ARENDT'S CONCEPT OF POLITICS
ABSTRACT

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Arendt conceives of politics as the highest activity men can engage in. The foundation and preservation of politics is the issue of primary importance. Participation in public life is the essence of human freedom and the polis is the realm in which men's uniqueness is revealed. Politics stands above men's mundane private life concerns and their social needs. It is not to be subordinated to other ends or revolutionary goals.

In Arendt's view, the failure of the French and American Revolutions, and of political parties, politicians, and thinkers, is that - with few exceptions - they have subordinated politics to other concerns and perceived it instrumentally. However, Arendt's problem is that she does not adequately examine the socio-historical conditions that have fostered this phenomenon. This hinders an understanding of what must be done in order to realize politics in the modern world. These limitations of Arendt's critique become quite evident in her failure to analyze the sources of modern labouring societies and the societal contradictions in them which could possibly stimulate change along authentically political lines.
ARENDT'S CONCEPT OF POLITICS

BY

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CHAPTER ONE
ARENDT'S CONCEPT OF POLITICS

Introduction

For Arendt politics is the highest and most important activity men can engage in. To participate actively in the affairs of the public realm expresses and fulfills the human essence. Arendt holds that the political realm is an autonomous end in itself, that political activity has an integrity and value that is not to be subordinated to other purposes and perceived instrumentally. The primary concern of men, the issue of ultimate significance to their humanity and freedom, should therefore be the foundation and preservation of the public political realm.

Like Aristotle, Arendt argues that politics stands counterposed to man's activities of labour and work in the private realm, where he remains preoccupied with his physical body and mundane existence, since it lets him transcend the confines of his life process and relate to other men through his higher faculties of speech and action. Arendt regards each man as a unique being from his natality or birth and what distinguishes men is their ability to express and reveal their unique identities to each other through their capacities of speech and action. Only in the political realm can these capacities be realized because public life provides a common shared world where men can relate to each other. Commonality and shared meaning among a plurality of men are the foundation of the political realm.

Arendt's conception of politics is significant since she regards participation in politics as the essence of human freedom and is concerned with human uniqueness and identity in an age which tends to regard the
political as a mere instrumentality or superstructure of the social order and which has come to view men in politics as a homogeneous mass all displaying and characterized by similar patterns of behaviour. In contrast to modern views of politics as a process pervaded by regularity and order, Arendt conceives of politics as pervaded by the unique and unexpected, and characterized by spontaneity, which results from the uniqueness of individual men at birth. 2

Politics is not to be a means to the achievement of material or social revolutionary goals which may illusorily be held to transcend it, but rather the political possesses an autonomy and integrity of its own since it is the realm that stimulates and insures the expression of men's unique identities, humanity and freedom. Through speech and action in the political realm a man expresses his unique views and appears before others revealing "who" he is. This is man's "second birth" in which he "inserts" himself into the (common) world through word and deed. 3 The impulse for this insertion comes from being born. Man begins something new on his own initiative since he is a beginner by birth. 4

Action in public is humanly disclosed by the word in which man identifies himself as an actor, announcing his actions and intentions to act. 5 Without speech action would lose its revelatory character and its subject says Arendt. Political action as a process of revelation and disclosure of the individual actor, is the human activity that most requires speech.

But for speech to be revelatory and disclose "who" someone is and give action meaning, so it is qualitatively different from other activities, human togetherness, provided in the polis or public realm, is necessary. 6 Where violence and conflict exist and men are not together speech becomes a mere instrument of the hostilities revealing nothing in terms of identity.
(It is similar to what Heidegger would describe as mere "talk".) The same applies in the private realm where men are not together but instead preoccupied with their own biological existences.

The common world of others, the public realm, fosters the revelatory quality of speech and action because it illuminates things and "lets them appear out of the darkness of sheltered existence". Things are brought into the open where they can be seen and heard by others - they are given publicity. They are disclosed within a plurality. The presence of others provides assurance of the worldly reality and our own existence. Others see and hear what we see and hear thus confirming it.

It is the modern development of "society" or the "social realm" that threatens to destroy this political opportunity in Arendt's view since it involves the expansion of the private realm and its concerns into the formerly public arena. Modern men have lost an appreciation for the intrinsic value of politics and are only concerned with the consequences it can have for their needs. They have made the public realm an instrument for satisfying the problems of the private realm. Their togetherness, if one can call it such, is based on a mutual preoccupation with the private problem of necessity. Where previously private concerns are what men now have in common the formerly private and public realms no longer exist but dissolve in a "social realm". Society, says Arendt, is the public organization of the life process where men become concerned with the biological life process only. Under such conditions disclosure or revelation of unique identity loses its meaning since the only things that are put before the concern of everyone are men's homogeneous private needs. And ironically because household concerns are "publicized" in society this way, modern man loses his privacy as well.
Arendt and Heidegger

When Arendt speaks of politics as involving the appearance or disclosure of the actor before others the influence of Heidegger becomes apparent. The latter's notion of the nature of truth can be seen as a basic influence on how Arendt conceives of a man's identity in the political realm. Heidegger based his notion of truth on unconcealment and disclosure, tracing the roots of this to the pre-Socratic Hellenic thinkers. Their word for truth was "aleithea" meaning unconcealment, or unhiddeness. Truth for Heidegger involves disclosure of what something is, its exposure in the open.

In *Existence and Being* Heidegger says "truth is the unconcealment and revealment of what-is. Truth is the revelation of what-is, a revelation through which something 'overt' comes into force". Heidegger's discussion of truth is founded on and concerned with the question of being. Truth is really related to the disclosure of a person, his exposure, and openness. That is, a situation where who he is is not hidden. In *Existence and Being*, he says all human behaviour is an exposition into overtness, openness. This is the essence of freedom in Heidegger. Similarly in Arendt, we find freedom as the potential to act and participate in politics and in so doing appear before others, stand in their presence and reveal who one is, i.e., one's identity or the truth about one.

Heidegger finds his roots in the early Greeks for whom appearance or showing oneself, was the essence of being. He notes that the highest mode of human being for them - which is also the core of Arendtian politics - was to glorify, to attribute regard to, and disclose. As in the Arendtian notion of politics this involved showing oneself, being placed in the light, and being given a sense of permanence.

Heidegger is counterposed to the major trends in Western political
thought in that his notion of truth as appearance, exposition and unconcealment, involves a rejection of the view that truth is based on a correspondence between subject and object. The latter involves the notion of truth as correctness and rightness (in both directions) or the idea of "putting oneself right by" as Heidegger says. The latter involves the notion of truth as correctness and rightness (in both directions) or the idea of "putting oneself right by" as Heidegger says.14 Men and things must then conform to the notion of what objective truth or reality is. The Platonic idea of forms is an example. Here the idea becomes the paradigm or model and appearance is only a copy, a reflection or an illusion of the true reality. The notion of appearance is denigrated into something deficient. Being now does not rise out of appearance, disclosure, but involves approximation of the ideal model.15

Arendt's indebtedness to Heidegger is apparent here when she criticizes Plato for rejecting the political realm by his claim that appearance there is only illusion and his attempt to conceive of politics as making (in the sense of the craftsman) by holding that the political must be made to correspond to the order and harmony of the reality of the forms. For Arendt the political is not to be a means to realizing a good that is seen to transcend it or subordinated to some higher order or model since it is the realm of truth itself, the highest good, or concern of ultimate significance.

Heidegger also criticizes the notion of truth as an attribute of the logos or reason where correctness with the higher reality of the process is the dominant theme. Appearance is again not the essence of truth and the logos contains categories which attempt, to impose an order on the world. He cites Hegel as an intensification of all this.16 Similarly, Arendt rejects political philosophies which find meaning in a process or reason. She asserts that political reality is irrational in the sense of not being pre- vaded by an overall process or a transcending order. Events, Arendt argues,
are self-contained, having their own meaning as they reveal and disclose
the men who freely and spontaneously appear in them. This again reflects
Arendt's notion that politics is an autonomous activity and not the agent or
instrument of historical processes or goals.

And Heidegger himself emphasizes the importance of the political
realm on which Arendt focuses her attention. Heidegger points out that
unconcealment is not simply given. It requires creative work that discloses
the truth of what presents itself. It can be accomplished by the work of
speech in poetry and thought and "the work of the polis as the historical place
in which all this is grounded and preserved".17 Arendt's notion of politics
as a self-justifying autonomous activity of unconcealment and revelation
of identity thus finds its roots in Heidegger's revival of early pre-
Platonic Greek notions of truth, human being, and freedom.

Arendt's consideration of historical examples within the Western
political tradition where such a politics has tried to assert itself will be
examined in the second chapter. At this point we are concerned with
elaborating Arendt's understanding of what it means to engage in politics
and the nature of the political realm in which this takes place.

Politics as a Performing Art

The comparison with Heidegger helps to emphasize the point that
Arendt's conception of politics differs substantially from our usual modern
notions. What we consider politics today, is for Arendt, the mundane that
man must rise above. Running society is of secondary importance at best in
the Arendtian notion of politics. Therefore, what is the essence of politics
for other theorists—liberals, Marxists etc. — is non-political for Arendt.
To perceive politics as do Hobbes, Locke, Bentham and Marx, as an instru-
mental force managing and restraining society is to confuse the political
with the "pre-political" issues of necessity in the private realm. For the pre-Socratic Greeks, Arendt points out that force only existed in the household realm in order to master necessity. The essence of politics does not lie with these problems, indeed their solution is only a prerequisite to be able to do politics. Politics, as Arendt argues, must maintain its autonomy as the free active participation of citizens in public or it loses its meaning. It was only the opportunities provided by the public realm for greatness or arete in the Greek sense, that made men willing to undertake the traditional burdens of jurisdiction, defense and the mundane administration of public affairs.19

Politics is in effect seen as an activity of performance by Arendt. In Greece, Arendt notes, everyone had constantly to distinguish himself from all others to show through unique deeds or achievements that he was the best of all.20 This required the formal presence of one's peers and could not happen in private or social realms. As the arena for speech and action and human appearance the "public realm stands as the 'work of man' rather than the work of his hands or the labour of his body" which is manifested in the private realm.21

Politics according to Arendt, is most like the performing arts since one reveals one's virtuosity to an audience of others. Arendt holds that "The art of politics teaches men how to bring forth what is great and radiant".22 Action is judged by greatness since it rises above the common place daily behaviour. Greatness lies in the performance of the deed itself. Motivation and achievement are ordinary in Arendt's view.23

The creative process of freedom is what appears in public. The politician appears, like the performing artist, in the very performance of his act before others. Arendt contrasts this with the creative artist who remains hidden in engaging in his activity.
... the element of freedom, ... present in the creative arts, remains hidden; it is not the free creative process which finally appears and matters for the world, but the work of art itself, the end product of the process. The performing arts, on the contrary, have indeed a strong affinity with politics. Performing artists - dancers, play-actors, and 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.24

It is the performance itself that contains the meaning, the "identity", of the actor.

One's identity depends on one's biography or life story, not on one's constructions.

Who somebody is or was we can only know by knowing the story of which he is himself the hero - his biography, in other words; everything else we know of him, including the work he may have produced and left behind, tells us only what he is or was.25

Thus the attainment of greatness according to Arendt, depends on "who" a man was not what he did. Those who emphasize what they have done become slaves to their work, while in contrast, the great, remain superior to what they have done at least as long as the source of creativity is alive - springs from who they are - and remains outside the actual work process as well as independent of what they may achieve.26

In this respect, Arendt criticizes intellectuals for remaining slaves to their work.

One problem with Arendt's discussion of politics as a performing art is that there is no discussion of how these two modes differ. That is, what is special about politics? While it is immediately apparent that politics, unlike the theatre, goes beyond mere fantasy and the playing of roles and involves a public disclosure of oneself to others rather than simply an evaluation by others of one's ability to perform something, this
doesn't seem to be sufficient. The revelatory political activity of a man in public would seem to imply that something important is at stake in the disclosure. That is, that political performances are involved with vital and important issues for men, ultimately culminating in the need to found and/or preserve politics. Arendt's treatment of what she considers authentic political efforts in Western history - to be considered in the second chapter - suggests this is the case. In these instances men come to appreciate the intrinsic value of the experience of acting and performing politically in revolutionary situations and then become concerned with the problems of protecting this experience by attempting to found a more permanent public realm. It is thus the realization and preservation of the public realm of human freedom that is ultimately involved in men's political performances.

This interpretation that political performances embody a primary concern with the fundamental issues of freedom and the foundation of the polis, is strengthened in light of Arendt's critique of modern society. The substance of Arendt's point is that in the era of the social realm labouring and private concerns threaten to replace men's public performances or political actions with the result that the social question and the problems of poverty and necessity become their primary concerns rather than the foundation and preservation of the public political realm. When men no longer are motivated to perform and appear before others politics has been lost.

The Problems of Action

Even if Arendt conceives of politics as in a sense a thing of performance and minimizes the significance of mundane societal administrative burdens her politics is not tension-free. Because human action is boundless
and unpredictable, due to the infinite possibility inherent in interaction with a plurality of others, the meaning of a story is only revealed when the entire process has ended. And unlike the process of fabrication where the craftsman controls the process by making a product according to a model, the actor cannot control the outcomes of the processes he begins. Therefore, only the historian understands the meaning of action, not the participants in the process. One's human essence or "who" somebody was, can only come into being after death when the historian lends meaning to his deeds.

In Greece one could only remain master of one's identity and potential greatness, Arendt points out, by dying after one's one great deed so that one could be free from its possible consequences and ramifications in death. That is, one then sums up one's life in a single deed so the story of the act ends with one's life. Arendt says that such a hero "... delivers into the narrator's hands the full significance of his deed so that it is as though he had not merely enacted the story of his life but at the same time also 'made' it". However, beyond this eudaemonia, partial alleviation, although not elimination, of this whole problem of the uncertainty of action, was provided in the immortality one might achieve through the remembrance of one's great deeds and actions in the works of the poets and historiographers and later in the polis.

The Polis and the Uncertainty of Action

The polis provided a partial remedy for the futility of political action and speech, that is, a mode for making great deeds "immortal", since it multiplied the opportunities for men to appear and reveal "who" they were and express their uniqueness. Arendt describes the polis as "the space protected from the futility of individual life and reserved for the
the relative permanence, if not immortality, of mortals".35

However, Arendt notes that the polis does not necessarily imply a specific location. It rises directly out of the common activity of men, "the sharing of words and deeds".36 It exists potentially whenever people gather together. Because it is embodied in action and speech it is always potentially there.37 This space of appearance is antecedent to the formal constitution and establishment of the public realm and the varieties of government.38

Through mutual promise and contract men agree to gather together and thus establish a certain limited reality and in doing so they attain a degree of autonomy from the uncertainty and unpredictability of the action process and the incalculability of the future.39 The polis can then always potentially exist to provide a degree of security for action.

The establishment and preservation of a public political realm where men can speak and act in common, thus is the issue of ultimate concern since the political realm stands to inspire men to dare to attempt the extraordinary, the unique, the miraculous, challenging them to be all they can be. Quoting Democritus, Arendt says that as long as the polis is there all things are safe, if it perishes, everything is lost. Men must have a place where the integrity of their action and appearance is secured and by implication thus must work to found a public realm where the participatory ideals of the polis are given pre-eminence. The latter point, as will be examined in chapter two, is made quite explicit by Arendt in On Revolution, where she describes the Paris Commune and the American Revolution as genuine efforts to establish politics.

The notion of earthly immortality is the basis for the existence of politics and the public realm. The common political world transcends our life span. It is what we enter at birth and leave at death. It outlasts
our life and it relates us to those who came before and the generations that
will come after by preserving what is great by giving it public exposure.
Speech, action and identity can thus approximate a notion of permanence
inspite of the uncertainty of existence in the world of action. They can
reveal and preserve meaning. Therefore in exposing and revealing "who"
we are in the public realm we are also immortalizing ourselves. According
to Arendt,

> It is the publicity of the public realm which can absorb and make shine through the centuries whatever men may want to save from the natural ruin of time. Through many ages before us, but now not any more—men entered the public realm because they wanted something of their own or something they had in common with others to be more permanent than their earthly lives.

Arendt asserts that the loss of the public realm today is reflected in the
loss of authentic concern with immortality which has come to be considered
as similar to the private vice of vanity.

In classical times the polis provided permanence for mortals in
a world of uncertainty. Today Arendt argues that public admiration is
not concerned with human identity and saving things from the destruction
of time but is instead based on monetary reward and status. It has become
a need, like hunger. The political is now seen as an instrument to
satisfy modern man's hedonism. A world with such subjective pangs as its
only basis is incapable of establishing a common world of politics.

**Diversity of Perspectives in the Polis: The Condition of Politics**

To have a polis, a public realm, means that men have a world in
common and are not completely immersed in their own subjectivity and experience,
according to Arendt. They see others and appear to them. Yet this same
common world involves an infinite number of perspectives among men with no
absolute standard of meaning. All that is necessary is that all are relating to the same object regardless of how they perceive it, for the common world to exist. This is what guarantees the existing reality.45

The difference and diversity of perspectives is a necessary condition of the common world.

Only where things can be seen by many in a variety of aspects without changing their identity, so that those who are gathered around them know they see sameness in utter diversity, can worldly reality, truly and reliably appear.46

Diversity of perspectives is rooted in the fact that in the public space everyone has a different location and that no two people occupy the same place according to Arendt. But does where we physically stand determine this or where we come from affect how we perceive? Arendt fails to deal with this question and its relation to the private. She is never clear about what she means by location. Arendt does not show how location influences perspectives, whether it helps to condition them, and also does not mention the role, if any, of the uniqueness of individual men from natality, influencing their perspectives. This question involves the crucial problem to be taken up later, of Arendt's failure to explain the development of "unpolitical" perspectives among men.

Be that as it may, Arendt's notion of a common world composed of diverse perspectives is counterposed to the liberal idea of relatedness where men have their natures and drives in common rather than the world they share. In the liberal view men are withdrawn into their own subjectivity - "privatized" - and they all act from self-interest to satiate themselves. In a common world, Arendt argues that reality is guaranteed not by men having a "common nature" but by the fact that people relate to each other on the basis of common things in their world and express their uniqueness and point of view or perception on this basis instead of all "behaving"
toward each other and things in a generally uniform manner.47

The hedonistic ego of the liberals, acting on the basis of his nature, which is identical in terms of desires and drives and basic make-up to that of others, does not appear before others as a unique "who" nor does he perceive the uniqueness and "whoness" of others. Rather he acts on the same behavioral basis they do to satisfy his needs. The dominance of the subjectivist desire for satiation replaces the common world of unique beings with diverse perspectives. When diversity of perspectives is gone the common political world in Arendt's sense no longer exists.

The end of the common world has come when it is seen only under one aspect and is permitted to present itself in only one perspective.48

Arendt is thus, in effect, suggesting that politics, because it is based on the interaction of different perspectives through speech and action, revealing the identity of diverse actors, no longer exists since action and speech lose their autonomy and integrity and become mere instruments for the attainment of one vision and its goal. Participation in public for its own sake is then no longer respected or valued.

This happens under tyranny or mass society where there is no recognition or toleration of diversity. In the former, the tyrant's perspective is the only one permitted. The tyrant then banishes the citizens from the public realm only permitting them to engage in private, life-sustaining, activities. Mass society isolates men while it also dominates them with one perspective and relegates them to primary concern with the life cycle. In both instances men are privatized, and Arendt implies, forced to work for goals that are held to transcend their public freedom. They do not hear or see others or "appear" themselves.
Arendt traces her notion of the common world to the Greeks who understood the world as filled with diversity and conducted themselves accordingly. Thucydides best expressed the Greek feeling in his account of the Peloponnesian War where he represented the positions and perspectives of all the parties to the conflict. The (pre-Platonic) Greeks saw their world as composed of infinite perspectives and standpoints, Arendt reminds us. And these corresponded to the great variety of opinions and viewpoints. Given this, Arendt says they tried and learned to understand all the perspectives on the world. The Greeks could exchange their viewpoints and opinions on their common world with those of their fellow citizens. Arendt says an "opinion" was "... the way the world appeared and opened up to him", was disclosed or unconcealed to him. Thus, in politics each must have his chance to express himself on the world. No one perspective or goal can dominate and destroy the freedom and integrity of other beings and make them mere instruments or agents for its fulfillment.

The main point is that the Greeks learned to see each others' "views" and still maintain the ability to see the sameness of the world they had in common. They learned, she says, "... to look upon the same world from one another's standpoint, to see the same in very different and frequently opposing aspects". In such a world speech and action become meaningful. Reality does not remain hidden and human identity can be understood and appreciated when a man appears before others. When men have this understanding the public realm or polis will endure - they are together.

Courage and Politics

Nevertheless, while diversity, understanding, and togetherness etc., are important basic elements for a viable public life, the issue involves more. We must return to the problem of uncertainty. Despite the
fact that the polis may stand to stimulate human greatness, entering the public realm and engaging in political action is not an easy thing in Arendt's terms because the public realm does not provide the security of a man's private domain - i.e., the family and household. Individual lives and interests are not the highest priority. The life process is not the essential concern. The public realm, as noted above, relegates mundane household concerns to a secondary status at best, and transcends individual life spans reaching as it does into the past and future. Arendt argues that,

It requires courage even to leave the protective security of our four walls and enter the public realm, not because of particular dangers which may lie in wait for us, but because we have arrived in a realm where the concern for life has lost its validity.

To be able to do politics one must liberate oneself from concern with the problems of necessity and try to transcend the mundane problems of perpetuating one's biological existence. In The Human Condition, speaking of the Greeks, Arendt notes that,

whoever entered the political realm had first to be ready to risk his life, and too great a love for life obstructed freedom, (and) was a sure sign of slavishness.

Property provided the basis for freedom and the opportunity to enter the common political world since it freed one to transcend his own biological life cycle by delegating others to these concerns.

Courage lies in the single act of leaving the protective shield of the household and disclosing oneself to others in public; stepping out from behind the screen as it were. To stand in the light of the public space and reveal "who" one is, to speak and act and be seen by others is not an easy experience. Arendt herself recognizes the difficulty of this.
The connotation of courage ... is in fact already present in a willingness to act and speak; at all, to insert one's self into the world and begin a story of one's own. 57

By entering the public world or polis one takes the responsibility for one's existence. One realizes that the decision about how one acts will build a story that reveals "who" one is - one's biography. Arendt says that leaving one's hiding place in the private realm and becoming "unconcealed", revealed, "unhidden", appearing in Heidegger's terms, and showing the world "who" you are by exposing yourself through word and deed, is itself an act of tremendous courage. 58 It is this courage which makes speech and action and hence freedom in the Greek sense possible.

Moreover, Arendt argues, the fact that the consequences of men's deeds and actions are uncertain and uncontrollable, as noted earlier, demands courage from an individual if he is to act. Even though the polis provides some alleviation from uncertainty through making deeds permanent and the hope of immortality and helps encourage men toward politics, nevertheless, the processes initiated by men are infinite and unpredictable and the realm of human affairs is thus always uncertain, control is not possible, action is irreversible, and prediction of consequences and analysis of motives is impossible. When a man acts he never really can be sure of the full implications of what he is doing. Thus, Arendt observes that "he always becomes 'guilty' of consequences he never intended or even foresaw ...."

Suffering, therefore, is inseparable from freedom, in the world of human action.

Arendt notes that all these problems are sufficient grounds for despair with politics and for having contempt for the human capacity for freedom which can produce relations that make a man suffer more than be a creator. 60 Arendt argues that it is ironic that in neither labour or
work is man seemingly less in control. In neither,

... does man appear to be less free than in
those capacities whose very essence is freedom
and in that realm which owes its existence to
nobody and nothing but man.61

The apparent solution may seem to be inaction, and abstention from public
life to maintain one's sovereignty and integrity as a person. Arendt says
that the basic error of these approaches is to equate sovereignty and
freedom. This is something which, according to her, has long been taken
for granted by political and philosophic thought. Arendt argues, however,
that sovereignty contradicts plurality, holding that men, not man, exist
in the world. She sees all these theories as efforts to overcome the
suffering involved in a pluralistic universe and rooted in an unwillingness
to recognize and live with the problems of the human condition.

The desire for sovereignty and control over one's future and
condition leads to either arbitrary domination of all others or, like
Stoicism, to a rejection of reality and the adoption of an imagery world
where plurality and its consequences are ignored and not even recognized.62
Arendt sees arguments about sovereignty and the problems of pluralism and
human action as efforts to ignore the fact that men cannot have control and
certainty, and that human political affairs cannot be ordered rationally.
As in Stoicism, it is a desire to provide comfort or an excuse to evade
public activity with others and to avoid facing what life really is about.

Arendt does not mention the metaphor of fear, but is applicable in
the sense that men dread the thought that they may be unable to master
the world they live in or that they have to make choices even given the
uncertainty and unpredictability of the public realm. Courage is required
to live in such a world. Existence is not easy and men suffer from lack of
control and certainty. But this flows out of their uniqueness, their
special identities, their "whoness". What makes certainty impossible, given the Arendtian framework, is man's humanity, his individuality, which does not let him be treated in a behavioural way and is the basis of having a common world of speech and action with other men. Traditional thought by equating sovereignty and freedom makes human existence appear absurd since, she says, having the capacity to begin something new and not being able to control it, or its consequences, does not seem to be acceptable as a way of life.63

Arendt and the Tradition of Western Political Thought

Understanding Arendt's notion of courage and politics is crucial for situating her within the tradition of Western political thought and explaining her perception of why others have not accepted politics on her terms and sought other notions of truth. Arendt sees the main strands and themes of Western political thought as efforts to avoid the uncertainty and unpredictability of political action. Arendt says this was true of Plato's attempt to conceive of politics as making, noted earlier. She argues that Plato wanted man to be able to control the actions he began and this is only possible in the process of fabrication. Plato's desire to order and control human affairs is manifested in the philosopher-king, who Arendt says is similar to a craftsman.64 The dichotomy between thought and action in Plato becomes the basis for control and domination where the inactive contemplative philosopher, with his ideal forms, shapes politics according to a model and denigrates and removes action from human affairs by interpreting it as making.65

Plato made men "puppets of the Gods" according to Arendt, since his forms imposed an order on the flux and uncertainty of political action from without. Arendt argues that the forms are a precursor to Providence,
"the invisible hand", class interest, and world spirit which she sees as attempts to solve the paradox that men do not control the making of history even though their actions are its essence. In Arendt's view Plato provides a blueprint for "making" political bodies that inspires later utopian efforts that try to eliminate tension and uncertainty from politics. (All these things impose their own definition of truth on politics; politics is no longer respected as the revelation of various positions and their interplay, but is only a part of a more profound project.)

Arendt finds this phenomenon apparent in Hegel and Marx and the liberals. She asserts that the notion that reason or ordered conflict pervades human action and that history is subject to laws, is really an attempt to overcome the anxiety of man's inability to control his world. In Hegel, for example, Arendt argues that the notion of history as a rational progressive process provides a solution to the problem that human political action might otherwise appear boundless, meaningless, or absurd. In Marx politics becomes a mere superstructure or adjunct to the historical process of class conflict and is explained and gains meaning in terms of it. It is a mere instrument of violence and class domination, rather than a free spontaneous thing. Instead of being characterized by uncertainty politics can be scientifically understood and manipulated toward the goal of social liberation. In liberalism too, (Bentham etc.), ordered social conflict guided by an "invisible hand" based on a materialist hedonism as the mode of behaviour, makes order and rationality possible in politics since the political's primary problem is to calculate and institute what maximizes satisfaction and thus produces and preserves social harmony.

Not only do these ideas destroy politics in Arendt's terms by
regarding it as an instrumentality, but Arendt is opposed to this rationalist tradition of Western political thought and overall interpretations of history because, she argues, they always break down and are refuted by reality which is composed of the unique and miraculous. According to Arendt, modern thought "founders on the perplexity that modern rationalism is unreal and modern realism is irrational". Arendt asserts that Hegel's monumental effort to reconcile spirit and reality grew out of the fact that reason did not seem to pervade reality.

For Arendt such theories only succeed by distorting the nature of human affairs and reality. Rationality, certainty, and predictability are only approximated by ignoring the real nature of political action and human freedom in the public realm. Only by rejecting or denigrating the essence of politics therefore, by considering man solely in his private existence, are the problems of action avoided.

For example, Arendt argues, Plato's republic is founded on the relations and institutions of the private realm. Plato expanded the master-slave relation of the household into the public realm eliminating the politics of speech and action. Within this republic men were reduced to specialized private roles within a division of labour with no public realm where they could appear in their uniqueness. Plato's thought and that of the Socratic school became concerned with the techniques of setting up an ordered society based on the regularity of the household realm which was free of the uncertainty of the action process.

Similarly, Bentham's notion of a politics based on rational conflict and harmonious reconciliation of interests is founded on his concept of man as non-political, privatized and withdrawn into his own subjective interest. That is, the notion of a basic human nature, which causes
each man to pursue his own private self-interest, permits the assumption that politics is pervaded by reason and can be rationally ordered. Order and rationality are attained by, in effect, eliminating politics because, as noted above, men are only considered to have their own basic nature in common rather than their world of speech and action. Speech is only a communicatory device or instrument for these egos in their pursuit of their goal of satiation. Politics here is at best a force to regulate this society of conflicting hedonistic egos and loses its essence and autonomy and primacy by becoming a mere instrument for engineering harmony by fulfilling material needs and goals.

Marx, who argued that politics was only the coercive superstructure of the rational process of historical class conflict moves from a similar point of departure making the private activity of labour man's greatest quality that expressed his humanity, Arendt argues. Labouring withdraws man into his own bodily processes and itself makes a common world of political interaction impossible. Moreover, politics cannot be autonomous or revelatory in Marx since it is seen as an instrument of the violence and conflict of the labouring process where speech and action embody an ideological superstructure rather than truth or unhiddenness. The rationality and meaning provided by Marx's historical materialism runs counter to Arendt's conception of politics by focusing on "unpolitical" labouring man and by portraying politics as a myth for the alienated. The public realm is removed from the pinnacle of primacy in human concerns by being reduced to a mere instrumentality to be captured and utilized in solving the social question and then discarded after the goals of the revolution have been completed. Therefore, Arendt argues that Marx's notion that the complete victory of society in the revolution would bring about a realm of freedom was wrong because freedom is seen as only possible
when the autonomy and integrity of the political realm is respected and protected so men can act in public with each other and express their essence as unique beings. Thus, as noted at the outset, politics is not to be subordinated to labouring and to the attainment of revolutionary social goals, as in Marx, or the satiation of human needs, as in Bentham.

For Arendt, theories that have seen rationality and processes at work in politics and history have only ignored or denigrated the authentic nature of politics by glorifying men's private animal capacities and directing men toward a pursuit of material goals. Such theories which seek reason and order in political action can, therefore, only ironically find it by focusing their emphasis away from public life and belittling politics. In the process the essence of human freedom and uniqueness is threatened.

Arendt and Dostoievski

Arendt's rejection of rationalist, all-encompassing approaches to politics, history and human existence makes her thought similar to the positions of Dostoievski and Nietzsche. Like Arendt, they both view theories that assume that reason pervades reality and that human action can be made predictable as illusions and myths that men use to be able to order their world so that their existence in it can seem more tolerable.

Dostoievski asserts that all men are unique and have the ability to act unpredictably on the basis of their own individual wills thus expressing their identity. What rationalists mistake as "error" he argues, is really human uniqueness. Like Arendt, he says man's nature cannot be defined by basic drives such as "self-interest", since it is far more complex than these rationalists assume and what appears to them as absurd or irrational is only the revelation of a man's individuality. As in Arendt's notion of natality, Dostoievski sees the unique, unexpected act, affirming man's
individuality, as always ready to spring up and defeat the analysis and predictions of the rationalists. And in *Notes From the Underground*, Dostoievski exhorts us to appreciate that men must act to oppose efforts to control and rationalize the world by acting "irrationally" to preserve their uniqueness and identity. He emphasizes, as Arendt does, that men must have the courage to rise above their mundane average existences and accept the responsibility and implications of freedom rather than remaining hidden among the masses of "average men" or relying on theoretical myths for comfort.

For Dostoievski and Nietzsche, as for Arendt noted above, suffering is inseparable from freedom. Dostoievski argues that lucidity - consciousness of the infinite possibility man has before him with no basis for certainty and definiteness in the world of action - paralyzes most men causing them to shun action. Arendt does not explicitly stress the theme of paralysis when man is confronted with no standard for action as Dostoievski does, but this is implied in Arendt's notion of requiring courage to act and appear in her political world since it is characterized by an infinite number of equally valid diverse perspectives where no ultimate final or overall interpretation can exist to explain human action and provide some sense of certainty of where it will lead. It implies that men have difficulty coping with the problem that action is their choice and their freedom - even though they cannot control its consequences - and reveals "who" they are and that its basis cannot be derived from an ultimate source outside themselves.

Dostoievski and Nietzsche share Arendt's view that human freedom involves the achievement of what one wills. The inner freedom of the philosopher or stoic is rejected as false. Freedom requires more than knowledge and will for Arendt. It also means being able to do what one
wills. Nietzsche asserts the unity of willing and acting when he says, "You say 'I' but your body is greater because it performs 'I'." Similarly Arendt tells us that freedom exists only where the "I will" and the "I can" coincide.

One of the most interesting similarities between Arendt and these two nineteenth century thinkers is in the notion that man can truly realize himself only by rising above the average mass of men who are seen as only concerned with their mundane day-to-day existences. Both Nietzsche and Dostoievski look down on "average men" as threats to man's excellence and essential humanity. This has parallels to Arendt's assertion that public life is the highest form of existence since it stimulates men to great deeds and achievements counterposed to the private realm that is only concerned with the basic biological needs of men and is characterized by homogeneity of behaviour and averageness. Historically, Arendt sees these labouring men as threatening to reduce everything to their mundane level by destroying the political realm. In times of change and instability this average mass of animal laborans produces isolated insecure men, who just as Dostoievski's "rabble", which arises out of society in times of social change, provide the core of revolutionary totalitarian movements that would destroy man as a human being and reduce him to a blind automaton.

With respect to Arendt's similarity to Dostoievski it is interesting to note Michael Gelven's argument on the similarity between Heidegger, Arendt's professor at Heidelberg, and Dostoievski, in A Commentary on Heidegger's "Being and Time". The figure of Christ in The Grand Inquisitor is like the notion of authentic existence in Heidegger, says Gelven. Christ would deprive men of the security they desire and ask them to assume the awesome burden of being free. Gelven points out that
for Heidegger, to be authentic is to be free; to be aware of possibilities and make choices;\(^8^7\) to choose one's own existence and see that one is responsible for how one exists.\(^8^8\) Authenticity for Heidegger, says Gelven, involves the notion of guilt in the sense of one's acknowledgement of the performance of a given specific act.\(^8^9\) This creates the awareness for the actor that he is a unique self, distinguishable from others and disclosed by what he assumes responsibility for. Through wanting to have a conscience and feel guilt for an action one becomes aware of one's own existence and one's own self and to be so aware is to be in the authentic mode.\(^7^0\). Similarly, in Dostoievski, to be free is to be aware of oneself as responsible and as able to act and choose one's existence on that basis and express one's identity.

For Heidegger, inauthenticity is the effort to avoid this guilt and responsibility by seeking other external explanations for one's action or even to argue that action is unfree, says Gelven.\(^9^1\) Since this prohibits self-awareness it is inauthentic. As in Dostoievski's *The Grand Inquisitor* one can deny the old man's meaning, accept the myth and relinquish the terrible burden of one's freedom, but only at the cost of denying one's ability to truly exist as a man. That is, being aware of one's power to act and choose one's existence.

To be authentic also involves wanting to leave the "crowd" which is an inauthentic way of being with others. For Heidegger inauthenticity results when, in one's daily concerns, one loses awareness of oneself in dealing with others and becomes immersed in the "they-self" of everyday existence.\(^9^2\) This "they-self" is where those men who wish to deny guilt or responsibility hide and exist inauthentically.\(^9^3\) The "they-self", like the cardinal with his myth, Gelven points out, provides relief from the terrors of freedom.
For the they-self and the cardinal both, the choices have already been made. There are no more choices. All that is left is to live out the implications.94

Gelven argues that for both authors this denial of freedom has a dear cost - the loss of one's authentic character.

And in Arendt as explained above, we also find that attempting to deny the burden of freedom and the implications of action and find some more tolerable substitute in the notion of an ordered existence in the everyday life of the private realm among the anonymous mass of labouring men, out of the reach of public life, can only deny the true essence of what it means to be a man. That is, to make choices and act and reveal one's uniqueness, or "who" one is in the process. Although one does not have ultimate control over the consequences of one's acts and may have to bear "guilt" for things one did not intend, the alternative is loss of one's identity if one wishes to avoid freedom by escaping into the security of the private realm.95 One is only a full man by having the initiative to participate in politics.

At this point it is important to note that Arendt's notion of politics and political action is similar to Heidegger's idea of authenticity. For Arendt, it seems fair to say that to participate in politics is an authentic mode of existence, the highest activity for man, since one reveals oneself to others through speech and action rather than becoming preoccupied with common basic needs or material social goals and thus must be aware of oneself as a unique being performing certain deeds. One accepts the uncertainty of choice and the infinite possibility of political action and does not seek external or universal explanations which provide security by ordering the world and lifting responsibility, or "guilt", for action from one's shoulders. One does not hide among the mass of
average men and their mundane lives but appears through one's deeds in
can public as a free man.

The private realm - which in modernity has expanded to become the
social - could be seen as an inauthentic mode of existence within the
Arendtian framework. One is only another labourer or worker among the
mass of many others. Words and deeds are not important, and as in the
case of conflict, language can be said to be an instrument or mere "talk",
in Heidegger's sense, and reveals nothing. As in Heidegger's "they-self",
there is no concern with one's acts and identity and thus no awareness of
oneself and one's own existence. The private realm is concerned only with
man's basic biological needs and material gratification and men are seen
only as homogeneous creatures in this respect, exhibiting similar behaviour
and incapable of specific unique acts. "Who" they are is of no concern.
In the private realm men can escape the uncertainty of freedom and political
action and lie hidden, as they can in the "they-self", if they pay the
price of sacrificing what their essence is - that is, acting and speaking
and choosing and having their own existence and identity.

In Arendt, to be an authentic, true man, that is, to be all man
can be, and realize his fullest potential, man must rise out of the private
realm and enter the political. Politics must be accepted as the ultimate
and most important activity for man above and beyond his needs and other
goals. Only there does he rise above common daily biological life concerns
of the average men (or they-self), is he unhidden, and can he express his
uniqueness and identity through his higher faculties of action and speech.

Some Problems with Arendt's Critique

All this discussion of politics as the highest human activity and
the critique of existence in the private realm as mundane and unfulfilling
should suggest an examination into why "un-political" private orientations arise among men. While Arendt may reject certain theories which find order in politics by focusing on men's lower private faculties as "unpolitical" escapes, a concise analysis requires that she provide some basis for explaining the existence of anti-political orientations and why they have grown. This is especially necessary when one finds that while Arendt may reject Marx's historicism and Bentham's focus on man's basic nature she still argues that in our technological era politics itself has become nothing but a function of society - the social realm - where speech and thought serve predominantly as superstructures of social interest, and where the real danger is not that theories of behaviourism are wrong but that they may indeed come true.

(One of the major problems which this thesis will focus on is that while Arendt criticizes political movements, parties, leaders, and theorists for threatening politics with un-political orientations that view the political only instrumentally, she fails to examine the forces and conditions which foster these orientations and which have to be overcome if politics is to survive). While Arendt holds that the existence of politics is the issue of ultimate significance she also holds that the modern age has been the culmination of a consistent trend away from politics and towards labouring societies with the expansion of the social realm. Such an analysis should suggest the need to examine the possible social bases and nature of private orientations that run counter to politics.

That Arendt may feel somewhat unresolved about her rejection of historicism and her assertion that politics is characterized by the spontaneous and unique is suggested by her attempt to buttress her position by arguing that over-all rationalist interpretations of history are today refuted by the modern scientific ability to prove that anything is possible
and provable since man encounters himself wherever he tries to learn (Heisenberg). Any hypothesis, it is pointed out, can be made to work in both the real and ideal realms. But this only obscures the main point that Arendt sees politics as an autonomous activity being replaced by labour-oriented societies. Even if any hypothesis can be proven and historicism and rationalism are illusions, the fundamental problem is to explain why men have chosen or followed certain orientations and movements - averse to public life - rather than others. Only then could one understand the basis for the historical decline of politics in the West and how it might be reversed.
FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

1Arendt notes that Aristotle called politics the "good life" in this sense. See Hannah Arendt, The Human Condition, Doubleday Anchor Books, (Garden City, New York 1959), p. 33. For Arendt, labour, work and action comprise the vita activa, and correspond respectively to man's biological life cycle, the artificial world of things produced through fabrication, and the human condition of plurality. Plurality refers to the notion that men are unique and not "endlessly reproducible repitions of the same model." It is the condition of politics. Arendt, The Human Condition, pp. 9-10.

2Arendt, The Human Condition, pp. 157-158.

3Ibid., p. 157.

4Ibid. This ability to begin something new, Arendt refers to as the human condition of "natality".

5Ibid., pp. 158-159.

6Ibid., p. 160.

7Ibid., pp. 46-47.

8Ibid., pp. 43.

9Ibid., pp. 60-64.


12Heidegger, An Introduction to Metaphysics, p. 86.

13Ibid., p. 87.

14Heidegger, Existence and Being, p. 292.


16Ibid., p. 158.

17Ibid., p. 160.


27 This is the main theme that comes out of Arendt's work, On Revolution, The Viking Press, (N.Y., 1965), which will be discussed in the second chapter of this thesis.

28 On Revolution makes this point especially with respect to the labouring poor in the French Revolution. See Arendt, "The Social Question", in On Revolution.

29 Performances become meaningless in the modern social realm because, as noted above (p. 3), men are preoccupied with their labouring, private interests, and life cycle, processes in which disclosure of identity is lost since only men's homogeneous private capacities are given publicity. Modern men have lost an appreciation for political action and now only regard the political as something to be manipulated to fulfill their needs.

30 See Arendt, The Human Condition, pp. 169-171 and 208-209. Human action begins processes that are both boundless and unpredictable. Uncertainty Arendt argues, not frailty - the ruination of things through time - is the vital concept of human affairs. (Frailty in politics arises from natality - the continual insertion of uniqueness - and is independent of the frailty of human nature. See Arendt, The Human Condition, pp. 170. and 208.) The unpredictability and boundlessness of human action are rooted in the scope of a plurality of others within which action takes place. "Since action acts upon beings who are capable of their own actions, reaction, apart from being a response, is always a new action that strikes out on its own and affects others". (p. 169).

Action because it creates relationships as noted earlier, tends to transcend and wear down existing boundaries and limitations making man's institutions subject to continual change and decay. Action, in Arendtian terms, is a two-edged sword that is infinite and boundless on one hand while simultaneously being a source of relationships on the other. Hence moderation is the political virtue that is supreme and hubris the greatest danger rather than man's desire for power.

Boundlessness may be somewhat counteracted temporarily by institutions (the polis), but the latter cannot limit or remedy the unpredictability of action. This is why the historian can only understand
the meaning of action once it has ended. And this is why man is not just a "doer" but simultaneously a sufferer when he acts in a pluralistic world of other acting beings. His acts always have consequences he cannot foresee that affect his own life story. Man ironically never knows the final meaning of the story he begins. Arendt leaves the impression that he may never know when she says action has no end and thus no certainty. "The reason why we are never able to foretell with certainty the outcome and end of any action is simply that action has no end. The process of a single deed can quite literally endure ... until mankind itself has come to an end." (p.209).

31 Arendt, The Human Condition, p. 171.
32 Ibid., p. 173.
33 Ibid., p. 173.
34 Ibid., pp. 175-176.
36 Ibid., p. 177.
37 Ibid., p. 178.
38 Ibid., p. 179.
39 Ibid., p. 222.
40 Ibid., p. 50.
41 Ibid.
42 Ibid., p. 51.
43 In this respect Heidegger's comments are interesting. "For moderns glory has long been nothing more than celebrity and as such a highly dubious affair, an acquisition tossed about and distributed by the newspapers and the radio - almost the opposite of being." See Heidegger, An Introduction to Metaphysics, p. 87.

44 Arendt, The Human Condition, p. 52.
46 Ibid., pp. 53-54.
47 Ibid.
48 Ibid., p. 53.
Ibid. Here Arendt still does not explain the basis of diverse perspectives and viewpoints.

This being together — where people live close by and gather and can relate — is called "power". Power is the ability of men to act in concert and have politics. It involves the ability of men to stay together and still be with and understand each other even after action has ceased. (See, Arendt, The Human Condition, pp. 178-180). Power, says Arendt, keeps the public realm in existence. It exists where word and deed have not parted company.

That understanding, (which Arendt discusses in "The Concept of History" in Between Past and Future, p. 51) fosters power, is evident when she says in The Human Condition, p. 179, that power exists, is actualized where words are not empty, deeds not brutal; where words are not used to veil intentions but to disclose realities; where deeds are not used to violate and destroy but to establish relationships and create new realities. Only understanding can foster the togetherness needed for power by letting men appreciate identity and action. Only with understanding could speech be revelatory and un concealing and not a mask. And only then will men gather and stay together — otherwise they'll disperse. Understanding lets men see all the perspectives and opinions and appreciate them and thus binds the community closer together, developing power. Power, which is based on togetherness, vanishes when men disperse.

The only material factor that fosters power is living together and the foundation of cities. (Arendt, The Human Condition, p. 180). These things keep the potentialities of action always present. Power like action is boundless, its only limitation is people and it corresponds to the human condition of plurality.

Arendt, "What is Freedom?" in Between Past and Future, p. 156.

Arendt, The Human Condition, p. 33. It will be recalled that the private realm had to be overcome if man was to be truly human and engage in speech and action revealing "who" he was because it lacked plurality — the presence of others. That is, the master-slave relation of the household did not provide the necessary conditions for being able to appear before one's peers. It was therefore as if man did not even exist in this realm. See, The Human Condition, pp. 28-29.

Arendt's notion of guilt can be seen as influenced by Heidegger's similar notion where he sees guilt as a basis of self-awareness, in the sense of one's acknowledging responsibility for certain acts as his own. See discussion below on Arendt and Dostoevski, pp. 26-27.
While courage is a vital element of politics, the problems that result from freedom and action when one seizes responsibility for one's existence and leaves the household to enter the public realm can be partially alleviated within the Arendtian framework. The notions of promising and forgiving provide a modicum of security within the tenuous world of action.

The ability to make and keep promises partially resolves the unpredictability of the future. It creates islands of security in the uncertainty of the future and permits a sense of continuity and durability which would otherwise be impossible. Forgiving is a form of redemption from one's acts providing man with the potential to make a new beginning by letting him overcome his past. It lets men remain free agents by mutual release from the consequences of action. Forgiving thus helps to make action finite in a sense.

But all this implies public attitudes of toleration and flexibility. Arendt notes that "... only by constant willingness to change their minds and start again can they (men) be trusted with so great a power as to begin something new". (Arendt, The Human Condition, p. 216). That forgiving and promising must exist in a public realm in Arendt's sense is implied by her argument that plurality is a requisite for both faculties since the presence of others is required because no one can forgive himself and no one can feel bound by a promise made only to himself. (See Arendt, The Human Condition, pp. 213-216).

Politics becomes subordinated to the goal of attaining the good, as was noted above on p. 5 of the text.

She notes that "although Plato and Aristotle would not allow the craftsman citizenship they were the first to propose handling political matters and ruling political bodies in the mode of fabrication" (p. 206).

Arendt, "The Concept of History", in Between Past and Future, pp. 78-79.

In "The Concept of History" in Between Past and Future, p. 85, Arendt says, "History - based on the manifest assumption that no matter how haphazard single actions may appear in the present and in their singularity, they lead to a sequence of events forming a story that can be rendered through intelligible narrative the moment the events are removed into the past - became the great dimension on which men could
become "reconciled" with reality (Hegel), the reality of human affairs, i.e., of things which owe their existence exclusively to men".

70 Arendt, The Human Condition, p. 274.
71 Ibid., p. 174.
72 Part I, Chap. 4 of Hobbes' Leviathan provides a good example of how speech is seen only as a communicatory device. While men may have speech in common, Hobbes only sees it as an instrument. It is concerned with signifying, defining and naming things. It marks things so they can be communicated but nothing is revealed in the process. Speech only helps to signify men's desires, appetites, and passions etc. See Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan (Edited with an introduction by C.B. MacPherson). Penguin Books, (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England 1968) pp. 100-110.
73 Hannah Arendt, "Tradition and the Modern Age", in Between Past and Future, p. 22.
74 Ibid., p. 23.
75 For Arendt, Marx is the prophet of the victory of labouring man and the intrusion of the social question, that has destroyed or transcended politics in our time. See Arendt, On Revolution, Chap. 2.
77 Ibid.
78 Natality, as noted p. 2n is simply Arendt's term for men's ability to begin something new and unexpected due to their uniqueness at birth.
79 Dostoievski goes into greater depth than Arendt with respect to the basis of human action. Arendt says action is unpredictable since all men are unique at birth and stops there, although even this is vague. Dostoievski argues that whim is an invaluable part of man's nature which preserves his dearest characteristic, his individuality. Thus, an apparently absurd wish which goes against "reason" is invaluable to man since it preserves his identity. This is why man does "irrational" things. See Dostoievski, Notes From the Underground, pp. 105-6, and 112-113.
80 Ibid., pp. 202-203.
81 Arendt, "What is Freedom?" in Between Past and Future, p. 160.
83 Arendt, "What is Freedom?" in Between Past and Future, p. 160.
84 The reference to the "rabble" is from Dostoievski's masterpiece, The Possessed, (translated by David Magarshack) Penguin Books,
(Harmondsworth, England 1969). For Arendt's discussion of human isolation and totalitarianism see, The Origins of Totalitarianism, Meridian Books, (Cleveland and New York) pp. 475-478. Arendt points out that men have become susceptible to totalitarian domination in our modern societies because loneliness is no longer a borderline phenomenon but it is now an everyday experience in modern mass society.

87 Gelven, p. 160.
88 Ibid., p. 170.
89 Ibid., p. 162.
90 Ibid., p. 163.
91 Ibid., p. 162.
92 Ibid., p. 67.
93 Ibid., p. 167.
94 Ibid., p. 160.
95 Arendt, The Human Condition, p. 209.
96 Ibid., p. 31.
97 Ibid., p. 295.
98 Arendt, "The Concept of History", in Between Past and Future, pp. 86-87.
CHAPTER TWO
ARENDT'S TREATMENT OF REVOLUTION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR HER THEORY OF POLITICS

Introduction

Arendt's treatment of revolutionary movements in the history of the Western political tradition is important since it helps to elucidate and emphasize her concept of what authentic politics is about. In On Revolution, politics as an authentic autonomous activity, is concerned with founding a polity that will guarantee all citizens the possibility of participating in public affairs. It is concerned with establishing and preserving the space for human speech and action. This is the issue or concern of ultimate significance for Arendt in Western history.

In On Revolution what is of importance to Arendt is that true politics, embodied in authentic political movements, is not concerned with the realization of final or ultimate goals or the establishment of absolutes. When Arendt argues that politics is autonomous in this context, it clearly means that politics is not instrumental or functional to the achievement of other goals or to the satiation of human needs. It stands above the social question.

However, this does not mean that politics is free of conflict or unrelated to the social question or material concerns. In On Revolution, Arendt suggests that historically attempts to establish politics have followed and even been stimulated by, efforts to find solutions to more material and economic concerns. This point is emphasized here because in The Human Condition, when Arendt argues that the public realm is independent of the private and that one must free oneself from the private life-concerns
of the household to do politics, autonomy seems to imply separation.¹

Arendt's concept of politics as an autonomous activity is given concise expression in her analysis of revolutions and from this perspective she attempts to develop a critique of other political theorists and political movements and their leaders. The major theme that emerges is that revolutionary efforts to establish politics have historically been confronted by political leaders or professional revolutionary movements that have sought to merely manipulate politics in the interest of their political purposes or revolutionary goals. They have primarily either granted the people power in their private capacities only or regarded a solution to the social question as the vital issue of men's freedom. The historical consequence of all this has been the stifling of these spontaneous efforts to establish an authentic polity by diverting men away from their concern with the experience of public life and toward the problem of securing their privatized species-existence by overcoming necessity. The gravity of the problem flows from the fact that, despite the spontaneous rise of politics among them during revolutionary situations, the labouring poor and working classes have had a strong desire to solve the social question and eliminate their previous deprivation.

This elevation of the social question to pre-eminence in modern revolutions is seen by Arendt as a vital force in the expansion of the private concerns of the life process into the public realm, a situation which Arendt characterizes as "society" or the social realm in The Human Condition, as noted before. Modern history since the French and American Revolutions is portrayed, in effect, as a monumental struggle between efforts to found an authentic politics and the "un-political" aspirations of revolutionary parties and leaders. In this struggle the stakes are either the truly "revolutionary" foundation of a public realm for the
expression of human freedom and identity or the dedication of man to the
task of overcoming need and scarcity. The consequence of the latter is
the growth of "society" where only a man's mundane homogeneous private
capacities concerned with his biological existence are recognized and
stifle his public life and unique essence.

The crucial problem with Arendt's discussion, which this section
will put forward, is that while, indeed, Arendt's critique of "un-political"
party and revolutionary orientations may have substance, it fails to
explain the basic forces and conditions which have fostered these outlooks
and activities. In other words, Arendt, in the final analysis, cannot
really explain why there has been a turning away from politics to a focus
on "un-political" goals and social concerns. And this has prevented a
concise understanding of what the fundamental obstacles to politics have
been. Only when such knowledge is attained will it then be possible to
suggest what has to be done to establish authentic public life in the
West. In this light an attempt will be made to transcend the limitations
of Arendt's critique and suggest what is required to found politics in
our time.

The Political Significance of Revolutions

In On Revolution, Arendt's notion of what politics involves is not
presented solely as a lost ideal of the past but as a potentially living
reality as well, being embodied in the spirit of modern revolutions.
Arendt argues, that all revolutions since 1789, have witnessed, if only
temporarily, efforts to found or re-establish the public realm so that
citizens could actively participate in politics. This is reflected in
the fact that what Arendt calls the council system has regularly emerged
in revolutionary movements since the French Revolution. This council
system expresses concretely what Arendt's notion of politics involves, and the forces against which it has had to struggle represent what Arendt regards as the essential problems and shortcomings of the modern political tradition in the West.

Arendt regards the councils, which she sees arising in the Parisian Commune of 1871, the Russian Revolution of 1905, the February Revolution of 1917, the soldiers and workers rebellion in Berlin in 1918-1919, and the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, as the essence of what is political since "they consciously and explicitly desired the direct participation of every citizen in the public affairs of the country."3 This was the primary concern, permanently to establish politics in the sense of a place where men could speak and act together. They regarded political activity as in itself valuable to men and did not consider politics as something to be used for other "ends."

Above it was argued that to be political in Arendt's sense is not to be concerned with using politics for, or seeing politics as involved with, the achievement of final or ultimate goals or the advancement of causes. Politics is something that is valuable for its own sake to man. This is apparent when Arendt notes that "... the remarkable thing about the councils was ... party membership played no role whatsoever."4 The councils were non-partisan because they appreciated the worth of political action itself and were not devoted to party programs which Arendt argues are only "ready-made formulas" that reduce men to the passive roles of administration and execution denegrating man's capacity for (unique) action.5 The council's common object was to establish a space where men could act and not be merely passive subjects or blind executors. Political freedom, Arendt tells us, involves both knowing and doing. As spaces of freedom, the councils,
according to Arendt, refused to regard themselves as instruments of the revolution since that would have robbed their members of the ability to actively participate in politics for its own sake, which is the essence of political freedom.

The councils... invariably refused to regard themselves as temporary organs of revolution and, on the contrary, made all attempts at establishing themselves as permanent organs of government.6

The councils were truly political since they were dedicated to providing men with a public space where their freedom could be realized.

The notion that being political means seeing the establishment of a public space for speech and action as an end itself, is made explicit by Arendt in reference to Jefferson's system of wards. She notes that Jefferson did not discuss the specific functions of the elementary republics he envisioned.7 This was because, as spaces for active participation and the appearance of freedom, they would be the end of the great republic in Jefferson's view. According to Arendt, the ward system like the councils, was based on the assumption that no one could be happy or free without participating in politics and having a share in public power for its own sake. Quoting Max Adler in 1919, Arendt points out that as long as the councils lasted,

every individual found his own sphere of action and could behold, as it were, with his own eyes his own contribution to the events of the day.8

Thus, for Arendt political freedom is not to be mistaken with civil rights and a passive role under limited government.9

Beyond suggesting that the councils expressed a concern for politics as an end in itself and thus implying that politics is not concerned with final goals, Arendt also implies that the manner of the establishment of the councils themselves stands counterposed to the notion that politics
is concerned with final goals and programs and to the idea that politics may be a planned or scientific activity. For Arendt, the most significant feature about all council systems is that they have all arisen spontaneously and thus contradict the contemporary models of planned, prepared and managed revolutions. Thus, those who see politics as instrumental, concerned with the methodical achievement of ultimate goals, perhaps through revolutionary means, are confronted by the spontaneous political nature of the councils.

Arendt holds that the councils represented a radically new form of government and were organs of action and order; the latter notion being important since the councils disproved old notions of the "lawlessness" of popularly constituted bodies not subject to higher authority. Being concerned with politics and political action as ends in themselves, the councils conflicted with parties and revolutionaries who saw the political as a means to their ends and wished to use the councils only temporarily for their revolutionary purposes and aims. The significance of this for those in opposition to Arendt's notion of the autonomy of politics will be considered below.

Federation

At this stage it is important to point out that Arendt sees the principle of federation as important for the establishment of politics as an autonomous activity since it will insure citizens at all levels the opportunity to actively participate in public affairs. Arendt suggests that there is an intimate connection between the revolutionary spirit of the councils and the federal principle and that both these things occurred together in Russia in 1917 and in Hungary in 1956, reflecting the common object of the councils to establish politics as a
thing in itself. The spontaneous councils which arose in both these instances soon began to coordinate and integrate themselves into higher councils, reflecting a federal principle. However, the participation and action of citizens in public affairs was still the issue of ultimate concern, since the integrity of the original bodies was to be maintained. This concern necessarily led to the notion of federation and division of power.

The common object was the foundation of a new body politic, a new type of republican government which would rest on "elementary republics" in such a way that its own central power did not deprive the constituent bodies of their original power to constitute. The councils ... jealous of their capacity to act and to form opinion, were bound to discover the divisibility of power as well as the most important consequence the necessary separation of powers in government.11

Politics vs. Representative Government

The federal principle reflects concern with a notion of politics as involving active participation by citizens in public affairs. Citizens cannot be merely "represented" since representative government can only represent a citizens (private) interests - which can be objectively determined according to Arendt.12 The welfare of the constituents only can be delegated, not the actions and opinions of men. Since opinions are formed in open public debate, they won't exist if the public space of participation is abrogated for the sake of representation. The latter, thus reduces politics to an instrument for serving men's needs and destroys its autonomy. This runs against the purpose of the councils whose object is to establish politics and not representative government which is concerned primarily with popular welfare, according to Arendt.

In this context it is not concern with private interests per se
which threatens the autonomy of politics. This concern is a consequence, rather, of the fact that representative government eliminates the space for citizens to participate in politics actively and thus no longer sees politics itself as a significant or autonomous activity for men to engage in. Instead it usually regards politics as more or less of a burden. That is, the notion of representative government undermines the autonomy of politics since it no longer regards politics as an end in itself. Arendt makes this explicit.

The defenders of this system ... if they are liberal and of democratic convictions, must deny the very existence of public happiness and public freedom; they must insist that politics is a burden and that its end is itself not political.13

Thus, in dealing with historical efforts to establish politics, Arendt's notion of the autonomy of politics involves regarding the creation of the space for freedom where human speech and action can appear as the ultimately significant issue.

**Conflict, Material Concerns and the Autonomy of Politics**

In considering the historical experiences of revolutions, Arendt recognizes that political concerns are bound up with the more material and mundane problems of the world. She also discusses the fact that politics, even as an autonomous activity of speech and action, can be involved in power struggles and conflicts in attempting to establish and maintain itself.

In contrast to the vague impression given in *The Human Condition*, where the relationship between politics and the household is not clear since the public realm is merely said to be "independent" of the private, Arendt's treatment of the modern revolutionary experience is pervaded by the notion that the effort to establish politics as an autonomous activity
is linked and related to the human struggle for liberation and man's desire to be free from oppression. In place of the impression in *The Human Condition* that the public and private realms are almost mutually exclusive, in *On Revolution* there is the idea that there is no clear distinction between liberation and freedom. It is suggested that in trying to solve or overcome mundane, and primarily material problems, men have almost inadvertantly and spontaneously been thrown into a concern with public political affairs. Arendt says,

> it is frequently very difficult to say where the mere desire for liberation, to be free from oppression, ends, and the desire for freedom as the political way of life begins.

One of the reasons for this close interconnection in the revolutions of the modern age is, according to Arendt, the fact that liberation—as freedom from restraint or "the power of locomotion"—is a condition of freedom. Thus, Arendt seems to recognize in this context, the notion that freedom to do politics may depend on the limitations that are externally imposed on one and that therefore it is important to examine why it is that some men cannot act politically rather than implying that such a situation reflects on those in question as full men.

**Politics and the Household in 18th Century Revolutions**

Arendt argues that the vagueness of the distinction between liberation and freedom was apparent in the actions of the men of the eighteenth century revolutions. The concrete practical-material concerns of the American Revolution such as "no taxation without representation" and the desire to abolish all sorts of economic restrictions, issues clearly concerned with the private realm or household, nevertheless got Americans involved in doing politics.
... the acts and deeds which liberation demanded from them threw them into public business, where, intentionally or more often unexpectedly, they began to constitute that space of appearances where freedom can unfold its charms and become a visible, tangible, reality.\textsuperscript{17}

In other words, Arendt argues that the task of achieving the primarily private aims of the revolution led men into political action which they soon began to appreciate for its own sake as an autonomous activity. Independent government and the foundation of a new body politic became prerequisites for their goals and this stimulated an appreciation on their part for the intrinsic value of participating in politics. Arendt holds that the oratory, speech-making and decision-making, the actual activities involved in meeting the goals of independence took on a different tone from the mundane claims the Americans originally fought for.

It was through these experiences that those who, in the words of John Adams, had been "called without expectation and compelled without previous inclination" discovered that "it is action, not rest, that constitutes our pleasure."\textsuperscript{18}

The revolution itself produced the experience of freedom for men to enjoy and they began to appreciate the opportunity to engage in political action for its own sake and regarded this as of the utmost importance.

Arendt observes a similar process in the experience of the Parisian Commune in the French Revolution of 1789. Although acknowledging that the Commune and its organs throughout France were concerned with social-material issues and served as "pressure groups of the poor", she
argues that they also embodied a potential basis for the establishment of politics. While the revolutionary societies may have been primarily concerned with popular happiness in the end, the Communal organization is seen by Arendt as a political system that could realize Jefferson's ideal of participatory government. Despite their material interests the people in the revolutionary societies developed "the notion and taste of public liberty", Arendt tells us. As will be noted later, they struggled to maintain the autonomy of their politics against the Jacobins, who would use the peoples' newly found organs as temporary instruments of the revolution.

An enormous appetite for debate, for instruction, for mutual enlightenment and exchange of opinion, even if all these were to remain without immediate consequence on those in power, developed in the sections and the societies; and when, by fiat from above the people in the sections were made only to listen to party speeches and to obey they simply ceased to show up.19

That these societies began to regard the establishment of politics as the issue of ultimate significance is implied by Arendt's observation that these councils brought the federal principle to the fore, unconsciously through their own spontaneous organizational efforts, and by the fact that, unlike the Jacobin club, they were non-partisan and thus ostensibly did not subordinate politics to other goals.20 These popular societies thus potentially realized Arendt's idea of politics as an autonomous activity.

The important point in this context is, however, that they arrived at this support of politics as an autonomous activity out of
an initial, and even as Arendt notes, largely general concern, with mundane material problems. In this context, as in the American, Arendt's notion of politics as an autonomous activity does not imply its isolation from concrete mundane material issues or the household as her discussion of the need for courage to do politics in *The Human Condition* seems to suggest.

Moreover, given Arendt's perspectives on labouring men in the private realm as inauthentic and unpolitical mentioned in chapter one, her consideration and treatment of the role of the poor in the experience of the revolution is, I would argue, quite significant. In this context she does not regard those in the private realm as hopelessly devoid of public spirit and of the capability for political action. Analyzing the historical experience of the men in the private realm during revolutionary upheaval, it seems fair to suggest, that Arendt expresses a degree of optimism toward those who labour that is notably absent from her discussion in *The Human Condition* where those in the private realm are described as slavish and, in effect, non-existent as men.21 Here, those with property are not necessarily doomed to a life of oblivion in private.

Even though Arendt sees these political aspirations as finally succumbing to necessity and the social question in the last analysis, and thus plaguing the public realm with men's private concerns, she still sees the popular societies of the poor in the Commune as containing the seeds for real politics. And such a concern arose even though the organs
of the Commune were initially largely ad hoc and could not finally establish themselves on a permanent basis.

In addition, Arendt's analysis of the political efforts of the poor in the French Revolution also implies that the failure to establish politics as an autonomous activity was not necessarily their responsibility. Arendt is aware that material conditions may prohibit the ability to do politics, noting that the want and misery exposed by the revolution aroused compassion and a desire to attempt to find a solution to this human misery. More explicitly she even suggests that the establishment of politics may be quite impossible in a situation of widespread poverty.

And here the reason is that such deprivation prevents the ability to do politics rather than the idea that those tied to the private realm are incapable of public action per se. This is implied in Arendt's comment on the desperate effort of the French Revolution "hoping against hope that violence would conquer poverty";

... had they admitted that the most obvious lesson to be learned from the French Revolution was that la terreur as a means to achieve le bonheur sent revolutions to their doom, they would also have had to admit that no revolution, no foundation of a new body politic, was possible where the masses were loaded down with misery.

Given Arendt's observation noted above that liberation is a condition of freedom, Arendt's historical analysis of revolutions suggests certain basic material means are required before one can have the potential to do politics, and before political principles can appear to be relevant.

Interpreting Arendt in this way seems justifiable to the extent that she expresses some understanding of how the problems faced by the revolutionists of 1789 could lead them to regard as meaningless the notions of public spirit in the context of the "naked forces of want and need".

the revolutionists learned that the early inspiring principles had been overruled by
the naked forces of want and need, and they finished their apprenticeship with the firm conviction that it was precisely the Revolution which had revealed these principles for what they actually were - a heap of rubbish. 25

Arendt does not condone this outcome but rather expresses an understanding of how it can occur when, although deploving the results of their efforts, she notes that the revolutionists' situation was a desperate one and the odds seemed to be against them from the beginning. 26 From this perspective it is fair to argue that Arendt does have an appreciation for how the question of necessity and the material limitations of society can restrict and even prohibit the possibility of establishing politics as an autonomous activity for certain men or for whole societies. This is something that is glossed over in the discussion of courage and politics.

These considerations should provide a basis for Arendt's later discussion of how revolutionists (and parties) could stand against the political aspirations of the people. The extent to which Arendt does in fact explore this question in depth, that is, the degree to which she extends these considerations to account for specific "unpolitical" theories and actions of other revolutionists and parties, will be considered below.

On another level, given the opposition of revolutionists to politics, there is also the important implication that the failure to establish politics does not rest with the people completely since they came into conflict with the beliefs and goals of revolutionists and parties when they tried to establish politics. Arendt notes that by virtue of their very existence the popular societies became competitors for public power and thus were crushed by those in the central leadership and government who saw other "ends" and issues, rather than politics as most significant. 27

Here it is evident that Arendt's notion of politics as an autonomous activity does not exclude the possibility that politics involves a struggle
for power. Indeed, revolutionary councils will always challenge the basis of established power as long as they hold that politics itself is the ultimate issue of significance and is not concerned with the final goals of parties and revolutionary movements which have an instrumental view of politics. To be non-partisan is to challenge the basis of these claims to authority and in this context it is ironically the poor who are seen as a source of hope by Arendt.

What is important to note is that Arendt's discussion of this conflict between the revolutionists and the political aspirations of the people implicitly reflects the notion that the forces and issues of society and the private realm somehow underly the dynamics of this struggle. The importance of social forces in stimulating the political aspirations of the people was noted above with respect to Arendt's discussion of the American and French Revolutions where concern with public affairs and political action developed out of, or was stimulated by, an initial preoccupation with the material problems of the household. With respect to the revolutionists it also seems reasonable to suggest that their "anti-political" positions with their notions of final goals and instrumental view of politics were at least stimulated by social problems. For if the "naked forces of want and need" made them feel that the establishment of politics as an autonomous activity was "rubbish" then these same forces, and the experiences they created for the revolutionists, must also have influenced the formation of the "unpolitical" final goals and theories of these men and the nature of the activities they engaged in.

The clash between these two groups, Arendt notes, created a gap between the revolutionists and the people and continued the old separation of rulers and ruled, so that according to her, things really didn't change much politically. To adequately explore the significance of this
problem and its origin for the future of politics Arendt would have to explore, in depth, her initial impressions about the relationship between social forces and the autonomy politics. That is, she would have to consider why revolutionists and parties developed their anti-political orientation in the socio-historical context they were in. There is a need to examine whether or not, despite her disagreement with their conclusions, their positions had merit under certain conditions given her recognition of the idea that social well-being is a prerequisite for politics. In addition, Arendt would also have to analyze the specific manner in which ostensibly private concerns can stimulate an appreciation for the integrity of politics among men as an autonomous activity. She would have to consider what prevents these social and household issues from becoming ends in themselves among the very people who developed this love for political affairs. An analysis of both these major questions will provide a clearer understanding of the forces for and against the establishment of politics as an autonomous activity and thus help to provide some indication as to the potential for the establishment of (an authentic) politics.

Nevertheless, despite these problems, Arendt's central theme is that for politics to be autonomous the establishment and preservation of politics must be seen as the most important issue with the social question in a subordinate position. This means that revolutions only really occur where liberation from oppression is accompanied by the constitution of freedom. On this basis Arendt contrasts the French and American Revolutions. The former she says was in the end not primarily concerned with politics but elevated the social question to primary importance as a result of the suffering and misery it confronted. The American Revolution was, at least initially, truly political since, in Arendt's view, it was "committed to the foundation of freedom and the establishment of lasting
institutions ..." Nevertheless, with respect to France, as noted above, Arendt expresses an awareness of the near impossibility of an autonomous politics in the context of the social misery of France. There seems to be the awareness, in On Revolution, that the overwhelming odds of the social problems of misery and poverty, may prevent even entire nations from engaging in, or founding politics. Whether all the implications of this for political action are pursued is another question to be analyzed in depth below.

When Arendt's notion of the autonomy of politics as expressed in the historical context of revolutionary movements is used as a framework for criticism of the political nature of movements, parties and theories, fundamental and cogent issues are raised. We now move on to consider these critiques and their implications for what politics is about. This will include the related issue of whether, in her critiques, Arendt adequately considers the role of social forces in influencing politics that is involved in her notion of the autonomy of politics as expressed in On Revolution.

Arendt's Critique of the Modern Western Political Tradition

While Arendt's analysis of the revolutions since 1776 in the West sees some source of optimism for the establishment of true politics in the recurrent emergence of the council system, the forces standing against these attempts at founding a politics of citizen-participation have been evidence of the fact that the conventional political conceptions of the West are still sufficiently strong to resist these new innovative urges. Arendt perceives this resistance as a manifestation of what is lacking in our modern understanding of politics. It is suggested that this is characteristic of all shades of the political spectrum to the extent that
one could argue that they are not essentially different from one another given their common aversion to the idea that the people should be permitted to speak and act directly in public affairs.

From her notion of politics as an autonomous activity, as the issue of ultimate significance, it seems fair to suggest that Arendt confronts almost the entire Western tradition of political activity and thought with the assertion that what it is engaged in is not really political. There is an implicit indictment of the Western tradition for prohibiting and stifling true freedom under various banners proclaiming human freedom and liberation.

The assumptions that underly Arendt's notion of politics as an autonomous activity implicitly reject as real politics what we have come to regard as political. The notions that representation is anti-thetical to true politics, that politics is not concerned with final goals, and that social and economic issues are of secondary importance would ostensibly seem to exclude many of the theorists, parties, governments, and movements of Western Europe and North America not to mention the rest of the world. With respect to these principles the French, Bolshevik, and even American Revolutions all have to be regarded as failing to attain the essence of what it is to be political and establish politics. But it is important to note that Arendt would not regard her critique as utopian. She is not arguing that these societies have failed to achieve an ideal harmonious state, but rather that they have destroyed the very real activity of politics which has repeatedly tried to reassert itself.

This section will critically examine the basis of Arendt's critique of these notions of doing politics. That is, as noted earlier, it will attempt to deal with or find the basic dynamic(s) between social and political of the opposing political and anti-political positions, implicit,
although not necessarily confronted in all their implications, in Arendt's thought. The purpose will be to consider what the possible outcome might be for politics and whether Arendt's critique is generally justified.

The French Revolution

The French Revolution, from Arendt's perspective, stands opposed to politics on all three levels of assumptions about the autonomy of politics. It was concerned with the social question and peoples' private interests, stood against direct participation as something more than functional to the revolution, and considered politics subordinate to its own programs and goals. According to Arendt, during the revolution the council system - manifested in the societies populaires - came to be regarded as only a temporary necessity to help achieve the revolution's aims. Concern was no longer with setting up a space for freedom with the councils being seen as the very "foundations of freedom", as Robespierre had argued, but with ensuring that the masses were provided with subsistence. This became reflected in the shift from direct participation to representation.

Arendt holds that when Robespierre came to power in 1793 he reversed his position completely arguing that the popular societies stood against "the great popular Society of the whole French people one and indivisible".32 This stifled the political aspirations of the people and regardless of its Rousseauistic basis fostered the age old dichotomy between rulers and ruled in Arendt's view. This was accompanied by the notion that the social question and not politics was the issue of key importance, as reflected in the words of Saint Just who argued that,

The freedom of the people is in its private life, don't disturb it. Let the government be a force only in order to protect this state of simplicity against force itself.33
Arendt argues that despite its pretension to representing the sovereignty of the nation, the centralized apparatus and power of the revolution attacked the freedom that had spontaneously arisen in the process of revolution since it,

... actually deprived the people of their power and hence had to persecute all those spontaneous feeble power organs which the revolution had brought into existence.34

The struggle and conflict between the government of the Jacobins and the councils revolved around three issues, in Arendt's view, (all of which reflect her notion of the autonomy of politics). First was the issue of public freedom as opposed to the "overwhelming odds of private misery"; second was the attempt at a "general will", or unified public opinion as opposed to the public spirit with the notion of diversity inherent in human speech and thought. This was embodied in the Jacobin's goal of absolute power and, says Arendt, "it was the power struggle of party and party interest against la chose publique", or public spirit of the councils. The third issue was derivative of the second and involved the effort at a government power monopoly counterposed to the federal republican principles of the councils. It was the struggle of the nation-state against the republic.35

Before going on, it is important to note that in this critique of the Jacobins Arendt does not go into the relation between issues two and one she mentions earlier in On Revolution. That is, while restating her opposition to the unpoltical nature of the "general will" or a unified public opinion, as violating the notion of diversity essential to doing politics, she does not actually go into the significance of the social context in which this is likely to occur that she mentions earlier.

In her chapter on "The Social Question" Arendt implies that diversity
of opinion and factionalism, the bulwarks of political freedom as
manifested early in America, generally require a certain minimal level
of economic well-being. Arendt notes that unlike Robespierre and his
colleagues, who invoked public opinion to legitimize their positions,
the Americans regarded the rule of public opinion as a form of tyranny.
The latter felt that exchange of views and politics were only worth-
while and meaningful where there was a diversity of views, and that
otherwise the public realm would be destroyed. But Arendt also implies
that this "positive accent on faction" was easier in the United States
given the material well-being of America.

The fact of the matter was, of course, that the kind of multitude which the founders of
the American republic first represented and then constituted politically, if it existed
at all in Europe, certainly ceased to exist as soon as one approached the lower strata
of the population. Arendt suggests that in its context Rousseau's description of a united
body driven by one will was accurate since these masses were all concerned
with obtaining basic subsistence and because "the cry for bread will
always be uttered with one voice". The need for bread, the problem of
overcoming poverty, creates a sameness and air of oneness among men
Arendt tells us. The French notion of "the people" reflects the reality
of efforts to overcome need and deprivation even though it is a threat
to politics, and,

if this notion has spread to the four corners
of the earth, it is not because of any influence
of abstract ideas but because of its obvious
plausibility under conditions of abject poverty.

Given the understanding the problems of poverty create for politics
Arendt's comments here and above reflect, it seems indeed strange that
she should present the actions of the French Revolutionaries in such a
one-dimensional manner later on, viewing them in general as only obstacles
to the establishment of politics. Certainly, such an approach would tend to obscure many of the essential (socio-economic) obstacles that stand against the foundation of politics, contained implicitly in her own thought.

Arendt seems to ignore the socio-historical context she regards as the setting where these events took place and argues, as mentioned earlier, that the councils were crushed simply because they were competitors for public power. She sees the Jacobins as a self-aggrandizing force (only) using and subverting the councils to gain dominance and advance their own goals.

Robespierre's rule of terror was indeed nothing else but the attempt to organize the whole French people into a single gigantic party machinery ... through which the Jacobin club would spread a net of party cells all over France. 39

Arendt sees the Bolsheviks in the same light as a party that "emasculated and perverted the revolutionary soviet system with exactly the same methods." 40

No one is disputing the fact that the Jacobins and the Bolsheviks did not regard Arendt's notion of politics as the issue of ultimate import - they saw the social question as primary, and had their own final goals which they advanced at the expense of the establishment of politics. What is being asserted is that Arendt's treatment is too mechanistic to the extent that she does not inquire into or attempt to find out why they acted in this way. This should be part of her approach given her discussion of social conditions. This creates the problem, that Arendt's notion of politics comes dangerously close to being a utopian measuring rod of the Western political tradition. This prevents it from possibly being a useful framework for understanding the problems of doing and establishing politics and therefore concluding, given an
analysis of the problems to be overcome, what is political in the sense of action necessary to promote conditions for founding politics. We will return to this problem later.

At this point, it is important to emphasize that Arendt is criticizing political movements with respect to whether or not they supported the idea of politics as an autonomous activity without taking into consideration how their particular social context might have influenced their activities and perspectives. Thus, Arendt perceives the French Revolution as embodying the conflict between "the modern party system and the new revolutionary organs of self-government". It is in this sense that she sees little difference between the revolutionary parties of the left and the more conservative parties of the right. Arendt thus fails to examine how left and right parties may be differentiated with respect to their perceptions of and prescriptions for socio-economic problems and their positions on the idea of human progress and perfectability and overall social advancement. From Arendt's point of view both have stood against the establishment of politics as a realm of speech and action for men interested in participating in public affairs and have made the people relinquish power to their representatives. Arendt argues that this occurs in one-party dictatorships as well as parliamentary systems since the former

... can never deny that its own origin lies in the factional strife of parliament, and that it therefore remains a body whose approach to the people is from without and from above.

When Robespierre established the tyrannical force of the Jacobins' faction against the non-violent power of the popular societies, he also asserted and re-established the power of the French Assembly.
Robespierre, as party politician, thus stood against the political aspirations of the people of France.

Arendt says as much for the Russian Communists in 1917 who were not concerned with founding politics but with advancing the goals of their party. They did not support the soviets which had spontaneously arisen in 1917 again as they had in 1905, as newly found political institutions, but saw them as spaces and instruments for consolidating their power.

When the Communists decided, in 1919 "to espouse only the cause of a soviet republic in which the soviets possess a Communist majority", they actually behaved like ordinary party politicians. Lenin's lack of sympathy for politics became clearly manifest when he put down the Kronstadt rebellion which Arendt regards as an attempt by the soviets (or councils) to throw-off the party dictatorship. This showed, Arendt argues, that the new councils with their emphasis on the autonomy of politics as an activity were incompatible with the party system and implicitly with, given Arendt's framework, its concern for achieving final (in this case Marxist) goals. The councils contradicted all the theories of the Bolsheviks. Arendt concludes that since Kronstadt the name Soviet Union has been not only a lie but also a testimony to the popularity of the system the party crushed.

Again here, there is little attention with what should be a major concern for Arendt. That is, how such a party developed hostility to ostensibly political organs and pursued a program which did not have the establishment of politics as its intention. From the perspective of a true Soviet Republic Arendt says, "the Bolshevik party was merely more dangerous but no less reactionary than all the other parties of the
defunct regime". It was interested in the social rather than political aspect of the revolution. But given her awareness of the problems of poverty this should come as no surprise to Arendt who seems to skirt the more difficult question of how in fact politics could be established in the social situations of revolutionary France or Russia.

Arendt limits her observations to the notion that the Bolsheviks represented the inability of revolutionists generally to understand and be prepared for actual revolutionary events as reflected in the spontaneous rise of the councils. The bewildered revolutionists, Arendt argues, always found that revolution did not involve the seizure of "power" by means of violence but rather the disintegration of the old order and the spontaneous rise of these new organs of power among the people. When they finally realized what was happening the revolutionists have used these new organs to advance the power of their parties rather than simply joining them and participating in them on an equal basis. Arendt therefore concludes,

the part of the professional revolutionists usually consists not in making a revolution but in rising to power after it has broken out ... And what Arendt really means by all this is that the revolutionists see politics, or the political action in these councils, as a means to achieving their final end for man as they theoretically understand it. The Revolutionists never appreciate politics - embodied in this new form of government - for what it is or can be. Here Arendt attributes this as much to narrowness as to the conscious effort to advance their goals. She observes that despite their study of past revolutions these men have failed to comprehend what is truly new and unique and spontaneous in revolutionary history.
The Party System

It is important to emphasize that Arendt, as mentioned above, does not see the nature of the actions and theories of the Jacobins and Bolsheviks as particularly unique. At most she regards them as more extreme manifestations of the orientations and concerns of parties and party systems in general.

Given her notion of the autonomy of politics as expressed in On Revolution, Arendt's analysis and critique of the general nature of political parties amounts to the assertion that political parties are not political. That is to say, the parties as institutions stand against Arendt's notion of what politics should be about on all levels. Parties, according to Arendt, do not regard politics as an end in itself but instead see it as an instrument for achieving their own goals. Historically they have stood against participation by citizens in public affairs and attempted to reduce men to a passive supportive role for their aims. Their programs have always subordinated (or prevented) any concern with the establishment of politics as a place where men could speak and act publicly.

As noted at the beginning of this section, Arendt argues that because party programs were always "ready-made formulas" they involved execution, or the following out of a plan, rather than (unique, human) action which is the essence of politics. The formulas of (revolutionary) parties per se, Arendt holds, even if they had achieved all they strove for, would have destroyed all that the spontaneous popular councils had desired since these formulas automatically implied a division between party experts and the people, with the latter reduced to merely executing the plans of the former. There was no room in the party for the human capacity for action nor for the idea that each man could have his own
perspective or opinion. In such a situation the councils could not survive. They thus turned against the parties and party system whose only concern was with programs or the ideals of the revolution. Arendt argues that because of their desire for doing politics the councils challenged "the party system as such, in all its forms". And from Arendt's point of view this makes the parties most certainly not political.

This is emphasized by the fact that Arendt argues that the parties focused on the social aspect of the revolution, rather than the political. (Or to transpose, if we may, the terminology Arendt uses in *The Human Condition*, the parties have facilitated the expansion of "society" or the social realm at the expense of politics). They thus did not regard material concerns as of secondary, although requisite importance, to politics. Their primary concerns were popular welfare and private happiness rather than positive political freedom. This was consistent with their emphasis on representation rather than participation in Arendt's view. As noted above, the only thing that can be represented is the people's objectively determinable interest or welfare which arises out of their private life and does not require a public space to appear as do their actions and opinions. And, as *The Human Condition* points out, when men's private concerns are all that appear in "public" affairs, the social realm has replaced politics.

Arendt concludes that modern parties and their system of representative government have fostered and reinforced the age-old distinction between rulers and ruled since the people only have power with respect to welfare and private happiness. The party system remains oligarchic, she says, because public freedom and political action are for the privileged. This last observation, however, shows a lack of precision in Arendt's critique, with respect to the notion that the privileged few can still
be termed political. For if they foster a system which gives primacy to the social question and denigrates and prevents action and participation of citizens in public affairs, they can hardly be said to be motivated by the notion that the establishment and preservation of politics is the issue of utmost importance.

Indeed, as noted previously, Arendt goes on to point out that those who defend this system have to argue that politics is not an end in itself but rather a burden. She emphasizes that the party as an institution has never been concerned with citizen participation and hence a true public realm. It has assumed either that such participation was unnecessary (or at best provided by other organs) or that the welfare state had made political questions the administrative concern of experts. Certainly, Arendt cannot really maintain that men involved with these parties, regardless of their presence in the ostensible "public arenas" of parliament, were really political given their concerns. Parliament would be used for what it has become — an arena for the meeting of conflicting private interests, rather than for authentic political action. It would then be the instrument of society or the social realm and at the same time a microcosm of it according to her formulation of society in The Human Condition. Politics and public life would be dead. There is no notion on Arendt's part that, like the Americans, these party politicians became concerned with politics for its own sake in the process of battling out material issues. Or perhaps Arendt tacitly assumes this? At any rate, this would have to have happened for these men to at least be partially political. And then if it had, there is the question of why they would not want to expand this public realm. This latter problem is something I will return to in considering Arendt's treatment of the political decline of the American Revolution. At this point, however, it should be apparent
that Arendt leaves these important problems that impinge on the potential
establishment of politics relatively untouched.

Nevertheless, regardless of Arendt's superficial observations about
the nature of party politicians' activity in parliament, her main point
remains that parties are anti-thetical to the establishment and preservation
of politics. She especially drives this point home in the last part of
On Revolution. There she emphasizes that the parties have stifled the
political aspirations of the people, arguing that the conflict between
parties and councils has arisen in all 20th century revolutions with the
issue at stake being "representation versus action and participation".59
The parties she says have always disregarded the councils as organs for
popular speech and action and only seen them as instruments to be used for
revolutionary struggles. After the revolution has been achieved the
parties have seen no need for these institutions and their concern with
political freedom, given the parties' preoccupation with the social
question.60 From this perspective Arendt makes it abundantly clear that
the parties and the politicians in them were not concerned with politics
as she conceives it. However, in this context, she portrays the parties'
concern with the social question as a motivation for their programs and
activities rather than leaving the impression that power in itself was a
major concern. Thus, parties, Arendt argues, perceived post-revolutionary
politics as a thing of administration rather than action.61

Again, however, as with the Jacobins and the Bolsheviks noted
previously, it is unfortunate that Arendt does not consider why the parties
were influenced to assume and follow the anti-political programs they did.
While her critique that they were primarily concerned with social concerns
and private material issues of need rather than with politics, and with the
attainment of their programs rather than with the expansion of active
popular participation in politics is accurate, why this occurred is also 
a vital question to explore. Understanding what influenced them to 
follow the "un-political" programs they did will help to elucidate and 
uncover what some of the forces against the establishment of politics 
might have been. In this respect, Arendt should bring into the analysis 
the obstacles to politics that misery and poverty provided, that she 
emphasizes earlier in her work, and look at the extent to which these 
party programs which stressed the social aspect of the revolution reflected 
the reality of existing conditions. For in this case, the parties and 
their programs are only a symptom of a larger and more basic problem she 
herself discusses. It is then unfair to create the impression that they 
are somehow responsible by themselves for the decline of politics and that 
the fundamental issue and conflict of our time is between the social aims 
of the parties and the political aspirations of the people. The more 
fruitful approach under these conditions would be to find out how social 
problems could be solved in a manner consistent with politics.

The fact is that Arendt notes, as pointed above, that the struggle 
for liberation and concern with necessity forms a basis for political free­
dom even if it cannot realize freedom. It should thus be understandable 
that many parties recognized the social question as a first order problem. 
To say, however, that all parties have this as their ultimate end and stand 
against active participation, is an unwarranted extrapolation without 
considering particular cases.

Moreover, that the parties weren't the only obstacle to politics 
is evident when Arendt herself notes that despite the people's interest 
in politics as expressed through the councils, the mass of men, not yet 
freed from the burdens of necessity, still viewed the social question as 
the overwhelming issue. They, therefore tended, in all revolutions, to
focus their attention there in the last analysis. Thus, Arendt's criticism of the "unpolitical" positions of the revolutionists and parties does not involve the clear cut type of conflict she tries to assert existed between themselves and the people. Arendt could only substantiate her argument by going into a deeper analysis of the roots of these spontaneous councils and showing that they could survive on their own with their political aspirations if it had not been for the activities of the parties and revolutionary movements. And this notion is something she herself refutes when she notes that the fatal mistake of the councils was in their failure to see the difference between "participation in public affairs and administration or management of things in the public interest". Therefore, the councils were also to blame for the inability to maintain politics.

As it stands, Arendt's critique inhibits an analysis of the basic anti-political trends historically involved in the decline of politics. She does not sufficiently analyze how social conditions affected the perspectives parties and people had on politics and this limits her ability to really say what is and is not a political activity. In other words, one has to establish what the obstacles to the foundation of politics are before one can categorically infer that certain actions and programs are political or not. This same problem is also apparent in her treatment of the American Revolution where again her failure to pursue in depth her implicit notion of the relation between social and political issues prohibits greater insights on her part.

The American Revolution

The notion that the attitudes and programs of the parties and revolutionists of Europe were symptoms of more basic problems confronting
the establishment of politics as an autonomous activity should be suggested by the fact that in the United States the founding fathers—whom Arendt considers as the best historical examples of men truly concerned with politics—ultimately prevented the establishment and foundation of Arendt's form of politics. These men created a system of government in 1789, which failed to institutionalize and make permanent the public spaces of freedom for direct citizen participation in public affairs, which had arisen in the localities and townships of pre-revolutionary America. Arendt ignores the historical fact of importance that this happened in America before the rise of political parties and in an environment where "revolution" did not involve rigid ideological programs that replaced unique human action with obedient execution of plans. Thus, politics declined in a society seemingly ideally suited to its foundation where none of the obstacles that existed in Europe, including that of abject misery and deprivation, were present to threaten it.

Despite the colonial tradition of participatory politics, representative government under the Constitution stifled public spirit and freedom. Arendt notes that the political realm was thus invaded by society transforming political principles into social values such as "civil liberties, the individual welfare of the greatest number, and public opinion as the greatest force ruling an egalitarian democratic society". Such a triumph of private and social values in a State so favorably suited for the establishment of politics should stimulate an examination of the factors that influenced the apparent shift in attitudes towards politics, of those in power, that in Arendt's view, layed the foundations for setting this process in motion. Such an analysis might reveal that it was not the founders alone who were responsible for the decline of politics in this period.
Unfortunately, as with political parties and revolutionists, Arendt doesn't analyze the things which could have formed the perspectives of the founders towards politics or changed them. While she notes that their concern with material issues threw them into public affairs which they soon appreciated for its own sake, Arendt does not adequately develop her implicit notion of the relation between social/private questions and doing politics to be able to provide insights into why the founders failed to institutionalize a ward system such as Jefferson's that would have made public spaces permanent in the United States. All Arendt can really tell us in the end is that the revolutionary political spirit in America died, and imply that the founding fathers behaved un-politically. How or why this happened, is left as an enigma by Arendt.

Arendt only gets potentially near the basis of the problem when she discusses the anti-democratic attitudes of the founders and their pre-eminent concern with stability. She mentions how they equated democracy with rule by the passions of public opinion, rather than public spirit. They felt this would both be an unstable form of government as well as threaten the diversity of opinion essential to freedom. Arendt argues that they thus saw representative or republican government as a viable alternative since it could serve to temper passions and purify interest and opinion by limiting those who could participate to the few. These men could then serve as mediators of opinions and promote rational decision-making.65

What Arendt does not do is discuss why the founders had these ideas toward democracy and the people. Nor does she consider the possibility that it was the social situation at the root of these anti-democratic ideas which could have also prevented the institutionalization of public spaces at the lowest levels.
Arendt never concerns herself with the implications for politics of one of the basic issues of post-revolutionary America. That was, whether or not democratization would have posed a threat to the landed and monied aristocrats of New York, Boston and Virginia from the small farmers, shopkeepers and labourers. (This is the problem which Hartz has examined in his book, *The Liberal Tradition in America*). Jefferson, whom she glorifies as the only founder concerned with establishing politics, was also viewed as the advocate of these people against the aristocrats. Thus the issue of democratization was directly related to the whole question of the establishment of politics as Arendt understands it. It seems fair to suggest that if Arendt is fully to deal with the problems of politics in early post-revolutionary America adequately she must also examine the social issues the question of wider political participation was intrinsically involved with.

By failing to do this Arendt only deals with this problem on a very superficial level. The decline of politics in the post-revolutionary period comes to be regarded as a perplexity. Arendt seems to grapple in vain with the problem that, in a republic founded on and constructed out of public freedom, no place existed for the qualities of speech and action involved with it to be exercised. Jefferson is seen as the man most clearly perceiving and attempting to overcome this problem. Arendt is sympathetic to his assertions that the founders were vain and presumptuous and downright tyrannical in attempting to govern beyond the grave by depriving the American people of public spaces where they could "begin something new." Arendt's answer to this problem is more descriptive than analytical or explanatory. She tells us the founders confused freedom and action with foundation and liberation alone.
It was in the nature of their experiences to see the phenomenon of action exclusively in the image of tearing down and building up.68

Unfortunately Arendt, unlike Hartz, does not examine how the nature of their experiences could influence their conceptions. Hartz explains how the aristocrats, or whigs or federalists, whichever terminology one wishes to use, feared the political participation of the people, even with respect to extending the suffrage, since they felt that the social interests of the masses were antagonistic and in conflict with their own. The Jeffersonians, the democratic-republicans, argued that democratization would not threaten the material interests of the aristocrats since the people only wished the opportunity to improve their condition and wanted the same things as those in power, having no intention of threatening their positions. Louis Hartz argues that the failure of the whigs to perceive this resulted in their ultimate demise under Jefferson and Andrew Jackson.69 Hartz's analysis lends the necessary historical context needed to elucidate what Arendt presents as an almost completely intellectual debate that confuses what the issue of the establishment of politics actually involved in early America. Given the perspective Hartz provides, one can understand that the founders who perceived the demands for democratization put forth by the Jeffersonians as a threat to their interests would be unlikely to support the decentralization of the government so that the people could directly participate in public affairs. From their perspective the effect of this would be even more radical than the extension of the suffrage.

Arendt, however, gives the impression that the founders were either ignorant or unaware of the implications of the representative form of government they had created despite her discussion of their anti-democratic
thinking. She agrees with Lewis Mumford that

the political importance of the township was never grasped by the founders, and that the failure to incorporate it into either federal or state constitutions was "one of the tragic oversights of post-revolutionary political development".70

Arendt sees this lack of awareness not as due to the fact that the founders weren't revolutionaries but because they took the spirit and institutions of the colonial period for granted. Such a facile conclusion is no substitute for a deeper historical analysis of the bases for the conflict over democratization and political participation between Jefferson and the founders. It seems difficult to see how something which the founders feared would threaten their interests would be omitted out of ignorance. And Arendt herself admits that the founders must have known that representative government could never reflect the opinions of the citizens. She notes that Madison felt that the members of the constitutional convention could not ascertain the opinions of their constituents or know how they would act and think had they been there.

Hence, they, the founders, could hear with approval, though perhaps not entirely without misgivings, when Benjamin Rush proposed the new and dangerous doctrine that although "all power is derived from the people, they possess it only on the days of their elections. After this it is the property of their rulers."71

The founders thus appear to have been able to recognize the implications of their actions for politics.

Arendt should especially see this when she argues that the question of representation itself "actually implies no less than a decision on the very dignity of the political realm itself".72 That is, as mentioned above, Arendt argues that representative government only represents the interests not opinions of men, turns government into administration, and excludes the people from politics.
Arendt shows how the main effect of the establishment of representative government under the Constitution was the beginning of the decline of politics as she conceives it in America and as she sees Jefferson advocating it. And such an outcome could not have been an accident on the founders' part. The system of representative government which they established reflected their anti-democratic beliefs and this involved the notion that the people's role should be as passive as possible in politics lest they pose a threat to the established order of things. Hence the system of indirect election of presidents and senators and the role of both as conservative checks against the passions and power of the people.

Arendt agrees with Jefferson that the great danger to politics was that the Constitution formulated by the founders gave power to the people in their private capacities only, depriving them of the public space in which they could speak and act as citizens. This led to an emphasis on the private, material, and economic dimensions of life at the expense of politics. Especially under the conditions of economic growth in America, this fostered the expansion of the private realm into the public, thus forming the social realm with all the consequences this has for public life already noted. Civil liberties replaced public freedom. That is, participation in public affairs was no longer a prime concern, but rather public power was used to protect the pursuit of private happiness. If Arendt related these notions, which alone are rather vague, to their historical context she would see that they correspond rather closely to the founders desire for a constitution that fosters the growth of a national economy and stands against the political democratization advocated by Jefferson which the aristocrats perceived as a threat to their interests.

This notion is something Arendt doesn't develop since she ignores
the historical events surrounding the ideas she deals with. Arendt is thus not sensitive to the social issues lying behind the political views of the time and she thus cannot explain concisely the opposition of the founders to politics. She cannot go beyond the symptoms of the problems to uncover the social issues that prevented the foundation of politics in America. This is rather unfortunate considering that she does recognize the relation between social issues and politics in the idea that the material and economic concerns of the revolution stimulated an involvement in and taste for politics. However, Arendt seems to stop here and does not pursue the essential task of exploring this relation. And as a result she limits her potential depth of analysis with respect to the obstacles to politics in America and consequently her ability to say what being political involves. That is, what activities could promote the foundation of politics. Arendt cannot see a possible solution to the problem of establishing politics in trying to reconcile what appeared to be conflicting social interests between the founders and the people as the Jeffersonian Democratic-Republicans did. This prevents her from asking the next question of why, once democratization was achieved politics still failed. Arendt ignores the historical fact that Jefferson and his followers were concerned with socio-economic issues as well as politics and that the notion of equality implicit in the former promoted private rather than political values.

Arendt also tries to argue that Europe's immigrant poor were instrumental in destroying the American public realm since their "passion for sudden riches" gave pre-eminence to the social question. But, given an understanding of early American history, one can see that this only compounded and exacerbated the whole problem. The founding fathers and the Democratic-Republicans had insured the growth of private concerns
and the decline of politics long before these poor immigrants landed in America. However, it is important to understand exactly how the decline came about.

Tocqueville and the Decline of American Politics

Had Arendt managed to extend her analysis to include underlying social conditions she might see that it was the material conditions of America that created a propensity to be un-political. According to Tocqueville, as will be explained below, by fostering social equality the American environment encouraged self-reliance and a withdrawal into one's private life away from politics so that people were willing to delegate their power to their representatives.

If Tocqueville is correct, then the founders' proclivities for representative government and their aversion to participatory politics only coincided with the general attitudes of the people toward public affairs that the American social context fostered. It would therefore be erroneous to pin the blame for the decline of politics on these aristocrats just because they gave the people power in their private capacities only. Under existing conditions of social equality this simply served to perpetuate and reinforce — rather than produce — the trend toward privatization.

The founders then can only be attacked for having spurred on and worsened the existing problem. And it must be remembered that the founders' actions were motivated by the belief that the nature of the private concerns of the common people posed a threat to their interests.

However, Arendt does not understand the dynamics of the decline of American politics from this perspective of the social conditions and social conflicts in America. Instead, Arendt's main conclusion is that
the basic problem involved the need to counteract the privatization and withdrawal from public life encouraged by the founders' inexplicable construction of a system of representative government. Jefferson's system of decentralized councils or wards for direct citizen participation in public affairs is seen as the only viable alternative in this respect.\footnote{The system of decentralized councils or wards for direct citizen participation was seen as a viable alternative to counteract the privatization and withdrawal from public life encouraged by the construction of a system of representative government.}

Arendt argues that the wards would have prevented the abuse of public power by private individuals for their interests - which she holds, resulted under representative government - since these public realms would have exhibited and exposed all those who entered them.\footnote{The wards would have prevented the abuse of public power by private individuals for their interests under representative government because these public realms would have exhibited and exposed all those who entered them.} Jefferson understood this, according to Arendt, in seeing, as discussed above, the danger to politics in a representative government which only granted the people power in their private capacities so they never entered the public space. As noted, under such conditions men were led to emphasize their private life concerns and interests, and thus view politics instrumentally.

Tocqueville's work, however, shows that this analysis and critique of Arendt's essentially mystifies the problem. For Tocqueville, representative government is not the cause of the problem but rather a consequence of it. In other words, representative government is a result of the development of the social realm and the decline of public life and not the force behind it. As noted, the equality fostered under the social conditions of the American environment tended to encourage a reliance on oneself rather than the acceptance of the perspectives of others. The common level of conditions men found themselves at led them to put no real value on the capacities of others as opposed to their own. Men felt that they could be autonomous and provide for themselves. In such a democratic society men tend to become so absorbed in their private life, Tocqueville argues, that they do not have time for public political
activities and they therefore relinquish this power to their representatives. The materialist individualism of American society thus encourages the growth of representative government. Therefore, as mentioned above, although the system set up by the founders discouraged politics this only consolidated what social conditions were already encouraging among the people. It is the social conditions that lead to equality, rather than representative government, that promote the people's egoistic behaviour and their preoccupation with private concerns that end in the use of public power for the advancement of private interests.

Thus, the people, not just the founding fathers, had attitudes and a value structure that provided obstacles to politics. Given Tocqueville's and Hartz's analysis we can form a clear picture of why politics was not established in post-revolutionary America by considering the importance social conditions and social conflict played in the process.

The people who followed and supported Jefferson and the Democratic-Republicans were creatures of the egalitarian conditions of the American environment demanding equal recognition for their private concerns from the national government controlled by the Federalists. They wanted the government to serve their interests. When they gained power under Jefferson and Jackson their main concerns were extension of the suffrage i.e., greater representation, and, especially under Jackson, a frontal assault on the financial and economic power of the northeast. Even if Jefferson the politician had been interested primarily in politics in Arendt's sense - and it is evident he wasn't - his followers became absorbed in economic and private concerns stimulated by the equal material opportunity America provided for men.

The problem of preserving politics in America thus did not involve the idea of a clear-cut conflict between the political aspirations of the
people and the theories of government of the founders. Arendt's oversimplification is no more applicable to America than it is to Europe. The problem was much more complex. Given the material aims, attitudes, and value structure of the people, noted above, it should come as no surprise to Arendt that the founders shouldn't allow them to directly participate in public affairs. First because they could easily be interpreted as a threat to aristocratic interests given their private and economic concerns. Second, because these concerns also involved a value structure that promoted homogeneity, faith in greatest number and the rule of public opinion, all based on private, gratification-seeking attitudes due to, as Tocqueville points out, the similar egalitarian conditions the people lived under. This stood in contrast to the founder's aristocratic notions of "public spiritedness". From this perspective one can understand how the founders would be opposed to democratic government, especially involving direct participation, as being unstable and dangerous since it would be governed by these apparently hostile privatistic interests and the "passions of public opinion". A representative government of separation of powers and checks and balances could theoretically protect the founders' interests and their taste in politics as involving diversity, tolerance and reason. And, rather ironically, such a government only reflected the basic desires of the American people as well.

On the Possibility of Politics in Early America

The actual establishment of politics in such a context would require two things. 1) Overcoming the individualism and egotism and private orientation of the people and 2) reconciling the founders to the fact that democratic participatory government could work and that the people did not pose a threat to their interests. This involves dealing with the social
conditions Arendt fails to analyze in depth.

The problem is to respond to the social conditions that foster absorption in private life and public passivity and thus promote representative government. One must not pose the solution as simply an alternative to representative government. Thus Tocqueville does not merely see the role of free public institutions as exposing and exhibiting words and deeds within their boundaries and just giving vent to men's public dimension stifled under representative government as Arendt implies. Tocqueville, rather, sees these institutions as forces actively transforming men's attitudes and building a public spirit and taste for politics in contrast to the attitudes fostered by the social environment. Free institutions serve to counteract the egotism, individualism and consequent isolation and withdrawal into private self-interest that occurs under social equality. Permitting men to participate actively in local public affairs brings them out of their private isolation and into contact with each other so they can develop a notion of mutual dependence and recognize that they live in a world of other men. Decentralized participatory institutions of freedom promote the notion that men have something in common despite their apparently conflicting private interests. Thus, Tocqueville regards free institutions as forces that can overcome the lack of public spirit produced by social conditions of equality.

Now in the context of early 19th century America it is unlikely that such ideas would have been accepted by the Federalists since the milder demands of extending the suffrage weren't realized until these men lost power and Jackson took over. As Hartz points out, the effort to argue that the interests of the people were materially similar to the Federalists and that there was no conflict of interest was not accepted by the latter. Thus, to establish politics it would have been first
necessary to gain power for the people whose social interests were restricted by the Federalists.

Once the Democrats had gained power the task then would have been to not only extend the suffrage but to decentralize government and set up local participatory organs so citizens could act in public affairs, and thus foster the growth of a public spirit and taste for politics beyond peoples' private concerns. Unfortunately, this did not occur either since the Democratic-Republicans lost - if they had ever had it - the concern with the autonomy of politics Jefferson later expressed, in their efforts to achieve the social goals of their movement. All this is not meant to imply that the people had no political values or public spirit at all. Rather, this spirit, which historically seemed to have blossomed in the late colonial and revolutionary period - where Arendt sees it as originally stimulated by material concerns - was challenged by the material opportunity provided by the American environment and society fostering an opposite set of values that soon gained predominance. In this respect Tocqueville's and Hartz's works are crucial because they emphasize the importance of examining how social conditions can contribute to the absence of a taste for politics among men and how the actions and attitudes of those in power can reinforce such trends.

While in On Revolution Arendt departs from her earlier narrow position and recognizes that private men can be public spirited and that concern with social problems is not necessarily a threat to politics since it can throw people into the action of public affairs, nevertheless, she does not develop this implicit notion of the relationship between social issues and conditions and political affairs. One result is that she fails to comprehend what types of social situations can threaten men's public spirit and politics and therefore does not recognize that the American
people were losing their taste for politics under social conditions of equality that stimulated an absorption in private concerns. And Arendt thus mistakes the problem as primarily rooted in the political attitudes and representative government of the founders' whose underlying basis she also does not discuss or show she understands. (This is rather interesting in view of the fact that she at least recognizes the importance of impoverished social conditions in France making it almost impossible to have politics. Arendt seems almost at a loss when dealing with social situations of relative abundance and their effect on men's public spiritedness).

These things again raise the important problem that the failure to comprehend the basic forces prohibiting politics restricts one's ability to criticize certain actions or programs as "unpolitical". As noted previously, not understanding the actual obstacles to politics, Arendt cannot suggest what action one has to engage in to establish or preserve politics and public spirit. For example, as noted above, given the opposition of the Federalists to popular participation in public affairs it would have first been necessary to gain power before the ward-system could be instituted to restore the peoples' desire to do politics. And this would have necessitated also appealing to the "un-political" social-interests of the people for support in some way. In a complex and changing society the effort to establish politics may not always be possible through purely political actions as Arendt conceives of them. Therefore a concise socio-historical analysis is necessary to determine whether or not seemingly un-political actions and approaches are required.

The conditions in early 19th century America would seem to imply that those concerned with founding a public realm would have to be
enlightened enough to solve and deal with social problems without letting those concerns become pre-dominant in the last analysis. This would be necessary because the public participation of the people might only be possible once these men had gained power on the basis of realizing the people's primarily material concerns. The question then becomes one of developing the techniques and understanding of how social problems can be solved in a manner consistent with politics. But this is made difficult by Arendt's main problem in On Revolution, which is that she never adequately examines how social conditions and problems stimulate, influence, and affect politics.

Social Issues and Politics

Evidence of this problem is apparent in Arendt's failure to analyze how the attitudes toward politics of those who participated in councils and local wards could be affected by social issues and conditions. For example, Arendt never discusses the meaning and implications of Jefferson's idea that each man's participation in public affairs would be based on his competence. What does this refer to, his inherent intellectual capacity or range of experience in society? It seems to imply that each man has the opportunity to engage in decisions that are closest to him or which involve questions with which he is most familiar. This would suggest that participation would be closely related to a man's activities in the society and be involved with what we might usually call his interest. Jefferson's activities in public life would seem to justify such an interpretation. The point is, that Arendt here ignores a discussion of the possible relation between a man's interest as a member of society and his opinion, or perspective when he participates in politics.
Arendt does the same thing when she discusses the councils which arose in Europe. She provides no framework for examining how politics finally became subordinate to the social question in these councils except to note that abject poverty and the programs of the parties were massive obstacles. Arendt's analysis is too superficial because she does not explain how social conditions and the social question specifically influenced political attitudes or why revolutionists and parties and their programs could gain support. As discussed above with respect to France and America, Arendt does not consider how the people could lose a "taste" for politics.

Arendt cannot explain how this process occurred because she devotes little attention to whether the councils reflected the nature of their membership in politics. In other words, there is no concise examination of the extent to which those who participated were still concerned with their own particular social situation and what the significance of this would be. Was this only due to their condition of poverty? Such an analysis should implicitly follow from Arendt's notion that councils dealt with both socio-economic as well as political issues. While Arendt asserts that politics requires that socio-economic concerns be secondary the fact that this has not happened historically necessitates a consideration of what has caused this since, given the example of America, poverty is not the only reason. This means an examination of how various social conditions can influence men's attitudes to a primary concern with material issues and party programs rather than politics and a public spirit. This is essential to understanding the possibility of having an autonomous politics.

If Arendt went into an analysis of how the actions and opinions of the men in the councils were related to the social issues they also dealt
with there she would have a framework for examining how the attitudes of
the people shifted away from politics. She could then, for example,
cogently confront the obstacles to politics in American society instead
of leaving the reasons for the decline of American politics enigmatically
with the "founding fathers" and the "immigrant poor". Like Tocqueville,
whose critique of modern politics is similar to hers, she could recommend
actions that could help to establish politics and a public spirit rather
than having, of necessity, almost to ignore this problem.

Arendt, however, is even vague on the issue of how men originally
developed a "taste" or liking for politics in America and France. There
is no real development of the notion that struggles for liberation and
political freedom have historically coincided and of the relationship
between social issues and politics this implies. While Arendt notes that
initial efforts involving material concerns in the French Revolution led
to a desire to do politics for its own sake among the people, there is no
analysis of the process or forces that brought this change of attitude
about. Similarly, in America where original concern with private issues
threw men into public business for its own sake, there is no examination
of the process by which the immersion of private men in a public space
fostered an appreciation for politics. Arendt doesn't explain how private
interest became transformed into public spirit.

While Arendt is clear on the point that politics is involved with
social issues and conflict this relationship is never elaborated. She
says the councils have always been concerned with social issues in a
secondary way, but what does this signify about the influence of these
issues on politics?

Arendt's discussion creates the general impression that actions and
efforts by men to achieve material aims throw them together and stimulate
political attitudes. However, she never considers whether this stimulation comes solely out of the experience of acting and being together or also from the implications of the social problems they deal with and the further issues these questions may raise about the nature of the state and its politics. One is never certain as to her conception of the relationship between social conflict and the concern with politics as the issue of ultimate significance due to her failure to delve into the implications of struggles for liberation giving rise to attempts to establish political freedom. In this context Arendt is still unclear as to what conditions promote an attitude favorable to politics and therefore fails to suggest what activities would be necessary to encourage the required changes for the growth of politics. Thus, there is no basis for actually understanding what political action would encompass in our imperfect world.

Thus Arendt's failure to develop the analysis of how social issues affect politics and political attitudes ends in the superficial conclusions noted above about the failure of politics in the modern age of revolutions. At the end of *On Revolution* the superficiality is again apparent when she concludes that the councils failed to establish politics because they confused participation in public affairs with the administration of things and failed to perceive the tremendous bureaucratic problems modern governments faced. 83

In the form of workers' councils, they have again and again tried to take over the management of factories, and all these attempts have ended in dismal failure. 84

This should be a point of departure for further analysis into why this confusion and stress on management of mundane private concerns developed and gained predominance over men's political attitudes. As far as this goes, like her critique of parties, revolutionists, and governments, this
is only a description, not an explanation of the forces standing against politics. The latter would require an examination of what induced the involvement with private concerns and let them predominate as well as the manner in which bureaucratization and administration inhibit the establishment of politics. Is the growth of bureaucracy a consequence of the homogeneity and rationalization fostered by modern egalitarian societies, as Tocqueville might argue, or is it a product of the growing specialization necessitated by technology and industrialism? Answers to these questions would provide an understanding of what the obstacles to the preservation of politics are and thus suggest what would have to be done to achieve it. Only when Arendt went this far could she fairly judge what actions and theoretical concerns were "political" in her sense. She might then discover that, although "un-political" thinkers, revolutionists and parties might not be disposed to her concept of politics, they still raised questions and confronted problems that were of vital importance to the possible realization of the Arendtian public space. And Arendt might then also see that her notion of what politics is about would have to include some of the ideas and issues these groups raised.

And it seems that Arendt is capable of this since she briefly, if almost casually, mentions the importance of the democratic attitudes Tocqueville notes, when she concludes on On Revolution. She argues that people in an egalitarian society have an "inability and conspicuous lack of interest ... in political matters as such". She argues that politics has become a profession and a career and that we no longer have political criteria for our decisions or selection of "elites" and lack public spaces for the people to participate and also chose the "elite". However, Arendt's critique remains at this mere descriptive level since, again, she fails to examine the situation which fostered this lack of
interest in politics as Tocqueville does when he examines the social conditions of America and France that inhibited a public spirit.
FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER TWO


3 Ibid., p. 267.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid., p. 268.

7 Ibid., p. 258.


10 Ibid., p. 226.

11 Ibid., p. 271.

12 Ibid., p. 273.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 Above, in chapter one (p. 16) it was pointed out that "to be able to do politics one must liberate oneself from concern with the problems of necessity". There liberation referred to transcending "the mundane problems of perpetuating one's biological existence". In *On Revolution*, liberation, however, more narrowly implies solving the social question of private needs - transcending the limitations of scarcity - but not necessarily rising above these concerns toward politics. The latter involves freedom. Freedom, in *On Revolution*, means participating in public life and politics as counterposed to preoccupation with social needs. Nevertheless, Arendt sees liberation as a prerequisite to freedom in this context and points out that the distinction between liberation and freedom is hard to establish in many cases.


18 Ibid.
19 Ibid., p. 249.
20 Ibid., pp. 249-250.
23 Ibid., p. 224.
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid., p. 223
26 Ibid., p. 224.
27 Ibid., p. 249.
28 Ibid., p. 278.
29 Ibid., p. 28.
30 Ibid., p. 87.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid., p. 243.
33 Ibid., p. 247.
34 Ibid.
36 Ibid., p. 89.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid., p. 90
39 Ibid., p. 250.
40 Ibid.
41 Ibid., pp. 249-50.
42 Ibid., p. 251.
43 Ibid.
44 Ibid., p. 262.
As explained earlier in this chapter, Arendt regards representative government as an obstacle to politics because it stands against active citizen participation and inherently leads to an emphasis on private interest and the people's happiness and welfare which politics is then reduced to serving. See Arendt, *On Revolution*, pp. 272-273 and pp. 44-45 above of this chapter.


Ibid.

Ibid., p. 276.

Ibid., p. 277.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid., pp. 247-249.

Ibid., p. 278. See also pp. 86-87 above of this chapter.


Ibid., pp. 227-230.


Ibid., p. 236.

Hartz, pp. 86 and 94.

Politics thus became an instrument of the economic system where only private drives and needs appeared in "public" and made revelation and identity meaningless.

Arendt confuses the overall content of the Constitution, which she later acknowledges, with the idea that its separation of powers involved a support for politics. She fails to remember that Jefferson himself strongly opposed the constitution until it incorporated a Bill of Rights. See Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 253.

What essentially comes out of Arendt's discussion of the American Revolution is that Thomas Jefferson most closely represents Arendt's notion of what politics is about. Arendt perceives Jefferson as a figure who stands counterposed to all those who threatened the existence of politics in the United States. Jefferson is the one who understands the implications of the action that occurred during the Revolution and knows how to maintain it. Jefferson is the man of politics and has an appreciation for the autonomy of the (political) action process which had gone on during the Revolution. Arendt notes that while at the beginning of the War of Independence Jefferson conceived of action primarily in terms of liberation and violence, he later on was involved with the establishment of a new government that would create the space of freedom. Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 237.

Jefferson felt that unless the nation was subdivided and decentralized into wards where all could participate in public affairs the basic political fabric of the republic would be endangered. Jefferson's ward system, Arendt argues, displayed his prophetic imagination of future revolutions. "Both Jefferson's plan and the French societes revolutionnaires anticipated with an almost weird precision those councils, soviets and rate, which were to make their appearance in every genuine revolution throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries". Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 252.

Arendt points out, that for Jefferson the wards would preserve America's revolutionary spirit as well as save the republic. They would foster the action necessary to the preservation of politics that had been apparent early in the revolution by allowing the people to participate in public affairs on a daily basis as they had done when, under the dynamics of the revolutionary process, their decentralized local organs had thrown the people into political concerns. "His expositions of the ward system always began with a reminder of how 'the vigor given to our revolution in its commencement' was due to the 'little republics', how they had 'thrown the whole nation into energetic action' ... 'the energy of this organization' being so great that there was not an individual in their States whose body was not thrown with all its momentum into action'." Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 254.

These decentralized wards would also overcome the top-heavy administrative structure of national and state government that have precluded political activity by the citizens. The people would have been able to participate in public affairs rather than being passively represented.
The political ideals of Jeffersonianism must not be viewed out of their socio-historical context. Jefferson the politician was enmeshed with the interests of the rising middle and lower middle-classes. But although Arendt points out that Jefferson conceived of the ward system only after he retired from public life she nevertheless portrays him as the only founder concerned with politics and ignores the social issues he and the people who followed him were involved with. Given Arendt's observation that Jefferson conceived of the ward system as an afterthought, and, in view of his own role in his nation's affairs, it seems reasonable to suggest that she should examine this role and its implications for the establishment of politics in America instead of ignoring it altogether as she does.


Tocqueville, p. 125.


Tocqueville, pp. 277-278.

Tocqueville, p. 278.

Tocqueville, p. 281.

Tocqueville, p. 282.
CHAPTER THREE
BEYOND THE LIMITATIONS OF ARENDT'S CRITIQUE OF THE WESTERN POLITICAL TRADITION

The Limitations of Arendt's Critique

Arendt's concept of politics as an autonomous activity and her failure to extend and analyze the notion that social conditions and private concerns affect politics results in a rather narrow idea of what political action can involve as was illustrated above with respect to her critique of parties, revolutionists, and American and French politics. From the Arendtian perspective there are few figures in Western thought and history who satisfy her requirements of accepting the establishment of politics, as a place where men can actively participate in public affairs, as the issue of ultimate significance and do not regard politics as instrumental for the achievement of other final goals and aspirations. The list of those who would regard speech and action as ends in themselves and can thus be termed "political men", is a limited one.

Pericles in his Funeral Oration and Jefferson in his later writings stand as symbols of Arendt's political ideals. The thought of both glorifies the human capacity for action as it takes place in the public realm. For them there is no higher activity for man. The Periclean Age expressed a unity between the men of thought and the men of action which subsequently disappeared. Arendt sees Jefferson's ideas as an effort to repair that rift and establish the autonomy of politics, against the assaults of thinkers and politicians who perceive politics as either subordinate to some transcendent idea or set of final goals.
The philosophes of the Enlightenment were also political men in Arendt's sense. They established the notion of freedom as the idea of public freedom counterposed to the ideas that freedom was either free will or free thought as philosophers had conceived of it since Augustine. Freedom for the philosophes was not free choice or the ability to escape from temporal reality but rather an immersion in and love for action in public. They saw freedom in terms of political action in public and as an end in itself, as it had been in antiquity.

By not following through her discussion of the relation between social conditions and politics Arendt does not go beyond these conceptions of political action and therefore rejects what has come to be generally regarded as the essence of politics in the modern world. Arendt displays little sympathy for notions of political action rooted in the idea that reality is pervaded by conflicting forces, interests and desires that involve serious clashes. There is an aversion to the notion that politics is an activity concerned with coercion, violence, struggles for power, or the use of illusion, myth or ideology to gain popular support in order to be able to manipulate and change the existing socio-political situation. For Arendt such ideas only involve a loss of the appreciation of politics as a thing of speech and action, in the pursuit of other "higher" ends. From Arendt's perspective, what we consider politics is no longer political. Men like Alcibiades, Machiavelli, Marx, Lenin or Robespierre do not represent what politics is about.

The cases of Lenin and Robespierre who stifled the spontaneous revolutionary political institutions of the people for the sake of their revolutionary goals were discussed above. Both men were only concerned with solving the social question rather than with establishing politics, in Arendt's view.
Alcibiades, however, is the most extreme example from Arendt's perspective since he not only lacked public spirit, but was concerned with having power for himself for its own sake as well. Arendt does not see political man as preoccupied with this need for power but this is not what makes her position so unique.

What is important about Arendt is that she not only criticizes men who view politics as an instrument for their ends but also rejects those theorists who are concerned with the ways in which it is possible to bring about political transformation and thus view power or gaining popular support instrumentally. That is, Arendt's critique is also of the means per se usually used in politics regardless of whether or not they are being used for final goals that denigrate politics.

Arendt's treatment of the young Marx is an example. While Arendt criticizes Marx's later scientific period for its concern with abundance rather than freedom, she holds that the young Marx, on the other hand, valued freedom and saw the social question as an obstacle to it, but learned from the French Revolution "that poverty could be a political force of the first order". Now while Arendt understandably attacks the "older" Marx for subordinating politics to the social question as the ultimate issue, she doesn't go into the implications of the young Marx's notion of poverty as a political force and the idea that need had to be abolished for political freedom to be possible. For if this was so then the means to overcoming poverty and gaining support of the people are thereby important to the establishment of politics. And it would have to be implicitly acknowledged, given the situation, that these means would not necessarily be political (in themselves) in her sense, but only in so far as they promoted a public space.
But Arendt always tries to reject this means - ends distinction as inherent in politics. She seems always to implicitly assume that politics exists in relatively uncorrupted form not acknowledging that certain "unpolitical" activities might be necessary to bring about conditions favourable to its establishment. Thus, while Arendt sees Machiavelli's concern with the foundation of an independent secular realm with autonomous laws and principles of action as prefiguring the efforts of modern political revolutions, if only in a limited way, she is critical of his stress on violence as essential to this process. For Arendt this betrays Machiavelli's "unpolitical" conception of action as a process of fabrication similar to Plato's conception and this impression is compounded by Machiavelli's acceptance of tyranny as potentially useful.

The only thing which Arendt doesn't challenge or discuss is Machiavelli's conception of reality which makes his stress on the need for violence and the use of illusion, myth and deception seem reasonable for the foundation of a secular politics. And this is important for contrary to the description Arendt provides, Machiavelli's conception of the best government is similar to her own. He held that princely governments tended to be narrow and tyrannical, and at best should be only resorted to out of necessity. Machiavelli felt that republics - the city-states of his time - were the key to the greatness of cities because they were concerned with the general, or common, rather than particular, or individualistic, good. He praised the ancient pagan societies since they deified only men of action who had achieved great glory rather than the men of contemplation as his age had done. These notions are in many ways reminiscent of Arendt's ideas. While Machiavelli does not speak of politics as a revelatory process of speech and action...
and his conception of popular freedom is relatively materialistic, his concern nevertheless contains an appreciation of republican government in terms of the city-state.

The important difference between Machiavelli and Arendt is that Machiavelli expresses concern with the fact that existing reality provides obstacles to the realization of his ideal, or notion of a polity. He then sets out to understand and outline the methods by which power can be gained under existing conditions so that the foundation of a stable city-state can be actualized. Machiavelli perceives reality as a process of constant flux and instability and thus sees politics as requiring the need for violence and myth to found a secular realm.

Arendt, on the other hand, never considers what actions are required to overcome the conditions which stand as obstacles to the foundation of politics, largely because she does not pursue a concise analysis of what these conditions are as noted above. Arendt provides no discussion of the problem of whether certain "unpolitical" instrumentalities are required to overcome the existing imperfect state of political reality. It is indeed ironic that a thinker who perceives the decline of politics as embodied in the increasing divorce of action and thought since Plato should not focus some of her thought on developing a theory of action that could restore what our political tradition has lost.

Instead Arendt confuses and essentially avoids the most important issue, which is the debate over the nature of existing reality and what this implies for the character of political thought and action. That is, Arendt should examine the conditions and reasons behind why politics has historically been "imperfect" and relatively unattainable by men from her perspective. She should analyze and develop a critique of existing reality as other political thinkers like Hobbes, Machiavelli, and Marx have done.
This is essential in order to be able to discuss the limitations and/or possibilities this reality creates for political action and what politics can ultimately be, as well as the type of action this reality necessitates for the realization of politics as she understands it. The positions of Hobbes, Machiavelli and Marx on the nature of politics are derivative of their ideas on man, the potential for human perfectability and the historical nature of human relations and interaction as they have existed in the world and what their consequences have been. From their perspectives on reality they have not seen the speech and action of politics as embodying a process of revelation, and un concealment of truth. Rather they have perceived almost the antithesis of this as the norm. And this has influenced their conception of what ideals and goals are possible and necessary for man and what actions are required to achieve them.

Arendt's criticisms never confront the substance of the works of these men but only their prescriptive consequences. She never engages in a discussion of the historical analysis of these thinkers and what they signify for the viability of her notion of politics. Instead Arendt focuses on their apparent absence of concern with freedom and their emphasis on material problems and the use of violence and manipulation. In short, she criticizes them using her ideal of politics, rather than the experience of human history as a standard of evaluation and thus these men are bound to come out on the short end of the debate. The result is that almost everyone save for Pericles and Jefferson fail to understand or strive for what is authentically political.

Arendt can attack but not explicitly account for Robespierre's preoccupation with the social question and violence and Lenin's pursuance of his Party's goals at the expense of the politics of the soviets. She basically takes these men out of their historical context and subjects
them to political evaluation from the perspective of the ideals of the Athenian polis whose context she also fails to consider. In the end one is left with the distinct impression that Arendt ignores a consideration of the basis of the political history of the West lest it undermine her ability to conceive of politics as she does.

Given the analysis of the decline of politics in France and America previously considered, especially the work of Hartz and Tocqueville, one must face and confront the problem that to establish politics as Arendt understands it would require a fundamental change in the political attitudes or consciousness of men and this would necessitate a transformation of existing socio-cultural conditions. From this perspective it is more useful to conceive of politics not solely as an ancient ideal from which to criticize our modern tradition, but rather as an activity concerned with developing the means and instrumentalities to change men's attitudes and stimulate a public spirit and appreciation for the need to participate in politics in them. Political action is then an endeavor to rouse people out of the passivity and artificiality of their private existences and get them involved in the vital public issues of their state.

The form and content of this action will change with respect to time and context, the particularities of each situation. Conceiving of politics as an activity acting on reality to transform it should create an awareness of the political relevance of theorists Arendt attempts to dismiss. Because this broader conceptualization of political action directly involves an attempt to overcome governments and systems of belief that promote withdrawal into private life and feelings of individual impotence in public issues, it requires a consideration of the techniques for promoting
popular action that men like Machiavelli, Lenin and Robespierre might suggest. For example, how could symbols, violence or ostensibly social issues be used to raise the ultimate issue of a particular society's politics and stimulate the people to question the existing order of things and their role in it so that they possibly could be encouraged to accept their political responsibility? Though the overall theories of these men may be undisposable to participatory politics a consideration of the instrumentalities and methods they use to arouse popular action and develop support is important in a context where speech and action are used to conceal rather than disclose realities. In contexts where public spaces are absent or scarce, attention must be devoted to discovering what causes people to rise up and form councils that have historically resulted in concern with public affairs. If Arendt's ideal is not to be a futile hope the reasons for these spontaneous communal systems must be discovered and discussed.

Political action in which citizens participate in public affairs and where speech and action reveal "truth", would have to be preceded by a more instrumental form of political action that lays the groundwork and foundation for this by transforming the institutions, values and beliefs of the existing society. And while this broader notion of political action encompasses things "unpolitical" from Arendt's position, it is necessitated by historical restrictions on the scope of political action, which must be supplemented by other means if it is to be realized.

In On Violence, Arendt has some recognition of this necessity when she observes how the rebellions and violent acts of students in France and America have succeeded in achieving some reforms. Unfortunately Arendt does not consider the political thinking behind the students' actions. In many instances these actions involved the use of forceful
instrumentalities not only to coerce those in power, but to unconceal who they were and what they were doing in order to gain the support of others and stimulate a desire in them to participate in the vital affairs of the university; the institution which Arendt sees as one of the last vestiges of public space in our society. Here we have a prime example of seemingly "unpolitical" actions being used to foster politics.

It is unfortunate that Arendt, as with the history of the councils, does not consider what encouraged the radicals themselves to act since this could provide a key toward activating other people in society to political concerns. Did they perceive politics as the alternative to the problems they suffered from under existing social conditions? Arendt notes, but does not pursue the implications of her feeling that much of the present glorification of violence is caused by severe frustration of the faculty of action in the modern world. It is simply true that riots in the ghettos and rebellions on the campuses make people feel they are acting together in a way that they rarely can. Do men have a basic desire and need to act and be together as Arendt suggests that can be mobilized by political instrumentalities such as violence against the forces of our society and can politics be the antithesis and solution to existing social problems of men? This issue is never clarified or pursued in empirical practice. The reasons why students feel the need to rebel against the impotence and powerlessness fostered by bureaucratic society, or rule by "no-one" as Arendt calls it, are not pursued, although she mentions this phenomenon. The problem of how students come to view participatory politics as a solution to the alienation they experience in society is not discussed.

Arendt essentially warns us against the use of political instrumentalities such as violence, arguing that given the unpredictability of
action, the means become almost as important as the ends since the realization of the latter is always uncertain. Violence and other instrumentalities are seen as, at best, of only short range value. While these observations are valid, the difficulty is that abstinence from political instrumentalities would only result in the maintenance of the current status quo against politics. The use of these instrumentalities and their consequences may be a risk we have to assume for the sake of our freedom. Arendt's failure to analyze in depth the roots of modern rebellions and violence results in an inability to suggest what the most successful instrumentalities might be.

Toward An Alternative View of Politics

Given the problems social conditions present for politics as well as the fact that historically the "spontaneous" popular attempts at politics have arisen within the context of social problems, an understanding of what is to be done for the promotion of politics requires a consideration of how the issues these conditions and problems raise can be transformed into, or even themselves stimulate, an interest in politics as occurred for a time in the French Revolution, the Paris Commune, the American Revolution and the Hungarian Revolt. The fundamental question we are raising is how can social problems be solved in a political way? We are concerned with discovering how social change can be made consistent with and perhaps even encourage the development of politics.

This involves going beyond Arendt's notion that politics is stimulated when men are thrown together in the pursuit of private ends and have the experience of speaking and acting together, to consider the possibility that the content of socio-economic issues can also stimulate a popular appreciation for the significance of politics as a vital activity for men
This alternative approach is feasible if one sees attempts at social change as concerned with more than private material issues. That is, attempts at social change may also be viewed as (potential) responses to judgements about the capacities and fate of men in society implicitly (or explicitly) contained in social conditions. The latter affect how men are perceived by each other and how they can live their lives in terms of what they are seen as capable of. To the extent that efforts at social change (and social movements) attempt to affirm the dignity and humanity of men and help them to overcome their condition of existing and being seen as less than human there is scope for developing these efforts simultaneously with the pursuit of politics as an activity concerned with human uniqueness and identity and the potential of all men to act on important problems and express themselves on public affairs rather than being reduced to menial roles where their humanity is denied. Both politics and social change can be concerned with the same things in this sense given the broader notion of politics discussed above as an activity concerned with helping men to transcend the limitations of their artificial private existences.

Social and political issues and questions can converge in practical efforts to stimulate governmental action to achieve needed reforms. Trying to solve social problems must involve an attack on state policies and actions that foster these problems and the latter will reveal and possibly bring into question the state's attitude toward the capacities and role of its citizens in general. That is, questioning the allocation of state resources as they impinge on social problems can raise the issue of what its goals are and what particular interests it supports at the expense of all its citizens. The question of the interests it supports implies a judgement on what activities men should be capable of performing.
That is, are they simply labourers, businessmen and technocrats absorbed in their private lives or are they capable of something else. In short, does the state accept a limited view of man due to its basis in certain private concerns and does its resource allocation effectively limit human opportunities to help to concretize this view? This debate over human capacities which questions the basis of the existing view of man implies the issue of what a state's politics should be about and whether the political system should be changed to recognize other human talents.

Raising these questions can make men aware that the concrete problems they suffer from are fostered by their acceptance of the existing order's view of their own public impotence which has encouraged their passivity. This can stimulate them to participate in politics as a way of influencing the fundamental issues that affect them, especially with respect to how resources are allocated and priorities set since these things imply not only a judgement, but also a direct effect, on their capacities and activities as men.

There are examples that exist to illustrate the possibility that concern with politics as a thing of popular participation and the realization of man's humanity, dignity and identity, can arise from an initial effort to solve social problems. To take one example, the issues Blacks and the poor raise in America with respect to allocation of resources to defense expenditures for Vietnam and ABM or space, and cutbacks on welfare can imply the fundamental question of the purpose and politics of American government. The fact that economic reforms that would make political freedom relevant for a large part of the population have been subordinated to other goals such as insuring stability in Southeast Asia or the stability of the economy at home has brought into question the fundamental political issue of whether America is concerned
with fulfilling its political ideals of freedom for all its citizens, and creating an environment that respects their uniqueness and humanity.

The disillusionment with government action led to the Black Power movement's challenge to the established political notions of the American system. Despite its concern with the material exploitation and poverty of blacks, black power saw an alternative view of politics as a participatory activity as the solution. The movement saw local direct political participation by blacks in public affairs as a way of combatting the human effects of poverty and deprivation that had robbed black men of their humanity and identity. Their alternative view of politics also included the idea of control of material resources in order to give blacks mastery over the means that had formerly reduced them to a servile status and socialized them into a passive submissive inhuman role. In other words, political participation was seen not only as restoring the human dignity and potency of blacks to speak and act through the experience of acting with others in public itself, as Arendt would argue, but this participation was also aimed at changing the social situations that had given rise to the inhuman conditions that deprived blacks of their humanity, dignity, and the ability to act independently. This movement perhaps best displays the political compatibility between social issues and politics both attempting to restore a respect for the uniqueness and dignity of men.

The early attitudes and thinking of the American New Left is also a source of optimism in this respect. The New Left's critique of the alienating nature of the existing bureaucratic-capitalist order, with its inhuman view of man as at best performing a functional administrative role within the system advocated changing these social conditions along political lines. The early SDS saw direct participation by men in the
institutions that affected their lives as a way of giving scope to the uniqueness and humanity of men stifled in the homogeneity of bureaucratic society. Men could now have their unique voices and opinions heard on the basic issues of the day rather than being the passive faceless objects of a distant impersonal bureaucratic machine. The New Left recognized, moreover, that material means affected the relations between men and that how they were used could restrict men to a servile functional role. Thus deciding how these forces would be utilized was also a fundamental issue since it determined the activities men would be free to engage in. The New Left argued that men should be able to participate in controlling and determining the use of those institutions that affected their existence. In short, the New Left also saw popular political participation in and control of these institutions, currently controlled by the "experts" and administrators of government and private industry, as the only way of building an environment that would guarantee the free expression of men's unique creative aspects or capacities for action as Arendt would call them. Political participation by all in the public affairs of the community, far from being precluded by a solution to social problems, would help to solve these problems in a manner that would insure the use of existing means to improve the quality of life and serve man. As with Black Power, politics was thus seen as necessary for overcoming the alienation and inhumanity of the existing order on two levels. That is, it guaranteed men the ability to both speak and act in public as well as to control the means that would affect their capacity to do this. The New Left saw participatory politics as the fulfillment of all that was lacking in contemporary society.

While Black Power and the New Left demonstrate the possibility of raising the issue of politics out of an initial concern with social
problems (as do other movements such as the Paris Commune and the May '68 Student Revolt), the realization of this is not a facile task. Making men aware of the sources of their problems and the directions in which they can be alleviated means transforming their consciousness through the skillful use of instrumentalities as discussed above. Both Black Power and the New Left utilized violent, theatrical and demonstrative techniques in many cases to get men to accept their picture of the world and subscribe to their alternative, and as yet both have had difficulty in developing wide bases of support. The only possible solution, if there is one, lies in confronting the problems social conditions create for politics and social change that thinkers such as de Tocqueville have discussed. Under such conditions, politics truly becomes the art of using instrumentalities and techniques to raise issues and problems in such a way as to get people to question their behaviour and environment and stimulate their public spirit.

Regardless of their limitations these movements illustrate the fact that real politics can grow out of a concern with social problems and possibly gain acceptance by those seeking radical social change since the political view of man is the anti-thesis of that fostered by the existing order the radicals wish to change. Politics thus stands as a way of overcoming and changing the alienating nature of existing social conditions and realizing the ideals of human freedom the radicals advocate. Arendt's analysis would be improved if she considered how the relationship between the content of social and political concerns could encourage men to appreciate the importance of the experience of public action and possibly propel them toward politics.

Despite the stress put on the radicals here it is important to recognize that certain political actors performing within the system
may provide hope for political rejuvenation in a similar manner as well. Robert Kennedy, Martin Luther King and John Lindsey in America, for example, have focused on the problems of those in social need - workingclass and poor, blacks and whites. But they have, in effect, tried to articulate the issues in a manner that stimulates the people to rise above their common private concerns to work for the reform and the building of a better political order in solving their social problems. They have posed social issues in a way that raises their political implications and stimulates men to act in politics. This has been done by focusing attention on the short-comings and inadequacies of the political system that foster social injustices such as racial discrimination and unemployment and suggesting what these problems reflect about how men are viewed under the present system. They have stressed the need for men to participate in the shaping of their own future by arguing for decentralization and local control in the political system.

Kennedy, King and Lindsey can be seen as figures concerned with overcoming present social problems in a manner that will rejuvenate the quality of public life as a realm of diverse expression. They have emphasized the need for giving everyone the opportunity for dignity and the exercise of their freedom. They stand counterposed to figures such as Nixon and Wallace who manipulate social problems of poor and middle class whites for the sake of either gaining power or "law and order" and denigrate the need to promote true freedom for all groups in public life as "permissiveness". These men stress security and order and the apathy of the non-participatory "silent-majority" who remain hidden in their private realms.

Now, of course, the mode of political action of Kennedy, King and Lindsey is not pure given the existing conditions they have had to work
in. There is a need to rely on mass media and demonstrations that may make their tone appear manipulative. The public appearance may seem theatrical or staged. This impression is reinforced by the notion of a few political men seemingly viewing the people as a force to be mobilized. But under present conditions of mass society and T.V. politics it must be conceded that the actors have little choice in the matter.

The essential point seems to be rather, whether these conditions are abused, or instead used to pose the political implications of social issues so that men's public spirit is stimulated and the problems of society are solved in a manner consistent with politics and the expansion of a public realm for all to participate in regardless of social position. Given the range of political actors between King etc. and Wallace the existing political system should not be viewed as monolithic and the potential impact of political action within "normal channels" by men concerned with the state of public affairs should be carefully studied rather than dismissed as impure and inauthentic.

**Politicization**

The importance of the modified understanding of politics we have been discussing is that it points the way to an alternative to the existing socio-political reality. If it is possible that attempts at social change and questioning the use of private means can raise the issue of politics if both these questions are concerned with the potential scope of human action, then a possible solution to the decline of politics may exist in providing channels for popular participation in the decision-making process of the private sector of society. This could be done by constituting popular councils within specific private institutions to discuss the latter's public effects and implications for the
entire polity and by 2) placing private institutions under the aegis and control of public spaces or councils at all levels of society. In both instances attention would be focused, not on the technicalities of efficient production and output - clearly private concerns which Arendt aptly observes many worker's councils have deteriorated into - but on the politicization of the implications for the citizenry and public life of the various uses to which these institutions can be put.

The importance of the idea of politicizing the private sector rests in its recognition of how social conditions influence the socio-political values and attitudes of men as illustrated above in the consideration of the decline of American politics. It is founded on the assumption that if people are permitted to affect the private institutions that directly impinge on their lives daily they will be stimulated to participate in politics. Moreover, by discussing and debating how they will use these resources as a community - rather than merely how they will be managed or operated - a public spirit could be stimulated since the opinion of all on how they might be affected would be heard.

Politicization of private institutions as outlined above could end the threat to politics inherent in a societal dichotomy between politics and private concerns in the following way. First those in private would have to deal with the public implications of the use of their institutions and this would promote a public attitude or awareness in them. The administrators and bureaucrats would have to discuss the overall political implications of their institution. Moreover, private institutions would be subject to having their use, actions, and influence discussed by formal public spaces or councils concerned ultimately with the preservation and realization of public freedom. These public councils would serve as checks on private institutions at all levels by bringing
the perspective of the overall public interest into play to counteract the
danger of particularism that might arise from the possibly restricted
perspective of the popular councils inside the private institutions.
However, this problem would be limited to the extent that all citizens
participated in formal public councils as well at their own level at least.
This would broaden their perspective on reality and the public concerns,
making them aware of more general problems so they could view the effect
of their own institution from a more objective universal standpoint, when
they returned to its own particular council.

Such a system would minimize the danger of isolated worker bureaucrats
and administrators and unresponsive institutions. Each man would have
to enter the public space and consider the public effects of his and
other private institutions from two perspectives: one from the particular
perspective of his own institution's council and his place in it and the
other from the more universal perspective of his position as a citizen
in the political council coming into contact with others from a broader
"more public" range of experience.

The notion of politicization is important to consider since it
represents a possible alternative to the privatization and bureaucratization
of modern life, problems to which Arendt gives primacy. However, it is
significant that Arendt does not consider any substantive solution to these
phenomena. Although she condemns parties for perceiving the substance
of politics as administration rather than action she does not discuss how
this problem might be overcome.

Indeed it seems reasonable to infer that Arendt perceives this
problem as in a sense inherent. She feels that only the few in each
society will ever have a taste for politics and the joys of public
life. And she implies that there is an inalienable dichotomy of sorts
between those suited for political and managerial pursuits when she says,

the qualities of the statesman or the political man, and the qualities of the manager or administrator are not only not the same, they are very seldom found in the same individual ... 15

The question of whether these qualities are inherent or socially conditioned is not explored. Nor is the issue of why some men, even in the ideal state, would have a taste for politics while others did not, so that politics would be reserved for these "aristocratic" few. 16

What all this amounts to is that Arendt paints a picture of socio-political reality as containing division and almost polarization without examining its implications. The division involves, in effect, two divergent forms of consciousness; one political and publicly oriented, the other bureaucratic, concerned with necessity, and privatisticly oriented. That both of these are in serious conflict is acknowledged by Arendt when she argues that "elites" have existed in politics to protect the public spirited few from the powerful threat of those concerned with necessity. 17 (While Arendt tries to argue that this conflict has always been of secondary importance to "political" men, 18 this becomes a rather tenuous assertion in the context of the historical pre-dominance of the social question noted in America and France). 19

Unfortunately, Arendt never makes it clear as to whether or not politics can survive this tension. There is no explanation of how the autonomy of politics can be maintained when private institutions and their administrative apparatus are irresponsible to public bodies and are not held accountable for the public implications of their actions. The question of the possibility of having politics in the context of such a tacit division of labour between politics and management is not pursued. We can only assume that somehow public men must have the
ability to assert their dominion over the managers and those who regard politics as the administration of needs. But this still does not confront the issue that the social effects of the material productive forces of an unbridled private sector can possibly create conditions that inhibit politics regardless of the weakness of their bureaucrats.

And because Arendt never explains her position on the bases of the differing propensities of men toward politics and management we never get to the discussion of whether this bifurcation can be transcended. If the public spirit is ever to flourish in our age it seems that this alternative must be considered. Tocqueville envisaged the possibility of politicizing men and getting them to transcend their private subjectivist worlds by altering popular attitudes fostered under social conditions of equality solely through the use of free public institutions for political participation. He saw political institutions as balancing out or counteracting the effects of social conditions rather than trying to change them. The approach I noted above tries, on the other hand, to go beyond this by suggesting consideration of the problem that this conflict and societal tension between public and private can be overcome by changing conditions and institutions of the private realm through a system of politicization. The next chapter, which will consider the implications for public life of Arendt's discussion of modern technological industrial society, will, I hope, demonstrate the importance of examining these ideas and possibilities.

* * * *

Because Arendt does not develop an analysis of the bases for the dichotomy between bureaucratic and political consciousness and fails to focus attention on the reasons for public spirit having been historically limited to the few, her conception of politics displays certain
ambiguities and contradictions toward the end of *On Revolution*. The question arises of whether Arendt's treatment of politics as the highest activity and issue of ultimate significance can be comfortably reconciled to the implications of her inherently "aristocratic" and elitist view of politics which persists tenuously due to her failure to discuss why only some men have a "taste" for politics. It becomes evident that she herself is not entirely at ease about this situation and the judgement it implies about those who abstain from public action.

The theme Arendt puts forth and which pervades *On Revolution* is that modern revolutions and the spontaneous rise of councilial politics represent an attempt by men to regain a political potency that has been lost. Man is perceived as a political being seeking to recapture his ability to speak and act in a community of others. Arendt portrays man as only a full and complete being when he has access to the public realm of appearance and action and she sees the councils as striving for this.

The basic assumption of the ward system ... was that no-one could be called happy without his share in public happiness, that no-one could be called free without the experience in public freedom, and that no-one could be called either happy or free without participating and having a share in public power.\(^2^0\)

Modern man's effort to regain his political potency is also perceived by Arendt as evident in contemporary manifestations of violence and rebellion. She sees these things as a reaction to the stifling of man's fullness and true self, through limitations on his ability to speak and act in concert with others.\(^2^1\)

These impressions suggest that a solution to the problems of modernity inheres in the provision of general popular access to the public realm. Indeed this is made apparent by Arendt's critique of repre-
sentative government and the actions of the Founding Fathers. The councils she discusses in *On Revolution* are perceived as political institutions for active popular participation. Yet, as noted above, Arendt opts for an aristocratic form of government insisting that only some men, the "self-selected elite", are suited for politics without clarifying or illucidating the basis for this. She fails to confront the issue of how her restricted "aristocratic government" will not suffer from the same problems as representative government which degenerates into an arena for private concerns when men do not appear in public and delegate their power to others who can only represent their interests rather than opinions. Arendt condemns the founders for the effects of not federating and extending the ward system so all could participate and quotes Jefferson's critique of their presumptuousness in trying to monopolize political action, but ironically tends toward the same aristocratic elitism.

Arendt moreover asserts that self-exclusion from politics, the voluntary decision to abstain from public action, is not to be viewed pejoratively. This in essence, dilutes her critique of those who deny the very existence of public happiness and public freedom, in their rationalization of and support for representative government. Arendt's position here is difficult to reconcile with her notion that man's humanity, identity, and freedom can only be realized in a public space of others. The problem is that if speech and action are the true essence of man's humanity, as chapter one showed Arendt believes, and if only the few in each society have these political capabilities or choose to exercise them, this necessarily implies that those who abstain from public action are not authentically full men. Chapter one pointed this out as well. This was the notion held by Greek thinkers from whom
Arendt develops her thesis. Arendt does not explain why it would not be unwise to abstain from politics even in her ideal council state. Arendt in *On Revolution* seems unwilling to pursue and acknowledge the implications of her notion that not all men are capable of or have a "taste" for politics, and this is ironically a somewhat justifiable omission, given her failure to consider the bases of these differential capabilities among men. Nevertheless if politics is the ultimate thing of significance Arendt conceives it as, then public passivity cannot be viewed with equanimity.

And in closing *On Revolution*, Arendt does not do this. She cites the war-time experiences of the French poet Rene Char as an example of how in losing our potential traditions we have lost ourselves and that only through public action can men once again retain their fullness. Arendt sees Char as exemplifying how public business (in this case rising out of the war-time struggle for liberation) frees men from privacy and hiddenness to appreciate their own selves and humanity.

The treasure, he thought, was that he had "found himself", that he no longer suspected himself of "insincerity", that he needed no mask and no make-believe to appear, that wherever he went he appeared as he was to others and to himself, that he could afford "to go naked".23

Arendt also cites the Greek poet Sophocles as showing us, through the character of Theseus, that only in the polis was human life full and meaningful.24 These references to Char and Sophocles, which portray political life as the fulfillment of man's humanity and identity, are consistent with Arendt's notion of politics examined in chapter one. They suggest that (voluntary or other) self-exclusion from politics is derogatory since such a choice would reflect on one's inauthenticity, one's desire to remain hidden, and if it wasn't a choice but an imposition,
would still nevertheless prevent the realization of one's true self before others.

While Arendt sees voluntary self-exclusion as providing the important negative liberty of "freedom from politics" to men, this is really a contradiction in terms once one accepts the idea that one can only be free and appreciated by appearing in the public realm through speech and action. For the Greek tradition, whose loss Arendt laments, exclusion from the polis embodied the loss of freedom. And Arendt herself has argued that negative freedoms or civil liberties are really the results of social liberation and not the actual content of freedom which is "participation in public affairs, or admission to the public realm."25

To avoid these problems and ambiguities Arendt would do well to refrain from casually opting for an "aristocratic" form of government which would assure that the "politically best" would be provided with their "rightful place" in the public realm before considering the conditions that have made the few demonstrate that "they care for more than their private happiness and are concerned about the state of the world".26 A more fruitful approach would be to analyze the source of these diremptions between political and un-political attitudes and thus consider more critically the whole question of elitism in politics. Attention should be focused on the conditions of a wider public spirit and the modes of achieving it by overcoming existing human limitations with respect to politics.

Nevertheless, Arendt's proclivity for "aristocratic" politics seems to betray a quiet pessimism and ambivalence in her thought about the possibility of expanding and developing politics on a general popular level. She seems rather unable to find a way out of the problems politics
faces in modernity. The final chapter of this thesis will examine Arendt's analysis of modern industrial-technological society and her treatment of the tension between public spirit and the institutions and consciousness of the social realm, focusing critically on the implications these conditions hold for her concept of politics.
FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER THREE


2 Ibid., p. 121.

3 Ibid., p. 56

4 Hannah Arendt, "What is Authority?" in *Between Past and Future*, Meridian Books, (Cleveland-New York 1968), pp. 139-140.


6 Ibid., p. 285.


8 Ibid., p. 83.

9 Ibid., p. 81.

10 Ibid., p. 4.

11 Ibid., p. 79.

12 The shortcomings of Arendt's position were noted above and need only be mentioned here briefly. The problem with Arendt's analysis is that she sees the taste for politics arising spontaneously and almost by accident out of the "public experiences" men have had in concerted action for private ends as in the French and American Revolutions. Arendt never really explains how these "public experiences" arise or what they are like or how they can even be "public" given their material content. The desire for politics remains a mystery. While this is an improvement over Arendt's other work since it recognizes that working men can have public spirit and are not in a hopeless situation, it cannot satisfactorily explain how this spirit grows and can be encouraged, or salvaged from the problems that engulf it. Unlike Tocqueville she does not explain how free public institutions can help men overcome their private individualistic attitudes and become public spirited.


14 Ibid., p. 283.

15 Ibid., p. 278.
And, as noted previously, a critical problem of the council system has been the inability to distinguish between "participation in public affairs and the management of things in the private interest". See chapter two pp. 68, and 77-78.

21 Arendt, On Violence, p. 82.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid., p. 25.
26 Ibid., pp. 283-284.
CHAPTER FOUR
AREN DT AND THE END OF POLITICS IN MODERNITY

Arendt's treatment of the nature of modern society - sketched out in the final section of The Human Condition, "The Vita Activa and the Modern Age", does not confront the fundamental problems just raised in the preceding chapter. The concrete basis for the diremption between political and privatistic forms of consciousness is not explored, although Arendt suggests that it is unlikely that politics will be able to survive the trends embodied in the latter warning that the modern age could culminate in an overall sterile passivity of withdrawal and subjectivism.\(^1\) Arendt's analysis of the modern age is essentially limited to tracing out the results of the private realm's growing strength and describing the morbid nature of its progressive elimination of the public realm. Her analysis of why this has taken place remains on an idealist plane since she isolates the source of the problem in the modern astro-physical world view and the rise of Cartesian doubt, rather than examining the societal conditions that could foster such a vision or developing in this respect the consequences of the use of the public realm to protect private property and advance material interests which she notes elsewhere.\(^2\) Arendt's critique of the Cartesian-Benthamite form of existence in the modern age, like her critique of the "un-political" nature of parties and revolutionary movements, suffers from a failure to consider the basic concrete social conditions which promoted these problems. Only with such an analysis can an accurate and undistorted understanding of the problems modern society
faces be attained to provide a concise foundation for discussing the changes necessary to promote politics. And only with such an analysis is it possible to escape the overexaggerated pessimism about the potential for politics in modernity that seems endemic in Arendt's theorizing. 

**Arendt's Critique of the Modern Age**

Arendt sees the modern age and modern society as the anti-thesis of politics and public life. She describes modern men as having withdrawn from the common public world they shared into an inward, introspective consciousness where each is isolated in his own subjectivity. Men now only have the structures of their minds, their mental processes and their basic species-life in common. Rather than sharing and acting in a common world in the body politic they have only the sameness of their own nature, in Bentham's sense, in common. Arendt describes modern men as labourers, jobholders, preoccupied only with their own biological-life processes.

Arendt, however, does not look for the sources of this condition in the dynamics and forces of society. Modern man's withdrawal into introspection and subjectivity is instead seen as a consequence of the scientific world view in modernity. Modern scientific and technological instrumentalities have shattered man's ability to know outward reality and have thrown him back upon himself.

Arendt holds that the problem began with Galileo and his telescope which challenged the adequacy of the human senses to reveal reality, leaving man in a universe whose reality he could only understand by the way it affected his measuring instruments.³

Instead of objective qualities, in other words, we find instruments, and instead of nature or the universe - in the words of Heisenberg - man encounters only himself.⁴

This new notion, that the senses could not be trusted, that truth and
reality would not reveal themselves to man's sensual observation, culminated in Cartesian doubt.  

Arendt emphasizes the crucial importance of Cartesian philosophy for the modern age. For even if truth no longer "opened-up" to man and he could not be certain of the external reality beyond himself, Descartes showed him, that he could at least be certain of the reality of his own mental processes. Arendt argues that Cartesian introspection was crucial to modernity since it helped overcome the nightmare of non-reality by making worldly objects into things processed by human consciousness and prepared modern man for the "dissolution of objective reality into subjective states of mind or, rather into subjective mental processes". Arendt adds that, moreover, the Cartesian mode for attaining certainty corresponded to the basic conclusion of modern science that "though one cannot know truth as something given and disclosed, man can at least know what he makes himself". Or to emphasize the same point Arendt says,

Cartesian reason is entirely based "on the implicit assumption that the mind can only know that which it has itself produced and retains in some sense within itself".

The significance of all this was that it forced men back into themselves so they only had their inner mental structures and processes in common and made modern men preoccupied with "producing" or "making" in order to attain knowledge and understanding. Arendt argues that because man could only know what he produced or created, the fabrication process (homo faber) gained pre-eminence in the "vita activa" and men now focused their attention on "how" things came into being rather than "what" or "why" something is. But this pre-eminence was not enduring since modern science was concerned with process rather than
product as such. That is, Arendt argues that because men made only in order to know and understand, the concern was focused on the production process, with the products themselves viewed only as incidental side-effects.

Arendt argues that because primacy was placed on the production process, with the creation of products, and the building of the world no longer as the true concerns, but only incidental results, the ultimate standard of measurement became whether something aided or impeded the production process itself. The principle of utility and the usage of things is no longer important; the only concern is with what promotes productivity and limits pain and exertion. The new standard of the age is Bentham's notion of "happiness", or "the amount of pain and pleasure experienced in the production or in the consumption of things".

Arendt argues that our modern societies form a literally Benthamite world and that this world can be seen as a logical outgrowth of the modern scientific vision and Cartesianism. Arendt argues that Bentham's hedonism is based on the notion of the inadequacy of man's senses to perceive reality and comprehend truth.

His "happiness", the sum total of pleasures minus pains, is as much an inner sense which senses sensations and remains unrelated to worldly objects as the Cartesian consciousness that is conscious of its own activity.

Arendt holds that Bentham, like the earlier philosophers of the modern age, promoted the retreat from politics and the shared common world. She argues that Bentham's fundamental premise that men only have the sameness of their own nature in common - "which manifests itself in the sameness of calculation and the sameness of being affected by pain and pleasure ...." - is derived from them.
Benthamism is the culmination of modern society where men become completely subjectively absorbed in the production-consumption process. Arendt argues that hidden behind Benthamite hedonism and other modern forms of egoism and theories of self-interest is the notion that life itself is the highest good. And interestingly enough this new principle involves a solution (of sorts) to the Cartesian dilemma, in Arendt's view. Arendt holds that the only tangible object the introspective consciousness can have is the biological life-process itself. And being self-aware or self-conscious of his biological-life cycle lets man overcome, to a degree, the unreality of the external world to the extent that his own (internal) biological processes involve working on or being involved in a metabolic process with nature.

... it is as though introspection no longer needs to get lost in the ramifications of a consciousness without reality, but has found within man - not in his mind but in his bodily processes - enough outside matter to connect him again with the outer world.

Arendt points out that the subject-object diremption and the split between res cogitans and res extensae is overcome on the level of "a living organism, whose very survival depends upon the incorporation, the consumption, of outside matter". Modern man thus becomes wrapped up in his biological-life processes. He is a mere labourer - animal labourans - whose only concern is to assure the continuity of his own life and that of his family. No longer connected with other men on the basis of his higher faculties he is, in effect, dissolved in the potentially never-ending life-process of the human species.

Arendt notes that the loss of faith and the undermining of the
Christian notion of the immortality of individual life due to Cartesian doubt made the victory of animal laborans complete. Losing certainty of the world beyond, man was thrown out of this world into his own subjectivity and inwardness and in place of the immortality of the public realm in antiquity, and the promise of ever-lasting life in the hereafter in Christianity, immortality could now only be found in "the possibly everlasting life process of the species man-kind".

Thus, modern society is the anti-thesis of politics. It is at best a labouring society of men engulfed in the lowest form of their own subjectivity, having only their natures in common, and "submerged in the overall life process of the species". Arendt argues that this last stage of the labouring society, the modern society of jobholders, ends in demanding only automatic functioning from its members and poses the threat of a pervasive "'tranquilized', functional type of behaviour".

She concludes,

The trouble with modern theories of behaviourism is not that they are wrong but that they could become true, that they are actually the best possible conceptualization of certain obvious trends in modern society. It is quite conceivable that the modern age ... may end in the deadliest, most sterile passivity history has every known.

Tocqueville's Analysis of the Cartesian Consciousness in America

After having considered Arendt's critique of modernity it seems fair to observe that while she does reflect on the critical problem of man's withdrawal into an isolated self-centered labouring existence her analysis remains superficially on an ideal plane, failing to consider the actual concrete social conditions that could foster such a society. That such an approach can distort the fundamental problems of modernity is suggested by Tocqueville's analysis which traces the pervasiveness of
the Cartesian vision and popular preoccupation with one's employment and private concerns in America to social conditions existing there rather than to the modern scientific vision with its shattering implications and naturalist solution, as Arendt does. ³² To borrow Marxist terminology, Arendt only deals with the problem in a superstructural manner.

In America, Tocqueville saw Cartesianism, like representative government, as a consequence and reflection of existing social conditions rather than as the source of privatization and men's concern with their material self-interest.

The Americans do not read the works of Descartes, because their social condition deters them from speculative studies; but they follow his maxims, because this very social condition naturally disposes their understanding to adopt them. ³³

As with representative government, discussed in chapter two,³⁴ the Cartesian consciousness is a product of the consequences of an environment of social equality. In terms of general equality, the similar common level of conditions men find themselves at, brings them back to their own reason as the source of truth and causes them to be influenced little by the opinions of other men. ³⁵

It is not only confidence in this or that man which is then destroyed, but the taste for trusting the ipse dixit of any man whatsoever. Everyone shuts himself up in his own breast, and affects from that point to judge the world. ³⁶

Democratic conditions give rise to the notion that one can stand alone. Egalitarianism, Tocqueville argues,

... throws man back forever upon himself alone, and threatens in the end to confine him entirely within the solitude of his own heart. ³⁷
Thus, not only are truth and opinion sought inwardly, but under equality, it will be recalled, men's feelings are also turned inward toward themselves alone. In other words, not only does social equality lead to Cartesian consciousness, but as explained in chapter two, it promotes a preoccupation with one's private concerns. Tocqueville points out that the privatistic individualism which is of democratic origin has a propensity to degenerate into the blind instinct of egotism. Therefore, Cartesian consciousness does not foster privatism and egotism but rather all these things are products of social equality. Hence, we are led to paraphrase our conclusion of chapter two on representative government. It is under a situation of pervasive social egalitarianism that men withdraw into themselves, become bound up in their private interest and employment, and are preoccupied with present enjoyment, engulfing themselves in the easy current of life and unconcerned with higher purposes.

This general trend toward uniformity inherent in the growth of private concerns is compounded by the general levelling process of social equality that Tocqueville notes, which promotes common uniform values, puts faith in "public" opinion or the greatest number, and focuses attention on "the people" rather than unique citizens.

Tocqueville saw the consequences of the trend toward democratic conditions and social equality as extremely ominous. He felt that democratic nations were potentially faced with a novel and unprecedented form of oppression and despotism. Democratic society was in danger of evolving into an atomistic society of homogeneous industrious animals who were only concerned with "happiness" or securing their gratifications.
The first thing that strikes the observation is an innumerable multitude of men all equal and alike, incessantly endeavoring to procure the petty and paltry pleasures with which they glut their lives. Each of them, living apart, is a stranger to the fate of all the rest ... he touches them, but he feels them not; he exists but in himself and for himself alone; and if his kindred still remain to him he may be said at any rate to have lost his country.43

Since these men are so absorbed in their private life they have no time for thinking44 or participating in public life,45 as noted in chapter two, and only seek the aid of the central government for their particular interests. This causes the government's administrative power to expand.46 Hence, standing above this "race of men" would be a "tutelary" state, guarding their fate and securing their happiness and gratification and all but sparing them the trouble of living. The exercise of man's free agency, says Tocqueville, would decline and become useless and the administrative structure would stifle the unique and energetic until a nation is reduced to "a flock of timid and industrious animals, of which the government is the shepherd".47 From Tocqueville's perspective, the pervasiveness of bureaucratization and the predominance of men with "un-political" consciousness, Arendt notes, is no longer a mystery.

The parallels of this description to Arendt's critique of the labouring society and its automatism, functionalism, and receptivity to modern behaviourism is striking. However, Tocqueville's analysis of the social roots of this privatized, predominantly labouring society, pervaded in practice by a Cartesian vision of the world, suggests the importance of the need for Arendt to consider the social conditions that can shape and foster the similar modern world view she criticizes.
Tocqueville's work poses the fundamental question of whether politics and public life are possible given democratic and egalitarian conditions. As noted in the preceding chapter, Tocqueville felt that free public institutions could counteract the effects of these social conditions and promote politics. And as was also suggested above it may be necessary to go beyond Tocqueville's solution and transform rather than counteract the given social conditions by politicizing the private realm or, in other words, placing it under public control within a system of decentralized political participation. For even if we grant Tocqueville's conclusion that social egalitarianism creates a trend toward privatization, egotism, and a Cartesian-like withdrawal, it is also evident that the resultant preoccupation with private interests, one's employment and private property, which Tocqueville notes, can only perpetuate the problem if they themselves are not confronted. Tocqueville's suggestions seem to at best promote a condition of balanced tension between both realms. Tocqueville's analysis of America's environment itself notes how the government increases its power by facilitating and protecting the pursuit of private property concerns, while it satisfies men that it will not interfere with their private interests, all of which acts to promote the security and autonomy of the private (property) realm at the expense of politics and human action. As we saw in chapter two the founders pursued a policy of granting the people power in their private pursuits only, thus reinforcing economic and material concerns rather than public political action, which they perceived as a threat. It seems fair to suggest, therefore, that the problems of politics may involve some sort of socialist solution. That is, only when private property is restricted would a state be able to directly confront the problem Tocqueville raises about egalitarianism having a propensity to
lead to withdrawal and self-reliance at the expense of politics, by eliminating what Tocqueville sees as only the resultant effects of democratic social conditions. Indeed, such an endeavor would be a test of Tocqueville's thesis about social equality being the fundamental problem.

The Limitations of Arendt's Analysis

But regardless of the solution one may opt for the fundamental issue here is to analyze social conditions so that the basic problems can be confronted and an alternative suggested. For Arendt this means, for example, relating her discussion of the rise of the social realm, when men used the public realm to protect their property and advance their wealth, to the development of the modern Cartesian world view. It means reconsideration of the notion that a propertied position is needed to be able to do politics, and the extent to which this involves a potential propensity to use the public realm to protect private interests, thus setting in motion the modern trend toward privatization and withdrawal from the world. It also means examining the extent to which the Cartesian vision became pervasive in America because the founders, as she notes in *On Revolution*, gave the people power in their private capacities only and considering whether their actions only reinforced existing trends. Arendt needs to synthesize her analysis of developments in both social reality and the realm of ideas if her critique of modernity is to be something more than an impression of the mood of our age.

The consequence of Arendt's critique of modern society is that because it fails to examine the concrete conditions behind the problems she notes, it becomes literally impossible to suggest alternatives for developing politics. That is, instead of analyzing the social conditions
and structures that foster subjectivism and withdrawal and how they can be changed one becomes mired in the logical impasse that given the modern astro-physical world-view, and Cartesian doubt as the principles of our age, politics is impossible because men cannot have the certainty of a world in common, beyond their natural needs, and hence can have no authentic public life. Confusing these modern ideas as being the source of the problem ends in a sense of hopelessness.

Arendt's only alternative is to rely on the human condition of "natality" - man's ability to begin something new - and the uniqueness and unpredictability of human events, to undermine the modern post-Cartesian vision of politics, represented in Hobbes, and its anticipation of a rational predictable order, based on men's private capacities and rooted in the fabrication process. Yet this capacity takes on an air of hopelessness with Arendt's picture of the labouring society where she admits that indeed behaviourism may accurately describe the trend of our modern societies. If Arendt does believe that the human capacity for action can undermine these trends - which she would want to, given her critique of rationalist interpretations of politics and history - she is obliged to explore the relationship between concrete reality and the Cartesian consciousness of labouring society and explain the nature of the contradictions that can undermine the latter and (the conditions which can) foster politics in its place.

By remaining on an idealist plane of analysis, accepting the modern astro-physical world view as the source of the problem, and ignoring the concrete conditions that promote inwardness and privatism, Arendt's critique contains the potential of evolving into a romantic anti-scientism and rejection of the modern technological production process per se. The only alternative may then appear to be in the abolition
of our modern highly specialized, functionally diverse technological industrial societies if Arendt sees them as essentially labouring, job-holding societies founded on automatism, functional behaviour, and the restriction of men to the performance of their roles in the overall production process for the sake of their biological existence, and thus as the fulfillment and essence of the modern scientific vision with its reliance on the fabrication process. Arendt's idealist critique of modernity can end in attacking the modern social-material realm itself as only a part of the modern scientific problem instead of suggesting modifications of it that could make politics more viable and secure as Tocqueville does.

By potentially regarding the modern social realm per se as part of the problem, this position could ironically advocate the elimination, rather than reform, of the material sources of tension, that is, the private and social problems that, as noted in On Revolution, have culminated ultimately in essentially political concerns and the rise of the council system, and as noted in chapter three above, the raising of fundamentally political issues and questions. If Arendt followed out the implications of her own critique of modernity she would have to reconcile herself to these revolutionary consequences. Otherwise she must acknowledge the necessity to examine the social context that fosters the Cartesian world view, and analyze the contradictions in the social milieu of modern labouring society that could lead to ferment and the undermining of this form of consciousness.

Overcoming Labouring Society

Tocqueville's work seems to show that viable and reasonable alternatives are possible since the pervasiveness of the Cartesian vision is only a reflection of certain social conditions which if acted on can provide an environment favourable to politics. One need not reject the
modern scientific age and modern production per se since in themselves they have not destroyed politics and forced men to withdraw into their inner-life processes. Depending on one's social analysis one can agree with Tocqueville that social equality has fostered Cartesian-withdrawal and privatization and suggest that free public institutions that bring men together and build awareness can counteract the problem and foster politics. Or one might ascertain the need to go beyond this. One might hold that as long as the production process remains in private hands and independent of public control, the issue of politics will remain subordinate to private interests and free public institutions will not be able to adequately counteract the hedonism and withdrawal such a society fosters. What is necessary is a critical evaluation of Tocqueville's social analysis. There is a need to examine whether or not general social equality only exacerbates the privatization and a retreat from the public realm that would seem to be an inherent part of a capitalistic system glorifying economic man as it does. (As noted, even if social equality was the prime source of self-reliance the effects of private interests would have to be dealt with).

Nevertheless, the system of private enterprise and the conditions of egalitarianism characteristic of the American context need not be the only possible sources of a labouring society. The consideration of the French and Russian experiences in chapter two suggests how the conditions of poverty have also contributed to privatization. It therefore seems best to examine various particular social conditions that lead to withdrawal into private material life concerns and the growth of the modern social realm. The next step is to search for the contradictions and tensions of the resultant social system or labouring society in question and recognize that the problem is to politicize these private problems.
and attempt to push them toward their public orientation as the preceding chapter explained.

Should some form of politicization (of the whole society), as discussed in the preceding chapter, become our alternative this process becomes important for realizing a system of public control and decentralized free political councils under existing conditions. Trying to change things even in Tocqueville's limited way, must first involve politicizing the problems of the existing social system and making them public issues of general concern in order to stimulate men's public spirit so they desire these fundamental changes. And Arendt's pessimistic critique notwithstanding, we do not as yet seem to have realized Marcuse's visions of a modern, tranquil, tension-free, one-dimensional society where meaningful politics is dead. As shown before, the activities of the Black Power movement and the New Left, and of such figures as Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King and John Lindsey embody the fact that meaningful politics can still exist. Modern men face social and privatistic problems and these can be transformed into public issues that stimulate their desire to participate in political affairs. Modern politics, although imperfect of necessity, has not been stifled under the monolithic forces of the labouring society but contains the hope that a more public participatory politics can be developed by changing existing society and acting on its problems.

Arendt fails to recognize this possibility since she ignores an analysis of the social conditions that foster such a labouring society and which can create, and be, sources of potential ferment and dissatisfaction as well. That such a system could contain serious undermining contradictions is not seriously considered since it is seen as the logical fulfillment of the modern scientific revolution and its
vision. Its automatism seems almost inevitable.

Tensions and Sources of Change in Modern Labouring Societies

There is a need to understand that modern labouring societies with their sophisticated technological apparatus can, as did the American colonies and the French feudal system in the late 18th century, contain serious private and social problems that can be transformed into political concerns as happened in the American Revolution and the Parisian Commune. One only has to look at daily T.V. news to realize immediately the fundamental crises facing post-industrial society and recognize that modern labouring societies are anything but tranquil and tension free. There seems to be no sound a priori reason, despite Arendt’s idealist critique, to assume that modern labouring men, or "job-holders", are hopelessly lost in "happiness". If the labouring poor of France could be stimulated toward politics in 1789 the same leap of consciousness should be possible for modern job-holders and technocrats. Our consideration of modern revolutions has shown that men in the private realm need not be devoid of public spirit in trying to overcome the problems which oppress them. Only the range of social and private contradictions and problems which can propel modern job-holders toward political action need be different in modern labouring societies. The point is to analyze the contradictions of modern labouring societies to discover what these sources of ferment are.

For clarity of discussion and analysis it seems useful to distinguish between material, psychological, and systemic contradictions and tensions. That is, between the problems of meeting needs, the pressures of a job-holding existence, and the basic problems and limitations of labouring
With respect to the material dimensions, tensions can grow when problems related to the life-process arise making it difficult to satiate needs. No labouring society would seem to be immune from the possibility that private egoistic interests could suffer when the material promises of egalitarianism might fall short. Job insecurity, unemployment, and inflation hinder the satiation of spiraling needs and have proven to be endemic problems of the post-industrial age. In short, one has to ask what happens to the "happiness principle" when pain and exertion increase as productivity falls? Will men still function automatically and exhibit "tranquil" passive behaviour? Or will ferment arise in a manner that might potentially culminate in some form of public political action?

The psychological tensions involved in the nature of a modern "job-holding" existence should not be underestimated either. Men may not be entirely "happy" with privatization and material satiation. The quality of life may seem to lack meaning and something may seem to be missing. These feelings have been important in the rise of "youth culture" and its aversion to middle-class suburban existence. Materialization and impersonalization of relations may make life harsh and tension-ridden. The need to escape this has been evident in recent disclosures about the problems of drug abuse within the corporate structure.

"Functional" behaviour does not necessarily mean tranquility. A compartmentalized, rationalized and essentially anonymous labouring existence can produce anxiety and feelings of impotence and isolation. While these things can be the grounds for totalitarian movements as Arendt notes, they can also stimulate more politically oriented discontent, ferment, and possible questioning of the system. Arendt, it was pointed out in chapter three, suggests that the glorification of violence by students
can be seen as a surrogate for the inability of men to act together and in common under present conditions. Modern men hardly appear contented with, or willing to acquiesce in, a meaningless job-holding rationalized bureaucratic society.

These problems and tensions involved in a labouring existence reflect the serious sources of conflict that characterize the social systems of labouring societies. The inhumanity and unresponsiveness of the bureaucratic-corporate system can breed discontent. Under a growing system of faceless administrative government or "rule by no-one", at many levels of society, where even public leaders disclaim responsibility for problems, a sense of popular impotence and the inability to control one's future can become pervasive. And as Arendt's critique of the modern concern with ordering and controlling one's world suggests, these feelings can prove to be serious contradictions in a social order apparently founded on the rule of reason.

In this respect the abuses by private corporate ownership of productive resources and the lack of concern for how their actions affect the whole society can create ferment and raise the issue of the need for greater public control. For example, the irresponsibility of the private corporate administrative structure in America with respect to the environment, unemployment, inflation and war industries stimulates labour, consumer and student unrest, and demands for reform. Since the basic contradiction here is between the ethic of egoistic private interests and concern with the overall public good or at least that of the greatest number, it embodies a fundamental conflict which can be politicized to stimulate men's public spirit and concern for politics.

The problems examined so far suggest that labouring society is not tranquilized, stable and routinized by definition but is conditioned
by the tensions generated by its interrelationship with the particular socio-political context it is a part of. In other words, the problems and tensions a particular labouring society will confront is influenced by the nature of the social forces which fostered it - such as egalitarianism and private enterprise in America - and the particular political system it is linked to. No society evolves into a purely abstract labouring society. Certain trends in a particular society can foster it but they put certain demands and strains on the resultant labouring society and in addition do not obliterate the existing traditional political values, institutions and patterns of action. Labouring society to be sure, does modify the latter, but in themselves these things can also react back on and shape the nature of labouring society and determine the problems that arise in it. These superstructural phenomena place limitations on labouring society.

The main point is that modern labouring society and its technology do not exist in an isolated vacuum governed by their own internal logic as Arendt tries to suggest. The nature of labouring society is restricted by contextual factors, as noted, and its technology's power is limited by the goals it is used to pursue.

In relation to the latter, the complex structures and instruments of modern labouring society do not create an anti-septic neutralized universe, free of serious tensions, where men are only "happy" and satiated, but are used to pursue the goals of leaders and vested interests in a particular societal context. These decisions do not reflect necessarily what is most logically and scientifically rational for the smooth functioning of a labouring society but represent a judgement, about what the proper priorities should be. There is no reason to assume that these decisions might not reflect narrow interests and lead to serious
contention and ferment in certain instances. Decisions by the leaders of the labouring society may run counter to certain interests or create dislocations. They may be at odds with accepted political and social values. For example, the use of technology for armaments, Vietnam and space rather than for mass-transit, environmental control, or anti-poverty raises conflicts between social groups and their goals. It may benefit defense industries but hurt others in the economy through unemployment and inflation. Moreover, the use of technology for a war and war economy can threaten and clash with vital political ideals. All these things emphasize the fact that technology and scientific know-how do not govern and control labouring society to produce a dazed, tranquil serenity but instead are used by its leaders to pursue certain policies and interests that can stimulate conflict and tension and lead to ferment and questioning.

Job-holding men in the labouring society are capable of responding critically to these problems because of the material, psychological, and systemic tensions noted. But the nature of the political values, beliefs and system they are in must also be seen as keeping labouring men from being hopelessly withdrawn into their life-processes. It cannot be over-stressed that the particular political context and system the labouring society develops in, places restrictions on the extent to which men become absorbed into a job-holding life-cycle. This point will be exemplified and elucidated shortly.

What is equally important to recognize is that Arendt over-simplifies the denigration of man's higher faculties today by ignoring the level of knowledge modern labouring society needs. While modern labouring society promotes privatization and economic man, and focuses on the life process, it nevertheless requires a tremendous investment in knowledge and research
to oil and perpetuate the "progress" of its technological apparatus and its range of uses. It therefore requires the use of man's higher critical faculties.

While it may be true that primary emphasis is on mathematical, calculable, rational thinking, it is superficial to argue that all that is required is merely "reckoning with consequences". The system to "progress" needs more than trained automatons. Innovative insights are needed to keep the system going and this means an emphasis on education and stimulation of men's higher critical faculties. This is especially so with respect to the need for universities for research where critical faculties grow and are protected. Men cannot be made — except perhaps through the use of terror — to only use their higher faculties in the interests of the system.

While labouring societies also require universities to train technocrats and managers, they have not been able to turn universities solely to this purpose and indeed, because they require innovative research, they cannot afford to. Nevertheless, even the aspect of the simultaneous use of universities as mass training centers has had to develop within the context of more traditional beliefs and values and has involved serious dislocations and tensions in the 1960's.

The development of mass education as a component of the technological needs of labouring society occurred in the particular context of American culture and its forceful dynamics interacted with existing values and structures yielding fundamental contradictions in many cases. Mass education did not come peacefully but involved tremendous shattering changes as the Berkeley student revolt began to show.

The student revolts revealed the limitations of labouring society's ability to denigrate man's humanity and political freedom. They were
essentially a reaction against the university as a microcosm of the
stifling nature of the rationalized corporate bureaucratic society.
Major themes echoed a refusal to be "processed" and a rebellion against
training for functional roles in the system. The students counterposed
to the passive roles cut out for them in the rationalized bureaucratic
order, demands for free speech, and participation in and control of the
university structures which affected their lives. It was an obvious
demand for politics, or free speech as an end in itself, instead of
relegation to a stifling mechanistic life.

The student revolt in Berkeley manifested the absence of tranquility
and the existence of deep tensions in labouring society and how they
could lead to serious ferment. Student revolts in general have focused
on the inhuman, alienating nature of the modern labouring system,
attacked the abuses of private power in the American system that have
helped to develop and abuse it, and opposed and attempted to obstruct
the actions its corporate-bureaucratic structure has pursued such as the
Vietnam War. The depth of these problems, together with the socialization
of the young in accordance with traditional American values of political
and personal freedom of expression and democracy, which clash with the
nature of administrative rule, have prevented the public passivity and
silence, and general withdrawal, that the bureaucratic-labouring order is
founded on. Out of the basic problems and contradictions of labouring
society has emerged a resurgence of political action and a concern with
politics as has been noted with respect to the early New Left in chapter
three. 57

The case of Daniel Ellsberg, surrounding the Pentagon Papers and
the Vietnam War, perhaps most emphatically illustrates the inability
of labouring society and its modern technological apparatus to tranquilize and daze men into passivity and submissiveness. The Ellsberg case shows that labouring society and its technology are not autonomous of the actions of the politicians who run things and the nature of the values of the society they are in.\textsuperscript{58} It demonstrates that the problems and contradictions of labouring society and the use of its technology can stimulate political action.

Ellsberg's action, in rebelling against the uses to which his job and knowledge were being put, exemplifies the fact that the modern scientific vision with its technocratic job-holding existence, fostered in the labouring society, does not necessarily have the capability to preclude or stifle political propensities in men. Modern men are not merely reduced to passive computer-like beings that merely reckon with consequences and have no higher concerns. Arendt, ironically in contrast \textit{The Human Condition}, implies this when writing about the Ellsberg case. The article, "Lying and Politics",\textsuperscript{59} in effect, notes how it was exactly among the rationalist, mathematically-oriented "problem-solvers" that the ferment about the Pentagon Papers arose. Like true Cartesians, these men were immersed in "the world of sheer mental effort".\textsuperscript{60}

They were eager to find formulae, preferably expressed in a pseudo-mathematical language, which would unify the most disparate phenomena with which reality presented them ....\textsuperscript{61}

Unfortunately, Arendt never deals with the implications of what Ellsberg represents for her discussion in \textit{The Human Condition}. She only describes his job and his protest but does not relate the two.

This is essential, for what we have here is a rationalist problem-solver, breaking out of, and transcending the world of his subjective mental processes and inserting himself into public life and critically revealing
and challenging the policies being pursued by those in the "administration", as the government in America is ironically known. His higher faculties were assertive rather than dormant, and he had a powerful impact on his fellow countrymen by speaking to them about his actions.

What the entire situation reveals is that the modern technological apparatus of a labouring society, because it is a mere tool for implementing the policies of leadership, is fallible and that this fallability can stimulate critical re-evaluations of policy, reveal its true nature, and possibly cause ferment in the ranks. In Vietnam what was rational or "scientifically" possible was not necessarily pursued, but rather what seemed to be in the interests of American society. The impotence of American material power in Vietnam is a striking example of how the technological apparatus does not govern labouring society but is utilized to serve its interests. American technology could not reshape the socio-political reality of Vietnam. Instead the war reflects an abuse of knowledge and resources that is ending in failure.

This failure prompted the organization of a critical evaluative study by McNamara, something which showed that things inside the apparatus are not as "automatic" or as mechanical as Arendt suggests. What the study revealed about the nature and effects of the American war effort and its subsequent suppression or "classification" created doubts and tensions for Ellsberg.

For Ellsberg was not just a technocratic job-holding problem-solver tranquilly subservient to labouring society. He was also an American, educated in its ideals of free expression, human dignity and democracy. Labouring society, it must be reiterated, is conditioned by its context. There was thus a clash and contradiction between Ellsberg's belief in traditional American values and the uses to which the society and its
leaders were putting his knowledge and techniques\textsuperscript{63} as revealed in the McNamara study of the policy's failure.

Ellsberg was moved by this tension to sacrifice his job-holding position in order to make the contradictions shown in the study public. Even on the level of those who simply undertook to evaluate the failure, Arendt emphasizes the important influence of the American context, although she does not pursue the implications for labouring society.

\begin{quote}
What had ... happened could indeed hardly have happened anywhere else. It is as though all these people, involved in an unjust war and rightly compromised by it, had suddenly remembered what they owed to their forefathers' "decent respect for the opinions of mankind".\textsuperscript{64}
\end{quote}

Arendt needs to examine how the failures and abuses of technique and the influence of traditional socio-political values can restrict the ability of labouring society to stifle men's critical faculties, and possibly stimulate some to inject themselves into public affairs and actually reject their positions in the apparatus as Ellsberg did.

The decision on Ellsberg's part to break the "top secret" label and "leak" the story to the press involved nothing less than inserting himself into public affairs out of the security of private isolation and withdrawal in his government "think tank". Ellsberg, in effect, revealed himself to his fellow men through his personally dangerous deed and how he attempted to defend and justify it. While the public realm he acted in may have been gravely inadequate, his desire to give the public the power to judge and debate the merits of the question testified to his respect for politics as an autonomous activity, and his desire to change the existing imperfections of public affairs. All this from someone who seemingly should have been passive and "happy" in his job and satisfied
in his subjective existence.

The inability of the technological apparatus of labouring society to pacify men and stifle their critical capacities is equally evident with respect to the failure of the domestic efforts at psychological manipulation to create a convinced audience for the war. The key factors again are i) the failure of American technological power to create a reality in Vietnam to correspond to the propaganda at home and ii) the American political context in which manipulation was attempted. In short, the impact of the failure of American policy and its apparatus in Vietnam in the context of the American political system precluded manipulation of the people on this issue. Arendt does discuss the limits of domestic psychological manipulation by the problem-solvers re Vietnam, but she fails to draw out the full implications of it with respect to her main thesis about labouring society.

Arendt argues that the problem-solvers and their leaders erroneously conceived of politics as a thing of public relations and psychological manipulation. They failed to account for the human element and misjudged their audiences. Arendt even touches on the problem of how the failures and abuses of technology for policy can stimulate ferment. She notes the misery and fear that the "solutions" of pacification, relocation, defoliation, napalm, and anti-personnel hardware etc., etc., etc., stimulated.

... since they dealt with the peoples' minds it remains astonishing that apparently none of them sensed that the "world" might get rather frightened of American friendship and commitment when the "lengths to which the U.S. will go to fulfill" them were shown and contemplated.

Arendt then points out that the free information flow in America made the people aware of the discordance between the image of success that
was being put forth and the actual reality of failure of the situation. This, it is argued, prevented the ability of the policy-makers to succeed in their effort to manipulate peoples' minds. Arendt however, never pursues how this may have manifested the critical capacities of modern labouring men. Adequate information seems to be sufficient to prevent total withdrawal and passivity. What this at least brings out is that Arendt implicitly sees the importance of political institutions - in this case a free press - in preventing manipulated tranquility in modern society.

But despite this, Arendt's discussion of context as a limiting factor on manipulation is rather narrow. While she argues that the policy-makers and their problem-solvers failed to perceive any non-psychological limitation she only cites the impact of the failure of the policy apparatus in Vietnam and its inhuman abuses as sources of ferment among the people. There is no discussion of how certain modes of action would clash with particular American political ideals and create contradictions and tensions. To be sure, she does suggest that the McNamara report might have been motivated by a "decent respect for the opinions of mankind". However, what is really needed is a consideration of how the diffusion of American ideals among the people can obstruct manipulation and passive behaviour. In addition, there must be a focus on how the use of technological resources to pursue a war can lead to ferment because it involves job dislocation, inflation and unemployment as well as diversion of resources from other pending needs.

Nevertheless, despite its short-comings, Arendt's analysis of the Pentagon Papers does unwittingly substantiate the notion that technology fails to create a "tranquil" universe in labouring society given the potential consequences and failures of the policy utilization of it by
leaders for the pursuit of certain interests and the context of the political system in which manipulation is attempted. Given free nations with at least a wide availability of information, the modern age need not hang under a behaviouristic doom.

In the Pentagon Papers, we deal with people who did their utmost to win the minds of the people. That is, to manipulate them, but since they laboured in a free country where all kinds of information were available they never really succeeded.\(^7\)

This optimism is reinforced by Arendt's hinting that the "problem-solvers" could be infected by these ideals of free expression in American democracy despite their modern scientific-technological orientation and have, as noted above, "a decent respect for the opinions of mankind" in producing the McNamara report. All this illustrates the important point that the political superstructure of a modern labouring society can counteract the latter's propensity to stifle human freedom and awareness and promote a rationalized privatistic existence, by revealing the abuses and failures of its technological apparatus and providing a background against which the consequences of policies can be judged. Contra The Human Condition, there still seems to be hope for human freedom in the modern age.

The case of the Vietnam War and the Pentagon Papers is crucial because it demonstrates both the fallability of the rationalized technological bureaucratic apparatus of modern labouring society and how the consequences and nature of this fallability can stimulate the ultimate issue of politics. It should be evident at this point that the Ellsberg case not only helped to disprove the notion that modern society is a tranquil "hive" but as well raised vital questions about the current nature of politics.

Ellsberg's actions challenged the notion of secrecy in politics and the idea that government leaders should conceal their actions from
the public. In exposing secret government documents Ellsberg reaffirmed the ideal that political actions and decisions should occur in the open. Ellsberg's defiance of the government's system of "classifying" policy information raised the vital point that important issues that affect a polity should be the concern of the public and subjected to its scrutiny. While the question of direct participation by all citizens in politics was not explicitly raised, Ellsberg's actions suggested that politics is a public process of speech and action since no one can claim a monopoly on truth and that the people thus have a right to know, control, and indeed formulate the basic concerns of public affairs. No goal or interest can be more important or meaningful than this including the questions of war and so-called "national security".

The Vietnam War and the Ellsberg case emphasize that basic questions have to be asked about the nature of our politics and the "un-political" views of government and its leaders. In particular they point out that one of the serious problems is not that the modern scientific vision has reduced man to automatism and sheer hopeless functionalism as Arendt suggests. Rather, the danger seems to be that the extensive use of modern technology and the growth of specialization and expertise under modern labouring society, have been employed as excuses for secrecy and elitism in politics. In this manner they have, in effect, perpetuated the development of labouring society and its goals.

Under the banner of modern specialized technological know-how in both scientific and social scientific fields, current leaders have tried to argue that only they understand which decisions are rational and appropriate. They have asserted that public debate and disclosures would only confuse things and threaten the success of their goals. Many
politicians have attempted to use the modern revolution in specialized knowledge of technique as an excuse and instrument for keeping people out of the public realm and immersed, instead, in their private concerns. The "silence" and non-activism of those who follow such an existence are then praised as virtues. This stance by many modern politicians has evident parallels to the actions of tyrants in former times who forced people out of the public realm and back into their households.

These modern politicians serve to reinforce, whether consciously or not, the trends toward subjectivism, withdrawal and a labouring existence in general, that social conditions such as equality and private property have fostered. And these things in turn contribute to the growth of a rational functionalist bureaucratic order (as Tocqueville notes) whose specialized knowledge is then used as a justification for the secrecy and unaccountability of policy-makers and administrators with respect to their actions.

Fortunately, this vicious circle is broken by the fact that the power of technology and the technique of manipulation is always limited by the goals which these things are utilized for and the nature of the socio-political reality which they act into. Serious social and political conflicts cannot be manipulated out of existence by technique itself. This is only an abuse of modern instrumentalities and knowledge. Modern technology can only possibly suggest alternative solutions to problems given the conditions at hand and what the values, social positions, and beliefs of the people involved will tolerate. The abuses of modern technology only help to stimulate politics against the purposes of leaders and their interests.

Arendt cannot see the problem this way since she fails to examine how labouring society and its technological apparatus is both fostered and
restricted by the socio-political system it is in. Arendt fails to deal with the contradictions in a modern labouring society that have been noted and how they can give rise to problems and conflicts which impinge on human consciousness and stimulate men to break out of their private job-holding existences into public action or at least prevent them from being passive and manipulable. When these contradictions and problems are understood and politicized it becomes possible to comprehend how to go about gaining popular support for the foundation of politics.

The Need for Caution in Building An Alternative

Nevertheless, while political action today is still existent and meaningful, albeit in a limited way, trying to build an actual political system that will give men a common public life to participate in and reverse the forces of privatization, subjective withdrawal, and loss of a common shared world, requires a recognition of, and appreciation for, certain significant problems. These problems will be especially important if change is concerned with formal politicization, or the institutionalization of a system based on public control as sketched out in the preceding chapter. The essential problem revolves around insuring that the effort to change and transform existing political reality into a system that provides a full public life for all to share in does not deteriorate into a sort of ideal future vision or program which could come to be "carried out" in a manner that developed its own bureaucratic inertia.

This first danger arises from the likelihood that the achievement of a political system that has public life as its primary concern will be a long and arduous process of challenging fundamental political and social values and institutions. The problem is fostered by the fact that
because public life is the anti-thesis of existing social activity and many of its problems, it might tend to develop its own proto-millenarian dialectic or dynamic and come to be viewed as another final solution to serious modern dilemmas rather than appreciated for its own inherent value as a new way of life and dealing with men's problems.

The problems of bureaucratization and ossification would be especially sensitive if the goal was to institutionalize a system of societal politicization discussed in the preceding chapter. Taking over the previously privately owned production process and its state bureaucratic service apparatus and putting them under a system of decentralized participatory public control would involve careful planning to initiate and institutionalize such a system and good coordination to keep it working smoothly after. Politicization can indeed turn out to be a meaningful solution but the previous discussion of how it would work must be complemented by a sober awareness of the sensitivity and dedication required to realize it. And such an awareness and understanding of the problems that have to be confronted in establishing a public participatory political system seems more useful than just relinquishing oneself to Arendt's superficial warning that because politics is unpredictable no end can be certain. The latter fails to confront the problems that must be solved to found a public realm - even in Tocqueville's limited sense - and indeed given her analysis of modernity hovering under a behaviouristic doom it is hard to see how Arendt finds such caution relevant. In contrast, the analysis of our approach shows that politics is still possible and, as well, seems to account for her suggestions in terms of analyzing and understanding the dangers and context of problems that have to be guarded against if politics is to survive.

* * * * *
In concluding, it must be emphasized that Arendt's notion of what politics should be about as well as her critique of what has happened to public life in the modern Western political tradition are important problems that modern men must deal with. That modern men have lost sight of politics as an autonomous activity that provides man with the opportunity to experience the full essence of his freedom and individuality and subordinated it to transcendent revolutionary goals and the satiation of human and social needs involves a fundamental loss.

What this thesis has tried to show is that Arendt fails to adequately deal with how these un-political orientations arose in the past and have been perpetuated in the present. There is a failure to analyze the bases and roots of modern labouring society. This prevents an understanding of the roots of the problem and what has to be overcome to establish politics. Moreover, Arendt fails to consider the contradictions and tensions that could undermine a labouring society or at least make an impact on its apparent tranquility.

Such concrete analysis is of the utmost importance because alternatives for building an authentic public life will only be possible when this has been done. That is, i) when the bases of the modern social problems are understood and ii) when the contradictions of labouring societies that can be politicized to promote change toward politics are revealed. It is hoped that this thesis has helped to illuminate some of the concrete bases of the instrumental view of politics and the concern with social needs and that this final chapter has shown that there are serious fissures in modern society that can be politicized so that an alternative, as put forth in chapters two and three, might be possible.

The essentially pressing need is to go beyond current notions of "one-dimensionality" and hopeless visions of a behaviouristic "brave new
world" toward an exploration of the existing contradictions of modern society in order to suggest how they might be used to undermine the bases of the labouring world and build an authentic political alternative.
FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR


2 Ibid., pp. 59-60. Arendt for example, should examine the relation between the modern Cartesian-Bentham consciousness she describes and how this could have been fostered by a society that began to use the public realm as a means toward private material ends, the accumulation of wealth, and the satiation of men's egoistic desires, which encourages withdrawal from the world men shared in common into one's own private concerns, as she notes. (See Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 97-102). She should examine the relationship between the developing capitalist-consumer society she earlier describes and how this could harbour and promote a Cartesian vision and be the initial source of our modern problems.


4 Ibid.

5 Ibid., pp. 249-250.

6 Ibid., p. 255.

7 Ibid., p. 257. The primary concern here is not to give a detailed account of Cartesian philosophy but only briefly outline the reasons why Arendt finds it so crucial to the modern consciousness.

8 Ibid.


10 On pp. 272-273 of *The Human Condition*, Arendt argues that the Hobbesian vision of politics is part of all this. See footnote no. 53 below.


12 Ibid., p. 271. That is for homo faber, the production process is only a means to an end - the creation of the tangible product. Homo faber was concerned with the product as an end. The result was, says Arendt, that "from the standpoint of homo faber, it was as though the means, the production process or development, was more important than the end, the finished product".

13 Ibid.
14 Ibid., p. 282. Arendt argues that now modern man "considers himself primarily a toolmaker and 'particularly (a maker) of tools to make tools' who only incidentally also produces things. If one applies the principle of utility in this context at all, then it refers primarily not to the use of objects and not to usage but to the production process. Now what helps stimulate productivity and lessens pain and effort is useful. In other words, the ultimate standard of measurement is not utility and usage at all, but 'happiness'...."

15 Ibid., p. 283.
16 Ibid., p. 282.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
20 Ibid., p. 285.
21 Ibid., p. 286.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid., p. 294.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid., p. 293.

27 Arendt notes also, that originally it was Christianity that had raised individual life to pre-eminence above the "life" of the public realm by making it immortal. Arendt, The Human Condition, p. 287.

28 Ibid., p. 293.
29 Ibid., p. 294.
30 Ibid., p. 295.
31 Ibid.

32 While in On Revolution, Arendt, in contrast to Tocqueville, failed to discuss how social conditions could account for the un-political attitudes of the founders and the people and the political failure of the revolution in America, in this context Arendt similarly does not historically analyze the societal conditions that could foster a world view of withdrawal from public life into one's isolated subjective process of labouring. While before the problem rested in the failure of the founders to preserve the township, here the problem rests solely in the modern scientific revolution and its Cartesian vision.

34 i.e., chapter two, pp. 77-78.

35 Tocqueville, p. 2.

36 Ibid., p. 3. See also p. 310, where Tocqueville again makes the same point there.

37 Ibid., p. 120.

38 Ibid., p. 118.

39 Ibid., pp. 118-119.

40 Ibid., p. 315.

41 Ibid., pp. 10-11, and p. 35.

42 Ibid., p. 380.

43 Ibid., p. 380.

44 Ibid., p. 312, Tocqueville argues that "indeed few men are idle in democratic nations; life is passed in the midst of noise and excitement, and men are so engaged in acting that little time remains to them for thinking. I would especially remark that they are not only employed but that they are passionately devoted to their employments. They are always in action, and each of their actions absorbs their faculties: the zeal which they display in business puts out the enthusiasm they might otherwise entertain for ideas".

45 Ibid., p. 351, Tocqueville observes that "Private life is so busy in democratic periods, so excited, so full of wishes and of work, that hardly any energy or leisure remains to each individual for public life".

46 Ibid., p. 352.

47 Ibid., p. 381.

48 See chapter two of this thesis p. 80, and chapter three p. 114, and Tocqueville pp. 124-128. Tocqueville's basic position, it will be remembered, was that public institutions can bring men together and get them to see beyond and rise above their private interests by helping to make them aware of what they have in common with other men.


50 Ibid., p. 381.

51 See chapter two of this thesis p. 74.
Arendt simply argues that the earth alienation of modern science made the world alienation from expropriation and wealth accumulation of minor significance. Arendt, The Human Condition, p. 240. While she describes how the rise of capitalism, or the use of the public realm to advance private property and wealth, undermined politics, since men were now held to only have their private interests in common, (The Human Condition, pp. 60–62), she does relate (or see the need to as her statement shows), this analysis to considering the possibility that such social conditions and such a private proprietyed society fostering withdrawal into one's private concerns, could easily promote a Cartesian-Benthamite vision of the world.

Arendt never fully plays out the problem of private property and politics. On the one hand it is seen as a necessary basis for doing politics by being free of the household and as a source of freedom and security giving each man a place in the world as a basis for politics while on the other, it threatens the very realm of politics and public freedom with the rise of wealth accumulation (capitalism). That is, Arendt must explain why at some point men no longer see property and wealth as a basis for doing politics, and instead become concerned property owners desiring to merely use the public realm to expand their wealth. Is private property ultimately antithetical to politics? (While Arendt may see intangible property, in the form of wealth, as a threat to politics and argue that a tangible worldly piece of property is needed as a basis of freedom and security the fact remains that at some point the former was used as the point of departure for developing and expanding the latter as Arendt points out. (See Arendt, The Human Condition, p. 60.) It seems reasonable to suggest that Arendt must deal with and play out this contradiction and relate the domination of politics by private property and wealth (the source of the social realm so-called) to our modern Cartesian-Benthamite societies as she sees them. For Arendt explicitly notes how modern property grew to lose its worldly character and became located in the person himself, in the possession of his body. (Arendt, The Human Condition, pp. 62 and 97.)

Arendt argues that the Hobbesian vision of politics grows out of the modern Cartesian world view. She argues that "...With Hobbes as with Descartes 'the prime mover was doubt', and the chosen method to establish the 'art of man', by which he would make and rule his own world... is also introspection..............Here, too, the rules and standards by which to build and judge this most human of human 'works of art' (the state) do not lie outside of men, are not something men have in common in a worldly reality perceived by the senses or by the mind. They are, rather, enclosed in the inwardness of man, open only to introspection, so that their very validity rests on the assumption that 'not......the objects of the passions' but the passions themselves are the same in every specimen of the species mankind. Here again we find the image of the watch, this time applied to the human body and then used for the movements of the passions. The establishment of the Commonwealth, the human creation of 'an artificial man', amounts to the building of an 'automaton (an engine) that moves(its)elf by springs and wheels as doth a watch'.

".....the processes of inner life, found in the passions through introspection, can become the standards and rules for the creation of the 'automatic' life of that 'artificial man' who is 'the great Leviathan' ". Arendt, The Human Condition, pp. 272–273.
54 Ibid., pp. 272-274.


57 See chapter three pp. 106-107 of this thesis.


59 Ibid., pp. 31-32 and 38.

60 Ibid., p. 32.

61 Ibid.

62 In "Lying and Politics" Arendt does not deal with this aspect, unfortunately. She instead concentrates on the failure of psychological manipulation to create a convinced audience for the war. There is no firm examination of the basis for discontent in the ranks of the technocrats and the implications this has for her analysis in The Human Condition.

63 Evidence of this clash and the existence of men's higher capacities and their power is evident in the need to soften the nature of actions and policies with pseudo-specialized language to make them more palatable to those developing and implementing them.


65 Ibid., p. 32.

66 Ibid., p. 34.

67 Ibid.

68 Arendt notes that the free availability of information in America was evident in the fact that the Pentagon Papers contained information that had long been public knowledge. Its main impact was that it came from a government source.


70 Ibid., p. 34.

71 Ibid., p. 36.
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