believe that human freedom can be manifested in our everyday experience, insofar as the human being is the horizon of his possibilities. Thus the manifestation of freedom cannot be confined to a specific kind of action that takes place in the political sphere. The activities pertaining to this sphere can be enhanced, and with regard to this contention, the last point of this thesis will be *an attempt* to read Arendt's (political) action through Marx's self-actualization. This attempt will be taken up by joining the capacity to produce and the capacity to begin something anew. Insofar as human togetherness is revealed as a productive togetherness, Marx's self-actualization and Arendt's political action will be integrated by what I call "producing meaning." In the end, I hope, the manifestation of freedom will reveal itself through the establishment of a *productive politics*.

CHAPTER 2

ARENDT ON THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN LABOR AND WORK

In her *The Human Condition*, Arendt offers an analysis of the human condition through her explication of the public and private realms with a direct reference to Greek antiquity and of the distinction between labor, work, and action by a criticism of political economists and Karl Marx. Her point is to provide us with the main insights of the “*vita activa*,” where action becomes the manifestation of freedom in the political sphere. This chapter is going to deal with her distinction between labor and work, offering an analysis that goes against her Marx criticism in the end.

Arendt's Concept of Labor

Arendt's notion of “labor” points to an activity without reference to a specific end product that establishes stability in the world, and this comes to mean that the laboring activity does not produce use objects. This point is important in her analysis since she attempts to lay out the “worldlessness” of the animal laborans in that he cannot construct a world which would provide him the public sphere that will be connected to the political arena. Insofar as the animal laborans is connected to the life process and its necessities, his activity is regarded as antipolitical, standing in opposition to the freedom which can be manifested in the political realm.

In the beginning of her analysis regarding labor, Arendt states one very

important aspect of her distinction between labor and work: “The word 'labor' understood as a noun, never designates the finished product, the result of laboring, but remains a verbal noun to be classed with the gerund, whereas the product itself is invariably derived from the word for work.”²

By this Arendt means that labor is an activity that does not point to an end product, and which only remains as an effort spent in order to produce rather nondurable things; whereas, work has the structure of using a means to an end, in order to produce durable things that make up the human beings' world. Arendt argues that the distinction between labor and work is analogous to unproductive and productive labor³ as she states:

Unlike the productivity of work, which adds new objects to the human artifice, the productivity of labor power produces objects only incidentally and is primarily concerned with the means of its own reproduction; since its power is not exhausted when its own reproduction has been secured, it can be used for the production of more than one life process, but it never 'produces' anything but life.⁴

The difference between labor and work can be found in the quality of their end products as well as in their repetition: labor's repetitiveness of production and consumption as a cyclical life process, work's repetitiveness as based on the production of durability in terms of means and ends.

As it is stated above, labor is considered as an activity that pertains to the life process. It is a life-oriented activity, and it stems from and results in the necessities of life. The repetitiveness or the incessancy of labor also refers to its cyclicity. It is a life activity in that it “becomes” a means to live, and through which life becomes a means to life itself. This activity itself reveals a necessity in which man cannot

² Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 80.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

manifest his freedom, but rather his being subject to necessity. One must eat in order to labor, and one must labor in order to eat. Laboring is an investment of energy into life in order to continue this life process. It is a cyclical process in that *it consumes in order to produce to consume to produce*. The beginning of this cycle, which is consumption, points to a rather “productive” consumption, because it consumes in order to produce, and what is produced in turn is consumed in order to produce again. However, this productivity is nothing akin to that of the productivity of work, which will be discussed in the next section of this chapter, but rather to the reproduction of the self. This cycle is represented by repetition and nondurability. Arendt states that labor does not end before life ends. She says that “it is indeed the mark of all laboring that it leaves nothing behind, that the result of its effort is almost as quickly consumed as the effort is spent,”⁵ and that “life itself depends upon it.”⁶ Labor is a life activity in which the human being uses his power – consumes it – in order to produce nondurable things that pertain to the necessities of his world, which in turn are consumed by the human being in order to live and to continue laboring.

Now what does Arendt mean when she says that labor leaves nothing behind? What would it mean to leave something behind? She explicates this idea of leaving something behind by production, although not in the sense of a productive consumption that results in the reproduction of the self, but a production which creates durability in this world. However, according to her, since labor produces things that are of “short duration,” in that it produces things for “consumption,” and not for usage, she argues that the laboring activity is not one which can create a world, but only life. Therefore, her statement regarding labor is concerned with

⁵ *The Human Condition*, p. 87.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

reproduction rather than production: labor produces life itself, as life is reproduced by life.

Coming back to the notion of durability, in Arendt's view, one way to leave something behind would be to produce something that has durability in this world. The "work" of a craftsman could be considered as such, since a craftsman's work would provide the human being with stability, letting one create a world through the objects that one's work materializes, for instance, the chair that one sits on.

Durability can be a property of the things which are produced to be used in this world, which make up our world; which man builds up into his world. However, the laboring activity of the laborer is realized by his own labor power's incorporation into the things he produces in order to be consumed, and thus the activity itself is lost in the product because it is as quickly consumed as it is produced, thus it cannot create a durability in the world since it does not possess that property. As Arendt states:

Labor's products do not become more durable by their abundance and cannot be 'heaped up' and stored away to become part of a man's property; on the contrary, they are only too likely to disappear in the process of appropriation or to 'perish uselessly' if they are not consumed 'before they spoil.'⁷

Considered in terms of "the life process of mankind, and within its frame of reference all things become objects of consumption."⁸ This consumption is related to consumer goods that assure the means of survival.⁹ As a result, it suggests the non-durable character of labor's products in that they become consumer goods and not use objects as in the case of products of work.

⁷ *The Human Condition*, p. 109.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

The concept of labor as an ongoing process between production and consumption, which reveals the cyclicity of this process, denotes a “naturalness” in that it pertains to the very life of man, to his survival, and thus is categorically different from the “unnaturalness,” or the “artificiality” of the products of work that assure the durability of the world. This naturalness takes us back to the notion of necessity, since it is necessary for man to labor in order to attain the necessities of survival. The naturalness denotes the difference between labor and work in the sense that labor as an activity is not governed by the rules of instrumentality because it is not done in terms of means and ends with a view of utility in the sense of the activity of work and its products. Although labor becomes a means to sustain life, it is considered from the perspective of necessity, rather than utility. Thus, laboring stems from necessities and ends in achieving the satisfaction of these necessities.

In Arendt's terms, “of all human activities, only labor, and neither action nor work, is unending, progressing automatically in accordance with life itself and outside the range of wilful decisions or humanly meaningful purposes.”¹⁰ This is another way in which labor differs from work, the latter referring to “utility” and serving a purpose rather than necessity in accordance with a production that realizes an end through a means, for instance, wood's being used to produce a table in order for one to eat on it. Arendt states that

all human activities which arise out of necessity to cope with them are bound to the recurring cycles of nature and have in themselves no beginning and no end, properly speaking; unlike *working*, whose end has come when the object is finished, ready to be added to the common world of things, *laboring* always moves in the same circle, which is prescribed by the biological process of the living organism and the end of its 'toil and trouble' comes only with the death of this organism.¹¹

¹⁰ *The Human Condition*, p. 106.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

This passage clearly explains how labor and work differ from the perspective of creating durability, and their connection to necessity and utility. Accordingly, Arendt further states that “labor's products, the products of man's metabolism with nature, do not stay in the world long enough to become a part of it, and the laboring activity itself, concentrated exclusively on life and its maintenance, is oblivious of the world to the point of worldlessness.”¹² Obviously, she means that labor does not enable one to create a world, whereas the products of work producing an end through a means, is what creates the world – as in producing all the things that pertain to the world, such as tables, chairs, houses, etc. This is why Arendt denies labor the ability to *create a world*, emphasizing its incessant cycle of production and consumption which only enables one to maintain and to further produce one's life through sustaining the necessities of life. What Arendt means by the notion of “world” itself will be elaborated in the second chapter with a brief view to Heidegger's philosophy.

Thinking of labor in terms of necessity can bring us to the conditions of freedom. Arendt states that “man cannot be free if he does not know that he is subject to necessity, because his freedom is always won in his never wholly successful attempts to liberate himself from necessity.”¹³ When a political movement happens out of the need to satisfy these (natural) necessities, the very political action is reduced to an achievement in view of bettering life conditions. This is the ensnarement of politics in an instrumental mentality of means-ends categories. It is the reason why Arendt does not promote a politics based on the ground of human needs, appealing to the necessities of life, trying to provide the satisfaction of these

¹² *The Human Condition*, p. 118.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

needs as an end in itself; since this would not point to a new political sphere based on freedom but rather a politics based on the instrumentality of work, basically stemming from the necessities of laboring.¹⁴ The laborer can act freely or perform an action which is the manifestation of his freedom only if he acts without directing his action to achieving, for instance, better life conditions, where his view would be governed by the rules of instrumentality, yet grounded on the necessities of life. This kind of instrumentality differs from the instrumentality of work in the sense that it is based on necessity rather than utility, and the means and ends of such an activity are still considered in terms of necessity. Only when the laborer frees himself from the language of necessity can his freedom be realized. This point will be further discussed in the third chapter in the section on “action.”

Arendt's Concept of Work

The notion of work has been touched upon in the previous section concerning the distinction between labor and work where it has already become clear that work is considered in terms of durability and utility which pertain to means and ends. The durability of work will be analyzed through expounding on the notion of “reification” in what follows.

First of all, it should be noted that Arendt attributes to the products of work the function of stabilizing human life through their durability and

¹⁴ Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Penguin Books, 1977), p.60. Here, Arendt states that “it was under the rule of this necessity that the multitude rushed to the assistance of the French Revolution, inspired it, drove it onward, and eventually sent it to its doom, for this was the multitude of the poor. When they 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 the life process itself.”

it is this durability which gives the things of the world their relative independence from men who produced and use them, their 'objectivity' which makes them withstand, 'stand against,' and endure at least for a time, the voracious needs and wants of their living makers and users.¹⁵

Their production and usage “contain an element of consumption” through wearing out their durability. The table is used and worn out by time through usage, but it is not consumed like the bread is consumed. An element of destruction “is incidental to use but inherent in consumption.”¹⁶ The reason is the “reification” of products that consists in fabrication; the work of homo faber¹⁷ which is the use object produced by the worker, *can* be destroyed by the worker, but the consumer good produced by the laborer is inevitably destroyed through consumption. The products of work stands against, as it is stated above, the needs and wants of their makers and users; they have objectivity in the sense of being relatively independent from human beings. Reification is the concretization or the objectivation of a model under the hands of the fabricator. It refers to the product of the human being, and not to nature. This point constitutes the difference between a world reified by the human beings and nature, which needs no reification. The products of work insofar as they become use objects that have durability in the world are marked by this reification through which they receive an independence from the human beings. However, human beings live in a world with reified beings which are used by them, and this leads people to engage in relationships with these things based on utility. The relationship between reification and the world will be further elucidated in the next chapter.

In order to produce a product of work, there must be an element of violence

¹⁵ *The Human Condition*, p. 137.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

in the procedure to gather the material to work upon, for instance, the cutting of a tree in order to provide wood for the making of a table. This, as Arendt comments, is “the most elemental experience of human strength, and, therefore, the very opposite of painful, exhausting effort experienced in sheer labor.”¹⁸ Thus, according to her, solidity is the result of this strength and not of laboring. The cutting of the tree to gather wood in order to make a table already suggests an instrumentality of the activity of work inasmuch as it is related to an end as the focal point of the activities. In Arendt's words: “The actual work of fabrication is performed under the guidance of a model in accordance with which the object is constructed.”¹⁹ From this Arendt concludes that this model provides a form or image outside the worker and this modeling precedes the work process as “the urgencies of life process within the laborer precede the actual labor process.”²⁰ This is to say that without the image of a bed, or a real bed, a carpenter cannot produce a bed, and this designates a time of preparation which precedes the activity of work, of making the bed. Alike in this sense is the labor process preceded by the necessities of life; the laborer has to eat in order to labor, and this urgency is what pushes him to labor. However, as in contrast to the product of labor, the model of the worker does not disappear along with the finished product, but rather, “survives present, as it were, to lend itself to an infinite continuation of fabrication.”²¹ This infinite continuation of fabrication denotes the “potential multiplication” of work's products that differs from the “repetition” which

¹⁸ *The Human Condition*, p. 140.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

is the mark of labor²² because the products of work provide a stability in contrast to the instability of labor's products that pertains to biological necessities of life that cannot be reified in order to provide stability.

As it is already stated, the process of making regarding work is “determined by the categories of means and ends.”²³ Arendt argues that “labor also produces an end for consumption,” which again becomes a means to reproduce labor power,²⁴ but the production process of labor does not end because its end produced for consumption is what enables the production to continue, its end has to be consumed in order to sustain the laboring activity. To this, it must be added that “the fabricated thing is an end product in the twofold sense that the production process comes to an end in it ('the process disappears in the product' as Marx said) and that it is only a means to produce this end.”²⁵ Thus labor is not only a means to produce an end, but its end becomes a means to labor itself. Labor and work differ inasmuch as the latter produces as its final products use objects which have “enough durability” to remain in the world.

Now, concerning the end product of fabrication, “the process need not be repeated,”²⁶ but can be repeated, or multiplied in proportion with the demand of the market; whereas, laboring has a compulsory repetition, again as “one must eat in order to labor and must labor in order to eat.”²⁷ This is to mean that fabrication has a definite beginning and a definite, predictable end that distinguishes it from the other

²² *The Human Condition*, p. 142.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

human activities, i.e., from labor and action. As it is discussed in the first part of this chapter, labor is defined by “a cyclical movement of the body's life process,” and it “has neither a beginning nor an end.”²⁸ From this Arendt infers that the homo faber (the fabricator) is “free to produce and free to destroy” since he is, as in contrast to the laborer, not subject to the necessity of his own life and is neither “dependent on his fellow men” as it will be revealed in the case of action.

The instruments that make up the world of things through the process of work are also related to the process of labor in that they become tools for laboring, and Arendt claims that the tools manifest their worldly character in the “labor process, where they are indeed the only tangible things that survive both the labor and the consumption process itself.”²⁹ Here, and in other cases, the tools or products of work that create a world – as their objectivity withstands – do become means again as long as they are used in labor or in other processes as use objects. Thus, the fabricated things cannot claim to be ends in themselves.³⁰ Now what does being an end in itself mean? According to Arendt, it is the “for the sake of” which something is done as opposed to the “in order to.” This “for the sake of” denotes “meaningfulness” for Arendt in that she makes explicit that the element of utility inherent in fabrication reveals the fabricator's “innate incapacity to understand the distinction between utility and meaningfulness, which we express linguistically by distinguishing between 'in order to' and 'for the sake of.’”³¹ This distinction will be further evaluated in what in the third chapter regarding the relationship between “meaningfulness” and

²⁸ *The Human Condition*, p. 144.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

“action,” but now the relationship between the homo faber and utility should be laid out.

Arendt states that “in the world of homo faber, where everything must be of some use, that is, must lend itself as an instrument to achieve something else, meaning itself can appear only as an end, as an 'end in itself' which actually is either a tautology applying to all ends or a contradiction in terms.”³² This means that the homo faber who has an instrumental mentality views everything as a means to an end, turning all ends into further means, and thus the meaningfulness that pertains to an end in itself cannot be established from his perspective. She says that “meaning must be permanent and lose nothing of its character, whether it is achieved or, rather, found by man or fails by man and is missed by him.”³³ The homo faber cannot understand meaning just as the animal laborans fails to understand instrumentality. The fabrication activity builds the world with its instrumentality; however, the world receives its meaning through action, when it is viewed from outside the sphere of instrumentality.

In order to have meaning or to found meaningfulness, instrumentality should be abandoned after it enables man to “erect a world,”³⁴ and this means it should not prevail in the political sphere where action will take place. Thus, Arendt does not criticize instrumentality itself but “rather the generalization of the fabrication experience in which usefulness and utility are established as the ultimate standards for life and the world of men.”³⁵ The generalization of the fabrication experience

³² *The Human Condition*, p. 154.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

takes place “only insofar as the life process takes hold of things and uses them for its purposes” and this can be interpreted as the combination of necessity and utility in that the life process directs one's needs, and accordingly, everything like the use objects becomes mere means. In the end, there is no room for meaningfulness, for this is the point where human beings start to view everything as a means – apart from themselves - which in the end leads them to use everything without even questioning the “use of use itself.” Arendt is critical of the anthropocentric approach illustrated above as she states that where the human being qua homo faber instrumentalizes everything – what is not reified by the human being loses its value.³⁶

In opposition to her statement that the social life of the *laborer* is “worldless and herdlike,” Arendt attributes the *worker* the capacity to have a public realm of his own, though not political, through the exchange market where he can exchange his products with others and form a relationship with them.³⁷ The exchange market, where the owners of commodities and exchange values meet, takes the homo faber out of his isolation which is needed in order for him to produce. However, the market does not provide the worker – the fabricator – with a political sphere where he can transcend his instrumentality, and this point will be important in stating the conditions of such a sphere that enables one to manifest one's freedom through action.

There is one subcategory within the category of work that Arendt sets aside, denying an inherent utility to it and this is the category of the work of art: “The proper intercourse with a work of art is certainly not 'using' it; on the contrary, it

³⁶ *The Human Condition*, p. 156.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

must be removed carefully from the whole context of ordinary use objects to attain its proper place in the world.”³⁸ She states that works of art are the “most intensely worldly of all tangible things,” since “they are not subject to use of living creatures, a use which, indeed, far from actualizing their own inherent purpose – as the purpose of a chair is actualized when it is sat upon – can only destroy them.”³⁹ Their durability is of a higher order, as their “reification is more than mere transformation; it is transfiguration.”⁴⁰ For instance, poetry secures its durability from memorability. Works of art are productions of thought, and thought is as useless as the works of art it inspires, it has “no end nor aim outside itself.”⁴¹ Being a production of thought, the uselessness of the artwork denotes the artwork's being outside the sphere of utility, and as such its having no instrumentality inherent to itself.

Arendt's distinction between labor and work serves to explain the difference between the life process as bound to biological necessities and the capability of erecting a world that humans live in. In the end, she argues that

the man-made world of things, the human artifice erected by *homo faber*, becomes a home for mortal men, whose stability will endure and outlast the ever-changing movement of their lives and actions, only inasmuch as it transcends both the sheer functionalism of things produced for consumption and the sheer utility of objects produced for use.⁴²

The man-made world of things becomes a home for mortal men only inasmuch as the human artifice is “a place fit for action and speech.”⁴³

³⁸ *The Human Condition*, p. 167.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 173.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 173. Here, Arendt defines the hierarchical system of labor, work, and action; maintaining that “if the *animal laborans* needs the help of *homo faber* to ease his labor and remove his pain,

A Criticism of Arendt's Criticism of Marx

The above analysis of the distinction between labor and work is Arendt's basis for her Marx criticism. The way in which she elaborates the notion of labor leads her to accuse Marx of having rendered the activity of labor as the most important activity in human life,⁴⁴ thereby abandoning human beings to the necessities of life which in the end turns into an endless struggle to maintain the life process.⁴⁵ However, her criticism can be proven wrong when one explicates her references to Marx. This explication will start off with what Marx actually refers to when he uses the word “labor,” for Arendt seems to confuse two different aspects of labor. Firstly, she acknowledges that labor stems from necessity, that one must labor in order to survive; but her examples from antiquity⁴⁶ do not coincide with what Marx expresses

and if mortals need his 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 and 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.” This entails two things: 1) The world erected by the fabricator is necessary in order to establish the “space of appearance” in which human beings will come together and act in a way that transcends the “sheer functionalism” of labor and the “sheer utility” of the things produced by the work of *homo faber*, and 2) The human being manifesting himself in action and speech needs the *homo faber* in order to be remembered after his action is over, i.e., the story-teller telling the actor's story and making it fit for remembrance. Also, it should be noted that the durability of the products of work provide the aspect of “worldliness” needed for action and speech to take place.

⁴⁴ Hannah Arendt, “Karl Marx and the Tradition of Western Political Thought,” *Social Research*, (Summer, 2002). Here, she states, against Marx, that “the really anti-traditional and unprecedented side of his thought is his *glorification of labor*, and his reinterpretation of the class – the working class – that philosophy since its beginning had always despised” (p. 6, emphasis added). The consequence of the glorification of labor is that “labor as an activity no longer belongs to the strictly private realm of life: it became a public political fact of the first order” (Ibid., p. 7).

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 10: “For when Marx stated that labor is the most important activity of man, he was saying in terms of the tradition that not freedom but necessity is what makes man human.”

⁴⁶ In *The Human Condition*, Arendt expounds upon the notion of labor with reference to the activity of the slaves in ancient Greece, who in toil and trouble only labored in order sustain their lives and to reproduce, and who were denied the public realm where only those liberated from the necessities of life could have an appearance among their equals, i.e., their fellow free men. Then, she concludes that labor as the most degraded form of human activity has been elevated by Marx

in the *Capital*, the other aspect of human labor grounding the difference from mere animal-like activity due to the element of “imagination” that the human being has:

Labour is, in the first place, a process which both man and Nature participate, and in which man of his own accord starts, regulates, and controls the material reaction between himself and Nature. He opposes himself to Nature as one of her own forces, setting in motion arms and legs, head and hands, the natural forces of his body, in order to appropriate Nature's productions *in a form adapted to his own wants*. By thus acting on the external world and changing it, he at the same time changes his own nature. He develops his slumbering powers and compels them to act in obedience to his sway. *We are not now dealing with those primitive instinctive forms of labor that remind us of the mere animal*. An immeasurable interval of time separates the state of things in which a man brings his labour-power to market for sale as a commodity, from that state in which human labour was still in its first instinctive stage. We pre-suppose labour in a form that stamps it as exclusively human. *A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguished the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality*. At the end of every labour-process, we get result that already existed in the imagination the labourer at its commencement. He not only effects a change of form in the material on which he works, but he also realises a purpose of his own that gives the law to his modus operandi, and to which he must subordinate his will.⁴⁷

From this passage, it can be clearly inferred that Arendt's concept of “work” coincides with Marx's concept of “labor.” This can be further maintained by Marx's idea that the human being differs from other beings through his capacity to produce consciously. A merely animal-like production (which often results in perfection, e.g. the honeybees' construction of a beehive) cannot be identical with a human production because the latter possesses the element of imagination, and “what he erects, he erects before in his imagination.”⁴⁸ This point is dismissed in Arendt's

to such a level that every activity now has turned into laboring; inseparable from the life's necessities and their satisfaction.

⁴⁷ Karl Marx, *Capital*, (New York: International Publishers, 1967), pp. 177-178 (emphases added).

⁴⁸ The element of imagination expressed by Marx in his *Capital* is what differentiates human production from animal production, and in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (New York: International Publishers, 1964), he states that “the animal is immediately one with its

criticism of Marx as she expresses that the laborer does not equal to the “worker” in the sense that the latter proceeds from a model when producing his product.

Arendt's criticism of Marxian labor based on her distinction between labor and work is actually a fact that Marx acknowledges about the capitalist mode of production. In his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, when dealing with the “Wages of Labor,” Marx analyzes the relationship between the accumulation of capital and the division of labor, stating that “with this division of labor on the one hand and the accumulation of capital on the other, the worker becomes ever more exclusively dependent on labor, and on a particular, very one-sided, machine-like labor at that.”⁴⁹ The worker's dependence on labor resembles what Arendt criticizes in fact about labor; however, it should be noted that Marx's contention is alike to criticize this kind of labor emerging from the dynamics of capitalism itself. This point should be distinguished from the *activity* of labor which Marx defines as the capacity of human production.

Now the reason underlying Arendt's criticism of Marx is her identification of the activity of labor with labor's products which she deems objects for consumption in contrast to the objects of use which the activity of work produces.⁵⁰ Due to this

life activity. It does not distinguish itself from it. It is *its life activity*. Man makes his life activity itself the object of his will and of his consciousness. He has conscious life activity” (p. 113). However, in the case of alienated labor, this relationship is reversed, and “he makes his life activity, his *essential* being, a mere means to his *existence*” (Ibid, p.113).

⁴⁹ Karl Marx, *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 68.

⁵⁰ In *The Human Condition*, Arendt states that the classical economists and Karl Marx articulated that “the laboring activity itself, regardless of historical circumstances and independent of its location in the private or the public realm, possesses indeed a 'productivity' of its own, no matter how futile and non-durable its products may be. This productivity does not lie in any of labor's products but in the human 'power,' whose strength is not exhausted when it has produced the means of its own subsistence and survival but is capable of producing a 'surplus,' that is, more than necessary for its own 'reproduction'” (p.88). Arendt's contention is that the dismissal of a productive force which enables the human being to erect a world will destroy the difference between labor and work, thus resulting in the identification of both categories which would lead the human being to be bound to life's necessities (e.g. natural necessities of survival and reproduction). However, this is far from Marx's view on labor since he analyzes the notion with regard to its end products – which will turn

regard, laboring as a life activity is subject to necessity (categorical) which is “worldless,” and work as another activity is subject to utility (hypothetical) that creates “worldliness.”⁵¹ However, Marx's analysis shows that labor creates use-values: “In the value of each commodity there is contained useful labor, i.e., productive activity of a definite kind and exercised *with a definite aim*.”⁵² Moreover, he does suggest that labor is what creates a world of objects, and “in creating a world of objects, by his practical activity, in his work upon inorganic nature, man proves himself a conscious species being, i.e., as a being that treats the species as its own essential being, therefore, or that treats itself as a species being.”⁵³ Here, Marx uses the term species being (*Gattungswesen*) in order not to point to a human nature for he does not contend with the idea of a human nature that is not conditioned by social and historical circumstances as well as by the human being himself. On the contrary, this species being points to the human being's capacity of producing.⁵⁴ Thus, “the object of labor is the objectification of man's species life.”⁵⁵

out to be “commodities” that establish the appearance of the “social relations” between human beings. This point will be analyzed in the next chapter when dealing with the fetishism of commodities.

⁵¹ Arendt states that in Marx's system “labor's productivity is measured and gauged against the requirements of the life process for its own reproduction; it resides in the potential surplus inherent in human labor power, not in the quality or character of the things it produces” (*The Human Condition*, p. 93). However, this is a very obvious dismissal of the laborer's production of use-values which would be counted among Arendt's homo faber's products of work.

⁵² *Capital*, p. 42 (emphasis added).

⁵³ *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 113.

⁵⁴ Avoiding attributing a specific nature to human beings, but rather assigning conditions and capacities to them is a point endorsed by both Marx and Arendt, for Arendt also uses the term “human condition” instead of “human nature” when discussing the human beings' activities. The human being's species being refers to humanity as well, which will be discussed in the next chapter under the heading “Marxian self-alienation and Arendtian world-alienation.”

⁵⁵ *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 114.

An Explication of Arendt's Line of Reasoning

In line with everything stated above, it is clear that there are certain statements that can be maintained from Arendt's line of reasoning. If a person does A in order to achieve B, then this person can be said to have acted in an instrumental manner. However, this instrumentality reigning in the means-end category in turn denotes a necessity imposed on the person in order for the fulfillment of an end. This necessity implies that the person cannot claim freedom for his action. This point is applicable to both the laborer and the worker, as the former necessarily labors in order to sustain his life, and as the latter produces within the framework of utility. However, if one is to claim freedom for one's action, then it should be the case that a necessity is not imposed on the person. This, in turn, would mean that this person does not do something in order to achieve something else, but rather, that the person does something for the sake of itself. This is the condition on which the person can claim freedom for his action.

The conclusion that Arendt would like to maintain would be that if a person does not do A in order to achieve B, but rather he does A for the sake of A, then the person's action would reveal the person's freedom. Since this freedom is equivalent to doing A for the sake of A, it reveals the "meaning" of the action and not its instrumentality pertaining to a kind of utility. Now, if it is not the case that "one does A in order to achieve B," then it does not necessarily follow that one does A for the sake of A. In Arendt's view, freedom can only be manifested when one does A in order to achieve A, thus when a person does A for the sake of itself. This means that

when a person does A in order to achieve ~A (which includes B as one of its subsets) “alienation” is created insofar as the person alienates himself in performing something that results in something that is not his own. In order to eliminate this alienating result, the action must be done for its own sake; thus preserving the identity of A with itself. This is how freedom is manifested in Arendt's exposition of the political action that reveals a “principle” apart from its motives and goals. The goals and motives of the action on the one hand and its principle on the other follow from the distinction between the “in-order-to” and “for-the-sake-of” relationships of human beings. This distinction will be dealt with in the upcoming chapter.

According to Arendt, the elimination of the alienation mentioned above is achieved by overcoming necessities and utility, and eliminating (natural) necessities entails a kind of independence from nature. She criticizes the naturalness bestowed upon the human being by labor because nature relates to necessity, and it is not the realm of the political where freedom can be manifested. This necessity also points to a kind of teleology in which the human being's end becomes the continuation of life. It is why politics (or political action) is not viewed as natural by Arendt as she denies any teleological aspect to it. Thus, Arendt criticizes modern politics for having turned politics into a making (fabrication) which is saddled with means-and-ends categories.⁵⁶ The idea of overcoming necessities and utility is also explicit in Marx's concept of self-actualization which can be considered with a view to emancipation from labor as resulting from *external reasons*. Arendt attempts to show that this is Marx's “fundamental contradiction which runs like a red thread through the whole of

⁵⁶ According to Arendt's line of reasoning, freedom can only be sought in meaning and not in utility. When a political action turns into utilizing a certain means for a certain end, its meaning is lost. This thesis will aim at showing how meaning can be established when Arendt's category of political action is read with a view of Marx's concept of self-actualization.

Marx's thought,⁵⁷ because it seems contradictory to state that the human being must be emancipated from labor while assuming that it is the “eternal necessity imposed by nature.”⁵⁸ However, it will be shown that Marx's statements do not contradict each other in what follows.

First of all, it should be stated that both Arendt and Marx agree on the fact that labor is necessary for survival; however, when labor results in alienation⁵⁹ and turns into a means for life rather than becoming an end in itself,⁶⁰ then the “generalization of utilization”⁶¹ prevails among the human beings' social relations as well. This is what Marx wants to do away with, since the human being is a social being, his relationships with other human beings should be a socialized one, rather than one based on utility. As Suchting states:

Man must be liberated from labor that is determined only by *external* necessity, labor that is non-specific to the individual men, which is devoted to the production of what is common to the needs of human beings as such, that is, the material presuppositions of their lives, 'laboring that is determined by want and external utility.'⁶²

This stated, it should be clear that the emancipation from labor is expressed as an emancipation from laboring through an external necessity, which is imposed by the capitalist mode of production that aims at the production of wealth.⁶³ The

⁵⁷ *The Human Condition*, p. 104.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

⁵⁹ This notion will be explicated in the next chapter under the heading “Marxian self-alienation and Arendtian world-alienation.”

⁶⁰ In his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Marx states that as a result of the worker's alienation from his product, his production activity, and his species-being; “life itself appears only as a *means to life*” (p. 113).

⁶¹ I use this phrase in order to denote what Arendt calls the “generalization of the fabrication experience.”

⁶² W. A. Suchting, “Marx and Hannah Arendt's *The Human Condition*,” *Ethics*, Vol. 73, No. 1 (Oct., 1962), p. 52.

⁶³ Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: foundations of the critique of political economy (rough draft)*, translated

emancipation from labor points to a free mode of production where self-actualization is at stake. It will be argued in this thesis that the Marxian self-actualization restores the manifestation of freedom not only through political action, as Arendt states it, but also as an action which is characterized by its being social, and thus happening in a “community”⁶⁴ where self-actualization of human beings becomes an end in itself. From the Marxian point of view, the conclusion of the explication would be formulated as the overcoming of external necessities through self-actualization that would lead one to the manifestation of one's freedom in a community.

Another important point in Arendt's Marx criticism is her emphasis on labor's production of consumption goods, which she distinguishes from objects for use. However, the basis of Marxian labor is the production of use-values, expressing the production of use-value as well as exchange-value that leads to the products' appearance as “commodities” in the market. Marx explicates this when he says that

in the labour-process, therefore, man's activity, with the help of the instruments of labour, effects an alteration, designed from the commencement, in the material worked upon. *The process disappears in the product; the latter is a use-value, Nature's material adapted by a change of form to the wants of man.* Labour has incorporated itself with its subject: the former is materialised, the latter transformed.⁶⁵

with a foreword by Martin Nicolaus, (Harmondsworth, England; Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1973), p. 104: “Not only the category, labor, but labor in reality has here become the means of creating wealth in general, and has ceased to be organically linked with particular individuals in any specific form.” The discussion of this mode of production and its consequences is reserved for the chapter concerning the fetishism of commodities.

⁶⁴ As Marx states: “Only in community [with others has each] individual the means of cultivating his gifts in all directions; only in the community, therefore, is personal freedom possible” (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology: Part one: with selections from parts two and three, together with Marx's "Introduction to a critique of political economy,"* edited and with introduction by C.J. Arthur, (New York : International Publishers, 1970), p. 83). This community qua a whole is not just a mere sum of its parts, which would render its parts merely as means to the formation of this whole. It is a community in which private interests are overcome, hence, it is not based on a utilitarian view. It is a community of rational human beings who have realized their truly social relations, and it is “in a real community the individuals obtain their freedom in and through their association” (Ibid., p. 83).

⁶⁵ *Capital*, p. 180 (emphases added).

A product does have a use-value insofar as it has a utility and “whether a use-value is to be regarded as raw material, as instrument of labour, or as product, this is determined only by its function in the labour-process, by the position which it there occupies: as this varies, so does its character.”⁶⁶ However, a product's being as a “commodity” appears, at first, with regard to its exchange-value which is the condition of its appearance in the market. This point will be discussed in the next chapter regarding the “fetishism of commodities.”

In the end, Arendt's distinction between labor and work does not apply to Marx's analysis in that Marxian labor is an activity which creates the world. The curious point about the *loss of the world* will be dealt with in the next chapter laying out a basis for the Arendtian world-alienation through the Marxian self-alienation in order to show how the fetishism of commodities appears as the guise of social relations which reveals the generalization of utilization that prevents human beings from maintaining their plurality.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 181.

CHAPTER 3

THE WORLD AS TRANSCENDENCE AND AS THE MAN-MADE WORLD OF THINGS

The notions of worldlessness and worldliness, explicated in the first chapter regarding the activities of labor and work, will now receive a further elucidation through an elaboration on the notion of “world” which Arendt uses in two different senses: First, as the man-made world of things and the “in-order-to” relations which the human beings form in this world, and second, as the “space of appearance” that lends the *transcendence* of the “sheer functionalism” of life and the “sheer utility” of products of work, which reveals the “for-the-sake-of-which” in human affairs. The Arendtian ontology of the world will lead to the discussion of Marx's self-alienation and Arendt's world-alienation in order to investigate the roots of the latter in the former. The last point of discussion will be about the notion of “the social” through Marx's critique of the fetishism of commodities and the “generalization of utilization” which Arendt criticizes. This discussion will be an attempt to bring Marx and Arendt together in their critical approach to the instrumentalization of necessities.

The World

In the beginning of *The Human Condition*, Arendt states that

the objectivity of the world – its object – or thing-character – and the human condition supplement each other; because human existence is conditioned existence, it would be impossible without things, and things would be a heap of unrelated articles, a non-world, if they were not the conditioners of human existence.⁶⁷

The human conditions of labor and work have been stated in the previous section; namely, necessity (life) and utility. These conditions are provided by the world, as the conditioner of human existence; however, it is curious what Arendt means by “world” since she nowhere makes it explicit apart from one passage in which we may find traces of the Heideggerian being-in-the-world:

The *vita activa*, human life in so far as it is actively engaged in doing something, is always rooted in a world of men and of man-made things which it never leaves or altogether transcends. Things and men form the environment for each of man's activities, which would be pointless without such location; yet this environment, the world into which we are born, would not exist without the human activity which produced it, as in the case of fabricated things; which takes care of it, as in the case of cultivated land; or which established it through organization, as in the case of the body politic.⁶⁸

This passage suggests the necessary relationship a human being forms with the things surrounding him; i.e., in producing and using things, in engaging with the world. The world in this sense is the man-made world of things, and the sheer utility of the products of work are necessary insofar as the human beings need a space where action can take place. In Arendt's words, “the world, the man-made home

⁶⁷ *The Human Condition*, p. 9.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

erected on earth and made of the material which earthly nature delivers into human hands, consists not of things that are consumed but of things that are used.”⁶⁹ The world, explicated as such is a world created by the homo faber, through his production of tools to be used both as ends, and as means for further production. The human being relates to the reified things in the world, and thus engages in activities “in order to” achieve certain ends. In Arendt's system, it is because the animal laborans lacks this instrumentality and engages in an activity which only results in consumer goods – is he denied the “worldliness” that the activity of the homo faber establishes. However, the conclusion of the first chapter has shown that this is not the case, at least from the Marxian point of view.

Now Arendt's analysis consists of three steps which lead her to define the sphere of political action in which the human being manifests his freedom. This sphere is the world qua the public realm which provides the space of appearance that is established in the presence of other human beings, who, in their plurality, share the capacity to act, to begin something anew, which manifests the heart of their freedom. It is in order for her to show that this is the only sphere where freedom from necessity and utility is present that she states: 1) the laboring activity stems from and results in life's necessities and it is bound up with the life process in such a way that the laborer is worldless, 2) the work of the homo faber is governed by instrumentality and as such results in erecting a world through the reification of its products, and 3) the human being qua the actor discloses his being as freedom through his words and deeds in action, in a world where he is with others, which, as such, has been reified by the work of homo faber which also grounds the human condition of plurality. The worldlessness, worldliness, and being-in-the-world-with-others are of importance in

⁶⁹ *The Human Condition*, p. 134.

the Arendtian system, and, they should be laid out with reference to Heidegger's *Being and Time*. In this section I will briefly lay out the Heideggerian notion of the “world” or the “worldhood” of the world in order to better elucidate Arendt's analysis.

In Villa's words, “Heidegger argues, we do not stand over against or out of the world but always already find ourselves within a world, alongside other entities and beings like ourselves”⁷⁰ and this “‘world’ is a characteristic of Dasein itself.”⁷¹ The world in Heidegger's view is not a totality of things, but of relations, “what Heidegger calls the 'equipmental' relations.”⁷² This means that the human beings first encounter entities in the world through their relationship in using them. It is the way in which we use things that we get to know them. In his *Being and Time*, Heidegger states that “the kind of Being which equipment possesses in which it manifests itself in its own right – we call 'readiness-to-hand (Zuhandenheit).’”⁷³ This readiness-to-hand is revealed in the relationship the Dasein (or the human being) forms with what is ready-to-hand, for instance, the pen and the paper I am using to write this paper down are revealed to me by their readiness-to-hand in which I use them in order to write something down. Heidegger puts forth this relationship as an involvement; the involvement of the Dasein rooted in its concerns.⁷⁴ This involvement precedes the encounter with the presence-at-hand of the object, for it is only when the pen breaks

⁷⁰ Dana R. Villa, *Arendt and Heidegger: the fate of the political* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 121.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 121.

⁷³ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time: a translation of Sein und Zeit*, translated by Joan Stambaugh, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 98.

⁷⁴ The concerns mentioned here are everyday ones, and should be distinguished from Dasein's being as *care*.

that I encounter it as a thing present-at-hand, that is, just as what it objectively is.

This primary experience with the things that are ready-to-hand shows our “dwelling” in this world, for the human being relates to things as well as to other human beings – he is among other beings all the time. The world first opens up in practice. Thus it reveals a horizon of possibilities just like the Being of Dasein presents itself as a possibility. The danger occurs when these possibilities are rigidified: “When any vocabulary, practice, or space of disclosure become this rigidified, it begins to conceal more than it reveals.”⁷⁵ This could be formulated as the generalization of the “in-order-to” relations which cover up the “for-the-sake-of” which the human beings are “there” in the world. Thus, the human being's dwelling in the world assumes a kind of purposivity in which Dasein's being as his possibility is concealed.

Arendt's analysis of the instrumental mentality of the homo faber refers to such an involvement with the things around us in that we regard them as use objects to be used in order to achieve certain ends; only to generalize this fabrication experience which leads us to view every practice in the means-end category. This is why she states that although the activity of work comes to an end in the finished product, the product is reduced again to a means to achieve further ends; i.e., the production of the pen which lends itself as a means for further use. The standard of utility inherent in the activity of work is thus generalized as I discussed in the previous chapter, and the meaning of the “for-the-sake-of” is lost in the “in-order-to” relations we establish with the objects surrounding ourselves. The human being creates the world, and he can affect it; at the same time being affected by it, through

⁷⁵ *Arendt and Heidegger*, p. 129.

utility. However, the meaningfulness of the “for-the-sake-of” reigns in another sphere where the human being does not act within a means-end category: “the meaningfulness of such action and speech has nothing to do with utility and success; indeed the illuminative or revelatory capacity of action springs from its ability to transcend these criteria.”⁷⁶

The meaning of action is manifest in our being-in-the-world, and with others. However, Arendt does not include *social relations* among our being with others as a mode of presenting human plurality, but rather as our being with others in a way that conceals this plurality. She underestimates the “social” for it rests on the loss of the public realm, as the private realm has covered up the public under the name of “the social.” The term “social” comes from the term “society,” and in Arendt's terms, “society is the form in which the fact of mutual dependence for the sake of life and nothing else assumes public significance and where the activities connected with sheer survival are permitted to appear in public.”⁷⁷ Whenever sheer survival is at stake, human plurality cannot be manifest for the biological necessities reduce human beings to the merely animal. Canovan states that “‘society’ in her sense is contrasted with an authentic public realm in which individuals are united in such a way that their plurality is preserved and made manifest.”⁷⁸ This point is important in revealing Arendt's conviction that life as such should not be the for-the-sake-of which human beings act, but rather, freedom as the manifestation of the human being in his distinctness can be the *principle* of political action: “It makes a huge difference

⁷⁶ *The Human Condition*, p. 138.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁷⁸ Margaret Canovan, *Hannah Arendt: a reinterpretation of her political thought* (Cambridge [England]; New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 117.

whether freedom or life is posited as the highest of all goods – as the standard by which all political action is guided and judged.”⁷⁹

In *On Revolution*, Arendt states the transition of the public realm into the social with the mark of the French Revolution as it “opened the gates of the political realm to the poor, this realm had indeed become 'social.’”⁸⁰ Thus, for Arendt, the term “social” does not denote the public realm in which human beings manifest their actions, but rather, it blurs the distinction between the private and the public realms, thus enabling private matters to enter into public debate. This is why she denies the guidance of social affairs in the political arena, where private concerns become publicized and action as a performance loses its transcendence of necessity and utility. According to her, through such action, meaning cannot be established.

Marx's Self-Alienation and Arendt's World-Alienation

The two-fold characteristics of the world paves the way to the analysis of the loss of the world with reference to the notion of alienation which plays an important role in both Marx's and Arendt's systems. This analysis aims to reveal – through a discussion of the fetishism of commodities - how Arendt's criticism can overlap with Marx's.

The Marxian analysis of alienation has three features: alienation from one's activity, from one's product, and from one's species being.⁸¹ It has been already stated that Marx views the species being as his essential being which endorses the human being's capacity to produce which is the human being's primary act in that it allows

⁷⁹ Hannah Arendt, “Introduction into Politics.” In *The Promise of Politics*, edited and with an introduction by Jerome Kohn, (New York: Schocken Books, 2005), pp. 144-145.

⁸⁰ *On Revolution*, “The Social Question,” p. 91.

⁸¹ *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, pp. 111-114.

him to create a world and manifest his freedom, and it relates to the whole humankind.⁸² How, then, does alienation come about if laboring is seen as the primary activity of the human being? Mainly, when it is forced, and when it becomes a mere means to sustain life. Thus, when it is presented as stemming from an external necessity in order to serve utility: “The fact that labor is *external* to the worker, i.e., it does not belong to his essential being; that in his work, therefore, he does not affirm himself but denies himself, does not feel content but unhappy, does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind.”⁸³ This is not to deny that labor is a necessity for survival, but to assert that *alienated labor* comes from an external necessity through which it becomes merely a means in order to sustain life. As laboring becomes the sole activity of the human being stemming from external necessities, “what is animal becomes human and what is human becomes animal.”⁸⁴ When his labor is alienated, the human being only produces in order to satisfy his needs and others' wants, and not to reveal his capacity for free and spontaneous production. This establishes the human being's alienation from his product, thereby from the activity of producing and from his capacity of free and spontaneous production as his species being, his labor is alienated. The object of his product stands against the worker since it is not *his* objectivation through a free activity.

Now, the Arendtian notion of world-alienation points to the “twofold flight

⁸² Marx states that it is “also because he treats himself as the actual, living species; because he treats himself as a universal and therefore a free being.” (*Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 112).

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

from the earth into the universe and from the world into the self,”⁸⁵ and it is with the latter that we will be concerned for “the flight from the world into the self” means, for Arendt, the elevation of the life process to a point where it becomes the highest good, and in turn deems politics, thus, freedom, impossible. The return to the self means, for her, the return and imprisonment into the necessities of the life process for the self in isolation cannot manifest freedom (e.g. the fabricator). Accordingly, Arendt's contention is that the Marxian glorification of labor denotes the return to the self, thereby eliminating meaningfulness from human affairs that are conditioned by the human plurality.

However, alienation in both Marx and Arendt denotes a loss of the objective, both in the sense of the *objectivation* of the self and of the objectivity of the world. It is, in both instances, a return to natural necessities imposed on the human being. Thus, the Arendtian world-alienation does not fall far from the Marxian self-alienation, for the latter, too, regarded this kind of alienation as a condition for hindering the manifestation of freedom. This alienation is at the root of turning life into a means for life itself, thus making the human being incapable of a “free, spontaneous human activity.”

The Fetishism of Commodities and the Appearance of Social Relations

At this point, I would like to assert that the concept of alienation does have a link with the fetishism of commodities, since, when labor is alienated, the product of labor stands against the human being as an alien thing, in which the “social character” of human labor disappears. Due to this alienation, the commodities

⁸⁵ *The Human Condition*, p. 6.

assume social relations among themselves where “the mutual relations of the producers, within which the social character of their labour affirms itself, take the form of a social relation between the products.”⁸⁶

Now, what is a commodity? Marx states that “a commodity is, in the first place, an object outside us, a thing that by its properties satisfies human wants of some sort or another.”⁸⁷ However, the answer to this question needs a more specific distinction between a product and a commodity: A product is a thing that has a use-value insofar as it can be used, but a product becomes a commodity due to its exchange-value. A commodity is defined in bearing an exchange-value, which presents itself in the exchange relations of commodities as the factor of reducing human labor-power to “general human labor”⁸⁸ that shows itself as objective without bearing any relationship the human being who has this power. Accordingly, alienated from his activity of labor and his product, while at the same time *bearing* an exchange-value for his own labor-power, which he can and does sell, the human being himself is reduced to a commodity as well. The human being's product of labor stands against him in its objectivity, as does his labor.

The exchange-value is different from the substance of the product. It does not stand for what is material in it. The product's characteristics as a commodity can only be conceived of within the relations of commodities, and, this is what attributes the “fetishism of commodities” its curious being. Marx states that

the existence of the things *qua* commodities, and the value-relation between the products of labour which stamps them as commodities, have absolutely no connexion with their physical

⁸⁶ *Capital*, p. 72.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 67: “The general value-form is the reduction of all kinds of actual labour to their common character of being human labour generally, of being the expenditure of human labour-power.”

properties and with the material relations arising therefrom. *There it is a definite social relation between men, that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things.*⁸⁹

This fetishism points to the “generalization of utilization” in the Arendtian sense that the relationship between commodities appears as a “social relationship” in which the concept of the social is used in a pejorative sense. A commodity is produced *in order to be exchanged* so that the social relationships between human beings turn out to be mediated through commodities in exchange. As Marx states in his *Capital*:

Since the producers do not come into social contact with each other until they exchange their products, *the specific social character of each producer's labour does not show itself except in the act of exchange.* In other words, the labour of the individual asserts itself as a part of the labour of society, only by means of the relations which the act of exchange establishes directly between the products, and indirectly, through them, between the producers. To the latter, therefore, the relations connecting the labour of one individual with that of the rest appear, not as direct social relations between individuals at work, but as what they really are, material relations between persons and *social relations between things.*⁹⁰

This is the case in which the term social gains a pejorative sense in Marx, and Arendt would have agreed to this since she criticizes the generalization of utilization in human encounters which leads her to deem “the rise of the social” as the destruction of the distinction between the public and private realms. The exchange of commodities entails a “social” relationship between things of value which veils the labor which bestowed value upon them in the first place. Now the commodities are presented as independent things which bear values on their own, and they become alien things without regard to the labor which expended value on them. According to this, the fetishism of commodities resulting from alienation disguises the social

⁸⁹ *Capital*, p. 72 (emphasis added).

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 73 (emphases added).

relationships' human form, turning it into the form of commodities.

The mode of production conditions the appearance of commodities since the capitalist mode of production presupposes “exchange” and this exchange serves to enhance the standard of “utility” which manifests itself as determining the mode of human relationships under the guise of the social.⁹¹ This standard of utility undermines the human capacity of a social, free, and spontaneous production in which performing the activity of production would become the manifestation of freedom regardless of the product which comes about at the end.

In and through self- and world-alienation and the fetishism of commodities; freedom and worldliness are lost, for the human being cannot manifest his free activity and the world which he erects is reduced to instrumental relations between things. What is truly social, or human, is replaced by the specter of exchange-values, and the generalization of utilization reigns in the human beings' activities. However, Marx wants to save the human element in the social relations. A truly social community would consist of social relations that do not have such a disguise, and which would overcome alienation in order to introduce the human beings' capacity of free and spontaneous production.

The explication above is taken as the ground of the similarity between Arendt's political action, disclosing who someone is, and Marx's self-actualization which puts forth the objectivation of oneself. The main insight of the human capacity of production can be the *production of meaning*, which is not determined by the means-ends category, but which reveals itself in the flux of the activity. Thus, the capacity to produce can be equivalent to the capacity to begin something anew. It

⁹¹ The standard of utility applies to the being of the human being as well, since “the whole system of capitalist production is based on the fact that the workman sells his labour-power as a commodity.” (*Capital*, “Machinery and Modern Industry,” p. 430)

will be argued in the next chapter that this free production can be applied to the free political action which is disclosive of the “who”, and that it can be conceived of as producing the human being in a meaningful way which is not determined by the means-ends category of utility.

CHAPTER 4

THE MANIFESTATION OF FREEDOM: AN ATTEMPT TO READ ARENDT'S (POLITICAL) ACTION THROUGH MARX'S SELF-ACTUALIZATION – OR – ESTABLISHING A “PRODUCTIVE POLITICS”

The first chapter has laid out a criticism of Arendt's criticism of Marx and paved the way to bring the two thinkers together in their criticism of the “social” in the second chapter. Having elaborated on the notions of labor and the world; it is now time to tie up the issue at the point of “freedom.” This chapter will be *an attempt* to read Arendt's (political) action through Marx's self-actualization as the manifestation of freedom in order to set forth a “productive politics,” which will be taken up by joining the “capacity to produce” and the “capacity to begin something anew.” The discussion will start off with an analysis of Arendt's category of (political) action, and continue with Marx's notion of self-actualization in order to show how the two notions can be integrated by what I will call “producing meaning” through action's performativity and virtuosity. In the end, I hope, freedom will be manifested through the establishment of a “productive politics.”

Arendt's Concept of (Political) Action

Arendt sets forth human plurality as the “basic condition for both action and speech” in its having “the twofold character of equality and distinction.”⁹² On the one hand,

⁹² *The Human Condition*, p. 175.

equality reveals the condition for understanding each other, for being able to relate to one another in terms of understanding the past and projecting into the future.

Distinction, on the other hand, is the ground of distinguishing oneself from another and of promoting communication through speech and action which surpasses mere signs and sounds in order to be understood. These are the conditions of the human plurality for us who live together in the world. The notion of distinction differs from “otherness” in that the latter is what man shares with everything that is, and the former that which he shares with everything alive, and this distinction “becomes uniqueness, and human plurality is the paradoxical plurality of unique beings.”⁹³

Speech and action reveal this unique distinctness resting on human initiative, and not on different bodily appearances.⁹⁴ Speech and action are what *essentially* pertain to being human, but not as in terms of a “human essence” as such, which Arendt makes clear as she uses the term “human condition” for “the sum total of human activities and capabilities.”⁹⁵ However, I say action and speech refer to what is *essentially* human because it is in these activities that the human being manifests his freedom – unlike in the activities of laboring and working (fabricating) in which man is subject to the necessities of life or, governed by instrumentality. Arendt also makes clear that one can refrain from labor and work, and still not lose the human world, since “with word and deed we insert ourselves into the human world”⁹⁶ which, as in contrast to labor and work, does not rest on necessity or utility. This insertion

⁹³ *The Human Condition*, 176.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

stems from “beginning something new on our own initiative”⁹⁷ as she relates the verb “to act” to its Greek origin in which it means “to begin,” “to set something into motion.”⁹⁸ The notion of beginning is connected to the principle of freedom as will be explained in what follows.

A human being's capability of action is related to the fact that we can expect “the unexpected” from him. This is rooted in the notion of natality because action as a beginning corresponds to the fact of birth, and to the human condition of plurality.⁹⁹ The notion of beginning is addressing the question of the new – the novel – what is the new? Every beginning which the human being begins. This is the very human “capacity” pertaining to natality and his capacity is everywhere realized when the human being acts in a way that can manifest his freedom. This action is also an activity of disclosing because a human being's words and deeds are the disclosure of who somebody is as opposed to what someone is, i.e., a woman, a man, a laborer, a worker, etc. Speech has to accompany action in this sense because without it action would lose its actor, the “who” that is disclosed by his words. This is to say that action as a human performance requires speech not in a sense of utility where speech becomes a means for communication, but rather the speech in action discloses “what he does, has done, and intends to do.”¹⁰⁰ Arendt claims that “the disclosure of 'who' in contradistinction to 'what' somebody is - [...] is implicit in everything somebody says and does.”¹⁰¹ This is an implicit disclosure revealed in the performance of one's

⁹⁷ *The Human Condition*, p. 177.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

action and speech because the “who” of somebody cannot be explicated in terms of language which enables one to define oneself as “what” somebody is, again, as a woman, a student, an American, a soldier, etc.

The aspect of disclosure entails a being-with-others, a “human togetherness” and this does not mean “being for or against others” but being-with-them; since being for or against others denotes the elements of violence, coercion and strategic action considered within the means-ends category that are evaluated by external criteria among which could be counted moral justification of consequences and intentions. Arendt excludes these elements from the political since including them would “promote the view that political action *is* violence.”¹⁰² Also, in her “Karl Marx and the Tradition of Western Political Thought,” she states that “the use of violence disqualifies all forms of government because, according to the older conception, violence begins wherever the polis, the political realm proper, ends.”¹⁰³

This disclosure is not explicit to the agent itself either, and being unable to know who one discloses in action leads the agent to get out of the sphere of utility in which one can represent oneself as this or that in order to achieve one's purpose. Thus, any action that does not have the “disclosure of the agent in the act,” “loses its specific character and becomes one form of achievement among others.”¹⁰⁴ This means that whenever people start acting in terms of means and ends, their disclosure is concealed insofar as the action becomes a means to achieve an end. Arendt states that this is what happens when “people are only for or against people, as for instance in modern warfare, where “men go into action and use means of violence in order to

¹⁰² *Arendt and Heidegger*, p. 58.

¹⁰³ “Karl Marx and the Tradition of Western Political Thought,” p. 18.

¹⁰⁴ *The Human Condition*, p. 180.

achieve certain objectives for their own side and against the enemy.”¹⁰⁵

Now what is the significance of disclosure? In what way does it let one differentiate the human being qua the actor from the human being qua the laborer or the worker? Disclosing, bearing a name, having a “who” attached to the action is what gives the action its “meaning.” Without this disclosure action becomes a pure means to an end - thus providing utility but not meaningfulness. This “who” has a “curious intangibility” because the moment we want to express who somebody is, we start describing what somebody is and Arendt argues that “the living essence of the person as it shows itself in the flux of action and speech”¹⁰⁶ cannot be solidified by words. The flux of action points to the action's character as a performance.¹⁰⁷ The flux of action denotes its standing outside of the sphere of fabrication, and in Arendt's words, “action almost never achieves its purpose.”¹⁰⁸ This last point will be related to the unpredictability of action's outcome in what follows.

An agent can perform an action but he cannot be “the author or producer of his own life story” because “the stories, the results of action and speech, reveal an agent, but this agent is not an author or producer.”¹⁰⁹ The reason underlying this is that the outcome of an action cannot be predicted, for it is born into a web of human relationships that remains open to possibilities. On the contrary, the worker, or the fabricator, is the producer of his product in the sense that he himself creates the final

¹⁰⁵ *The Human Condition*, p. 180.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

¹⁰⁷ Considering the flux of action as a performance is what I believe can enable an integration of Arendt's political action and Marx's self-actualization since action is “the sheer to capacity to begin” as “the hidden source of *all production*” (*Between Past and Future*, p.169) (emphasis added).

¹⁰⁸ *The Human Condition*, p. 184.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 184.

product, and in isolation, not within the plurality of others; whereas, the agent in action needs the condition of human plurality in order to perform an action that will be meaningful. This is why the fabricator is denied meaningfulness, in that he produces in isolation with a view of means and ends, where the sole standard of his activity is utility. However, the actor, performing an act, can neither control the outcome of his action nor “make” a story out of his own action, since his action does not result in a reification like the work of the fabricator. Still, Arendt suggests that action's reification is possible and it is “only possible through a kind of repetition, the imitation or mimesis”¹¹⁰ and for instance, in theatre “is the political sphere of human life transposed into art.”¹¹¹

The condition of human plurality in action also reveals that it “acts into a medium where every reaction becomes a chain reaction and where every process is the cause of new processes”¹¹² and as reaction also refers to a new process, action and reaction cannot be considered in terms of a closed circle. Arendt says that “action always establishes relationships and therefore has an inherent tendency to force open all limitations and cut across all boundaries”¹¹³ and this is related to its “boundlessness” and its inherent “unpredictability.”¹¹⁴ The aspect of its unpredictability refers to the outcome of action and the actor's lack of knowledge or control over it, and this is in line with Arendt's asserting that action's “full meaning can reveal itself only when it has ended,”¹¹⁵ only when it is turned into a story that is

¹¹⁰ *The Human Condition*, p. 187.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 190.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 190.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 191.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

made not by the actor but the storyteller who perceives the action. Thus, when action becomes a product of work. The story of the action is important in Arendt's system, because “the unchangeable identity of the person, though disclosing itself intangibly in act and speech, becomes tangible only in the story of the actor's and speaker's life; but as such it can be known, that is, grasped as a palpable entity only after it has come to its end.”¹¹⁶

This is again related to the distinction between the fabricator and the actor, where the former produces tangible products and views them in their utility, whereas the latter can only act freely in a way that does not claim instrumentality – otherwise, his action would be reduced to another means for other ends, and thus would lose its meaning. When action is reduced to a means considered in terms of utility, it becomes work, and loses its meaning. Then the question arises: Can work become action? Arendt allows that it can become the *content of action* where no further action is desirable or possible, as in the case of the Greek legislator.¹¹⁷ She states that the Greeks “believed that the establishment of the polis requires a lawgiving act, but this lawgiver was not a citizen of the polis, and what he did was definitely not 'political',”¹¹⁸ but legislation as the legislator's work is what can give ground to political action as it provides the stability for creating the space of appearances where human beings can act freely.¹¹⁹

The condition of human plurality is realized in a “space of appearance” which

¹¹⁶ *The Human Condition*, p. 193.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

¹¹⁸ *The Promise of Politics*, “Introduction into Politics,” p. 129.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 194: “To them, the laws, like the wall around the city, were not results of action but products of making.”

“comes into being wherever men are together in the manner of speech and action, and therefore predates and precedes all formal constitution of the public realm and the various forms of government, that is the various forms in which the public realm can be organized.”¹²⁰ Now this space of appearance is there “wherever people gather together, [...] but only potentially, not necessarily and not forever.”¹²¹ Arendt relates this potentiality to the notion of power as it “is what keeps the public realm, the potential space of appearance between acting and speaking men, in existence” and it “is actualized only where word and deed have not parted company, where words are not empty and deeds not brutal, where words are not used to veil intentions but to disclose realities, and deeds are not used to violate and destroy but to establish relations and create new realities.”¹²² Although Arendt does not give specific examples regarding this last point, it can be inferred from what is stated previously that she means any action that is related to violence destroys this potential power to come into actuality in a space of appearance. This is analogous to the instrumental mentality of the activity of work, in that it destroys one thing *in order to produce* something else. Thus, such action destroys the power to keep a space of appearance intact, and it reveals a *power over* others and eradicates the equality among human beings which can be only be manifested in a space of appearance.

This potentiality of power comes from the notion of “*dynamis*” in Greek, where power is thought of as a capacity to be realized rather than a force or strength that is actually there, as in the case of the fabricator where it is clear that the fabricator has *power over* his products. The power of the space of appearance is;

¹²⁰*The Human Condition*, p. 199.

¹²¹*Ibid.*, p. 199.

¹²²*Ibid.*, p. 200.

however, potentially there, and it can only be actualized through action, where human beings have “power to” act, but not “power over” each other which would destroy all the meaning of action. This actuality is the performance of words and deeds in which there is no end pursued or no work left behind – as it would be in the case of fabrication. Arendt states that “the performance is the work, the *energeia*”¹²³ and it is “outside the category of means and ends.”¹²⁴ Through action – performance – can the political realm be realized. This notion of performance is related to the notion of virtuosity, which becomes the characteristics of any action done through words and deeds. The reason is because any utterance reveals a kind of virtuosity whose end is not a solidification of words, but rather utterance as a performative speech enables the locutor to manifest himself.

Once we go back to the discussions in the previous chapters, we can realize that neither labor nor work possess the characteristics of an action which establishes the political realm; however, consistent with her analysis, Arendt states that “workmanship may be an unpolitical way of life, but it certainly is not an antipolitical one”¹²⁵ because fabrication is still related to the *space of appearance*. Firstly, as it is based on the tangible things it produces, and secondly, as the fabricator, leaving his isolation, comes into contact with other people to show his products. Then, when Arendt states that work is unpolitical, her emphasis is on the inherent standard of utility that the activity of work possesses. This activity does not stand against the political, but the framework within which it operates is not sufficient to found “meaning” for it rather stays at the level of utility.

¹²³ *The Human Condition*, p. 206.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 207.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 212.

On the other hand, Arendt attains that “laboring is antipolitical,” since the laborer is alone with his body and its natural necessities. The way she distinguishes between labor and work from the viewpoint of politics explicates why she deems labor an antipolitical activity. Since the political stands for freedom, stemming from necessities and continuing incessantly for the satisfaction of these necessities, the laboring activity stands in direct opposition to political activity. Laboring results in the “loss of all awareness of individuality and identity”¹²⁶ where there is no equality but *sameness*. This sameness provides a unity among the laborers through which they cannot realize their distinctness but rather a becoming one as far as the metaphor goes, thus incapable of retaining their identity which would in turn reveal their plurality.¹²⁷ From the viewpoint of labor, every human being is the same inasmuch as each is bound to biological necessities. Arendt argues that “the incapacity of the animal laborans for distinction and hence for action and speech seems to be confirmed by the striking absence of serious slave rebellions in ancient and modern times.”¹²⁸ Thus, the way in which labor reveals human beings in their utter sameness destroys the condition of political action, that is human plurality.

Now, Arendt describes the transformation of action into a “making” where we instrumentalize action in terms of means and ends which would disable us to “prevent anybody's using all means to pursue recognized ends.”¹²⁹ This relates to her conviction that the utilitarian language should be purged from the realm of politics,

¹²⁶ *The Human Condition*, p. 213.

¹²⁷ As Arendt states in “The Social Question”: “In so far as we all need bread, we are indeed all the same, and may as well unite into one body” (p. 95).

¹²⁸ *The Human Condition*, p. 215.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 229.

although it has come to inhabit political practice widely. However, she also acknowledges the fact that this instrumentalization has not “succeeded in eliminating action, in preventing its being one of the decisive human experiences, or in destroying the realm of human affairs altogether.”¹³⁰ There is still room for action, and thus, for freedom; for the manifestation of freedom only needs a “space of appearance” established by human plurality.

Having stated that the essence of action is freedom, saying that the actor of the action is not the author of his action means to say that the actor is not “sovereign” to his action. Insofar as action is a process that is started by an agent which is born into a medium consisting of human plurality, its outcome is never predictable – and it has no end: “the process of a single deed can quite literally endure throughout time until mankind itself has come to an end.”¹³¹ This statement can be elucidated through another statement Arendt makes in “The Tradition of Political Thought” where she says: “Action, which is primarily the beginning of something new, possesses the self-defeating quality of causing the formation of a chain of unpredictable consequences that tend to bind the actor forever.”¹³² This point expresses the action's characteristics of unpredictability and irreversibility which will be dealt with in what follows.

How, then, does the agent manifest his freedom through action? Arendt's solution to this problem lies, again, in the condition of human plurality. Living among human beings, and sharing our deeds and words with others indeed entail that sovereignty - “the ideal of uncompromising self-sufficiency and mastership” - “is

¹³⁰ *The Human Condition*, p. 230.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 233.

¹³² *The Promise of Politics*, pp. 58-59.

contradictory to the very condition of human plurality.”¹³³ In action, whatever we do, we do among human beings; thus action cannot survive the isolation of the fabricator, and one cannot master one's action from beginning to end because one does his deeds within a web of human relationships and in a way that possesses the characteristics of unpredictability and irreversibility. However, Arendt does not stop at this point and attempts to offer the redemption of these two characteristics of action.

On the one hand, forgiving is the redemption of irreversibility, for what is done cannot be undone. Once one acts into a medium where human beings are manifest in their plurality, one's action insofar as its outcome is unpredictable can incite, in turn, unpredictable reactions from others. This is why Arendt thinks that forgiving is necessary; so that the human plurality does not extinguish by way of turning human beings against each other, defeating their togetherness. On the other hand, making and keeping promises is the redemption of unpredictability, for without a promise projected onto the future, the possibility of future actions is in danger. These two faculties refer one back to the condition of human plurality since both can be realized among men, in the presence of others, where one can only forgive or make a promise to another. Through forgiving and making promises is the boundlessness of action is controlled: thus “they are like control mechanisms built into the very faculty to start new and unending processes,”¹³⁴ that is acting.

¹³³ *The Human Condition*, p. 234.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

Action's Motives, Goals, and its Principle

The previous section has presented a specific notion of action as the manifestation of freedom, that is neither about the freedom of the will nor freedom of choice. This kind of freedom is shown to be related to the performance of an action, which does not rest on an instrumental mentality, and its freedom lies in its transcendence of utility. However, this is not supposed to mean that an action does not have a motive or a goal. There are motives and goals pertaining to an action, but, there is also a *principle of action*. It is *for the sake of* the principle that the action is performed, and not *in order to* achieve a goal.

In her *Between Past and Future*, Arendt states that

action, to be free, must be free from motive on one side, from its intended goal as a predictable effect on the other. This is not to say that motives and aims are not important factors in every single act, but they are its determining factors, and action is free to the extent that it is able to transcend them. [...] Action insofar as it is free is neither under the guidance of the intellect nor under the dictate of the will – although it needs both for the execution of any particular goal – but springs from something altogether different which (following Montesquieu's famous analysis of the forms of government) I shall call a principle.¹³⁵

Action has motives and goals, but they are not instrumental in that they cannot be translated into causes and ends. Action cannot be stripped off of them; it can only transcend them. One can have a goal in action, but insofar as the goal is transcended by a “principle,”¹³⁶ that is when its goal is not pursued as an *end*, can the action be said to be the manifestation of freedom. Otherwise, the human being qua the actor

¹³⁵ *Between Past and Future*, “What is Freedom?”, pp. 151-2 (emphasis added).

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 193: “One might say that it is the fundamental conviction that a group of people share.”

cannot transcend the utilitarian framework, and insofar as from what Arendt tells us, utility is not the only way of engaging in the world. This point bears with it the suggestion that self-actualization can be a principle from which the action emerges, and whether this actualization bears instruments should not be the criterion for judging the action. A painter may use a brush in order to paint; but his performance of painting is what would constitute the flux of action, and it is not for the sake of the end product that he paints; for that, too, is unpredictable, although it comes about, in the end. If Arendt is so insistent on the performative aspect of action, then one has to acknowledge that action is also a production in that it “produces” meaning through the performance.

In his article “Motive and Goal in Hannah Arendt's Concept of Political Action,” Knauer suggests that it “a particular action may be described most generally as S doing A in order to achieve G for the sake of P.”¹³⁷ Following Knauer's argument, I will say that motive and goal; although not being the determinants of a free action, for the action has to transcend them to be free, can still be regarded within the framework of action. The principle reveals the meaning of action and Arendt states that “the meaning of a thing, as opposed to its end, is always contained within the thing itself, and the meaning of an activity can exist only as long as the activity continues.”¹³⁸ This means that meaning is found in the performance of an action, and as long as it lasts. Then the “principle” which manifests itself through action can be revealed as Marx's *self-actualization*; not at all emphasizing the privacy

¹³⁷ James T. Knauer, “Motive and Goal in Hannah Arendt's Concept of Political Action,” *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 74, No. 3 (Sep., 1980), pp. 721-733: S acts in order to G for the sake of P (S: subject, G: goal, P: principle). Thus the achievement of the goal does not defeat the meaning revealed by the principle of action.

¹³⁸ *The Promise of Politics*, p. 193.

of the self, but rather its characteristics of appearing in a community, which will be used in similar regard to a space of appearance, as a publicly organized space.

The way in which an actor acts has the unique characteristics of a disclosure; i.e., a self-revealing that is not bound by “objective” standards which can be judged instrumentally regarding the actor's goals and motives. Knauer interprets Arendt's main point as follows: “Any given instance of action will involve an actor with motives and goals, but insofar as it is political action, its meaning will transcend those motives and goals and can never be comprehended by an account of them.”¹³⁹ Thus, Knauer's analysis of Arendt's political action can be used as a guideline in order to understand the transcending aspect of action's principle over its motive.

Self-Actualization without the “Generalization of Utilization”

In his *Grundrisse*, Marx states that “the human being is not merely a gregarious animal, but a political animal, who can individuate himself in society”¹⁴⁰ and he states in his *Capital*:

[...] that the economic and structure of society, is the real basis on which the juridical and political structure is raised, and to which definite social forms of thought correspond; that the mode of production determines the character of the social, political, and intellectual life generally, all this is very true for our own times, in which material interests preponderate, but not for the middle ages, in which Catholicism, nor for Athens and Rome, where *politics, reigned supreme.*”¹⁴¹

This passage reminds us of the fact Marx was analyzing, and criticizing the “bourgeois society” in which the political has become a place for the manifestation

¹³⁹ Knauer, p. 729.

¹⁴⁰ *Grundrisse*, p. 84.

¹⁴¹ *Capital*, p. 82 (emphasis added).

of force; this force as grounded in economic terms, i.e., the force of exploitation. Here, I believe, Arendt's criticism of Marx once again does not apply in an *absolute* manner, for they in fact seem to have similar views regarding the *political*. Her distinction between the public and private spheres implies a criticism of liberalism, and of its utilitarian values bringing private matters to the fore, inasmuch as it blurs the public/private distinction. My contention is that, in line with his analysis of the fetishism of commodities, Marx is promoting something against the utilization of social relationships. On the other hand, I believe, there is a way in which their concerns can converge upon a publicly organized space, i.e., the “community” in Marx and the “space of appearance” in Arendt, for this space of appearance can be a manifestation of a truly social human togetherness, and this characteristic is what I will add to her notion. Now, only within the community, or, in a space of appearance can freedom be realized. This freedom pertains to praxis, and although Marx adds an element of production to praxis,¹⁴² Arendt's nonteleological notion of action can survive and can be enriched through Marx's concept of self-actualization.

In his *The German Ideology*, Marx states that

for as soon as the distribution of labour comes into being, each man has a particular, exclusive sphere of activity, which is forced upon him and from which he cannot escape. He is a hunter, a fisherman, a shepherd, or a critical critic, and must remain so if he does not want to lose his means of livelihood; which in communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticise after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming a hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic.¹⁴³

¹⁴² *The German Ideology*, “Theses on Feuerbach,” 8th Thesis: “All social life is essentially *practical*. All mysteries which lead theory to mysticism find their rational solution in human practice and in the comprehension of this practice” (p. 122). Here the human practice denotes both production and action.

¹⁴³ *The German Ideology*, p. 53.

This passage reveals a certain kind of parallel between Marx and Arendt, that of between “truly social labor” regarding the former and “free political action” regarding the latter. The analysis here does not aim to speculate about a “future communistic society” in which this truly social labor manifests freedom in Marx's system. Instead, having stated that their notions of a publicly organized space may converge, I will keep the Arendtian “space of appearance” intact, which I believe can be regarded as a “truly social space.”¹⁴⁴ Then, Arendt's manifestation of freedom will be read with a view to Marx's self-actualization emerging from the human being's capacity to produce freely, in order to enhance the sphere of the former.

Now, the very term “self-actualization” calls for a clarification of the concepts of the self and actualization. The concept of the self will be taken to mean the individual human being as a subject distinct from other subjects or objects for that matter. One of its emphases is on individuality as that which differentiates one from the other and another is on self-consciousness that which distinguishes the human being from other species beings. The concept of actualization, on the other hand, refers to a process of “becoming actual.” This becoming implies a previous state of affairs, namely a potentiality, that is to be actualized through this process of actualization. Regarding Marx's concept of self-actualization, Wood suggests that “it must be done consciously and for its own sake and not unintentionally or as a means to some other end.”¹⁴⁵ Thus, self-actualization reveals the freedom of the human beings for it presents the “for the sake of” which they act.

¹⁴⁴ Marx suggests that “by social we understand the *co-operation* of several individuals, no matter under what condition, in what manner and to what end” (*The German Ideology*, p. 50) (emphasis added).

¹⁴⁵ Allen W. Wood, *Karl Marx*, (New York : Routledge, 2004), p. 22.

In Marxian terms, the potentiality stated above is the capacity to produce, which is the primary act that the human being does. Thus, self-actualization entails a capacity to produce oneself; to objectivate oneself. This objectivation is the objectivation of the human being himself, and it is not the objectification of labor in an alienated manner; for alienation is what brings the human being away from his species being. Self-actualization points to becoming oneself, revealing “who” someone is, and in practice.

Due to both Marx's and Arendt's convictions that there is no given immutable human nature; it follows from this, that the human being is a self-creating being. This creation can be expressive, for one can create oneself by writing a novel; although Arendt would consider this within the category of work, i.e., the work of art. However, the performance of writing is what is creative itself, the end-product is just the end of the creating activity. Marx's notion of self-actualization covers this entailment and allows for freedom to manifest itself, in and through the activity of writing.

It should not be taken merely as a metaphor when Marx talks about fishing in the morning and being a literary critic in the evening, insofar as this statement implies the species being of the human being as his free, spontaneous activity which grounds his being as “possibilities.” Although self-actualization does entail a conscious life-activity; the potentiality inherent in the notion does point to the human beings' possibilities, so that the term “conscious” should not be taken to mean “determined.” This activity cannot be reduced down to a “production” that has to assume an end-product in the end; for it is rather a production which manifests the actualization of the human being through his performance. This is why self-

actualization should not be conceived of within the means-ends category based on the standard of utility. The disclosing of the “who” in one's performance, and the being of one's possibilities do not come with labels; thus, the human being as painting, but not as a painter.¹⁴⁶

The Integration of Political Action and Self-Actualization

When the principle of action is taken as self-actualization; the potentiality which may be unknown to the human being manifests itself in the performance, thus manifesting freedom in that it does not aim at accomplishing a certain end. It is not in order to become a painter that one paints, but the activity of painting becomes the for-the-sake-of which it is done. It is done for the sake of revealing oneself. This way of reading Arendt's political action would enhance the sphere in which freedom can be manifested. For instance, artistic performances can become manifestations of freedom. As Arendt herself states:

The performing arts, [...], have indeed a strong affinity with politics. Performing artists – dancers, play-actors, musicians, and the like – need an audience to show their virtuosity, just as acting men need the presence of others before whom they can appear; both need a publicly organized space for their “work,” and both depend upon others for the performance itself.¹⁴⁷

It could be argued that whether an artistic performance could be political in the Arendtian sense; but she herself expresses that “whatever occurs in this space of

¹⁴⁶ *The German Ideology*, p. 109. Although Arendt refers to the same passage in her “Karl Marx and the Tradition of Western Political Thought” (p. 12) in order to criticize the “loss” of fabrication activity in the communistic society, I believe she is not acknowledging the merit of Marx's insight, and insofar as this thesis is concerned, I do not intend to read it in Arendt's way.

¹⁴⁷ *Between Past and Future*, p. 154.

appearances is political by definition, even when it is not a direct product of action.”¹⁴⁸ Thus, having stated that the “space of appearance” will remain intact in this analysis, and that self-actualization is introduced in order to enhance the sphere of freedom, performance as such can be a manifestation of freedom inasmuch as it is done for the sake of the principle of self-actualization.

Now, if we go back to the explication of Arendt's line of reasoning in the first chapter, we see that it revealed a discrimination among the categories of labor, work, and action (necessity, instrumentality, and freedom); however, to come to a conclusion whereby all instrumentality is eliminated in order to establish the sphere of freedom seems like an unrealistic enterprise, and I believe Arendt's own project cannot accomplish that, either. Rather, her seemingly fragmented approach to the spheres of these activities needs to be overcome, and it is for this reason that I introduced goals and motives back into the notion of action following Knauer's argument. I believe, this will help us understand how labor as the capacity to produce and action as the capacity to begin something anew can indeed be combined.

Arendt states that action reveals the human capacity to begin something anew; something that cannot be predicted beforehand, which is not allowed to be judged within the means-ends category. The self-actualization of the human being refers, as well, to the transcendence of utility in order to reveal the human being's freedom in Marxian terms. The self-actualization of the human being remains a production insofar as it reveals the human capacity to produce, but it is also a performance done in a publicly organized space. The self-actualization of the human being does not serve in order for him to become a “what” as under the division of labor one inevitably assumes; but to reveal “who” somebody is, which opens up a

¹⁴⁸ *Between Past and Future*, p. 155.

sphere of “possibilities” for it does not limit the human being in doing different activities. The “actualization” is what is important, and not the end-product, although in most cases there is an end-product.¹⁴⁹

The aim of this section was to further elucidate the disclosure of the self by the Marxian concept of self-actualization; which in his famous passage, lays out the possibility of one's fishing in the morning and being a literary critic in the evening. This point in Marx has been explicated as revealing the “whoness” of the actor rather than a “whatness” which is solidified in names and qualities, for the actualizing of oneself does not entail one's being a “fisher,” but one's actualizing of his potentiality of fishing.¹⁵⁰ Now, we should take another step and see how action is actually a production insofar as it produces meaning.

Producing Meaning

Arendt states in her *Between Past and Future*, that “neither freedom nor any meaning can ever be the product of a human activity.”¹⁵¹ This, Arendt asserts, because she thinks of “production” in (merely) instrumental terms; however, the human plurality

¹⁴⁹ Eli Zaretsky's comment is in line with this point for he says that “the distinction between the public and the private gains immeasurably when it is situated historically and is linked to the distinction between necessity and freedom, for then, the values associated with 'action' can be freed from being restricted to a particular sphere – 'politics' – and instead can be developed recursively so that all spheres of life, including labor and work, can be informed by an appreciation of the human need to be recognized and known through engaging in meaningful, nondeterministic, personally creative, and ultimately 'public' endeavors” (“Hannah Arendt and the Meaning of the Public/Private Distinction.” In *Hannah Arendt and the meaning of politics*, ed. Craig Calhoun and John McGowan. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997, p. 227).

¹⁵⁰ Jennifer Ring, in her article “On Needing both Marx and Arendt: Alienation and the Flight from Inwardness,” *Political Theory*, 17, No.3 (August, 1989), pp. 432-448, presents a similar view: “The capacity of people to *do* what they wanted without ever *becoming* what they did – hunter, fisherman, critic, and so forth – parallels Arendt's insistence that the human significance of action is that it allows a person to express *who* rather than *what* he or she is” (p. 445).

¹⁵¹ *Between Past and Future*, “The Concept of History,” p. 78.

which is the condition of action through deed and speech already presupposes a production insofar as the meaning disclosed to the “others” through speech is conveyed by *language* which is a social production since the human being alone cannot be said to possess a language if there is no other being to relate it to. In the *Grundrisse*, Marx states that “language is itself the product of community, just as it is in another itself the presence [Dasein] of the community, a presence which goes without saying.”¹⁵² Language as a social product presents a special situation, insofar as it is a production which produces meaning within social relations of human beings, although mere utterance (or speech by itself) does not leave an end-product in the end. Hence, language reveals a productive politics.

Production of meaning cannot be defined in the means-ends category because the meaning cannot be explicit to the human being before the “performance” of an action is realized – thus it has to be disclosed through the action; be it a political one or not. This production goes back to the capacity of production which can be integrated with the capacity to begin something anew. Every production has a definite beginning, and a definite end, according to Arendt; it is indeed the aim of production that it has an end. However, if this production is thought of in terms of the human capacity to produce in Marxian terms, it is not exhausted by *material production* only. It is the very manifestation of human freedom, the objectivation of the self, “in and through association with others,” in that it is done for the sake of its performance.

It is stated that the production of meaning can happen in the presence of

¹⁵² What Marx has to say on this issue is revealing for he states in *The German Ideology* that “language is as old as consciousness, language is practical consciousness that exists also for other men, and for that reason alone it really exists for me personally as well; language, like consciousness, only arises from the need, the necessity, of intercourse with other men” (p. 51).

others, when we are with others and in association with them. This meaning cannot be produced under a model which is erected in the mind before the performance of action; for it is established not in isolation but in our being-with-others. Meaning can be born into human affairs and within a web of human relationships. Insofar as the world is produced by human beings, which as the man-made world of things provides stability (such as the houses, bridges, cathedrals, as well as laws and constitutions to count some of these instrumentally produced things), that becomes the ground for the establishment of *any* space of appearance; the web of human relationships situated in this space also reveals *social productions* as far as the meaning of the principle of an action is concerned. Arendt states that, “love of equality, fear, or even hatred, can be principles of action”;¹⁵³ however, a way to read these concepts as outside the sphere of social lingual categories would be attributing a transcendence to them – which they do not have inasmuch as they need human presence to be manifested. I believe, this is how Arendt herself attributes a *principle* the capacity of transcending the goals and motives of an action, although she would not wish to contend with any kind of transcendence as such for the meaning is found *in the world and among human beings*. Thus, it would not be a bold thing to state that these principles can only be meaningful in the social framework within which they are produced. This is how politics becomes productive, insofar as it produces new meanings and new relationships among human beings.

Above is stated only one way in which one can put forth a “productive politics” insofar as action “produces” its own meaning into a medium consisting of other beings who can make sense of this meaning. However, there is another way to

¹⁵³ *Between Past and Future*, p. 152: “Such principles are honor or glory, love of equality, which Montesquieu called virtue, or distinction or excellence – [...] but also fear and distrust.”

reveal a “productive politics” which rests on the performativity of action. As Villa states, “the performance model, then, reveals the nonsovereignty or 'haphazardness' of action as the root of its specific freedom and meaning-creating power.”¹⁵⁴ The next section will deal with a kind of productive politics through the characteristics of performativity and virtuosity of an action.

Performance and Virtuosity

Both for Marx and Arendt, freedom does not lie in the achievement of an end, insofar as this end pertains to an instrumentality that conceals the self-actualizing capacity of an action. However, this does not rule out the possibility of achieving the goal of an action, for we differentiated between a goal and an end, in that the former is one of the determining factors of action – although action is free insofar as it can transcend its goal, it is still within the framework of action; whereas, the latter belongs to the category of work. The performance of an action manifests the human being's freedom, but in the end it may indeed *produce* an effect, a change, and it surely does, for one acts into a web of human relationships where it incites chain reactions. Now, what about a productive politics which produces meaning in and through the *performance* of action? This question is not at all irrelevant.

Acting as a capacity to begin entails the actualization of this capacity and its condition is human plurality which is manifest in the presence of others. Insofar as the end of action is unpredictable, it is not what constitutes the meaning of the action; rather, it is the flux of action which reveals its meaning. This meaning is revealed as freedom. Since Arendt does not deny that there are goals and motives of an action,

¹⁵⁴ Arendt and Heidegger, p. 85 (emphasis added).

but that these should be transcended for the sake of freedom; one can surpass the means-end category in and through the *performance*. This seems compatible with the Marxian self-actualization for it is not for the sake of life or in order to achieve an end; but for the sake of freedom in revealing one's capacity of free production. This production, since it is not coerced, does not alienate the human being from his product – be it the performance, or meaning – for it is the objectivation of the self rather than the reification of an object which is alien to the human being.

As Villa states,

The peculiar self-sufficiency of action must be divorced from any obligation whatsoever to a pre-given *telos*. Arendt's appropriation of *praxis* proceeds, [...], by detaching *energeia* from the metaphors of production or growth that had made it the teleological concept par excellence. Once actuality is divorced from the notion of final causality or development, it can be seen to inhere fully in the activity itself. [...] The virtuosity manifest in the performance of an action is action's true reason for being.¹⁵⁵

It should be noted that Arendt's appeal to the performativity of action, which designates the actuality of action as identical with itself, relies on her project to save what is truly political from the terminology of fabrication. This would mean that she wants to purge politics from teleology, insofar as the latter determines the standard by which we judge an action. This is why she emphasizes the actuality of action as one with itself, and outside the category of means-and-ends. For her, “to *be* free and to act are the same”;¹⁵⁶ however, this thesis is concerned more with freedom than with politics, thus, it is *an attempt* to read Arendt's (political) action with a view of Marx's self-actualization, while preserving the performativity of a productive politics.

¹⁵⁵ *Arendt and Heidegger*, p. 53.

¹⁵⁶ *Between Past and Future*, p. 153.

Now, if the space of appearance is where human plurality manifests itself as the condition of freedom; then, it follows that any action that takes place in this sphere can be a manifestation of freedom. As I have previously stated, any speculation of a future communistic society does not fall within the scope of this thesis, and as far as I am concerned, this space of appearance in Arendtian terms can be taken for a “community” in the Marxian sense. Thus, an activity of production (whether with-or-without-an-end-product) can reveal the freedom of the human being insofar as he is not alienated to his activity, for this space of appearance provides truly social relations *between human beings* without the disguise of *relations between things*.

The Manifestation of Freedom as a “Productive Politics”

The space of appearance has been shown to consist of human beings' social relationships, where their plurality is manifested through their being-with-others. This space provides the transcendence of the standard of utility by which actions and practices are guided and judged. This means that when one's concern is not to produce another product in order for it to become another commodity in circulation, thus when one is not forced to make his capacity to produce only a means to sustain his life, alienated from his activity of production; the act of producing something need not have a standard of utility by which it is judged, although it may bring about a useful product in the end, i.e., an end-product of human production.

The goal of a person, in this case, can be to write a novel but the performance of writing it discloses himself more than the end-product, and whether his goal is

achieved or not, his freedom is realized in and through his performance. This is similar to the case in which the virtuosic pianist manifests his freedom, for his performance is what fully manifests himself to the audience, and the case of the teacher who is never boring, who can perform and actualize his capacity of teaching without leaving a tangible “product” but producing meaning in the eyes of his students.

If, as Arendt states, that freedom is not about the freedom of the will nor the freedom of choice, but rather about disclosing oneself; then it does not do justice in that she denies freedom to other *productive* activities of the human being; for we all live in the world and not only among others but with them. Thus, we can all experience freedom – insofar as it can be conceived of as a “productive politics” for any product of human affairs becomes political in a space of appearance, and any activity can become a production – the production of the self – the objectivation of the human being through his self-actualization.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The thesis at hand dealt with the concept of freedom that pertains to the human being in his being-with-others; in disclosing himself through his performance of action and production; indeed a productive action which is called self-actualization. This was first of all *an attempt* to read Arendt and Marx together and to see what the merit of integrating their systems could reveal. I believe this merit lies in the human capacities of action and production – when read with a new light – are seen to be integrated, for the human being both produces the world in which he lives and the possibilities of meaning his horizon presents. The human being dwells in this world, and with others. Any kind of manifestation of freedom, does too, take place in this world and in the presence of others. Thus, any kind of space of appearance which provides the human plurality – the being-together – that *transcends* the *alienating* results of instrumental relations, but that does not eliminate goals and motives altogether, can provide the ground for the manifestation of freedom – through establishing a *productive politics*. This project was constructed as follows:

First of all the activities of labor and work were analyzed from Arendt's perspective in order to arrive at Marx's concept of labor, and to present a criticism of Arendt's criticism of Marx, for Marx's labor in fact coincides with the concept of work in the Arendtian sense. Moreover, Arendt's criticism of Marx was shown to be acknowledged by Marx in his theory of alienation which deals with the reduction of

labor into a mere means to sustain life insofar as the human being cannot manifest his free and spontaneous activity of production in his alienated labor.

What Marx has laid out in his analysis of the fetishism of commodities as that which conceals the truly social relations of human beings, was then revealed to be the ground for Arendt's criticism of "the social" as denoting the loss of the public realm which designates self- and world-alienation. This, I believe, can be counted as a relatively novel reading, through which I tried to see how the two philosophers can in fact agree with each other.

The last point was to arrive at the integration of Arendt's political action and Marx's self-actualization in order to introduce the latter, when taken as a principle of action, can be the manifestation of freedom in and through the performance of actualizing. The worldly ground of this manifestation was kept as the Arendtian space of appearance, which I presented as equivalent to a truly social space, for I did not intend to deal with a speculation of the future communistic society. The reason underlying this is also connected to the main concern of this thesis, for it has been formulated as the relationship between the human being and freedom; the human being as living in this world with others can manifest his freedom *in this world*.

The *attempt* to read Arendt's (political) action through Marx's self-actualization as the manifestation of his production, has revealed the productive aspect of action: producing meaning. For the human togetherness can account for the social production of language, the meaning manifested through the performance of an action is presented as a productive production which produces new meanings and reveals new relationships among human beings. In addition to this, if whatever happens in this space of appearance is political; including artistic performances, and

other activities, such as teaching; then the self-actualization of the human being can be the manifestation of freedom through establishing a *productive politics*.

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