HANNAH ARENDT

# THE HUMAN CONDITION

With an Introduction by Margaret Canovan

SECOND EDITION

# *The Human Condition*

BY HANNAH ARENDT

*Second Edition*

Introduction by
Margaret Canovan

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
CHICAGO & LONDON

The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 60637
The University of Chicago Press, Ltd., London

07 06 05 04 4 5
ISBN: 0-226-02599-3 (cloth)
ISBN: 0-226-02598-5 (paper)

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Arendt, Hannah.
The human condition / by Hannah Arendt; introduction by Margaret Canovan. — 2nd ed.
p. cm.
Originally published: Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1958.
Includes index.
ISBN 0-226-02599-3 (cloth : alk. paper)
ISBN 0-226-02598-5 (pbk.: alk. paper)
1. Sociology. 2. Economics. 3. Technology. I. Title.
HM211.A7 1998
301—dc21 98-17015
CIP

© The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of the American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z3 9.48-1992.

# Table of Contents

Introduction by Margaret Canovan vii
Prologue 1

I. *The Human Condition*

1. *Vita Activa* and the Human Condition 7
2. The Term *Vita Activa* 12
3. Eternity versus Immortality 17

II. *The Public and the Private Realm*

4. Man: A Social or a Political Animal 22
5. The *Polls* and the Household 28
6. The Rise of the Social 38
7. The Public Realm: The Common 50
8. The Private Realm: Property 58
9. The Social and the Private 68
10. The Location of Human Activities 73

III. *Labor*

11. "The Labour of Our Body and the Work of Our Hands" 79
12. The Thing-Character of the WorId 93
13. Labor and Life 96
14. Labor and Fertility 101
15. The Privacy of Property and Wealth 109
16. The Instruments of Work and the Division of Labor 118
17. A Consumers' Society 126

## IV. *Work*

18. The Durability of the World 136
19. Reification 139
20. Instrumentality and *Animal Laborans* 144
21. Instrumentality and *Homo Faber* 153
22. The Exchange Market 159
23. The Permanence of the World and the Work of Art 167

## V. *Action*

24. The Disclosure of the Agent in Speech and Action 175
25. The Web of Relationships and the Enacted Stories 181
26. The Frailty of Human Affairs 188
27. The Greek Solution 192
28. Power and the Space of Appearance 199
29. *Homo Faber* and the Space of Appearance 207
30. The Labor Movement 212
31. The Traditional Substitution of Making for Acting 220
32. The Process Character of Action 230
33. Irreversibility and the Power To Forgive 236
34. Unpredictability and the Power of Promise 243

## VI. *The* Vita Activa *and the Modern Age*

35. World Alienation 248
36. The Discovery of the Archimedean Point 257
37. Universal versus Natural Science 268
38. The Rise of the Cartesian Doubt 273
39. Introspection and the Loss of Common Sense 280
40. Thought and the Modern World View 285
41. The Reversal of Contemplation and Action 289
42. The Reversal within the *Vita Activa* and the Victory of *Homo Faber* 294
43. The Defeat *of Homo Faber* and the Principle of Happiness 305
44. Life as the Highest Good 313
45. The Victory of the *Animal Laborans* 320

Acknowledgments 327

Index 329

# Introduction

*Margaret Canovan*

> With the creation of man, the principle of beginning came into the world. . . . It is in the nature of beginning that something new is started which cannot be expected. (Below, p. 177)

## I

Hannah Arendt is preeminently the theorist of beginnings. All her books are tales of the unexpected (whether concerned with the novel horrors of totalitarianism or the new dawn of revolution), and reflections on the human capacity to start something new pervade her thinking. When she published *The Human Condition* in 1958, she herself sent something unexpected out into the world, and forty years later the book's originality is as striking as ever. Belonging to no genre, it has had no successful imitators, and its style and manner remain highly idiosyncratic. Although Arendt never tried to gather disciples and found a school of thought, she has been a great educator, opening her readers' eyes to new ways of looking at the world and at human affairs. Often the way she sheds light into neglected corners of experience is by making new distinctions, many of them threefold, as if conventional dichotomies were too constricting for her intellectual imagination. *The Human Condition* is crammed with distinctions: between labor, work, and action; between power, violence, and strength; between the earth and the world; between property and wealth; and many more, often established through etymological explorations. But these distinctions are linked to a more controversial way of challenging contemporary truisms. For (in what is surely the most unexpected feature of the book) she finds in ancient Greece an Archimedean point from which to cast a critical

eye on ways of thinking and behaving that we take for granted. Indeed, her calm assumption that we may be able to learn important lessons from the experience of people who lived two and a half millennia ago itself challenges the modern belief in progress. Continual references to the Greeks have added to the sense of bewilderment experienced by many readers of *The Human Condition,* who have found it hard to understand what is actually going on in the book. Here is a long, complex piece of writing that conforms to no established pattern, crammed with unexpected insights but lacking a clearly apparent argumentative structure. The most urgent question to be addressed by way of introduction is, therefore, what is Arendt actually *doing}*

Both the book's difficulty and its enduring fascination arise from the fact that she is doing a great many things at once. There are more intertwined strands of thought than can possibly be followed at first reading, and even repeated readings are liable to bring surprises. But one thing she is clearly *not* doing is writing political philosophy as conventionally understood: that is to say, offering political prescriptions backed up by philosophical arguments. Readers accustomed to that genre have tried to find something like it in *The Human Condition,* usually by stressing Arendt's account of the human capacity for action. Since the book is laced with criticism of modern society, it is tempting to suppose that she intended to present a Utopia of political action, a kind of New Athens. Nor is this caricature entirely without foundation. Arendt was certainly drawn to participatory democracy, and was an enthusiastic observer of outbreaks of civic activity ranging from zAmerican demonstrations against the Vietnam War to the formation of grassroots citizens' "councils" during the short-lived Hungarian Revolution of 1956. Reminding us that the capacity to act is present even in unlikely circumstances was certainly one of her purposes. But she emphatically denied that her role as a political thinker was to propose a blueprint for the future or to tell anyone what to do. Repudiating the title of "political philosopher," she argued that the mistake made by all political philosophers since Plato has been to ignore the fundamental condition of politics: that it goes on among *plural* human

beings, each of whom can act and start something new. The results that emerge from such interaction are contingent and unpredictable, "matters of practical politics, subject to the agreement of many; they can never lie in theoretical considerations or the opinion of one person" (p. 5).

Not political philosophy, then; and, indeed, a good deal of the book does not on the face of it appear to be about politics at all. The long analyses of labor and work, and of the implications of modern science and economic growth, are concerned with the setting for politics rather than politics itself. Even the discussion of action is only partially related to specifically political acts. Shortly after the book's publication, Arendt herself described *The Human Condition* as "a kind of prolegomena" to a more systematic work of political theory which she planned (but never completed). Since "the central political activity is action," she explained, it had been necessary first to carry out a preliminary exercise in clarification "to separate action conceptually from other human activities with which it is usually confounded, such as labor and work."[1] And indeed the book's most obvious organizing principle lies in its phenomenological analysis of three forms of activity that are fundamental to the human condition: labor, which corresponds to the biological life of man as an animal; work, which corresponds to the artificial world of objects that human beings build upon the earth; and action, which corresponds to our plurality as distinct individuals. Arendt argues that these distinctions (and the hierarchy of activities implicit in them) have been ignored within an intellectual tradition shaped by philosophical and religious priorities. However, there is considerably more to the book than the phenomenological analysis, and more even than Arendt's critique of traditional political philosophy's misrepresentation of human activity. For those concerns are framed by her response to contemporary events. When she says in her prologue that she proposes "nothing more than

1. From a research proposal submitted to the Rockefeller Foundation after the publication of *The Human Condition,* probably in 1959. Correspondence with the Rockefeller Foundation, Library of Congress MSS Box 20, p. 013872.

to think what we are doing," she also makes clear that what she has in mind is not just a general analysis of human activity, but "a reconsideration of the human condition from the vantage point of our newest experiences and our most recent fears." *What* experiences and fears?

## II

The prologue opens with reflections on one of those events that reveal the human capacity for making new beginnings: the launch of the first space satellite in 1957, which Arendt describes as an "event, second in importance to no other, not even to the splitting of the atom." Like the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, which also occurred while she was working on the book, this unexpected event led her to rearrange her ideas, but was at the same time a vindication of observations already made. For, noting that this amazing demonstration of human power was greeted on all sides not with pride or awe but rather as a sign that mankind might escape from the earth, she comments that this "rebellion against human existence as it has been given" had been under way for some time. By escaping from the earth into the skies, and through enterprises such as nuclear technology, human beings are successfully challenging natural limits, posing political questions made vastly more difficult by the inaccessibility of modern science to public discussion.

Arendt's prologue moves from this theme to "another no less threatening event" that seems at first sight strangely unconnected: the advent of automation. While liberating us from the burden of hard labor, automation is causing unemployment in a "society of laborers" where all occupations are conceived of as ways of making a living. Over the course of the book, framing the phenomenological analysis of human activities, a dialectical contrast between these two apparently unrelated topics is gradually developed. On the one hand, the dawn of the space age demonstrates that human beings literally transcend nature. As a result of modern science's "alienation from the *earth"* the human capacity to start new things calls all natural limits into question,

leaving the future alarmingly open. On the other hand, in a development Arendt traces to "alienation from the *world"* modern, automated societies engrossed by ever more efficient production and consumption encourage us to behave and think of ourselves simply as an animal species governed by natural laws.

Human animals unconscious of their capacities and responsibilities are not well fitted to take charge of earth-threatening powers. This conjunction echoes Arendt's earlier analysis of totalitarianism as a nihilistic process propelled by a paradoxical combination of convictions: on the one hand the belief that "everything is possible," and on the other that human beings are merely an animal species governed by laws of nature or history, in the service of which individuals are entirely dispensable. The echo is not surprising, for *The Human Condition* is organically linked to Arendt's work on totalitarianism, and the two together contain an original and striking diagnosis of the contemporary human predicament.

The book grew from the Charles R. Walgreen Foundation lectures which Arendt gave at the University of Chicago in April 1956, themselves an outgrowth of a much larger project on "Totalitarian Elements in Marxism." Arendt had embarked on this project after finishing *The Origins of Totalitarianism,* which contained a good deal about the antecedents of Nazi anti-Semitism and racism, but nothing about the Marxist background to Stalin's murderous version of class struggle. Her new enterprise was to consider what features of Marxist theory might have contributed to this disaster. In the event, her trawl brought up so rich and variegated a catch that the Marx book was never written, but many of the trains of thought involved found their way into *The Human Condition,* notably her conclusion that Marx had fatally misconceived political action in terms of a mixture of the other human activities she calls *work* and *labor.*

To understand political action as *making* something is in Arendt's view a dangerous mistake. Making—the activity she calls *work—is* something a craftsman does by forcing raw material to conform to his model. The raw material has no say in the process, and neither do human beings cast as raw material for an

attempt to create a new society or make history.[2] Talk of "Man" making his own history is misleading, for (as Arendt continually reminds us) there is no such person: "men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world." To conceive of politics as making is to ignore human plurality in theory and to coerce individuals in practice. Nonetheless, Arendt found that Marx had inherited this particular misconception of politics from the great tradition of Western political thought. Ever since Plato turned his back on the Athenian democracy and set out his scheme for an ideal city, political philosophers had been writing about politics in a way that systematically ignored the most salient political features of human beings—that they are plural, that each of them is capable of new perspectives and new actions, and that they will not fit a tidy, predictable model unless these political capacities are crushed. One of Arendt's main purposes in *The Human Condition* is therefore to challenge the entire tradition of political philosophy by recovering and bringing to light these neglected human capacities.

But this critique of political philosophy is not the only grand theme in the book that stems from her reflections on Marx. For although Marx spoke of *making,* using the terminology of craftsmanship, Arendt claims that he actually understood history in terms of processes of production and consumption much closer to animal life—labor, in fact. His vision of human history as a predictable process is a story not of unique, mortal individuals but of the collective life-process of a species. While he was in Arendt's view quite wrong to suppose that this process could lead through revolution to "the realm of freedom," she was struck by his picture of individuality submerged in the collective life of a human species, devoted to production and consumption and moving inexorably on its way. She found this a revealing representation of modern society, in which economic concerns have come to dominate both politics and human self-consciousness.

2. Arendt's point is illustrated by Mussolini's admiring comment on the Bolshevik revolution, "Lenin is an artist who has worked in men as others have worked in marble or metal," quoted by Alan Bullock in *Hitler and Stalin; Parallel Lives* (London: Fontana Press, 1993), page 374.

A second grand theme interwoven with Arendt's phenomenology of human activities is therefore her account of the rise of a "laborers' society."

This theme of "the social" remains one of the most baffling and contentious aspects of the book. Many readers have taken offense at Arendt's derogatory references to social concerns, and have also assumed that in criticizing the conformist materialism of modern society, Arendt intends to recommend a life of heroic action. But that reading misses the book's complexity, for another of its central themes concerns the *dangers* of action, which sets off new processes beyond the actors' control, including the very processes that have given rise to modern society. At the heart of her analysis of the human condition is the vital importance for civilized existence of a durable human world, built upon the earth to shield us against natural processes and provide a stable setting for our mortal lives. Like a table around which people are gathered, that world "relates and separates men at the same time" (p. 52). Only the experience of sharing a common human world with others who look at it from different perspectives can enable us to see reality in the round and to develop a shared common sense. Without it, we are each driven back on our own subjective experience, in which only our feelings, wants, and desires have reality.

The main threat to the human world has for several centuries been the economic modernization that (as Marx pointed out) destroyed all stability and set everything in motion. Unlike Marx, for whom this change was part of an inevitable historical process, Arendt traces it to the unintended effects of contingent human actions, notably the massive expropriation of ecclesiastical and peasant property carried out in the course of the Reformation. For property (in the sense of rights to land passed down through the generations) had always been the chief bastion of the civilized world, giving owners an interest in maintaining its stability. The great change set in motion by the expropriations of the sixteenth century was twofold. For one thing, peasants with a stake in the stability of the world were turned into day laborers entirely absorbed in the struggle to satisfy their bodily needs. For another, stable property was converted into fluid wealth—capital, in

fact—with the dynamic effects that Marx had described so well. Instead of inhabiting a stable world of objects made to last, human beings found themselves sucked into an accelerating process of production and consumption.

By the time that Arendt was reflecting on the implications of automation, this process of production and consumption had gone far beyond catering for natural needs; indeed the activities, methods, and consumer goods involved were all highly artificial. But she points out that this modern artificiality is quite unlike the stable worldly artifice inhabited by earlier civilizations. Objects, furniture, houses themselves have become items of consumption, while automatic production processes have taken on a quasi-natural rhythm to which human beings have had to adjust themselves. It is, she says, "as though we had forced open the distinguishing boundaries which protected the world, the human artifice, from nature, the biological process which goes on in its very midst as well as the natural cyclical processes which surround it, delivering and abandoning to them the always threatened stability of a human world" (p. 126). Elsewhere in *The Human Condition* she describes what has happened as an "unnatural growth of the natural" or a "liberation of the life process," for modernization has turned out to be extraordinarily good at increasing production, consumption, and procreation, giving rise to a vastly expanded human race which is producing and consuming more than ever before. Her contention is that since these economic concerns came to be the center of public attention and public policy (instead of being hidden away in the privacy of the household as in all previous civilizations), the costs have been devastation of the world and an ever-increasing tendency for human beings to conceive of themselves in terms of their desire to consume.

The implication of her argument is not, however, that all we need to do is to haul ourselves up out of our immersion in labor and take action. For this modern hegemony of laboring does not mean that human beings have ceased to act, to make new beginnings, or to start new processes—only that science and technology have become the arena for "action into nature." At the very same time when men were becoming more and more inclined to

think of themselves as an animal species, their ability to transcend such limits was being dramatically revealed by scientific inventions. For the counterpart of the "world-alienation" suffered by laborers was "earth-alienation" among scientists. While Archimedes had declared long ago that he would be able to move the earth if he could find a place to stand, Arendt argues that (from the time of Galileo to contemporary space engineers and nuclear scientists) men *have* found ways of looking at the earth from a cosmic perspective, and (exercising the human privilege of making new beginnings) have challenged natural limits to the point of threatening the future of life itself. According to her diagnosis of the contemporary predicament, Promethean powers—releasing processes with unfathomable consequences—are being exercised in a society of beings too absorbed in consumption to take any responsibility for the human world or to understand their political capacities. She observes in her prologue that "thoughtlessness" (itself related to the loss of the common human world) is "among the outstanding characteristics of our time," and her object in thinking aloud was surely to encourage thought in others.

## III

In so far as Arendt's purpose was to provoke thought and discussion, she has been resoundingly successful. Like many of her writings, *The Human Condition* has been the subject of intense debate ever since its appearance. Indeed, few other works of modern political theory have had such a mixed press, regarded by some as a work of genius and by others as beneath refutation. Many academics have taken exception to the book's unorthodox style and manner. Paying no attention to mainstream debates, Arendt sets out her own analysis without defining her terms or engaging in conventional argumentation. Political controversies have also raged about the book. Its treatment of the *animal laborans* and its analysis of social concerns made its author unpopular with many on the left, but her account of action brought a message of hope and encouragement to other radicals, including some in the Civil Rights movement and behind the Iron Curtain.

During the students' movement of the 1960s *The Human Condition* was hailed as a textbook of participatory democracy, and association with that movement in turn alienated its critics.

In recent years, as Arendt's thought has attracted increased attention (partly for reasons she would not herself have welcomed, such as interest in her gender, her ethnicity, and her romantic relationship with Heidegger), the book's importance has come to be very widely recognized, but its meaning remains in dispute. Such is the complexity of its interwoven threads that there is scope for many different readings. Aristotelians, phenomenologists, Habermasians, postmodernists, feminists, and many others have found inspiration in different strands of its rich fabric, and the forty years since its publication are not nearly long enough to allow an assessment of its lasting significance. If we can extract a central theme from so complex a book, that theme must be its reminder of the vital importance of politics, and of properly understanding our political capacities and the dangers and opportunities they offer.

Arendt's account of the human condition reminds us that human beings are creatures who *act* in the sense of starting things and setting off trains of events. This is something we go on doing whether we understand the implications or not, with the result that both the human world and the earth itself have been devastated by our self-inflicted catastrophes. Looking at what she calls "the modern age" (from the seventeenth to the early twentieth century), she diagnoses a paradoxical situation in which radical economic processes were set off by human action, while those concerned increasingly thought of themselves as helpless flotsam on the currents of socioeconomic forces. Both trends, she believed, were linked with a new focusing of public attention on economic activities that had traditionally been private matters for the household. In her prologue, however, she observes that this "modern age" of which she writes has itself now passed away, for the advent of nuclear technology has begun a "new and yet unknown age" in the long interaction between human beings and their natural habitat. If she were alive today, she might point to a novel variation on the familiar theme of power and helplessness, again connected with the emergence into the public

realm of a natural function hitherto cloaked in privacy. On the one hand, the advent of genetic engineering (with its power to set off new processes that burst the bonds of nature) strikingly confirms human transcendence and what she called "a rebellion against human existence as it has been given" (p. 2). On the other hand, our self-understanding as animals has deepened into an unprecedented stress not just on production but on reproduction. Matters of sex, allowed only recently into the public arena, seem rapidly to be elbowing other topics out of public discourse, while neo-Darwinian scientists encourage us to believe that everything about us is determined by our genes.

Since the gap between power and responsibility seems wider than ever, her reminder of the human capacity for action and her attempt "to think what we are doing" are particularly timely. However, we need to listen carefully to what she is saying, for we can easily misunderstand her message as a call for humanity to rise from its torpor, take charge of events, and consciously make our own future. The trouble with that quasi-Marxist scenario is that there is no "humanity" that *could* take responsibility in this way. Human beings are plural and mortal, and it is these features of the human condition that give politics both its miraculous openness and its desperate contingency.

The most heartening message of *The Human Condition* is its reminder of human natality and the miracle of beginning. In sharp contrast to Heidegger's stress on our mortality, Arendt argues that faith and hope in human affairs come from the fact that new people are continually coming into the world, each of them unique, each capable of new initiatives that may interrupt or divert the chains of events set in motion by previous actions. She speaks of action as "the one miracle-working faculty of man" (p. 246), pointing out that in human affairs it is actually quite reasonable to expect the unexpected, and that new beginnings cannot be ruled out even when society seems locked in stagnation or set on an inexorable course. Since the book's publication, her observations on the unpredictability of politics have been strikingly confirmed, not least by the collapse of communism. The revolutions of 1989 were notably Arendtian, illustrating her account of how power can spring up as if from nowhere when

people begin to "act in concert," and can ebb away unexpectedly from apparently powerful regimes.

But if her analysis of action is a message of hope in dark times, it also carries warnings. For the other side of that miraculous unpredictability of action is lack of control over its effects. Action sets things in motion, and one cannot foresee even the effects of one's own initiatives, let alone control what happens when they are entangled with other people's initiatives in the public arena. Action is therefore deeply frustrating, for its results can turn out to be quite different from what the actor intended. It is because of this "haphazardness" of action amongst plural actors that political philosophers ever since Plato have tried to substitute for action a model of politics as *making* a work of art. Following the philosopher-king who sees the ideal model and molds his passive subjects to fit it, scheme after scheme has been elaborated for perfect societies in which everyone conforms to the author's blueprint. The curious sterility of Utopias comes from the absence within them of any scope for initiative, any room for plurality. Although it is now forty years since Arendt made this point, mainstream political philosophy is still caught in the same trap, still unwilling to take action and plurality seriously, still searching for theoretical principles so rationally compelling that even generations yet unborn must accept them, thus making redundant the haphazard contingency of accommodations reached in actual political arenas.

Arendt observes that there are some remedies for the predicaments of action, but she stresses their limited reach. One is simply the permanent possibility of taking *further* action to interrupt apparently inexorable processes or set politics off on a different direction, but that in itself does nothing to cure the damage of the past or make safe the unpredictable future. Only the human capacities to forgive and to promise can deal with these problems, and then only in part. Faced (as so many contemporary polities are) with the wearisome sequence of revenge for past wrongs that only provokes further revenge, forgiveness *can* break that chain, and recent efforts at reconciliation between the races in South Africa offer an impressive illustration of Arendt's point. As she notes, however, no one can forgive himself:

only the unpredictable cooperation of others can do that, and some evils are beyond forgiveness. Furthermore, this way of breaking the chain of consequences set off by action works only for *human* consequences; there is no remedy through forgiveness for the "action into nature" that sets off nuclear reaction or causes the extinction of species.

Another way of coping with the unpredictable consequences of plural initiatives is the human capacity to make and keep promises. Promises made to oneself have no reliability, but when plural persons come together to bind themselves for the future, the covenants they create among themselves can throw "islands of predictability" into the "ocean of uncertainty," creating a new kind of assurance and enabling them to exercise power collectively. Contracts, treaties, and constitutions are all of this kind; they may be enormously strong and reliable, like the U.S. Constitution, or (like Hitler's Munich agreement) they may be not worth the paper they are written on. In other words they are utterly contingent, quite unlike the hypothetical agreements reached in philosophers' imaginations.

Arendt is well known for her celebration of action, particularly for the passages where she talks about the immortal fame earned by Athenian citizens when they engaged with their peers in the public realm. But *The Hum,an Condition* is just as much concerned with action's dangers, and with the myriad processes set off by human initiative and now raging out of control. She reminds us, of course, that we are not helpless animals: we can engage in further action, take initiatives to interrupt such processes, and try to bring them under control through agreements. But apart from the physical difficulties of gaining control over processes thoughtlessly set off by action into nature, she also reminds us of the political problems caused by plurality itself. In principle, if we can all agree to work together we can exercise great power; but agreement between plural persons is hard to achieve, and never safe from the disruptive initiatives of further actors.

As we stand at the threshold of a new millennium, the one safe prediction we can make is that, despite the continuation of processes already in motion, the open future will become an arena for countless human initiatives that are beyond our present

imagination. Perhaps it is not too rash to make another prediction: that future readers will find food for thought and scope for debate in *The Human Condition,* picking up and developing different strands and themes in this extraordinary book. That would have suited Arendt very well. As she said toward the end of her life,

> Each time you write something and you send it out into the world and it becomes public, obviously everybody is free to do with it what he pleases, and this is as it should be. I do not have any quarrel with this. You should not try to hold your hand now on whatever may happen to what you have been thinking for yourself. You should rather try to learn from what other people do with it.[3]

3. Remarks to the American Society of Christian Ethics, 1973. Library of Congress MSS Box 70, p. 011828.

# Prologue

In 1957, an earth-born object made by man was launched into the universe, where for some weeks it circled the earth according to the same laws of gravitation that swing and keep in motion the celestial bodies—the sun, the moon, and the stars. To be sure, the man-made satellite was no moon or star, no heavenly body which could follow its circling path for a time span that to us mortals, bound by earthly time, lasts from eternity to eternity. Yet, for a time it managed to stay in the skies; it dwelt and moved in the proximity of the heavenly bodies as though it had been admitted tentatively to their sublime company.

This event, second in importance to no other, not even to the splitting of the atom, would have been greeted with unmitigated joy if it had not been for the uncomfortable military and political circumstances attending it. But, curiously enough, this joy was not triumphal; it was not pride or awe at the tremendousness of human power and mastery which rilled the hearts of men, who now, when they looked up from the earth toward the skies, could behold there a thing of their own making. The immediate reaction, expressed on the spur of the moment, was relief about the first "step toward escape from men's imprisonment to the earth." And this strange statement, far from being the accidental slip of some American reporter, unwittingly echoed the extraordinary line which, more than twenty years ago, had been carved on the funeral obelisk for one of Russia's great scientists: "Mankind will not remain bound to the earth forever."

Such feelings have been commonplace for some time. They show that men everywhere are by no means slow to catch up and adjust to scientific discoveries and technical developments, but that, on the contrary, they have outsped them by decades. Here, as in other

respects, science has realized and affirmed what men anticipated in dreams that were neither wild nor idle. What is new is only that one of this country's most respectable newspapers finally brought to its front page what up to then had been buried in the highly non-respectable literature of science fiction (to which, unfortunately, nobody yet has paid the attention it deserves as a vehicle of mass sentiments and mass desires). The banality of the statement should not make us overlook how extraordinary in fact it was; for although Christians have spoken of the earth as a vale of tears and philosophers have looked upon their body as a prison of mind or soul, nobody in the history of mankind has ever conceived of the earth as a prison for men's bodies or shown such eagerness to go literally from here to the moon. Should the emancipation and secularization of the modern age, which began with a turning-away, not necessarily from God, but from a god who was the Father of men in heaven, end with an even more fateful repudiation of an Earth who was the Mother of all living creatures under the sky?

The earth is the very quintessence of the human condition, and earthly nature, for all we know, may be unique in the universe in providing human beings with a habitat in which they can move and breathe without effort and without artifice. The human artifice of the world separates human existence from all mere animal environment, but life itself is outside this artificial world, and through life man remains related to all other living organisms. For some time now, a great many scientific endeavors have been directed toward making life also "artificial," toward cutting the last tie through which even man belongs among the children of nature. It is the same desire to escape from imprisonment to the earth that is manifest in the attempt to create life in the test tube, in the desire to mix "frozen germ plasm from people of demonstrated ability under the microscope to produce superior human beings" and "to alter [their] size, shape and function"; and the wish to escape the human condition, I suspect, also underlies the hope to extend man's life-span far beyond the hundred-year limit.

This future man, whom the scientists tell us they will produce in no more than a hundred years, seems to be possessed by a rebellion against human existence as it has been given, a free gift from

nowhere (secularly speaking), which he wishes to exchange, as it were, for something he has made himself. There is no reason to doubt our abilities to accomplish such an exchange, just as there is no reason to doubt our present ability to destroy all organic life on earth. The question is only whether we wish to use our new scientific and technical knowledge in this direction, and this question cannot be decided by scientific means; it is a political question of the first order and therefore can hardly be left to the decision of professional scientists or professional politicians.

While such possibilities still may lie in a distant future, the first boomerang effects of science's great triumphs have made themselves felt in a crisis within the natural sciences themselves. The trouble concerns the fact that the "truths" of the modern scientific world view, though they can be demonstrated in mathematical formulas and proved technologically, will no longer lend themselves to normal expression in speech and thought. The moment these "truths" are spoken of conceptually and coherently, the resulting statements will be "not perhaps as meaningless as a 'triangular circle,' but much more so than a 'winged lion' " (Erwin Schrodinger). We do not yet know whether this situation is final. But it could be that we, who are earth-bound creatures and have begun to act as though we were dwellers of the universe, will forever be unable to understand, that is, to think and speak about the things which nevertheless we are able to do. In this case, it would be as though our brain, which constitutes the physical, material condition of our thoughts, were unable to follow what we do, so that from now on we would indeed need artificial machines to do our thinking and speaking. If it should turn out to be true that knowledge (in the modern sense of know-how) and thought have parted company for good, then we would indeed become the helpless slaves, not so much of our machines as of our know-how, thoughtless creatures at the mercy of every gadget which is technically possible, no matter how murderous it is.

However, even apart from these last and yet uncertain consequences, the situation created by the sciences is of great political significance. Wherever the relevance of speech is at stake, matters become political by definition, for speech is what makes man a political being. If we would follow the advice, so frequently urged

upon us, to adjust our cultural attitudes to the present status of scientific achievement, we would in all earnest adopt a way of life in which speech is no longer meaningful. For the sciences today have been forced to adopt a "language" of mathematical symbols which, though it was originally meant only as an abbreviation for spoken statements, now contains statements that in no way can be translated back into speech. The reason why it may be wise to distrust the political judgment of scientists *qua* scientists is not primarily their lack of "character"—that they did not refuse to develop atomic weapons—or their naivete—that they did not understand that once these weapons were developed they would be the last to be consulted about their use-—but precisely the fact that they move in a world where speech has lost its power. And whatever men do or know or experience can make sense only to the extent that it can be spoken about. There may be truths beyond speech, and they may be of great relevance to man in the singular, that is, to man in so far as he is not a political being, whatever else he may be. Men in the plural, that is, men in so far as they live and move and act in this world, can experience meaningfulness only because they can talk with and make sense to each other and to themselves.

Closer at hand and perhaps equally decisive is another no less threatening event. This is the advent of automation, which in a few decades probably will empty the factories and liberate mankind from its oldest and most natural burden, the burden of laboring and the bondage to necessity. Here, too, a fundamental aspect of the human condition is at stake, but the rebellion against it, the wish to be liberated from labor's "toil and trouble," is not modern but as old as recorded history. Freedom from labor itself is not new; it once belonged among the most firmly established privileges of the few. In this instance, it seems as though scientific progress and technical developments had been only taken advantage of to achieve something about which all former ages dreamed but which none had been able to realize.

However, this is so only in appearance. The modern age has carried with it a theoretical glorification of labor and has resulted in a factual transformation of the whole of society into a laboring society. The fulfilment of the wish, therefore, like the fulfilment

of wishes in fairy tales, comes at a moment when it can only be self-defeating. It is a society of laborers which is about to be liberated from the fetters of labor, and this society does no longer know of those other higher and more meaningful activities for the sake of which this freedom would deserve to be won. Within this society, which is egalitarian because this is labor's way of making men live together, there is no class left, no aristocracy of either a political or spiritual nature from which a restoration of the other capacities of man could start anew. Even presidents, kings, and prime ministers think of their offices in terms of a job necessary for the life of society, and among the intellectuals, only solitary individuals are left who consider what they are doing in terms of work and not in terms of making a living. What we are confronted with is the prospect of a society of laborers without labor, that is, without the only activity left to them. Surely, nothing could be worse.

To these preoccupations and perplexities, this book does not offer an answer. Such answers are given every day, and they are matters of practical politics, subject to the agreement of many; they can never lie in theoretical considerations or the opinion of one person, as though we dealt here with problems for which only one solution is possible. What I propose in the following is a reconsideration of the human condition from the vantage point of our newest experiences and our most recent fears. This, obviously, is a matter of thought, and thoughtlessness—the heedless recklessness or hopeless confusion or complacent repetition of "truths" which have become trivial and empty—seems to me among the outstanding characteristics of our time. What I propose, therefore, is very simple: it is nothing more than to think what we are doing.

"What we are doing" is indeed the central theme of this book. It deals only with the most elementary articulations of the human condition, with those activities that traditionally, as well as according to current opinion, are within the range of every human being. For this and other reasons, the highest and perhaps purest activity of which men are capable, the activity of thinking, is left out of these present considerations. Systematically, therefore, the book is limited to a discussion of labor, work, and action, which forms its three central chapters. Historically, I deal in a last chap-

ter with the modern age, and throughout the book with the various constellations within the hierarchy of activities as we know them from Western history.

However, the modern age is not the same as the modern world. Scientifically, the modern age which began in the seventeenth century came to an end at the beginning of the twentieth century; politically, the modern world, in which we live today, was born with the first atomic explosions. I do not discuss this modern world, against whose background this book was written. I confine myself, on the one hand, to an analysis of those general human capacities which grow out of the human condition and are permanent, that is, which cannot be irretrievably lost so long as the human condition itself is not changed. The purpose of the historical analysis, on the other hand, is to trace back modern world alienation, its twofold flight from the earth into the universe and from the world into the self, to its origins, in order to arrive at an understanding of the nature of society as it had developed and presented itself at the very moment when it was overcome by the advent of a new and yet unknown age.

CHAPTER I

# The Human Condition

## I

## *Vita Activa* AND THE HUMAN CONDITION

With the term *vita activa,* I propose to designate three fundamental human activities: labor, work, and action. They are fundamental because each corresponds to one of the basic conditions under which life on earth has been given to man.

Labor is the activity which corresponds to the biological process of the human body, whose spontaneous growth, metabolism, and eventual decay are bound to the vital necessities produced and fed into the life process by labor. The human condition of labor is life itself.

Work is the activity which corresponds to the unnaturalness of human existence, which is not imbedded in, and whose mortality is not compensated by, the species' ever-recurring life cycle. Work provides an "artificial" world of things, distinctly different from all natural surroundings. Within its borders each individual life is housed, while this world itself is meant to outlast and transcend them all. The human condition of work is worldliness.

Action, the only activity that goes on directly between men without the intermediary of things or matter, corresponds to the human condition of plurality, to the fact that men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world. While all aspects of the human condition are somehow related to politics, this plurality is specifically *the* condition—not only the *conditio sine qua non,* but the *conditio per quam*—of all political life. Thus the language of the Romans, perhaps the most political people we have known, used the words "to live" and "to be among men" *{inter homines esse)*

or "to die" and "to cease to be among men" *{inter homines esse desinere)* as synonyms. But in its most elementary form, the human condition of action is implicit even in Genesis ("Male and female created He *them"),* if we understand that this story of man's creation is distinguished in principle from the one according to which God originally created Man *(adam),* "him" and not "them," so that the multitude of human beings becomes the result of multiplication.[1] Action would be an unnecessary luxury, a capricious interference with general laws of behavior, if men were endlessly reproducible repetitions of the same model, whose nature or essence was the same for all and as predictable as the nature or essence of any other thing. Plurality is the condition of human action because we are all the same, that is, human, in such a way that nobody is ever the same as anyone else who ever lived, lives, or will live.

All three activities and their corresponding conditions are intimately connected with the most general condition of human existence: birth and death, natality and mortality. Labor assures not only individual survival, but the life of the species. Work and its product, the human artifact, bestow a measure of permanence and durability upon the futility of mortal life and the fleeting character of human time. Action, in so far as it engages in founding and pre-

1. In the analysis of postclassical political thought, it is often quite illuminating to find out which of the two biblical versions of the creation story is cited. Thus it is highly characteristic of the difference between the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth and of Paul that Jesus, discussing the relationship between man and wife, refers to Genesis 1:27: "Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female" (Matt. 19:4), whereas Paul on a similar occasion insists that the woman was created "of the man" and hence "for the man," even though he then somewhat attenuates the dependence: "neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man" (I Cor. 11:8-12). The difference indicates much more than a different attitude to the role of woman. For Jesus, faith was closely related to action (cf. § 3 3 below); for Paul, faith was primarily related to salvation. Especially interesting in this respect is Augustine *(De chitate Dei* xii. 21), who not only ignores Genesis 1:27 altogether but sees the difference between man and animal in that man was created *umtm ac singulum,* whereas all animals were ordered "to come into being several at once" *(plum simul iussit exsistere).* To Augustine, the creation story offers a welcome opportunity to stress the species character of animal life as distinguished from the singularity of human existence.

serving political bodies, creates the condition for remembrance, that is, for history. Labor and work, as well as action, are also rooted in natality in so far as they have the task to provide and preserve the world for, to foresee and reckon with, the constant influx of newcomers who are born into the world as strangers. However, of the three, action has the closest connection with the human condition of natality; the new beginning inherent in birth can make itself felt in the world only because the newcomer possesses the capacity of beginning something anew, that is, of acting. In this sense of initiative, an element of action, and therefore of natality, is inherent in all human activities. Moreover, since action is the political activity par excellence, natality, and not mortality, may be the central category of political, as distinguished from metaphysical, thought.

The human condition comprehends more than the conditions under which life has been given to man. Men are conditioned beings because everything they come in contact with turns immediately into a condition of their existence. The world in which the *vita activa* spends itself consists of things produced by human activities; but the things that owe their existence exclusively to men nevertheless constantly condition their human makers. In addition to the conditions under which life is given to man on earth, and partly out of them, men constantly create their own, self-made conditions, which, their human origin and their variability notwithstanding, possess the same conditioning power as natural things. Whatever touches or enters into a sustained relationship with human life immediately assumes the character of a condition of human existence. This is why men, no matter what they do, are always conditioned beings. Whatever enters the human world of its own accord or is drawn into it by human effort becomes part of the human condition. The impact of the world's reality upon human existence is felt and received as a conditioning force. The objectivity of the world—its object- or thing-character—and the human condition supplement each other; because human existence is conditioned existence, it would be impossible without things, and things would be a heap of unrelated articles, a non-world, if they were not the conditioners of human existence.

To avoid misunderstanding: the human condition is not the

same as human nature, and the sum total of human activities and capabilities which correspond to the human condition does not constitute anything like human nature. For neither those we discuss here nor those we leave out, like thought and reason, and not even the most meticulous enumeration of them all, constitute essential characteristics of human existence in the sense that without them this existence would no longer be human. The most radical change in the human condition we can imagine would be an emigration of men from the earth to some other planet. Such an event, no longer totally impossible, would imply that man would have to live under man-made conditions, radically different from those the earth offers him. Neither labor nor work nor action nor, indeed, thought as we know it would then make sense any longer. Yet even these hypothetical wanderers from the earth would still be human; but the only statement we could make regarding their "nature" is that they still are conditioned beings, even though their condition is now self-made to a considerable extent.

The problem of human nature, the Augustinian *quaestio mihi factus sum* ("a question have I become for myself), seems unanswerable in both its individual psychological sense and its general philosophical sense. It is highly unlikely that we, who can know, determine, and define the natural essences of all things surrounding us, which we are not, should ever be able to do the same for ourselves—this would be like jumping over our own shadows. Moreover, nothing entitles us to assume that man has a nature or essence in the same sense as other things. In other words, if we have a nature or essence, then surely only a god could know and define it, and the first prerequisite would be that he be able to speak about a "who" as though it were a "what."[2] The perplexity

2. Augustine, who is usually credited with having been the first to raise the so-called anthropological question in philosophy, knew this quite well. He distinguishes between the questions of "Who am I?" and "What am I?" the first being directed by man at himself ("And I directed myself at myself and said to me: You, who are you? And I answered: A man"—*tu, quis es? [Confessiones* x. 6]) and the second being addressed to God ("What then am I, my God? What is my nature?"—*Quid ergo sum, Deus meus? Quae natura mm?* [x. 17]). For in the "great mystery," the *grandeprofundum,* which man is (iv. 14), there is "something of man *[aliquid hominis]* which the spirit of man which is in him itself

is that the modes of human cognition applicable to things with "natural" qualities, including ourselves to the limited extent that we are specimens of the most highly developed species of organic life, fail us when we raise the question: And *who* are we? This is why attempts to define human nature almost invariably end with some construction of a deity, that is, with the god of the philosophers, who, since Plato, has revealed himself upon closer inspection to be a kind of Platonic idea of man. Of course, to demask such philosophic concepts of the divine as conceptualizations of human capabilities and qualities is not a demonstration of, "not even an argument for, the non-existence of God; but the fact that attempts to define the nature of man lead so easily into an idea which definitely strikes us as "superhuman" and therefore is identified with the divine may cast suspicion upon the very concept of "human nature."

On the other hand, the conditions of human existence—life itself, natality and mortality, worldliness, plurality, and the earth-can never "explain" what we are or answer the question of who we are for the simple reason that they never condition us absolutely. This has always been the opinion of philosophy, in distinction from the sciences—anthropology, psychology, biology, etc.—which also concern themselves with man. But today we may almost say that we have demonstrated even scientifically that, though we live now, and probably always will, under the earth's conditions, we are not mere earth-bound creatures. Modern natural science owes its great triumphs to having looked upon and treated earth-bound nature from a truly universal viewpoint, that is, from an Archimedean standpoint taken, wilfully and explicitly, outside the earth.

---

knoweth not. But Thou, Lord, who has made him *[fecisti mm]* knowest everything of him *[eius omnia]"* (x. 5). Thus, the most familiar of these phrases which I quoted in the text, the *quaestw mihi factus sum,* is a question raised in the presence of God, "in whose eyes I have become a question for myself" (x. 33). In brief, the answer to the question "Who am I?" is simply: "You are a man—whatever that may be"; and the answer to the question "What am I?" can be given only by God who made man. The question about the nature of man is no less a theological question than the question about the jnature of God; both can be settled only within the framework of a divinely revealed answer.

## THE TERM *Vita Activa*

The term *vita activa* is loaded and overloaded with tradition. It is as old as (but not older than) our tradition of political thought. And this tradition, far from comprehending and conceptualizing all the political experiences of Western mankind, grew out of a specific historical constellation: the trial of Socrates and the conflict between the philosopher and the *polls.* It eliminated many experiences of an earlier past that were irrelevant to its immediate political purposes and proceeded until its end, in the work of Karl Marx, in a highly selective manner. The term itself, in medieval philosophy the standard translation of the Aristotelian *bios politikos,* already occurs in Augustine, where, as *vita negotiosa* or *actuosa,* it still reflects its original meaning: a life devoted to public-political matters.[3]

Aristotle distinguished three ways of life *(b'xo'i)* which men might choose in freedom, that is, in full independence of the necessities of life and the relationships they originated. This prerequisite of freedom ruled out all ways of life chiefly devoted to keeping one's self alive—not only labor, which was the way of life of the slave, who was coerced by the necessity to stay alive and by the rule of his master, but also the working life of the free craftsman and the acquisitive life of the merchant. In short, it excluded everybody who involuntarily or voluntarily, for his whole life or temporarily, had lost the free disposition of his movements and activities.[4] The remaining three ways of life have in common that

3. See Augustine *De civitate Dei* xix. 2, 19.

4. William L. Westermann ("Between Slavery and Freedom," *American Historical Review,* Vol. L (.1945]) holds that the "statement of Aristotle . . . that craftsmen live in a condition of limited slavery meant that the artisan, when he made a work contract, disposed of two of the four elements of his free status [viz., of freedom of economic activity and right of unrestricted movement], but by his own volition and for a temporary period"; evidence quoted by Westermann shows that freedom was then understood to consist of "status, personal inviolability, freedom of economic activity, right of unrestricted movement," and slavery consequently "was the lack of these four attributes." Aristotle, in his enumeration of "ways of life" in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (i. 5) and the *Eudemim Ethics* (1215a35 ff.), does not even mention a craftsman's way of life; to him it

they were concerned with the "beautiful," that is, with things neither necessary nor merely useful: the life of enjoying bodily pleasures in which the beautiful, as it is given, is consumed; the life devoted to the matters of the *polls,* in which excellence produces beautiful deeds; and the life of the philosopher devoted to inquiry into, and contemplation of, things eternal, whose everlasting beauty can neither be brought about through the producing interference of man nor be changed through his consumption of them.[5]

The chief difference between the Aristotelian and the later medieval use of the term is that the *bios folitikos* denoted explicitly only the realm of human affairs, stressing the action, *praxis,* needed to establish and sustain it. Neither labor nor work was considered to possess sufficient dignity to constitute a *bios* at all, an autonomous and authentically human way of life; since they served and produced what was necessary and useful, they could not be free, independent of human needs and wants.[6] That the political way of life escaped this verdict is due to the Greek understanding *of polls* life, which to them denoted a very special and freely chosen form of political organization and by no means just any form of action necessary to keep men together in an orderly fashion. Not that the Greeks or Aristotle were ignorant of the fact that human life always demands some form of political organization and that ruling over subjects might constitute a distinct way of life; but the despot's way of life, because it was "merely" a necessity, could not be considered free and had no relationship with the *bios polltikos.*'[1]

---

is obvious that a *bcmausos* is not free (cf. *Politics* 1337b5). He mentions, however, "the life of money-making" and rejects it because it too is "undertaken under compulsion" *(Nic. Eth,* 1096a5). That the criterion is freedom is stressed in the *Eudemian Ethics:* he enumerates only those lives that are chosen *ep' exousian.*

5. For the opposition of the beautiful to the necessary and the useful see *foli-*«Vsl333a3Off., 1332b32.

6. For the opposition of the free to the necessary and the useful see *ibid.* 1332b2.

7. See *ibid.* 1277b8 for the distinction between despotic rule and politics. For the argument that the life of the despot is not equal to the life of a free man because the former is concerned with "necessary dungs," see *ibid.* 1325a24.

With the disappearance of the ancient city-state—Augustine seems to have been the last to know at least what it once meant to be a citizen—the term *vita activa* lost its specifically political meaning and denoted all kinds of active engagement in the things of this world. To be sure, it does not follow that work and labor had risen in the hierarchy of human activities and were now equal in dignity with a life devoted to politics.[8] It was, rather, the other way round: action was now also reckoned among the necessities of earthly life, so that contemplation (the *bios theoutikos,* translated into the *vita contemplativa)* was left as the only truly free way of life.[9]

However, the enormous superiority of contemplation over activity of any kind, action not excluded, is not Christian in origin. We find it in Plato's political philosophy, where the whole Utopian reorganization of *polis* life is not only directed by the superior insight of the philosopher but has no aim other than to make possible the philosopher's way of life. Aristotle's very articulation of the different ways of life, in whose order the life of pleasure plays a minor role, is clearly guided by the ideal of contemplation *(theoria).* To the ancient freedom from the necessities of life and from compulsion by others, the philosophers added freedom and surcease from political activity *(skhole),*[10] so that the later Christian claim to be free from entanglement in worldly affairs, from all the busi-

8. On the widespread opinion that the modem estimate of labor is Christian in origin, see below, § 44.

9. See Aquinas *Summa theologica* ii. 2. 179, esp. art. 2, where the *vita activa* arises out of the *necessitas vitae praesentis,* and *Expositio in Psalmos* 4S.3, where the body politic is assigned the task of finding all that is necessary for life: *in dvitate oportet invenire omnia necessaria ad vitam.*

10. The Greek word *skhole,* like the Latin *otium,* means primarily freedom from political activity and not simply leisure time, although both words are also used to indicate freedom from labor and life's necessities. In any event, they always indicate a condition free from worries and cares. An excellent description of the everyday life of an ordinary Athenian citizen, who enjoys full freedom from labor and work, can be found in Fustel de Coulanges, *The Ancient City* (Anchor ed.; 1956), pp. 334—36; it will convince everybody how time-consuming political activity was under the conditions of the city-state. One can easily guess how full of worry this ordinary political life was if one remembers that Athenian law did not permit remaining neutral and punished those who did not want to take sides in factional strife with loss of citizenship.

ness of this world, was preceded by and originated in the philosophic *apolitia* of late antiquity. What had been demanded only by the few was now considered to be a right of all.

The term *vita activa,* comprehending all human activities and defined from the viewpoint of the absolute quiet of contemplation, therefore corresponds more closely to the Greek *askholk* ("unquiet"), with which Aristotle designated all activity, than to the Greek *bios politikos.* As early as Aristotle the distinction between quiet and unquiet, between an almost breathless abstention from external physical movement and activity of every kind, is more decisive than the distinction between the political and the theoretical way of life, because it can eventually be found within each of the three ways of life. It is like the distinction between war and peace: just as war takes place for the sake of peace, thus every kind of activity, even the processes of mere thought, must culminate in the absolute quiet of contemplation.[11] Every movement, the movements of body and soul as well as of speech and reasoning, must cease before truth. Truth, be it the ancient truth of Being or the Christian truth of the living God, can reveal itself only in complete human stillness.[12]

Traditionally and up to the beginning of the modern age, the term *vita activa* never lost its negative connotation of "un-quiet," *nec-otium, a-skholia.* As such it remained intimately related to the even more fundamental Greek distinction between things that are by themselves whatever they are and things which owe their existence to man, between things that are *physei* and things that are *nomo.* The primacy of contemplation over activity rests on the conviction that no work of human hands can equal in beauty and truth the physical *kosmos,* which swings in itself in changeless eternity without any interference or assistance from outside, from man or god. This eternity discloses itself to mortal eyes only when all human movements and activities are at perfect rest. Compared with this attitude of quiet, all distinctions and articulations within

11. See Aristotle *Politics* 1333a3O—33. Aquinas defines contemplation as *quies ab exterioribus motibus {Summa theologica* ii. 2. 179. 1).

12. Aquinas stresses the stillness of the soul and recommends the *vita activa* because it exhausts and therefore "quietens interior passions" and prepares for contemplation *(Summa theologica* ii. 2. 182. 3).

the *vita activa* disappear. Seen from the viewpoint of contemplation, it does not matter what disturbs the necessary quiet, as long as it is disturbed.

Traditionally, therefore, the term *vita activa* receives its meaning from the *vita contemplativa;* its very restricted dignity is bestowed upon it because it serves the needs and wants of contemplation in a living body.[13] Christianity, with its belief in a hereafter whose joys announce themselves in the delights of contemplation,[14] conferred a religious sanction upon the abasement of the *vita activa* to its derivative, secondary position; but the determination of the order itself coincided with the very discovery of contemplation *(theorid)* as a human faculty, distinctly different from thought and reasoning, which occurred in the Socratic school and from then on has ruled metaphysical and political thought throughout our tradition.[16] It seems unnecessary to my present purpose to discuss the reasons for this tradition. Obviously they are deeper than the historical occasion which gave rise to the conflict between the *polls* and the philosopher and thereby, almost incidentally, also led to the discovery of contemplation as the philosopher's way of life. They must lie in an altogether different aspect of the human condition, whose diversity is not exhausted in the various articulations of the *vita activa* and, we may suspect, would not be exhausted even if thought and the movement of reasoning were included in it.

If, therefore, the use of the term *vita activa,* as I propose it here,

13. Aquinas is quite explicit on the connection between the *vita activa* and the wants and needs of the human body which men and animals have in common *(Summa theologica* ii. 2. 182. 1).

14. Augustine speaks of the "burden" *(sarcina)* of active life imposed by the duty of charity, which would be unbearable without the "sweetness" *(suavitas)* and the "delight of truth" given in contemplation *(De civitate Dei* xix. 19).

15. The time-honored resentment of the philosopher against the human condition of having a body is not identical with the ancient contempt for the necessities of life; to be subject to necessity was only one aspect of bodily existence, and the body, once freed of this necessity, was capable of that pure appearance the Greeks called beauty. The philosophers since Plato added to the resentment of being forced by bodily wants the resentment of movement of any kind. It is because the philosopher lives in complete quiet that it is only his body which, according to Plato, inhabits the city. Here lies also the origin of the early reproach of busybodiness *(polypragmosyne)* leveled against those who spent their lives in politics.

is in manifest contradiction to the tradition, it is because I doubt not the validity of the experience underlying the distinction but rather the hierarchical order inherent in it from its inception. This does not mean that I wish to contest or even to discuss, for that matter, the traditional concept of truth as revelation and therefore something essentially given to man, or that I prefer the modern age's pragmatic assertion that man can know only what he makes himself. My contention is simply that the enormous weight of contemplation in the traditional hierarchy has blurred the distinctions and articulations within the *vita activa* itself and that, appearances notwithstanding, this condition has not been changed essentially by the modern break with the tradition and the eventual reversal of its hierarchical order in Marx and Nietzsche. It lies in the very nature of the famous "turning upside down" of philosophic systems or currently accepted values, that is, in the nature of the operation itself, that the conceptual framework is left more or less intact.

The modern reversal shares with the traditional hierarchy the assumption that the same central human preoccupation must prevail in all activities of men, since without one comprehensive principle no order could be established. This assumption is not a matter of course, and my use of the term *vita activa* presupposes that the concern underlying all its activities is not the same as and is neither superior nor inferior to the central concern of the *vita contemplativa.*

## 3

### ETERNITY VERSUS IMMORTALITY

That the various modes of active engagement in the things of this world, on one side, and pure thought culminating in contemplation, on the other, might correspond to two altogether different central human concerns has in one way or another been manifest ever since "the men of thought and the men of action began to take different paths,"[16] that is, since the rise of political thought in the

16. See F. M. Cornford, "Plato's Commonwealth," in *Unwritten Philosophy* (1950), p. 54: "The death of Pericles and the Peloponnesian War mark the moment when the men of thought and the men of action began to take different paths, destined to diverge more and more widely till the Stoic sage ceased to be a citizen of his own country and became a citizen of the universe."

Socratic school. However, when the philosophers discovered—and it is probable, though improvable, that this discovery was made by Socrates himself—that the political realm did not as a matter of course provide for all of man's higher activities, they assumed at once, not that they had found something different in addition to what was already known, but that they had found a higher principle to replace the principle that ruled the *polls.* The shortest, albeit somewhat superficial, way to indicate these two different and to an extent even conflicting principles is to recall the distinction between immortality and eternity.

Immortality means endurance in time, deathless life on this earth and in this world as it was given, according to Greek understanding, to nature and the Olympian gods. Against this background of nature's ever-recurring life and the gods' deathless and ageless lives stood mortal men, the only mortals in an immortal but not eternal universe, confronted with the immortal lives of their gods but not under the rule of an eternal God. If we trust Herodotus, the difference between the two seems to have been striking to Greek self-understanding prior to the conceptual articulation of the philosophers, and therefore prior to the specifically Greek experiences of the eternal which underlie this articulation. Herodotus, discussing Asiatic forms of worship and beliefs in an invisible God, mentions explicitly that compared with this transcendent God (as we would say today) who is beyond time and life and the universe, the Greek gods are *anthropophyeis,* have the same nature, not simply the same shape, as man.[17] The Greeks' concern with immortality grew out of their experience of an immortal nature and immortal gods which together surrounded the individual lives of mortal men. Imbedded in a cosmos where everything was immortal, mortality became the hallmark of human existence. Men are "the mortals," the only mortal things in existence, because unlike animals they do not exist only as members of a species

17. Herodotus (i. 131), after reporting that the Persians have "no images of the gods, no temples nor altars, but consider these doings to be foolish," goes on to explain that this shows that they "do not believe, as the Greeks do, that the gods are *anthropophyeis,* of human nature," or, we may add, that gods and men have the same nature. See also Pindar *Carmina Nemaea* vi.

whose immortal life is guaranteed through procreation.[18] The mortality of men lies in the fact that individual life, with a recognizable life-story from birth to death, rises out of biological life. This individual life is distinguished from all other things by the rectilinear course of its movement, which, so to speak, cuts through the circular movement of biological life. This is mortality: to move along a rectilinear line in a universe where everything, if it moves at all, moves in a cyclical order.

The task and potential greatness of mortals lie in their ability to produce things—works and deeds and words[19]— which would deserve to be and, at least to a degree, are at home in everlastingness, so that through them mortals could find their place in a cosmos where everything is immortal except themselves. By their capacity for the immortal deed, by their ability to leave nonperishable traces behind, men, their individual mortality notwithstanding, attain an immortality of their own and prove themselves to be of a "divine" nature. The distinction between man and animal runs right through the human species itself: only the best *(aristof),* who constantly prove themselves to be the best *(aristeuein,* a verb for which there is no equivalent in any other language) and who "prefer immortal fame to mortal things," are really human; the others, content with whatever pleasures nature will yield them, live and die like animals. This was still the opinion of Heraclitus,[20] an opinion whose equivalent one will find in hardly any philosopher after Socrates.

18. See Ps. Aristotle *Economics* 1343b24: Nature guarantees to the species their being forever through recurrence *(periodos),* but cannot guarantee such being forever to the individual. The same thought, "For living things, life is being," appears in *On the Soul* 415bl3.

19. The Greek language does not distinguish between "works" and "deeds," but calls both *erga* if they are durable enough to last and great enough to be remembered. It is only when the philosophers, or rather the Sophists, began to draw their "endless distinctions" and to distinguish between making and acting *(poiein* and *prattein)* that the nouns *poiemata* and *pragmata* received wider currency (see Plato's *Charmides* 163). Homer does not yet know the word *pragmata,* which in Plato *(ta ton anthropon pragmata)* is best rendered by "human affairs" and has the connotations of trouble and futility. In Herodotus *pragmata* can have the same connotation (cf., for instance, i. 155).

20. Heraclitus, frag. B29 (Diels, *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* [4th ed.; 1922]).

In our context it is of no great importance whether Socrates himself or Plato discovered the eternal as the true center of strictly metaphysical thought. It weighs heavily in favor of Socrates that he alone among the great thinkers—unique in this as in many other respects—never cared to write down his thoughts; for it is obvious that, no matter how concerned a thinker may be with eternity, the moment he sits down to write his thoughts he ceases to be concerned primarily with eternity and shifts his attention to leaving some trace of them. He has entered the *vita activa* and chosen its way of permanence and potential immortality. One thing is certain: it is only in Plato that concern with the eternal and the life of the philosopher are seen as inherently contradictory and in conflict with the striving for immortality, the way of life of the citizen, the *bios politikos.*

The philosopher's experience of the eternal, which to Plato was *arrheton* ("unspeakable"), and to Aristotle *aneu logon* ("without word"), and which later was conceptualized in the paradoxical *nunc stans* ("the standing now"), can occur only outside the realm of human affairs and outside the plurality of men, as we know from the Cave parable in Plato's *Republic,* where the philosopher, having liberated himself from the fetters that bound him to his fellow men, leaves the cave in perfect "singularity," as it were, neither accompanied nor followed by others. Politically speaking, if to die is the same as "to cease to be among men," experience of the eternal is a kind of death, and the only thing that separates it from real death is that it is not final because no living creature can endure it for any length of time. And this is precisely what separates the *vita contemplativa* from the *vita activa* in medieval thought.[21] Yet it is decisive that the experience of the eternal, in contradistinction to that of the immortal, has no correspondence with and cannot be transformed into any activity whatsoever, since even the activity of thought, which goes on within one's self by means of words, is obviously not only inadequate to render it but would interrupt and ruin the experience itself.

*Theoria,* or "contemplation," is the word given to the experience of the eternal, as distinguished from all other attitudes, which at

21. *In vita activa fixi permanere possumus; in contemplativa autem intenta mente manere nullo modo valemus* (Aquinas *Summa theologica* ii. 2. 181.4).

most may pertain to immortality. It may be that the philosophers' discovery of the eternal was helped by their very justified doubt of the chances of the *polis* for immortality or even permanence, and it may be that the shock of this discovery was so overwhelming that they could not but look down upon all striving for immortality as vanity and vainglory, certainly placing themselves thereby into open opposition to the ancient city-state and the religion which inspired it. However, the eventual victory of the concern with eternity over all kinds of aspirations toward immortality is not due to philosophic thought. The fall of the Roman Empire plainly demonstrated that no work of mortal hands can be immortal, and it was accompanied by the rise of the Christian gospel of an everlasting individual life to its position as the exclusive religion of Western mankind. Both together made any striving for an earthly immortality futile and unnecessary. And they succeeded so well in making the *vita activa* and the *bios politikos* the handmaidens of contemplation that not even the rise of the secular in the modern age and the concomitant reversal of the traditional hierarchy between action and contemplation sufficed to save from oblivion the striving for immortality which originally had been the spring and center of the *vita activa.*

CHAPTER II

# The Public and the Private Realm

## 4

### MAN: A SOCIAL OR A POLITICAL ANIMAL

The *vita activa,* human life in so far as it is actively engaged in doing something, is always rooted in a world of men and of man-made things which it never leaves or altogether transcends. Things and men form the environment for each of man's activities, which would be pointless without such location; yet this environment, the world into which we are born, would not exist without the human activity which produced it, as in the case of fabricated things; which takes care of it, as in the case of cultivated land; or which established it through organization, as in the case of the body politic. No human life, not even the life of the hermit in nature's wilderness, is possible without a world which directly or indirectly testifies to the presence of other human beings.

All human activities are conditioned by the fact that men live together, but it is only action that cannot even be imagined outside the society of men. The activity of labor does not need the presence of others, though a being laboring in complete solitude would not be human but an *animal laborans* in the word's most literal significance. Man working and fabricating and building a world inhabited only by himself would still be a fabricator, though not *homo faber:* he would have lost his specifically human quality and, rather, be a god—not, to be sure, the Creator, but a divine demiurge as Plato described him in one of his myths. Action alone is the exclusive prerogative of man; neither a beast nor a god

is capable of it,[1] and only action is entirely dependent upon the constant presence of others.

This special relationship between action and being together seems fully to justify the early translation of Aristotle's *zoonpolitikon* by *animal socialis,* already found in Seneca, which then became the standard translation through Thomas Aquinas: *homo est naturaliter politicus, id est, socialis* ("man is by nature political, that is, social").[2] More than any elaborate theory, this unconscious substitution of the social for the political betrays the extent to which the original Greek understanding of politics had been lost. For this, it is significant but not decisive that the word "social" is Roman in origin and has no equivalent in Greek language or thought. Yet the Latin usage of the word *societas* also originally had a clear, though limited, political meaning; it indicated an alliance between people for a specific purpose, as when men organize in order to rule others or to commit a crime.[a] It is only with the later

1. It seems quite striking that the Homeric gods act only with respect to men, ruling them from afar or interfering in their affairs. Conflicts and strife between the gods also seem to arise chiefly from their part in human affairs or their conflicting partiality with respect to mortals. What then appears is a story in which men and gods act together, but the scene is set by the mortals, even when the decision is arrived at in the assembly of gods on Olympus. I think such a "co-operation" is indicated in the Homeric *erg' andron te them te (Odyssey* i. 338): the bard sings the deeds of gods and men, not stories of the gods and stories of men. Similarly, Hesiod's *Theogony* deals not with the deeds of gods but with the genesis of the world (116); it therefore tells how things came into being through begetting and giving birth (constantly recurring). The singer, servant of the Muses, sings "the glorious deeds of men of old and the blessed gods" (97 ff.), but nowhere, as far as I can see, the glorious deeds of the gods.

2. The quotation is from the Index Rerum to the Taurinian edition of Aquinas (1922). The word "politicus" does not occur in the text, but the Index summarizes Thomas' meaning correctly, as can be seen from *Summa theologha* i. 96. 4; ii. 2. 109. 3.

3. *Societas regni* in Livius, *societas sceleris* in Cornelius Nepos. Such an alliance could also be concluded for business purposes, and Aquinas still holds that a "true *societas"* between businessmen exists only "where the investor himself shares in the risk," that is, where the partnership is truly an alliance (see W. J. Ashley, *An Introduction to English Economic History and Theory* [1931], p. 419).

concept of a *societas generis humani,* a "society of man-kind,"[4] that the term "social" begins to acquire the general meaning of a fundamental human condition. It is not that Plato or Aristotle was ignorant of, or unconcerned with, the fact that man cannot live outside the company of men, but they did not count this condition among the specifically human characteristics; on the contrary, it was something human life had in common with animal life, and for this reason alone it could not be fundamentally human. The natural, merely social companionship of the human species was considered to be a limitation imposed upon us by the needs of biological life, which are the same for the human animal as for other forms of animal life.

According to Greek thought, the human capacity for political organization is not only different from but stands in direct opposition to that natural association whose center is the home *(oikiri)* and the family. The rise of the city-state meant that man received "besides his private life a sort of second life, his *bios politikos.* Now every citizen belongs to two orders of existence; and there is a sharp distinction in his life between what is his own *(idion)* and what is communal *(koi?jon)."*[&] It was not just an opinion or theory of Aristotle but a simple historical fact that the foundation of the *polls* was preceded by the destruction of all organized units resting on kinship, such as the *phratria* and the *phyle.*[6] Of all the activities

4. I use here and in the following the word "man-kind" to designate the human species, as distinguished from "mankind," which indicates the sum total of human beings.

5. Werner Jaeger, *Paideia* (1945), III, 111.

6. Although Fustel de Coulanges' chief thesis, according to the Introduction to *The Ancient City* (Anchor ed.; 1956), consists of demonstrating that "the same religion" formed the ancient family organization and the ancient city-state, he brings numerous references to the fact that the regime of the *gens* based on the religion of the family and the regime of the city "were in reality two antagonistic forms of government. . . . Either the city could not last, or it must in the course of time break up the family" (p. 252). The reason for the contradiction in this great book seems to me to be in Coulanges' attempt to treat Rome and the Greek city-states together; for his evidence and categories he relies chiefly on Roman institutional and political sentiment, although he recognizes that the Vesta cult "became weakened in Greece at a very early date . . . but it never became enfeebled at Rome" (p. 146). Not only was the gulf between household and city much deeper in Greece than in Rome, but only in Greece

necessary and present in human communities, only two were deemed to be political and to constitute what Aristotle called the *bios politikos,* namely action *{praxis)* and speech *(lexis),* out of which rises the realm of human affairs *(ta ton anthropon pragmata,* as Plato used to call it) from which everything merely necessary or useful is strictly excluded.

However, while certainly only the foundation of the city-state enabled men to spend their whole lives in the political realm, in action and speech, the conviction that these two human capacities belonged together and are the highest of all seems to have preceded the *polis* and was already present in pre-Socratic thought. The stature of the Homeric Achilles can be understood only if one sees him as "the doer of great deeds and the speaker of great words."[7] In distinction from modern understanding, such words were not considered to be great because they expressed great thoughts; on the contrary, as we know from the last lines of *Antigone,* it may be the capacity for "great words" *(megaloi logoi)* with which to reply to striking blows that will eventually teach thought in old age.[8] Thought was secondary to speech, but

---

was the Olympian religion, the religion of Homer and the city-state, separate from and superior to the older religion of family and household. While Vesta, the goddess of the hearth, became the protectress of a "city hearth" and part of the official, political cult after the unification and second foundation of Rome, her Greek colleague, Hestia, is mentioned for the first time by Hesiod, the only Greek poet who, in conscious opposition to Homer, praises the life of the hearth and the household; in the official religion of the *polis,* she had to cede her place in the assembly of the twelve Olympian gods to Dionysos (see Mommsen, *Romische Geschichte* [5th ed.], Book I, ch. 12, and Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths* [1955], 27. k).

7. The passage occurs in Phoenix' speech, *Iliad* ix. 443. It clearly refers to education for war and *agora,* the public meeting, in which men can distinguish themselves. The literal translation is; "[your father] charged me to teach you all this, to be a speaker of words and a doer of deeds" *(mython te rheter' emenai prektera te ergon).*

8. The literal translation of the last lines of *Antigone* (1350-54) is as follows: "But great words, counteracting [or paying back] the great blows of the overproud, teach understanding in old age." The content of these lines is so puzzling to modern understanding that one rarely finds a translator who dares to give the bare sense. An exception is Holderlin's translation: "Grosse Blicke aber, / Grosse Streiche der hohen Schultern / Vergeltend, / Sie haben im Alter

speech and action were considered to be coeval and coequal, of the same rank and the same kind; and this originally meant not only that most political action, in so far as it remains outside the sphere of violence, is indeed transacted in words, but more fundamentally that finding the right words at the right moment, quite apart from the information or communication they may convey, is action. Only sheer violence is mute, and for this reason violence alone can never be great. Even when, relatively late in antiquity, the arts of war and speech *{rhetoric)* emerged as the two principal political subjects of education, the development was still inspired by this older *pte-polis* experience and tradition and remained subject to it.

In the experience of the *polis,* which not without justification has been called the most talkative of all bodies politic, and even more in the political philosophy which sprang from it, action and speech separated and became more and more independent activities. The emphasis shifted from action to speech, and to speech as a means of persuasion rather than the specifically human way of answering, talking back and measuring up to whatever happened or was done.[9] To be political, to live in a *polis,* meant that everything was decided through words and persuasion and not through force and violence. In Greek self-understanding, to force people

---

gelehrt, zu denken." An anecdote, reported by Plutarch, may illustrate the connection between acting and speaking on a much lower level. A man once approached Demosthenes and related how terribly he had been beaten. "But you," said Demosthenes, "suffered nothing of what you tell me." Whereupon the other raised his voice and cried out: "I suffered nothing?" "Now," said Demosthenes, "I hear the voice of somebody who was injured and who suffered" *(Lives,* "Demosthenes"). A last remnant of this ancient connection of speech and thought, from which our notion of expressing thought through words is absent, may be found in the current Ciceronian phrase of *ratio et oratio.*

*9.* It is characteristic for this development that every politician was called a "rhetor" and that rhetoric, the art of public speaking, as distinguished from dialectic, the art of philosophic speech, is defined by Aristotle as the art of persuasion (see *Rhetoric* 1354al2 ff., 1355b26 ff.). (The distinction itself is derived from Plato, *Gorgias* 448.) It is in this sense that we must understand the Greek opinion of the decline of Thebes, which was ascribed to Theban neglect of rhetoric in favor of military exercise (see Jacob Burckhardt, *Griechische Kulturgeschkhte,* ed. Kroener, III, 190).

by violence, to command rather than persuade, were prepolitical ways to deal with people characteristic of life outside the *polls,* of home and family life, where the household head ruled with uncontested, despotic powers, or of life in the barbarian empires of Asia, whose despotism was frequently likened to the organization of the household.

Aristotle's definition of man as *zoom politikon* was not only unrelated and even opposed to the natural association experienced in household life; it can be fully understood only if one adds his second famous definition of man as a *zoon logon ekhon* ("a living being capable of speech"). The Latin translation of this term into *animal rationale* rests on no less fundamental a misunderstanding than the term "social animal." Aristotle meant neither to define man in general nor to indicate man's highest capacity, which to him was not *logos,* that is, not speech or reason, but *nous,* the capacity of contemplation, whose chief characteristic is that its content cannot be rendered in speech.[10] In his two most famous definitions, Aristotle only formulated the current opinion of the *polls* about man and the political way of life, and according to this opinion, everybody outside the *polls*—slaves and barbarians—was *aneu logon,* deprived, of course, not of the faculty of speech, but of a way of life in which speech and only speech made sense and where the central concern of all citizens was to talk with each other.

The profound misunderstanding expressed in the Latin translation of "political" as "social" is perhaps nowhere clearer than in a discussion in which Thomas Aquinas compares the nature of household rule with political rule: the head of the household, he finds, has some similarity to the head of the kingdom, but, he adds, his power is not so "perfect" as that of the king.[11] Not only in Greece and the *polls* but throughout the whole of occidental antiquity, it would indeed have been self-evident that even the power of the tyrant was less great, less "perfect" than the power with which the *paterfamilias,* the *dominus,* ruled over his household of slaves and family. And this was not because the power of the city's

10. *Nicomachean Ethics* 1142a25 and 1178a6 ff.

11. Aquinas *op. cit.* ii. 2. 50. 3.

ruler was matched and checked by the combined powers of household heads, but because absolute, uncontested rule and a political realm properly speaking were mutually exclusive.[12]

## THE *Polls* AND THE HOUSEHOLD

Although misunderstanding and equating the political and social realms is as old as the translation of Greek terms into Latin and their adaption to Roman-Christian thought, it has become even more confusing in modern usage and modem understanding of society. The distinction between a private and a public sphere of life corresponds to the household and the political realms, which have existed as distinct, separate entities at least since the rise of the ancient city-state; but the emergence of the social realm, which is neither private nor public, strictly speaking, is a relatively new phenomenon whose origin coincided with the emergence of the modern age and which found its political form in the nation-state.

What concerns us in this context is the extraordinary difficulty with which we, because of this development, understand the decisive division between the public and private realms, between the sphere of the *polls* and the sphere of household and family, and, finally, between activities related to a common world and those related to the maintenance of life, a division upon which all ancient political thought rested as self-evident and axiomatic. In our understanding, the dividing line is entirely blurred, because we see the body of peoples and political communities in the image of a family whose everyday affairs have to be taken care of by a gigantic, nation-wide administration of housekeeping. The scientific thought that corresponds to this development is no longer political science but "national economy" or "social economy" or *Volkswirtschaft,* all of which indicate a kind of "collective house-

12. The terms *dominus* and *paterfamilias* therefore were synonymous, like the terms *servus* and *familiaris: Dominion patrem familiae appellaverunt; servos . . . familiares* (Seneca *Epistolae* 47. 12). The old Roman liberty of the citizen disappeared when the Roman emperors adopted the title *dominus,* "ce nom, qu'Auguste et que Tibere encore, repoussaient comme une malediction et une injure" (H. Wallon, *Histoire de I'esdavage dans 1'antiquite* [1847], III, 21).

keeping";[13] the collective of families economically organized into the facsimile of one super-human family is what we call "society," and its political form of organization is called "nation."[14] We therefore find it difficult to realize that according to ancient thought on these matters, the very term "political economy" would have been a contradiction in terms: whatever was "economic," related to the life of the individual and the survival of the species, was a non-political, household affair by definition.[16]

Historically, it is very likely that the rise of the city-state and the public realm occurred at the expense of the private realm of family and household.[16] Yet the old sanctity of the hearth, though much less pronounced in classical Greece than in ancient Rome, was never entirely lost. What prevented the *polis* from violating the private lives of its citizens and made it hold sacred the boundaries surrounding each property was not respect for private property as we understand it, but the fact that without owning a house

13. According to Gunnar Myrdal *(The Political Element in the Development of Economic Theory* [1953], p. xl), the "idea of Social Economy or collective housekeeping *(Volksivirtschaft)"* is one of the "three main foci" around which "the political speculation which has permeated economics from the very beginning is found to be crystallized."

14. This is not to deny that the nation-state and its society grew out of the medieval kingdom and feudalism, in whose framework the family and household unit have an importance unequalled in classical antiquity. The difference, however, is marked. Within the feudal framework, families and households were mutually almost independent, so that the royal household, representing a given territorial region and ruling the feudal lords as *primus inter pares,* did not pretend, like an absolute ruler, to be the head of one family. The medieval "nation" was a conglomeration of families; its members did not think of themselves as members of one family comprehending the whole nation.

15. The distinction is very clear in the first paragraphs of the Ps. Aristotelian *Economics,* because it opposes the despotic one-man rule *(mon-archia)* of the household organization to the altogether different organization of the *polis.*

16. In Athens, one may see the turning point in Solon's legislation. Coulanges rightly sees in the Athenian law that made it a filial duty to support parents the proof of the loss of paternal power *(op. cit.,* pp. 315-16). However, paternal power was limited only if it conflicted with the interest of the city and never for the sake of the individual family member. Thus the sale of children and the exposure of infants lasted throughout antiquity (see R. H. Barrow, *Slavery in the Roman Empire* [1928], p. 8: "Other rights in the*patria potestas* had become obsolete; but the right of exposure remained unforbidden till A.D. 374").

a man could not participate in the affairs of the world because he had no location in it which was properly his own.[17] Even Plato, whose political plans foresaw the abolition of private property and an extension of the public sphere to the point of annihilating private life altogether, still speaks with great reverence of Zeus Herkeios, the protector of border lines, and calls the *horoi,* the boundaries between one estate and another, divine, without seeing any contradiction.[18]

The distinctive trait of the household sphere was that in it men lived together because they were driven by their wants and needs. The driving force was life itself—the penates, the household gods, were, according to Plutarch, "the gods who make us live and nourish our body"[19]—which, for its individual maintenance and its survival as the life of the species needs the company of others. That individual maintenance should be the task of the man and species survival the task of the woman was obvious, and both of these natural functions, the labor of man to provide nourishment and the labor of the woman in giving birth, were subject to the same urgency of life. Natural community in the household therefore was born of necessity, and necessity ruled over all activities performed in it.

The realm of the *polls,* on the contrary, was the sphere of freedom, and if there was a relationship between these two spheres, it was a matter of course that the mastering of the necessities of life

17. It is interesting for this distinction that there were Greek cities where citizens were obliged by law to share their harvest and consume it in common, whereas each of them had the absolute oncontested property of his soil. See Cou-Ianges *(op. cit.,* p. 61), who calls this law "a singular contradiction"; it is no contradiction, because these two types of property had nothing in common in ancient understanding.

18. *See Laws* 842.

19. Quoted from Coulanges, *op. cit.,* p. 96; the reference to Plutarch is *Quaestiones Romanae* 51. It seems strange that Coulanges' one-sided emphasis on the underworld deities in Greek and Roman religion should have overlooked that these gods were not mere gods of the dead and the cult not merely a "death cult," but that this early earth-bound religion served life and death as two aspects of the same process. Life rises out of the earth and returns to it; birth and death are but two different stages of the same biological life over which the subterranean gods hold sway.

in the household was the condition for freedom of the *polls.* Under no circumstances could politics be only a means to protect society —a society of the faithful, as in the Middle Ages, or a society of property-owners, as in Locke, or a society relentlessly engaged in a process of acquisition, as in Hobbes, or a society of producers, as in Marx, or a society of jobholders, as in our own society, or a society of laborers, as in socialist and communist countries. In all these cases, it is the freedom (and in some instances so-called freedom) of society which requires and justifies the restraint of political authority. Freedom is located in the realm of the social, and force or violence becomes the monopoly of government.

What all Greek philosophers, no matter how opposed to *polls* life, took for granted is that freedom is exclusively located in the political realm, that necessity is primarily a prepolitical phenomenon, characteristic of the private household organization, and that force and violence are justified in this sphere because they are the only means to master necessity—for instance, by ruling over slaves—and to become free. Because all human beings are subject to necessity, they are entitled to violence toward others; violence is the prepolitical act of liberating oneself from the necessity of life for the freedom of world. This freedom is the essential condition of what the Greeks called felicity, *eudaimmla,* which was an objective status depending first of all upon wealth and health. To be poor or to be in ill health meant to be subject to physical necessity, and to be a slave meant to be subject, in addition, to man-made violence. This twofold and doubled "unhappiness" of slavery is quite independent of the actual subjective well-being of the slave. Thus, a poor free man preferred the insecurity of a daily-changing labor market to regular assured work, which, because it restricted his freedom to do as he pleased every day, was already felt to be servitude *(douleia)*, and even harsh, painful labor was preferred to the easy life of many household slaves.[20]

20. The discussion between Socrates and Eutherus in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* (ii. 8) is quite interesting: Eutherus is forced by necessity to labor with his body and is sure that his body will not be able to stand this kind of life for very long and also that in his old age he will be destitute. Still, he thinks that to labor is better than to beg. Whereupon Socrates proposes that he look for somebody "who is better off and needs an assistant." Eutherus replies that he could not bear servitude *{douleia).*

The prepolitical force, however, with which the head of the household ruled over the family and its slaves and which was felt to be necessary because man is a "social" before he is a "political animal," has nothing in common with the chaotic "state of nature" from whose violence, according to seventeenth-century political thought, men could escape only by establishing a government that, through a monopoly of power and of violence, would abolish the "war of all against all" by "keeping them all in awe."[21] On the contrary, the whole concept of rule and being ruled, of government and power in the sense in which we understand them as well as the regulated order attending them, was felt to be prepolitical and to belong in the private rather than the public sphere.

The *polls* was distinguished from the household in that it knew only "equals," whereas the household was the center of the strictest inequality. To be free meant both not to be subject to the necessity of life or to the command of another *and* not to be in command oneself. It meant neither to rule nor to be ruled.[22] Thus within the realm of the household, freedom did not exist, for the household head, its ruler, was considered to be free only in so far as he had the power to leave the household and enter the political realm, where all were equals. To be sure, this equality of the political realm has very little in common with our concept of equality: it meant to live among and to have to deal only with one's peers, and it presupposed the existence of "unequals" who, as a matter of fact, were always the majority of the population in a city-state.[2a] Equality, therefore, far from being connected with

21. The reference is to Hobbes, *Leviathan,* Part I, ch. 13.

22. The most famous and the most beautiful reference is the discussion of the different forms of government in Herodotus (iii. 80-83), where Otanes, the defender of Greek equality *(isonomie),* states that he "wishes neither to rule nor to be ruled." But it is the same spirit in which Aristotle states that the life of a free man is better than that of a despot, denying freedom to the despot as a matter of course *{Politics* 1325a24). According to Coulanges, all Greek and Latin words which express some rulership over others, such as *rex, pater, (max, basileus,* refer originally to household relationships and were names the slaves gave to their master *(op. cit.,* pp. 89 ff., 228).

23. The proportion varied and is certainly exaggerated in Xenophon's report from Sparta, where among four thousand people in the market place, a foreigner counted no more than sixty citizens *(Helknica* iii. 35).

justice, as in modern times, was the very essence of freedom: to be free meant to be free from the inequality present in rulership and to move in a sphere where neither rule nor being ruled existed.

However, the possibility of describing the profound difference between the modern and the ancient understanding of politics in terms of a clear-cut opposition ends here. In the modern world, the social and the political realms are much less distinct. That politics is nothing but a function of society, that action, speech, and thought are primarily superstructures upon social interest, is not a discovery of Karl Marx but on the contrary is among the axiomatic assumptions Marx accepted uncritically from the political economists of the modern age. This functionalization makes it impossible to perceive any serious gulf between the two realms; and this is not a matter of a theory or an ideology, since with the rise of society, that is, the rise of the "household" *(oikia)* or of economic activities to the public realm, housekeeping and all matters pertaining formerly to the private sphere of the family have become a "collective" concern.[24] In the modern world, the two realms indeed constantly flow into each other like waves in the never-resting stream of the life process itself.

The disappearance of the gulf that the ancients had to cross daily to transcend the narrow realm of the household and "rise" into the realm of politics is an essentially modern phenomenon. Such a gulf between the private and the public still existed somehow in the Middle Ages, though it had lost much of its significance

24. See Myrdal, *op. cit.;* "The notion that society, like the head of a family, keeps house for its members, is deeply rooted in economic terminology. … In German *Volksivirtschaftshhre* suggests . . . that there is a collective subject of economic activity . . . with a common purpose and common values. In English, ... 'theory of wealth' or 'theory of welfare' express similar ideas" (p. 140). "What is meant by a social economy whose function is social housekeeping? In the first place, it implies or suggests an analogy between the individual who runs his own or his family household and society. Adam Smith and James Mill elaborated this analogy explicitly. After J. S. Mill's criticism, and with the wider recognition of the distinction between practical and theoretical political economy, the analogy was generally less emphasized" (p. 143). Th

9In,24; industrial development as limited, 65n.69; inviolability of agreements, 243; *opus* and *operae* distinguished by, 92n.26; the *plebs,* 62n.59; private and public as coexisting among, 59; slaves of, 59, 59n.54; on sparing the vanquished, 239; territory and law for, 195n.21; Vesta cult, 24n.6; on violence in founding a new body politic, 228. *See also* Roman Empire; Roman Republic
Romanticists, 39
Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, 39, 41, 79
Royal Academies, 278
Royal Society, 271n.26
rule: *archein,"\ll,* 189, 222-23, 224; Aristotle on, 222; contract contrasted with, 244; democracy, 220, 222; as escape from politics, 222; of feudal lords, 34; Greek and Latin words for, 32n.22: leaders becoming rulers, 189-90; master/slave compared with ruler/ruled, 223-24; ochlocracy, 203; oligarchy, 222; Plato on, 222, 224, 227n.69, 237-38. *See also* monarchy; tyranny
Russell, Bertrand, 267n

*savs-culottes,* 218, 218n.54
satellites, artificial, 1, 269
saving the appearances, 259n. 10, 260, 266, 285
Schachermeyr, M. E, 195n.22
Schelsky, Helmut, 128n.75
Schlaifer, Robert, 36n.3O
Schlatter, Richard, 110n.56
Schopp, Joseph, 145n
Schrodinger, Erwin, 3, 287n.51
Schuke-Delitzsch, Hermann, 98n
science: action as prerogative of scientists, 323-24; behavioral sciences, 45; carrying irreversibility and unpredictability into natural realm, 238; dreams as anticipating, 1-2; earth alienation as hallmark of, 264-65; emphasis shifting from why to how, 295-96; experiment, 150n, 231, 286, 287-88, 295, 312; as history of the universe, 296; hypothesis, 278, 287; instruments in, 295; as making nature, 231-32, 295; mathematics in, 4, 267, 284, 285-87; in modern age's creation, 248, 249-50, 249n; and philosophy, 272, 290, 294, 313; subjectivization of modern, 141, 282; success as criterion of, 278-79; virtues of modern, 278. *See also* natural science
science fiction, 2
*scienza nuova,* 249n
scribes, 91,92, 92n.28
sculpture, 82n, 93, 93n.30, 157
secondary qualities, 114n,63, 115
secularization, 253, 320
self: Marxian self-alienation, 89n.21, 162, 210, 254; modern philosophy's concern with the, 254. *See also* introspection
self-sufficiency, 234-35
Seneca, 23, 36n.30, 40n, 218n.53
senses, the: astrophysical world view challenging, 261-62; Cartesian doubt of, 274-79; common sense as uniting, 208-9; in experiencing the world," 114-15, 114n.63; and Galileo's telescope, 260, 260n.ll; and mathematization of physics, 287; vision, 114n.63. *See also* common sense
sensualism, 51n.43, 112, 272. 310, 311
servants, 119, 122
servile arts, 91-93
*servi publiri,* 84n. 11
shame, 73
sign language, 179
Simon, Yves, 141n
sin: and death, 314; original sin, 3 10
*skhole,* 14-15, 82n, 131n.84
slavery: ancient attitude toward, 36n.30; ancient justification of, 83-84; Aristotle on, 83n,9, 84, 84nn. 11, 12, 119n.69; chief function of ancient, 119; Christian view of life affecting, 316; *dimioiirgoi* and slaves distinguished, 81; emancipation contrasted with that of free labor, 217; Euripides on slaves, 84n. 10; excellence as lost in, 49n; freed slaves becoming businessmen, 66n.7O; Greek word as signifying defeated enemy, 81, 129n,79; labor power in, 88; masters seeing and hearing through their slaves, 120; Periandros's attempt to abolish, 221; Plato on natural slavishness, 36n.3O, 316; Plato on treatment of slaves, 34n.37; property owning by slaves, 62, 62n.58; rebellions as rare, 215, 215n.51; in Roman Republic and Empire, 36n.30, 59, 59n.54; scribes as slaves, 92; Sen-

slavery *(continued)*
eca on, 36n.3O; shadowy existence of slaves, 50n; the slave as *instrumentum vocale,* 121; slaves as instruments of living not making, 122; slaves as passing away without a trace, 55, 55n; as social condition of laboring classes, 119; Stoics on all men as slaves, 13On.81; torture of slaves, 129, 129n.78; twofold unhappiness of, 31; uniform dress proposal, 218n.53; wealth as counted by number of slaves, 65; women and slaves in same category, 72, 72n.8
"small things," 52
Smith, Adam: on division of labor, 88n.l8, 161n.29; on exchange as characteristic of man, 160, 16On.27; on the exchange market, 136; on government's function, 22On; "invisible hand" doctrine, 42n, 185; on labor as source of wealth, 101; and labor/work distinction, 103, 104; on menial servants, 86, 93, 93n.29, 103, 207; philosophers and street porters compared by, 213; on power of exchange, 210; on public extravagance of government, 110n.55; on rewards of men of letters, 56; on society as keeping house, 33n; on unproductive labor, 85, 86
Soboul, A., 218n.54
social, the: Aristotle on man as social animal, 24, 25; excellence persisting in, 49; freedom as located in realm of, 31; large population associated with, 43; as new phenomenon, 28; and the political, 23-24; and the private, 68-73; rise of, 38-49. *See also* society
socialism, 44n, 72, 89n.21, 118n.65
socialized man: accumulation of wealth as limitless for, 124; activities as hobbies, 117-18; Marx on, 42n, 44, 321; means of achieving, 72; purpose of, 89, 89n.21
*societas,* 23-24, 23n.3
society: action as excluded from, 40-41; commercial society, 162, 163, 210, 307; communistic fiction in, 44; consumers' society, 126-35; emergence changing meaning of public and private, 38; equality in, 39, 40, 41; family declining with emergence of, 40, 256; government contrasted with, 110n.54; life of the species asserting itself in, 321; monarchical rule in, 40; as monolithic, 46; as organization of property owners, 68; politics as means of protecting, 31, 159; public realm eclipsed by rise of, 257; as superhuman family, 29, 39; as victorious in modern age, 45. *See also* mass society; social, the
Socrates: *daimonion* of, 182n.7; on the eternal as center of thought, 20; and Eutherus, 3 In; on no man as wise, 75; and Plato's theory of ideas, 142n; on the *polis* and the household, 37; quoting Hesiod on laziness, 82n; on a realm higher than the political, 18; story of as known, 186; Western political thought originating in trial of, l2
solitude, 76
Solon, 2 9n. 16, 81
Sophists, 19n.l9
Sophocles: *Antigone,* 25, 25n.8; on *daimon* of Oedipus,. 193n. 18
Sorel, Georges, 117n, 3O5n
sovereignty: abstention from human affairs for safeguarding, 234; contract contrasted with, 244; freedom identified with, 234-35; of *homo faber,* 305; and promising, 245
Soviet Union, 216, 220
space of appearance: coming into being, 199; *homo faber* and, 207-12; plurality as condition of, 220; the *polis* as, 198-99; power and the, 199-207; and work, 212
Sparta, 32n.23
specialization of work, 47n, 123, 214n.48
speech: and action, 26, 177n.l, 178-81; the agent as disclosed in, 175-81; in Aristotle's *bios politikos,* 25; in Aristotle's definition of man, 27; and beginning, 178; courage as required for, 186; as creating its own remembrance, 207-8; futility of, 173, 197; in *homofaber's* redemption, 236; human and animal life distinguished by, 205; as idleness for *animal laborans* and *homo faber,* 208; interests as concern of, 182; as making man political, 3; people distinguishing themselves by, 176; and plurality, 178; *the polis as* giving permanence to, 198; products of, 95; reification

of, 95, 187; and revelation, 178-80, 187; rhetoric, 26, 26n.9; stories resulting from, 97; as superstructure, 33; and thought, 25; in weh of relationships, 184. *See also* words
state, the (government): Augustine on function of, 229n; bureaucracy, 40, 45, 93n.28; contradiction in modern conception of, 69; economists as hostile to, 109-10, 110n.54; Marx on withering away of, 45, 60; Marx's stateless society, 13 In.82; Smith on function of, 220n; violence as monopoly of, 31, 32; wealth accumulation protected by, 72. See *-Asa polls,* the
state of nature, 32
statistics, 42-43
status, 41, 56
steam engine, 148
Stoicism: abstention from human affairs in, 234; all men as slaves for, 130n.81; attitude toward slavery influenced by, 36n.30; illusion of freedom underlying, 235; modern hedonism contrasted with, 311; pain as natural experience underlying, 112; as world alienation, 310
stories: action and speech resulting in, 97; action revealing itself fully only to the storyteller, 191-92; an agent revealed in, 184; biography, 97; each human life telling its story, 184; fictional and real, 186; hero of a story, 184-87, 186n, 194; history as story of mankind, 184-85; the *polls* as giving permanence to, 198; storytelling transforming intimate life, 50; and the web of relationships, 181-88
strength: of action process, 188-89, 233; as bounded, 201-2; power contrasted with, 200; sovereignty and man's limited, 234; and violence, 140, 203
strongmen, 188-89
subject/object split, 312-13
success, as criterion of science, 278-79
suicide, 315, 316
surplus, 88, 108

tame animals, 80, 83n.8
Tartaglia, Niccolo, 249n
teamwork, 161-62, 179, 271n.26
technology: carrying irreversibility and unpredictability into natural realm, 238; development of modern, 147-50; origins in useless knowledge, 289
telescope, invention of, 248, 257-58, 274,290
Tertullian, 54n.46, 74, 74n.83
*thaumazein,* 273, 302, 3O2n
Thebes, 26n.9
theodicies, 281, 282
*theoria:* in Aristotle's political philosophy, 14; in experience of the eternal, 20; in Greek political philosophy, 301; Socratic school on, 16; and *thaumazein,* 302; truth as residing in, 278. *See also* contemplation
thing-character of the world, 9, 93-96
thirty-six righteous men, story of, 75
Thomas Aquinas. *See* Aquinas, Thomas
thought: the brain and, 3, 322; cognition distinguished from, 170-71; contemplation distinguished from, 16; for Descartes, 279n.39; eternity as center of metaphysical, 20; freedom as condition for, 324; *homofaber* as inspired by, 171; as inner dialogue, 76, 291; and modern world view, 285-89; Plato as separating from action, 223-27; and poetry, 170; as source of works of art, 168-69; and speech, 25; thinking as laboring, 90; transforming into tangible objects, 76, 90, 95; as unable to think itself, 236; useless thought, 170
Thucydides, 205-6
Tilgher, Adriano, 3O5n
tilling of the soil, 138
Tocqueville, Alexis de, 39
tools: and division of labor, 124—25; instrumentality of, 151; labor enhanced by, 121-22, 144; machines contrasted with, 147; machine tools, 148. *See also* machines
torture, 129, 129n.78
totalitarianism, 216
trades, 91
trade unions: division of labor in, 123; political parties contrasted with, 215-17
tragedy, Greek, 187, 187n.l2
Trajan, 13On.81
Trojan War, 197, 198
truth: action as source of, 290; Cartesian doubt of, 274-79; and mathematization of physics, 287; Plato on

truth *(continued)*
speech and, 178n; as revealing itself only in stillness, 15; as revelation, 17; as subjective, 282,293
tyranny: acting as easier than thinking in, 324; Aristotle on, 22 In.57; citizens banned from public realm in, 221-22, 224; as combination of force and powerlessness, 202; private property as guarding against, 67, 67n.72; subjects as impotent in, 203; tyrants discouraging people from worrying about politics, 160; as working too well, 221

Unknown Soldier monuments, 181, 181n
*urbs,* 64n,64
usefulness. *See* utility
use objects: beauty or ugliness in, 172-73; as commodities in exchange market, 163; as consumer goods, 124, 125-26, 230; consumer goods contrasted with, 94, 137-38; instrumentality of, 154, 157, 158-59; utility principle presupposing, 308; the world as consisting of, 134
use value: changing to exchange value in capitalism, 165; exchange value distinguished from, 163; exchange value's triumph over, 307; Marx retaining term, 165
utilitarianism: automation's advocates opposing, 151; in classical economics, 172; communistic fiction in, 44n; as *homo faber's* philosophy, 154—57. *See also* utility
*utilitas,* 91nn.23,25, 183n
utility: Bentham on, 3O8nn. 71, 72; classical economists on, 172; and design, 152; greatest happiness principle replacing principle of, 308-9; *homo faber* on, 154, 305; meaningfulness distinguished from, 154-55; and means-ends relationship, 153-54, 155; in modern philosophy, 306; use objects presupposed by, 308
Utopias, 130-31,227

vainglory, 56-57, 314
Valery, Paul, 212n.43
value: in the exchange market, 136, 163-65; marketable value, 164; medieval view of, 164n.34, 166n; religious values, 235n.74; Ricardo's theory of, 165n.37; that derived from labor, 213; utilitarianism on intrinsic, 155, 156. *See also* exchange value; use value
vanity, 56, 162, 204
Veblen, Thorstein, 102, 160
vengeance, 240-41
Vernant,J.-P., 81n.6
Vesta, 24n.6
Vico, Giambattista, 232, 298, 298n
violence: and action, 179; artists and thinkers yearning for, 203-4; as declining in modern age, 129-30, 13On.8O; in fabrication, 139-40, 153; as government monopoly, 31, 32; Marx on, 228, 228n; as mute, 26; as no substitute for power, 202; in political thought of modern age, 228; power of foregoing use of, 200-201; strength's coping with, 203
virtues, 48, 207, 208n.40
vision, 114n.63
*vitaactiva,* 7-17; action in, 7,205, 301; Aquinas on, I4n.9,15n,12, 16n.l3; Christian view of life leveling out articulations in, 316; classical economics on goal of, 133; elements of, 7; fabrication's role in, 141; and the modern age, 248-3 2 5; a proper location for. 73,78; reversal within, 294-304; as' rooted in world of men, 22; second reversal in, 306-7; speech and action as essential to, 176; traditional meaning of term, 12-17; as unquiet, *I5;vita contemplative!* opposed to in traditional thought, 14-17,21; and *vita contemplativa* reversed in modern age, 289-94. See *also* action; labor; work
*vita contemplativa:* Aquinas on, 318n.84; Christianity on, 318; speechless wonder in, 303-4; *vita activa* opposed to in traditional thought, 14-17, 21; and *vita activa* reversed in modern age, 289-94. *See also* contemplation
von (in names). *See under* substantive part of name
voting, property qualifications for, 217
Vuillemin, Jules, 104n.48, 3O5n

Wallon, H., 38n, 34n.27, 72n.80, 92n.28, 130n.81
warfare, 180
waste economy, 134
watch: God and nature as watchmaker and, 297; invention of the, 289

wealth: accumulation of as limitless for, 124; as capital, 68, 255; common wealth, 68—69; as condition of citizenship, 65n.68; expropriation in accumulation of, 254-55; government protecting accumulation of, 72; Greek and Roman attitudes toward, 59, 59n.54; growth of, 105, 111; labor as source of, 101; landed wealth, 66; political significance of, 64-65; property distinguished from, 61, 253
Weber, Max: on ancient cities as centers of consumption, 66n.69, 119n.7O; on Athens as pensionopohs, 37; on innerworldly asceticism of capitalism, 251, 252n, 254; on loss of certainty of salvation, 277n
web of relationships: defined, 183; and the enacted stories, 181—88; freedom entangling people in, 233-34; realm of human affairs consisting of, 183-84
Weil, Simone, 131n.83, 287n.53
Weizsacker, Viktor von, 123n, 213n.45
Westermann, William L., 12n.4, 215n.51
Whitehead, Alfred North: on common sense as in retreat, 283; on Galileo and the telescope, 257; on Michelson's interferometer, 295n; on nature as process, 296n.61; on science and organization, 271n.26; on scientific results offending reason, 290; on traditional versus modern science, 267n
will to power, 203, 204n, 245n
Wilson, Edmund, 105n.50
women: Jesus and Paul on creation of, 8n; labor in giving birth, 30; in sexual division of labor, 48n.38; and slaves in same category, 72, 72n,8; species survival as task of, 30; and working class emancipated in modern age, 73
wonder, 273, 302, 3O2n
words: futility of, 173; immortality of, 19; inserting ourselves in the world with, 176; politics as transacted in, 26
work, 136-74; and action in Greek political philosophy, 301-2; in Aristotle's *biospolitikos,* 12, 13; benefactors as doing, 196; defined, 7; as destructive for nature, 100, 139,153; as having an end, 98, 143; image or model as guiding, 141-42; intellectual work, 90-93; labor distinguished from, 79-93, 80n.3,81n.5,83n.8,94, 103-4, 138; natality and mortality as connected with, 8—9; as now performed in mode of laboring, 230; a proper location for, 73; rhythm for, 145n; in solitude, 22; and space of appearance, 212; specialization of, 47n, 123, 214n.48;in *vita activa,* 7; world alienation affecting, 301. See also *homofaber;* instruments of work; use objects
work ethos, Protestant, 252n
working class: alienation of, 255; emancipation of labor, 126-35, 217-18, 255; as jobholders like everyone else, 219; labor movement, 212-20; as not always having existed, 66n.7O; as wage-earners, 255n; and women emancipated in modern age, 73
working hours, 132, 132n.85
workmanship: labor replacing since industrial revolution, 124; machines contrasted with tools of, 147; in music and poetry, 169; as required only for models, 125; teamwork as destructive of, 161; as unpolitical but not antipolitical, 212
works: good works, 76; greatness of mortals in, 19, 19n.l9
works of art. *See* art
world, the: absence of pain in liberation from, 112-15; alienation from, 6, 209, 248-57, 301, 307, 310; as consisting of use objects, 134; discovery and exploration of the earth, 248, 250-51; durability of, 136-39; natality as miracle that saves, 247; permanence of, 167-74; power in human creation of, 204; "public" as signifying, 52; the senses in experiencing, 114-15, 114n.63; thing-character of, 9, 93-96; trust in reality of, 120; work's products in, 94
worldlessness, 54, 76, 115, 118-19
worldliness: of artists, 323, 323n; fabrication as sustaining, 236; as human condition of work, 7; love as unworldly, 242; of produced things, 96; secularity identified with, 253, 320

Xenophon, 3In, 32n.23, 48n.38, 82n, 182n.7

Zeus Herkeios, 30
Zoroastrianism, 278n.35