Beyond Politics and Security

Freedom, Human Plurality and Modern Politics in the Thought of Hannah Arendt

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Introduction

The modern constitution of the international political realm as a collective of sovereign nation states gives this realm a rather unstable character. In the absence of an overarching authority to guide the conduct of these states, most of them have implemented a vast array of security measures to ensure their durability in this insecure environment. This, however, has simultaneously led to a situation in which governments have historically unparalleled forces of destructive violence at their disposal. If the twentieth century has demonstrated as anything, it is how such developments can end in complete catastrophe. Two horrendous world wars, the Holocaust and the subsequent Cold War with its continuous nuclear threat and political strategies based on 'mutually assured destruction' are exemplary of how this political situation can affect the world. One consequently wonders whether our modern political landscape is able to transform in order to overcome this excessive focus on security, or whether a world without politics, in the form of some massive global bureaucratic machinery administering our basic economic conducts, seems to be the only solution to give this world a stable character (Arendt, 2005).

Looking at the dominant Realist branch of the academic study of International Relations (IR), the chances of overcoming the unstable character of the international realm appear to be rather slim. Notwithstanding a plethora of internal perspectives, Realism as an approach to IR is unified by its systematic portrayal of the international political realm as anarchic in nature, constituted by self-interested states who seek for an expansion of their power to ensure their survival in this unstable environment (Burchill, 2005). The pursuit of security by nation states is therefore a logical and rational consequence of these main characteristics of the international realm to Realism. This static ontological perspective on what international politics in its basic form is constituted of therefore leaves little room for potential transformation.

The main contestation of this basic Realist perspective arguably comes from the Liberal branch of IR, which argues that a more stable world wherein peace and order come to be its main characteristics is a difficult though attainable prospect. Specifically by means of an ongoing global spread of adherence to Liberal democratic values and an appreciation for a free market economy, this strand of IR beliefs that the international political realm can receive a more reliable character (Ibid., 2005). International politics would in that case not be characterized anymore by anarchy and struggle, but rather by cooperation and global development.

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The academic works of Michel Foucault, however, arguably pose the most powerful critique on this Liberal image of global development and peace. Foucault namely argues that a 'discourse of war' is built into the Liberal image of politics, whereby the state government has appropriated the means to 'produce' the only allowed form of freedom, to which its citizens have to comply (Evans, 2010). The government subsequently comes to work as an 'apparatus of security' in order to ensure to proper continuation of this produced form of freedom (Foucault, 2007: p. 11). These critiques have subsequently inspired many IR scholars to examine the detrimental effects the Liberal form of governance has in international issues (see for example: Duffield, 2007). What these critiques mainly imply is that the establishment of a Liberal world order, or some form of a Liberal global authority regulating the conduct of states, cannot go without a simultaneous imposition of global regimes of security (Evans, 2010).

For this reason, it is interesting to examine whether Foucault himself can give us a different understanding of politics, one which arises outside of the realm of security considerations. This, however, appears not the be the strongest aspect of his oeuvre, since he mainly focused on the uncovering of those veiled strategies employed by political powers which are constituted around the concepts of war and security (Foucault, 2003). Foucault therefore gives the image that the modern focus on security is inherently a result of political power as such. As a consequence, the IR studies inspired by Foucault generally bear the character of posing a critique on specific governance styles by unveiling their implied assumptions. Conducting this style of research is of course worthwhile in its own right, but in order to shift this discussion towards a more constructive nature, it might therefore be wise to look at the works of other scholars which touch upon the same issue.

The political thoughts of Hannah Arendt provide a promising value for this endeavor, for, similar to Foucault, she heavily criticized the modern conflation of politics and security (Arendt, 2006). However, instead of focusing on political power strategies themselves, Arendt was more concerned with how this particular understanding of politics emerged out of the Western tradition of political thought. To her, this tradition goes back to the establishment of the polis in ancient Greece, where the political realm was established to provide a space where a plurality of men could come together to freely speak about and act on the world around them (Arendt, 2009c). As a result, the main aim of her political thinking has been to go against the grain of the Western political tradition, which has according to her abandoned the concept of freedom from the political realm after the demise of the Greek poleis (Arendt,

2005). For this reason, she has devoted a considerable amount of attention to the question of how freedom can again become the main principle of politics in the modern world.

In light of these considerations, a question which is worthy of pursuit is therefore how Arendt's understanding of political freedom based on the human condition of plurality opens up new ways for thinking beyond the conflation of politics and security in the modern world.[1] The main claim this research subsequently makes is that Arendt's approach demonstrates that the modern conflation of politics and security is a result of the application of a traditional Western understanding of freedom based on individual sovereignty onto the political realm, rather than a deliberate strategy by political powers to obtain sovereign power. Consequently, if we wish to think of politics outside of the realm of security, we should shift our understanding of freedom and base it on a notion of judgment and Sensus Communis, which is able to warrant the plural condition of human existence.

This research is relevant to the academic study of IR by bringing a new perspective based on a philosophical discussion of freedom into the existing discussion on international security. Traditionally, this discussion takes place mainly in the before mentioned fashion. This means, Realism stresses the inevitability of security due to the anarchic system of the international realm, Liberalism puts emphasis on the transformative potential of democracy and a free economic market, while the Foucauldian inspired studies stress the inherent role of security which is concealed in the vision of Liberalism.[2] This research, then, contributes to this discussion by focusing instead on Arendt's philosophical investigations of political freedom and its implications for security and international politics. By doing this, the aim is not to find definitive answers as to how international politics should be organized, but rather to demonstrate how we can shift the existing discussion into a more constructive direction.

The thoughts of Hannah Arendt arguably serve this purpose adequately, given that despite her great affinity regarding issues of political philosophy, she is still largely neglected by the field of IR (Lang and Williams, 2005).[3] A reason for this lies perhaps in the fact that Arendt bases her thoughts on a phenomenological perspective, meaning that she focuses specifically on how human beings experience their lives and on 'the political implications of

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[1] I am aware of the fact that strictly speaking, modernity and the modern world may represent different notions (see for example: Arendt, 2009c: p. 14). However, in this specific research I use both terms to denote the same phenomenon: the increasing focus on security that accompanied the rise of the modern nation state.
[2] While it is true that other perspectives, such as Constructivism, also deal with security, I nevertheless chose not to deal with them due to the limited space of this research. Because Foucault's critique is moreover specifically directed at Liberalism, this seems to be a justifiable decision.
[3] During the last two decades, interest in Arendt has however grown within IR. Nevertheless, the issues this literature deals with is not of relevance to our current endeavor (see specifically: Owens, 2005; Lang and Williams, 2005; Cotter, 2005; and Hayden, 2010).

our worldly existence' (Borren, 2013: p. 232). It is for this reason that she stresses the importance of the plural condition of human beings, since each one of us has to deal with his or her own existence, and therefore has a different perspective on the world that lies between us. Politics, for Arendt, then specifically deals with events that appear as phenomena in between a multitude of people who intersubjectively perceive and interpret these, which means they cannot be studied as objective objects (Vollrath, 1977).

For scholars of IR, this phenomenological focus on our lived experience understandably may sound peculiar when dealing with issues that are so global in nature, but Arendt's studies on totalitarian regimes indicate how relevant this is for the international political realm (Arendt, 1968). What these studies namely demonstrate is that the ability of these regimes to change the everyday outlook on life and the world of its citizens greatly determined what sort of politics the citizens enhanced and what they were capable of doing themselves (Arendt, 1963; 1968). For Arendt, the basic structural outline of the international realm, which is in its nature constituted by multiple political communities, could therefore not determine the behavior of states, for this behavior is still reliant on the existential outlook of the citizens inhabiting the political community. Arendt's works are therefore particularly interesting for IR, since they introduce the importance of one's existential outlook into this realm.

For the 'real' political world, a close attention to Arendt's thoughts may therefore serve as a way to understand this world in a new light. Instead of regarding states or institutions as giant external objects that regulate parts of our lives, we come to perceive of them as appearances which condition our existence. As such, this different perspective can have great implications for how we wish to arrange our political realms, as this research will indicate.

The first chapter will elaborate on Foucault's understanding of modern politics as an apparatus of security. Specific attention will be awarded to his description of power strategies and the deployment of a 'discourse of war' in modern politics. In addition, the shortcomings of his approach in light our current endeavor will be discussed. The second chapter will subsequently deal with Arendt's understanding of modern politics in light of the Western political tradition. By taking this perspective, it will be demonstrated how Arendt's approach sheds a different light on the same modern phenomenon. This approach will namely demonstrate that the modern focus on security has been the result of the development of the understanding of freedom in the Western political philosophical tradition. The third chapter, thereafter, provides Arendt's phenomenological analysis of freedom based on the will. This is

a logical step, for Arendt identifies that the traditional understanding of freedom has equated it with the will. This analysis will illuminate that political freedom based on the will has greatly contributed to the excessive security considerations of modern politics. The fourth chapter, lastly, treats Arendt's understanding of political freedom based on judgment and the Sensus Communis. This demonstrates that this form of freedom can ensure a political realm where a plurality of men can speak and act. By a phenomenological analysis of how this notion of freedom influences one's existential outlook, it moreover concludes that security comes to be the subservient of the Sensus Communis, rather than the guiding principle of the will.

I.   The Apparatus of Security

The works of Michel Foucault demonstrate that he problematizes the modern development in the Western world to base politics on what he regards as a discourse of war. What he mainly finds objectionable is the historical fact that it has led to the growing power of 'regimes of security' which aim at normalizing societies. Consequently, rather than taking the outcome of this development as an ontological fact of our modern political landscape, he embarks on a genealogical search to find out how this discourse came to dominate our understanding of the political realm (Spieker, 2011). However, due to his sole focus on the actual practices of political power, he arguably fails to grasp how these practices fit in with the historical experience of the people of those times to which modern scholars like Hobbes and Rousseau had to respond. Consequently, for Arendt, Foucault's account would lack a basis in understanding of the reasons for the importance of politics in the Western tradition and of the broader issue of political authority.

The main aim of Foucault's studies concerning politics is to analyze the practical workings of the execution of political power. This means that rather than concerning himself with questions on the legitimacy of specific forms of governments or policies, he focuses on how political power comes to operate and what effects this has for the actors in power and the actors under its power (Evans, 2010). By doing this, he wishes to uncover those dynamics that remain hidden under universal claims such as 'sovereignty' or 'social contract' (Spieker, 2011). Foucault's works are therefore based on historical analyses, whereby he traces the historical emergence of a particular concept which has come to be of major importance, to subsequently examine how this concept has come to be constitutive of a range of specific power dynamics and strategies (Dillon, 1995). For Foucault, the historical emergence of a concept such as sovereignty is therefore not only, or even predominantly, of political or juridical concern, but in turn relates to a field of practices associated with it which influences the broader social world as well.

For our modern political context, Foucault identifies that the concepts of 'war' and 'security' have been the main constitutive principles on which the political strategies of the modern age, as exemplified by the nation state, have been based (Foucault, 2007). He argues that during the seventeenth century a discourse based on war as a historical and political phenomenon came to be employed by societal fractions to challenge the sovereign authority of kings and the alleged homogeneity of the society, which in its place was based on a

juridical and religious discourse (Spieker, 2011). This war discourse challenged the legitimacy of a sovereign political power, due to the fact that the ability to exert this power was the inevitable result of a historical conquest. During and after the French Revolution, however, Foucault argues that the state 'colonized' this war discourse by emphasizing the historical roots of the nation and the subsequent juridical sovereign right of the state to rule as the embodiment of the nation (Ibid., 2011). This sovereign right of the nation was therefore not the establishment of peace to Foucault, but rather the introduction of a war discourse onto the political realm. The implied homogeneity of the nation namely embedded the state strongly in a historical-political context. The discourse of war thus did no longer concern a strive between different nations or groups within a state who challenge its sovereign power, but rather a strive to uphold the sovereignty of the state itself (Ibid., 2011). Consequently, in the battle to uphold the sovereignty of the state, Foucault sees that security comes to play a determinative role in the practices of political power.

Foucault namely argues that from the nineteenth century onwards, as a result of the constitutive role of security, politics mainly comes to function as an 'apparatus of security' to regulate the natural conduct of the population (Foucault, 2007: p. 11). What this first and foremost implies to Foucault is the fact that political power came to apply its functions directed at the population as a separate social entity, in possession of its own inherent laws. This was the creation of a new 'reality', he argues, since beforehand the population merely consisted of the total sum of the citizens (Ibid., 2007: p. 352). The security aspect of political power then came to lie in identifying optimal populational dynamics, and the subsequent ensuring of their smooth continuation.

The main political strategy to secure such populational processes is what Foucault calls 'normalization', implying the identification of cases in the population which represent an ideal 'norm' and the subsequent effort to bring deviant cases closer to this norm (Ibid., 2007). What this practically implies is that after the identification of variables which are important for the continuation of productive populational laws, statistical analyses of certain groups from the population are consulted to see which groups meet the criteria of these variables and as such constitute the 'norm'. Subsequently, the specific characteristics of this group are analyzed, in order to be able to bring other groups towards the identified norm as well (Ibid., 2007: 60-61).

What this employment of political power based on a strategy of normalization therefore represents to Foucault is a specific way to 'manage reality', in which freedom is guaranteed to the citizens only insofar it adheres to the broader productive populational

dynamics. As such, the freedom of the population becomes dependent on the employment of an 'apparatus of security' by the political power. For Foucault, this practice therefore implies that:

> 'The new art of government therefore appears as the management of freedom…. Liberalism formulates simply the following: I am going to produce what you need to be free. And so, if this liberalism is not so much the imperative of freedom as the management and organization of the conditions in which one can be free, it is clear that at the heart of this liberal practice is an always different and mobile problematic relationship between the production of freedom and that which in the production of freedom risks limiting and destroying it' (Foucault, 2008: pp. 63–64).

By directly discussing the political ideology of Liberalism, Foucault thus claims that the freedom it provides is not a 'real' sense of freedom, but only a freedom based on a reality which the government deems to be appropriate and is willing to 'produce'. Consequently, due to the focus on the population as an organic whole, the upholding of individual freedom can never be the main goal of political power. Foucault therefore claims that 'when population becomes the vis-à-vis of a government, rather than of sovereignty, then I think we can say that man is to population what the subject of right was to the sovereign (Foucault, 2007: p. 79). As a result of the application of the apparatus of security, the 'normal' man thus becomes engrossed in the wider population. However, it concerns not only those who are crushed by the weight of the population, but also those who risk 'limiting and destroying' freedom. Foucault namely claims that when a government is faced with actors or forces not willing to abide to the 'norm', the apparatus of security serves as perfect strategy to forcefully confront those actors under the banner of the freedom it aims to establish (Evans, 2010).

A struggle to preserve society is therefore inherent to the basis of the political power of the nation state, implying a continuous struggle against domestic and international 'enemies' (Spieker, 2011). This direct confrontation with perceived threats that potentially pose a risk to the produced freedom by the state is a clear consequence of the workings of the war and security discourse of politics. Domestically, this implies that those actors who might endanger the homogeneity of the population or the 'normal' proceeding of its processes are met with additional security measures and suspicion (Foucault, 2007).

As a consequence of its dealings with the international realm, the apparatus of security only gains in influence, due to the fact that its internally produced homogeneous freedom is in principle incompatible with the divers nature of the international realm, which as such poses a threat to it (Foucault, 2003). Consequently, Foucault detects an upsurge of security measures aimed at the protection of the populational dynamics in light of such external dangers (Ibid., 2003). As a result of the domestic application of the war and security discourse, Foucault thus detects the emergence of an international realm constituting of states where all are directly opposed against all, analogous to Hobbes' description of his natural war of all against all (Foucault, 2003).

The only political strategy which would make it possible, then, to overcome this international state of anarchy, is to incorporate more and more people into an international Liberal 'sphere', so as to enable the production of international freedom and peace (Evans, 2010). The problem with this solution, nevertheless, is the fact that the war discourse is still implied in this homogeneous image of the international, which would thus require a global apparatus of security to uphold this. The consequences of this strategy, however, are precisely what Foucault wants to uncover for us, and as such this strategy could never be approvable to him.

The question which after these considerations logically emerges, is then what Foucault himself sees as a legitimate basis for political power. This question, however, is somewhat difficult to answer since Foucault himself has not in great detail dealt written on this issue. What we nonetheless can determine is that his thinking on this topic is characterized by a relatively large shift at around the end of the 1970's, as becomes clear from remarks he has made on it (Sluga, 2011). As such, we can aim towards forming some account of his vision based on these statements.

What directly becomes apparent from these remarks is that Foucault questioned the Liberal tendency to regard freedom as something that could be provided to someone, but rather saw it as inherent to one's ability of action (Ibid., 2011). In his earlier work, Foucault still focused predominantly on the power relations inherent to all political structures, but in the late phase of his career he became focused on the 'care of the self' (Ibid., 2011: p. 77). What this concept basically entails is a form of acceptance of and attention to one's own finitude in the world, and the freedom this implies, for it gives room for action to change things (Nichols, 2014). Moreover, it entails the pursuit to reveal the historical situatedness of our being, which in many cases remains hidden due to our present conception of being (Ibid.,

2014). This latter point, therefore, is largely in concordance with Foucault's earlier genealogical endeavors.

The taking care of the self has for Foucault a strong ethical underpinning that is relevant for the political realm, for it also leads to new forms of appreciation of the socialization of human beings and the realization that we are all 'members of the community of the governed, and thereby obliged to show mutual solidarity' (Foucault, 2000: pp. 474-475, as quoted in Sluga, 2011: p. 77). As such, he acknowledged the necessity of government, but hinted at the importance of a specific kind of public engagement based on his notion of self-care. How this in practice would look like for Foucault is hard to determine, but we can find a clue in his treatment of Hobbes' political philosophy. What is namely apparent in that, is the fact that Foucault regards Hobbes' social contract as a mutual contract of peace, for it is not based on historical considerations, but rather on the subjective acknowledgment by multiple people that without a government, one remains prone to the whims of others (Spieker, 2011).

This portrayal of political power by Foucault however has its limitations, which is particularly based on his peculiar interpretation of the works of Hobbes, and on the absence of clear indications of what the 'mutual solidarity' that stems from self-care consist of. Starting with the former, it is justifiable to say that Foucault's perspective of Hobbes' work tends to overemphasize the role of the contract in it, and the subsequent voluntary transmission to a sovereign political power. Hobbes namely only utilized the theoretical state of nature to give a certain image of man's ontological state (Ibid., 2011). Hobbes perceived man as continually being divided between reason and passion, and as such regarded an unbalanced focus on passion as posing the threat for slipping back into the state of nature. Consequently, he regarded the presence of a sovereign authority to be necessary for the preservation of order and reason, for it could make civilians fearful of its power, and thus make them behave properly (Ibid., 2011). The means with which this order could be preserved are moreover precisely the disciplining and normalizing strategies which Foucault criticized (Ibid., 2011). Moreover, although Foucault regarded Hobbes authority to be an a-historical one, Hobbes nevertheless spoke highly of nationalism as a strategy for unifying the country; in fact, Hobbes himself was a strong adherent of English nationalism (Kateb, 1989). It therefore appears that Foucault's analysis of Hobbes fails to uphold the original content.

The main problem of Foucault's interpretation of Hobbes is arguably then that he fails to adequately understand what the main purpose was with which Hobbes' saw himself confronted: namely, to find a basis for political authority in the absence of the traditional transcendental religious basis for this (Arendt, 2009c). Whether it is for Hobbes, who focused

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on the sovereign authority of the Leviathan, or for example for Rousseau, who placed authority in the general will, all these major political thinkers during modernity focused on the question of political authority in order to unite the political community. The great subsequent efforts by these authors to find such a ground only demonstrates how difficult this task has been. For this reason, Foucault's emphasis on a contract based on a discourse of peace appears rather naïve.

These reservations towards Foucault's account of politics are reinforced when considering his emphasis on the taking care of the self and mutual solidarity. This account namely does not clarify on what grounds both of these processes can precisely be based to serve as a valuable tool for politics. Foucault only stresses that it implies a continuous struggle against dominant power structures (Sluga, 2011). However, on what grounds a particular structure might be contested by a viable alternative does not become clear. As a result, it is impossible to see how this strategy would lead to the establishment of a legitimate political authority.

Overall, Foucault's work thus embodies a powerful critique on the understanding of liberal freedom, which can only exist in dependence on an apparatus of security to produce the freedom necessary for it. This political strategy is based on a discourse of war that implies a continuous struggle with internal and external threats which might potentially endanger the homogeneity of the nation. The solution of transferring the political realm to the international level moreover only shifts the problem, for the discourse of war and the apparatus of security will then still be intact. Foucault's solution of a viable conception of politics, subsequently, fails to convince of its applicability due to the fact that it does not make clear on what political authority can be based. Nevertheless, despite of these latter reservations, Hannah Arendt would arguably have been in agreement with Foucault on the importance of security for politics during modernity. She even called the development of Western politics in modernity not much more than a security project (Arendt, 2006). Arendt, however, would simultaneously have stressed that the main aim of this political development had still been the establishment of political freedom. The rather unfortunate result of this endeavor had according to her more to do with the particular progression of the understanding of freedom in the Western political philosophical tradition. Consequently, by approaching the issue from this perspective, we might be awarded with new insights to guide us in our current investigations.

II.   The Quest for Freedom

In contrast to Foucault, for Arendt the Western political tradition had since the founding of the Greek polis continuously revolved around the foundation of a realm of freedom (Arendt, 2009c). The importance of security in the political realm after belief in the divine right of kings had lost its credibility was to her therefore not the result of a conscious power struggle, but rather the consequence of the introduction of a particular understanding of freedom onto the political realm that had dominated the Western philosophical and political tradition under Christianity. Arendt argues that this understanding has only been able to regard freedom as a concept pertaining to man as a singular sovereign being, rather than to men in their plural form (Ibid., 2005). Consequently, the application of this particular understanding of freedom has been the main reason for the predominance of security in the political realm.

In order to find the basic meaning of politics in the Western tradition, Arendt turns towards the ancient Greeks to find their basic motivations for the establishment of the polis. Their belief in the importance of the founding of a polis lay subsequently in their conviction that only a polis could provide human beings with freedom (Arendt, 2009c). This was firstly a consequence of the fact that without a polis men would be subject to the radical contingency of nature, in the form of the chaotic natural world surrounding them, as well as to the uncertain natural inclinations of other human beings (Ibid., 2009c). The polis, then, would provide a protection towards both in the form of literal walls that would protect one from the natural world, and in the form of figurative walls, or laws, which would protect one from the uncertain behavior of other human beings.

Secondly, moreover, only the polis could provide a public space in which men could freely appear before each other as unique equals, unimpeded by the necessities of life (Ibid., 2009c). It was only in relation to this way of life that Aristotle famously defined the human being as a political being (Arendt, 2005). By living in the polis, the Greeks discovered that political freedom could only be attained in a public realm accessible by equal men, in which life's necessities and self-interest were not decisive, but rather speaking with one-another (Ibid., 2005). As such, they realized that this kind of freedom could never be realized in communities based on power hierarchies of those who rule and those who are being ruled, for speaking in that instance is replaced by mere commanding and obeying (Arendt, 2009b).

The ancient Greeks thus made a distinction between two types of freedom: freedom in the sense of a considerable amount of protection from the natural world and other human

beings, which enables one to freely arrange one's life, and the freedom to enter a public realm on equal foot with others in order to speak and act together. In the former case, meaning does not reside within the concept of freedom itself. Freedom is rather regarded as a given or as a right which allows one to carry out the actions he or she desires or wants within the confines of the law. In the latter case, on the other hand, meaning is confined within the concept of freedom itself. Here, freedom is not regarded as a means to the practical fulfillment of a specific way of life, but is rather seen as a state of being centered around speaking and acting with others as a way to create a world in between each other. For the Greeks, this understanding of freedom was therefore the kind of freedom suited for the political realm, whereas the former could only concern man in his individuality (Arendt, 2005).

In the political writings of Plato, however, Arendt detects a first shift in the appreciation of political freedom containing meaning in itself, towards the inner life of the individual. For Plato, true meaning can be found in the shaking off of the shackles which imprison one in the cave, and to step out into the bright sunlight in order to disinterestedly behold the glaring truth of the transcendental Ideas (Plato, 1997). Consequently, the status of the political realm, with its potential to provide an earthly state of freedom, was severely damaged by Plato, who spoke out in clear favor of the experience of the contemplation of his Ideas (Arendt, 2005). Despite of the fact that Plato still wrote a political philosophy, it becomes clear that meaning does not reside at the political level for him, which he arguably mostly regarded as a legitimate means to provide him with the security to live his philosophical life based on the philosophical capabilities of the state (Ibid., 2005).

The political writings from late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, so heavily influenced by religious inspiration, demonstrate a similar focus on meaning and freedom in the individual for Arendt. Freedom could mostly be found in the individual search for salvation through the church. As a result, earthly public issues were mostly regarded in a more denigrated fashion. It is therefore telling that during the Middle Ages the state was generally regarded as a necessary imperfect earthly constitution constructed in the image of its sinful inhabitants (Cassirer, 1948). In a very similar manner as we encountered with Plato, the state was therefore mostly regarded as a means to enable the peaceful religious practice of its subjects (Arendt, 2006). Now, however, the legitimacy of the state shifted from its philosophical capabilities to the divine right of the king, who was supposed to be a representative of God on earth.

With the rise of modernity, then, the individual more and more lost its divine place in the center of the universe. Simultaneously, however, the state also lost its traditional divine

basis for power. Consequently, in line with the tradition, politics had to find a new legitimate basis which could provide meaning, or a new source of meaning at the individual level had to emerge, similar to the rise of Christianity. The latter nonetheless did not occur, for individual life came mostly to be regarded in short-term utilitarian based pursuits of happiness and desire in their inherent meaningless chains of means, ends, and ends turning into means again (Arendt, 2009c). What did happen, Arendt argues, is that meaning was transferred onto the political realm (Arendt, 1982). The state was still regarded as an actor to provide security to enable a degree of individual freedom to enable the individual pursuit of happiness, but, in the image of the Leviathan, it came to be perceived in mythical god-like proportions. The notorious image on the cover of the Leviathan reflects a radically different perception of the state than the 'imperfect earthly construction' of the Middle Ages.

That the state, as an almost mythical figure, could come to be perceived as the political embodiment of the free and sovereign nation, was thus a consequence of the fact that individuals abandoned their religious inner lives which had become permeated by doubt, and demanded political representation (Camus, 2004; Arendt, 2009a). Different to what Foucault had argued, the identification of the population was thus not a result of a colonization of the war discourse by the state, but rather a result of the declining influence of religion and the subsequent demise of political authority based on a divine right. In the vacuum created by the demise of the sovereignty of the king and the religious individual, there was room for the rise of a new sovereign power, which came to be constituted by the population represented as the nation (Ibid., 2009a).

An additional reason for the rise of the society lies in the fact that during modernity, the decline of religious authority was accompanied by the emergence of the activity of labor onto the public realm (Arendt, 2009c).[4] Under Christianity, a contemplative way of life had been the predominant mode of existence, but during modernity focus shifted towards a more active way of life. Activity, subsequently, came mostly to be perceived in terms of productive labor, as the influence of a theorist like Adam Smith exemplifies, who stressed the importance of the productive labor forces of the people for the 'general good' (Ibid., 2009c). As a consequence of this shift of labor from the private to the public realm, what was mostly demanded from the government was for it to take care of the needs of the people (Arendt,

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[4] It is important to note here that Arendt makes a distinction between labor and work in *The Human Condition* (2009c). Labor is closely related to physical labor in order to keep the life process ongoing, while work is regarded as the activity to make lasting artifacts that receive a place in the human world. A third activity Arendt discerns is the political activity of action, which entails speaking and acting with one's equals. Together, these activities constitute the *Vita Activa,* which is active way of life, as opposed to the *Vita Contemplativa, which is the way of life that goes on the mind itself.*

2006). In this way, the state came to be constituted in a manner which Arendt perceived to be similar to a gigantic household (Arendt, 2009c).

With this shift of the population onto the public realm, the question however remained how freedom could be established at the political realm, since the traditional sense of freedom, lying in the religious individual, could no longer provide an adequate answer. Due to this historical focus on freedom as pertaining to an individual being, however, Arendt argues that this new sense of freedom could also only be understood as belonging to the newly emerged society as a whole, as constituting one nation (Arendt, 2006). Consequently, thinkers such as Hobbes and Rousseau tried to find a basic principle which could guarantee this freedom of the nation. For Hobbes, this principle came to lie in the frightening power of the sovereign authority of the 'Leviathan' (Hobbes, 2009). For Rousseau, then, freedom came to be constituted in the concept of the 'general will', which implies that individuals should give up a part of their natural freedom for the public cause which the government carries out (Arendt, 2006). The Liberal thinkers, moreover, believed in the role of the government as a security provider for the continuation of the productive forces, which as a whole would serve the interest of the entire nation (Arendt, 2009c). This understanding of political freedom was thus of a radically different kind than the ancient Greeks used to conceive of. Political freedom in the form of the sovereignty of the nation diverged from the Greek understanding of political freedom as a way of being in the sense that it was not based on a gathering of equal men in a public realm.

The overall meaning of political freedom thus came to be placed in the utilitarian based belief in a perpetual growth of happiness and prosperity for the nation, and the promise of individual freedom *from* politics (Arendt, 2009a; Arendt, 2009c). Arendt, however, identified a number of problems inherent in this understanding of freedom. Firstly, she questioned the inherent meaning present in this belief in perpetual growth, for it is only able to think in perpetual means-ends categories (Arendt, 2009c). Secondly, given the fact that human beings are all but sovereign when they are active in the world, this notion of political freedom based on sovereignty could only lead to ever-increasing security measures to ensure the continuation of this perpetual growth, at the expense of others (Arendt, 2018). As such, Arendt was wary of the fact that the realization that no active agent can be sovereign would lead to a crisis in meaning and a disbelief in the value of freedom and politics (Arendt, 2018). These latter two arguments are clearly present in the following statement on the issue by Arendt:

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'Politically, perhaps no other element of the traditional philosophical concept of freedom has proved to be as pernicious as this equation of freedom with sovereignty that is inherent in it. For this lead either to a denial of freedom – when it is realized that whatever men may be, they are not sovereign – or to the insight, which may seem to contradict this denial but does not, that the freedom of one man or a group can only be purchased at the price of the freedom of other. What is so extraordinarily difficult to understand within this problematic reflection is a simple fact, namely that freedom is only given to men under the condition of nonsovereignty' (Ibid., 2018: p. 232).

It is interesting to see how close Arendt's critique of sovereignty is related to Foucault's critique on political power in modernity. Specifically her claim that the sovereignty of one group can only be realized when that of other's is denied greatly resembles Foucault's critique on the creation of internal and external threats which do not fit the framework of the produced freedom by the state. Domestically, Arendt saw, similar to Foucault, that this notion of freedom inevitably had a normalizing effect on the society, for each individual had to adapt him or herself to contribute to the identified general good (Arendt, 2009c). Internationally, in addition, Arendt regarded the simultaneous existence of multiple sovereign actors as incompatible with each other, which could only work growing tensions and security considerations in the hand (Arendt, 2018). In a similar vein as Foucault, she regarded the only solution to this issue to be a dominating emphasis on mankind as a whole, and as such a realization of some form of world government (Arendt, 2009c). However, to her this would imply the worst kind tyranny possible, for it would effectively deprive men of their essential ability to act (Arendt, 2005).

Nevertheless, Arendt's focus on the development of freedom through the Western philosophical tradition has demonstrated that she approaches the problem from a different perspective than Foucault. Instead of regarding the modern predominance of security to be the result of a conscious employment of a discourse of war by the state, she conceives of it as a result of the misguided application of a canonical understanding of freedom based on the individual onto the political realm; a realm per definition concerned with a plurality of men. Consequently, contrary to Foucault, her thought provides a more grounded approach to how political freedom can be established. For this purpose, she engaged herself first with a phenomenological approach towards the faculty of the 'will', which was to her the basis of an understanding of freedom based on sovereignty. Therefore, her investigations on the will serve as a way to uncover how this faculty is unfit to establish a public sense of freedom on.

III. Security and the Will

For Arendt, the importance of the modern political ideal of sovereignty has been a result of the dominance of the Western philosophical tradition, heavily based on its Christian world outlook, in which freedom was largely equated with the sovereignty of the individual. We, however, saw as well that Arendt perceives this freedom based on sovereignty to be derivative from the notion of a free will, when we take into consideration her statement that 'this identification of freedom with sovereignty is perhaps the most pernicious and dangerous consequence of *the philosophical equation of freedom and free will'* (Arendt, 2006: p. 163; italics added). Arendt thus discerns that the Christian focus on sovereign freedom had led to a philosophical identification of freedom with the faculty of the will, while it was precisely this understanding of free will which came to be applied at the political level during modernity. This is indeed the case when she discusses the modern phenomena of political revolutions, which are to her largely inspired by a reference that political action should be based on the will of the people (Arendt, 2009a). Her problematizing of the modern political concept of freedom in its roots therefore had to be stemming from a problematic character inherent in the relationship between the will and freedom. In order to examine what this fundamental problematic represents, she therefore turned to the original Christian sources which dealt first with the issue. From these investigations, Arendt concluded that the faculty of willing could impossibly serve as a basis for political action, due to its oppressive character and its sole concern with the self. Consequently, rather than regarding the focus on security to be a result of governmental appropriation of a war discourse, as Foucault, she claims it is a result of the existential outlook the will provides us with.

According to Arendt, the will in its most basic form does not initiate action, but rather mandates the self to carry out a certain action of which the aim is priorly determined by a judgment (Arendt, 2006: p. 150). The issue of whether this command is executed in a free manner, she claims, became only a relevant philosophical question for Christian thinkers, while for the ancient Greeks this was not a topic of discussion at all. The reason for this peculiar divergence lies according to Arendt in the fact that freedom was a political phenomenon in ancient Greece, while under the influence of the rise of Christianity it became a concept related to the self. Of course, the individual had been a topic of inquiry long before the advent of Christianity, but freedom itself had never been a troublesome issue. Someone like Plato, for example, was not interested in pursuing freedom, while a philosophical school

like the Stoics saw no problem inherent to the notion of finding freedom within oneself by means of the absence of desires (Ibid., 2006).

The Christian tradition, nevertheless, became confronted with the issue of freedom as a consequence of the experience of the will as a distinct mental faculty (Arendt, 2013). This discovery was done, Arendt argues, by Paul, when he experienced the weakness of his will when he could not execute what it commanded (Ibid., 2013: p. 269). As a consequence, discussions emerged on whether the power of the will could serve as a means to liberate the self from those earthly temptations that were not in accordance with people's religious convictions (Arendt, 2006). Arendt however refers to Augustine to demonstrate how he regarded a willing individual to always be comprised of two elements: a willing, and a not-willing one. Because, as she quotes him, 'the will commands that there be a will, it commands not something else but itself….Were the will entire, it would not even command itself to be, because it would already be' (Augustine, as quoted in Arendt, 2006: p. 160). This necessary duality of the will thus demonstrates that in its nature, the will carries always a character of domination in it: the one has to force the other to will what it wills.

Due to this inner duality, Arendt regards the will as a purely inner mental faculty, albeit one which forces our other senses and faculties, such as our memory, intellect and imagination to focus on a particular appearance (Arnold, 2012). Arendt explains that '[t]he will tells the memory what to retain and what to forget; it tells the intellect what to choose for its understanding'(Arendt, 1978: p. 99). The will is thus an inner mental faculty that commands our other faculties and senses to pay attention to the same object to perceive this object in a meaningful way, rather than having our senses perceive a mass of appearing impulses without any understandable order in it (Arnold, 2012). In this way, the will is essential for the proper functioning of our senses and mental faculties.

What the will commands itself to focus on, is generally derived from a broader image of a particular state of being, which it then uses to guide us in our daily activities. We namely saw that to Arendt a judgment on a specific aim precedes the will (Arendt, 2006). In practice, this for example means that one has in mind a particular future state of being which is judged to be pleasing or admirable. The will subsequently commands the mental faculties and senses to focus on those appearances that are potentially contributive to the achievement of this aim. However, the will does not initiate one to take action on them, for it only commands the inner self to will this action, while it simultaneously provokes an inner response from the will not to will the action (Arnold, 2012).

To base one's actions solely on the will is therefore not an issue of freedom to Arendt, but rather of one's strength or weakness to obey the commanding character of the will (Arendt, 2006). It is precisely this struggle which awarded Paul and Augustine which such distress. When one starts to act, then, it is no longer the will that is decisive, but rather one's spontaneous response to certain appearances. During action, there is therefore no will (Arnold, 2012). Only after an action was carried out does the will come into play again, where its commanding force can have willed or not willed the action, potentially causing the distressing feeling again.

It is however possible to object Arendt's claims, by for example stating that the will is related to freedom, for it enables one to achieve a freely chosen desired state of being, or to adjust one's actions to a freely chosen set of transcendental rules. The commanding character of the will in that case serves a means to achieve a particular state. Arendt nevertheless disapproves of such claims, for it would not lead to the appearance of freedom in the world (Arendt, 2006). In our minds we may convince ourselves that what we do is free, while simultaneously all are actions are derivative from the oppressive character of the will.

Moreover, due to the fact that the will is a divided inner mental faculty, it cannot take the freedom of others into account. What this means is that the will can only be directed at the simultaneous non-will in relation to the appearance which it commanded focus on. In other words, the will can only give attention to its own inherent struggle regarding the appearance that in some way might contribute to the overall aim which is sought after. This then implies that when other events take place that are not deemed relevant for the achievement of this overall aim, they tend to be neglected. When such events happen repeatedly and threaten to disturb the achievement of the aim, which is not merely a hypothetical situation in the world where a plurality of actors and forces are at play, a continuous sole focus on the will then can only increase the oppressive character of the will, and it can only in increasing numbers try to block and secure oneself from these threats. This is therefore what Arendt means when she says that the will cannot liberate the self, for it cannot transcend its idiosyncratic character (Ibid., 2006).

These phenomenological investigations on the faculty of the will clarify the reason Arendt regards the modern transference of freedom based on the will to the political realm to be troublesome, for its commanding and idiosyncratic character inevitably deprive politics of freedom. First of all, due to the fact that the will can basically be directed at any goal, all standards in the political realm are undermined. Secondly, after such a goal has been established, all actions merely come to be viewed as a 'necessity' to comply to this

overarching framework (Beiner, 1982). Under Christianity, the will could therefore come so strongly to the fore, for it provided the strength or weakness to life up to the revealed word of God. The overarching framework for the will to give direction was thus already present. Now Arendt identifies the same dynamic in modernity, where the overarching framework to base the will upon comes to be constituted by the 'process' of societal productivity (Arendt, 2009c).

The process as an overarching framework, so characteristic of the modern age for Arendt, is constituted by the continuation of the inherent laws pertaining to the society which guarantee the outcome of maximal happiness for the greatest number of people (Ibid., 2009c). In this characterization, we inevitably see a description of utilitarianism and Liberalism, which Arendt indeed regards as the dominant forces of modern politics in the West (Ibid., 2009c). She sees this rise of the related concepts of the process, utilitarianism and Liberalism moreover as conditioned by the demise of religion and the emergence of science. In this situation, truth is not regarded anymore as a revelation, but rather as an application of experiments in the natural realm to see what 'works' (Arendt, 2006: p. 39). Consequently, history comes to be seen generally as something that can be 'made' by human beings themselves (Ricoeur, 1983). As such, these general developments serve perfectly well to place the notion of the will within. The task to execute the will of the people can therefore be constituted by the identification of general patterns of movements that optimize societal productivity and happiness, which can subsequently be 'made' by the political power's interference (Arendt, 2006: p. 81). The role of the political realm then comes to be constituted by providing the 'security which should permit an undisturbed development of the life process of society as a whole' (Ibid., 2006: p. 149).

By focusing on the will and its modern placement in the overarching framework of societal processes, Arendt thus reaches the same conclusion as Foucault did with his analysis of the apparatus of security. Arendt's notion of the 'making' of history is basically the same as Foucault's notion of the 'production' of freedom by means of the government. Both imply the production by the government of a specific kind of freedom to which the citizens need to comply. This complying moreover means that both understand that this brings an inevitable process of normalization and conformation with it as well.

However, the different paths both took to arrive at this point implies that they have a diverging view on the origin of this situation. We have seen that Foucault regards it generally as an issue pertinent to political power as such, and that his constructive account of politics therefore is focused on the continual struggle against this power. For Arendt, on the other

hand, the issue is more related to the general modern existential outlook on freedom. By basing political freedom on the faculty of the will, politics became concerned with the making of history, with the consequence that focus came to lie on the only thing regarded as true and meaningful: the life process of the society. Arendt's phenomenological approach towards the will therefore gives her analysis more depth on what the consequences of the conflation of freedom and will have been for the manner in which politics is experienced in our lives.

With the modern rise of political freedom based on the notion of the will of the people, or sovereignty, Arendt namely identifies a peculiar attitude towards the appearance of political events. She claims that due to the focus on the will, the particular isolated events stemming from human action have lost their inherent meaning, and can only be regarded in a way that Kant describes as a 'melancholy haphazardness' (Arendt, 2006: p. 85). In other words, perceived reality defined as a meaningful understanding of it, comes solely to be regarded in light of the overall process of society's life-cycle, while events and factual phenomena as such are rendered meaningless, for they do not contribute to the overarching framework of the will. For that reason, such events are perceived as mere contingencies that could just as well not have happened, as Kant's phrasing exemplifies.

Domestically, according to Arendt, this therefore means that man's existence comes to be almost solely regarded in light of the state and society. He or she namely becomes for most part an isolated individual in the emerged mass society, characterized by its automatic processes to which he or she can contribute in order to validate his or her existence, or otherwise live as if not existing at all (Arendt, 1968). Only the state would then still rise above his or her existence as the grand protector of society. Internationally, moreover, this comes to mean that the existence of other states becomes mostly seen as a potential threat to the economic interests of the domestic state. Unless, logically, the other state provides economic opportunities to profit from.

What is specifically problematic in this situation for Arendt is the fact that it gives people a very poor and scanty image of reality. For, as we discussed, the belief in political sovereignty and the sole focus on the will leads in her view to a very distorted and unattainable view of the world, in which sovereignty is, by the fact of existence in a plural world, not a gift endowed to people (Arendt, 2018). Consequently, appearing facts that seem to contradict this idea of sovereignty, either have to be explained away, or simply have to be denied. As a result of this distortion between the image and the facts themselves, however, Arendt argues, our capabilities of making sense of the world diminish, whereby more radical responses are a danger. She argues:

'Those who adjust images and stories to ever-changing circumstances will find themselves floating on the wide-open horizon of potentiality, drifting from one possibility to the next, unable to hold on to any one of their own fabrications. Far from achieving an adequate substitute for reality and factuality, they have transformed facts and events back into the potentiality out of which they originally appeared. And the surest sign of the factuality of facts and events is precisely this stubborn *thereness*, whose inherent contingency ultimately defies all attempts at conclusive explanation. The images, on the contrary, can always be explained and made plausible – this gives them their momentary advantage over factual truth – but they can never be in complete stability with that which simply is because it happens to be thus and not otherwise. This is the reason that consistent lying, metaphorically speaking, pulls the ground from under our feet and provides no other ground on which to stand' (Arendt, 2006: p. 253: italics added).

What Arendt is saying here, is thus that facts in themselves do not explicate much – they are mere facts. However, when a particular political image is imposed on the world by which it tries to explain all of reality, - which according to Arendt is done with the focus on the will and sovereignty - they do receive meaning in their simple appearance of being there by which they manage to destabilize the image. In this way, our sense of understanding reality becomes strongly compromised, leading to a sense of meaninglessness. For Arendt, this has been the case in the modern world, in which the failure of the upholding of the image of sovereignty and our ability to make history as a consequence of the appearance of facts that contradicted this image has destabilized belief in both, which subsequently has led to a decrease in our competence of making sense of and finding meaning in the world (Ricoeur, 1983). As a result, Arendt concludes that a more common response is cling to even stronger ideological stances as a way to get some grasp on reality, leading to a growth of nationalistic sentiments or security measures (Arendt, 2006).

What Arendt concludes from these considerations is therefore that political freedom simply cannot be based on a faculty which is idiosyncratic in nature, for this can only serve to increase the tension between the diverging wills. Rather than relying on a faculty which we all share – which is the will, since we are all able to will – we need to rely on something we have *in common* (Ibid., 2006). Only be focusing on the world that lies between us can we,

according to Arendt, guarantee the upholding of freedom of a plurality of human beings (Arendt, 2005).

What this discussion has established is that Arendt's phenomenological investigations on the will have led to an analysis of the same phenomenon Foucault was occupied with: namely, the role of the government as an apparatus of security. However, the different angle from which Arendt approached the issue has opened up new ways for reconsidering the issue. Rather than in a Foucauldian sense merely regarding the apparatus of security as an instance of a power structure, Arendt namely perceives it as an inevitable consequence of the existential outlook of the faculty of the will. This faculty can namely only refer back to itself, while furthermore it can only be exercised in a commanding fashion. Action as such comes to appear merely as a necessity. These insights convinced Arendt that political freedom can only be established on the basis of a human faculty which presupposes the existence of other human beings. For this reason, she could never have been in full agreement with Foucault on his insistence that taking care of the self could somehow warrant the upholding of political freedom. Rather, she found a hint towards this appropriate political faculty in Kant's *Critique of Judgment*. Consequently, only the faculty of judgment could for her guarantee an adequate sense of political freedom.

IV. Judging, Sensus Communis and Freedom

Arendt's critique on the existential outlook that willing provides thus led her to focus on the mental faculty of judgment. What she sought from this faculty is the ability to uphold the freedom of a plurality of human beings, and, related to it, the ability to keep a relatively free relationship with reality – to accept reality as it is, without however being fully determined by it. She subsequently argued that Kant in his *Critique of Judgment* proves precisely both of these points. Kant namely argues that in the process of making an adequate judgment, one necessarily takes the views of others into account. Moreover, a judgment is concerned with the particular as such, and not with how a particular object fits into a larger scheme (Kant, 1951). As a result, Arendt gave her own interpretation of Kant's work to see how this can serve the political realm. From this, she established a groundwork for how particular political practices can regarded to be justifiable or not, and whether alternatives are viable. In this way, her approach overcomes the two main shortcoming of Foucault's perspective: it provides a basis for making legitimate normative claims and it is directed at events and appearances which occur in our common world, and as such simultaneously come to constitute our shared world. In this manner, the trap of falling back into idiosyncratic accounts of behavior can be overcome, which additionally means that politics can no longer serve merely as a provider of security to produce freedom and make history. Rather, freedom returns to the political realm as a mode of being, which appears in the world by acting.

The main reason Arendt has such high regards for Kant's work on judgment can arguably be found in the fact that Kant wrote specifically on a sort of judgment that only deals with particular instances. Kant namely wrote his *The Critique of Judgment* as an addition to his earlier work on 'determinate' forms of judgment, meaning the process of subsuming a particular under the heading of a universal concept (Arendt, 1982).[5] Kant nevertheless realized that there is a fundamentally different type of judgment people tend to make as well, based on a more 'reflective' nature. This was for him the case when we make an aesthetic judgment by stating that something is either beautiful or not. By making this statement, we namely do not perceive something and place it in the category of beauty based on our understanding of what beauty entails, for the concept of beauty is not based on an explicated set of characteristics which an object in this category should possess (Weidenfeld, 2012).

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[5] This refers to the cognitive processes whereby an object resembling specific characteristics of a house is for example judged to be subsumed under the general concept of 'house'.

Rather, Kant argues, aesthetic judgments are made based on a pleasurable feeling one obtains from the object. However, despite of the fact that aesthetic judgment is based on an internal feeling, the claim that something *is* beautiful implies simultaneously that we expect others to agree with our judgment. This seeming contradiction was the crux for Kant for investigating this particular issue so intensively.

Kant then started to investigate how our mental faculties behave to understand how it is that we attain a pleasurable feeling from beholding a beautiful object. What firstly happens in the process of aesthetic judgment, he argues, is that our imagination and understanding come to relate to each other in a sort of playful manner. The imagination presents the object in a relatively intelligible way to the mind, but different than in a determinate judgment, where the faculty of understanding has a concept ready to subsume this presentation under, the understanding now has no concept ready to associate the presentation with. Consequently, the imagination and the understanding encourage each other to find a new adequate concept or to provide a new pattern by which the object is represented (Weidenfeld, 2012). It is this free interaction between these two faculties that according to Kant gives us pleasure.

This feeling of pleasure, however, does not suffice for the final judgment of beauty. First, Kant argues, we have to reflect on whether our pleasure was actually the result of the interplay between the imagination and our understanding, or whether it were perhaps more idiosyncratic factors that played a role in the emergence of this feeling (Ibid., 2012). When it is subsequently decided that such idiosyncratic factors were not involved, one can rightfully make the universal claim that something *is* beautiful, for the object caused our a priori cognitive abilities of imagination and understanding to creatively interact with each other in a harmonious way (Ibid., 2012). The reason we may expect our aesthetic judgment to be universally valid thus lies in the fact that it is determined by a pleasurable feeling caused by our a priori cognitive processes.

Judgments of beauty should never be fixed to tightly for Kant, for many unconscious personal factors can play a role in it (Ibid., 2012). Despite these difficulties, Kant however puts forward the norms of 'disinterest and formality' to examine whether the judgment of beauty is valid and therefore the result of cognitive processes (Ibid., 2012: p. 257). What these norms mainly imply is that aesthetic judgment can only regard the subjective reaction to the presentation of the object in the mind. Personal opinions on whether or not the object should exist in the first place, what effect the object may have on its environment, the legitimacy of its appearance, and so on, should therefore play no role at all in the experience and determination of beauty (Ibid., 2012). As such, Kant's analysis of judgment represents a form

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of 'enlarged mentality', which indicates the activity of 'thinking in the place of everybody else' (Arendt, 2006: p. 217).

It may be difficult to see why these philosophical investigations by Kant would be important for a political thinker such as Arendt. Nevertheless, there are a number of reasons identifiable why this specific work of Kant has been of such importance to Arendt. Firstly, for Arendt Kant's distinction between determinate and reflective judgment is of crucial importance given the context of modernity, in which most traditional transcendental yardsticks for basing determinate judgments for actions on are no longer valid (Weidenfeld, 2012). Secondly, Kant's identification of subjective but still universally valid human cognitive abilities ensures Arendt that men have at their disposal the capacity to think politically, that is to say, to think outside of one's own narrow perspectives and to discern what is essentially human in their thoughts (Degryse, 2011). For this reason, Arendt sees in the activity of judgment the political activity par excellence, for it, as opposed to willing, inherently takes the presence of others in account.

However, Arendt does not simply apply Kant's conclusions at the political level by stressing the importance of beauty in the political realm. Similar to her treatment of willing, she rather had to interpret, based on the specifically philosophical investigations, how this faculty would affect people's experience of political action. As a consequence, Arendt is not particularly interested in using Kant's work on reflective judgment merely as a theory of beauty. Rather, she is interested in how Kant's basic cognitive discoveries for reflective judgment can serve as a framework for the broader issue of political judgment. The reason she thinks this is possible lies for example in the fact that she presumes a close relation between aesthetic and moral judgment (Degryse, 2011: p. 348). The following statement by Arendt on this issue is telling in that regard:

> 'The reason why I believe so much in Kant's Critique of Judgment is not because I am interested in aesthetics but because I believe that the way in which we say 'that is right, that is wrong' is not very different from the way in which we say 'this is beautiful, this is ugly.' That is, we are now prepared to meet the phenomena, so to speak, head-on, *without any preconceived system*' (Young-Bruehl, 1982: p. 452; italics in original).

What this statement demonstrates is that Arendt thinks that Kant's thoughts on reflective judgment enable us to speak about judgment of particulars without having to refer to

transcendental yardsticks or overarching frameworks of action. What Arendt however had to demonstrate, then, is that this more general notion of political judgment can indeed rely on a similar claim to universal validity as aesthetic judgment can, and how this in would work out in practice.

For that reason, Arendt occupied herself with identifying what happens when someone makes a judgment about a political or social event, by which she took Kant's critique as her guiding principle. According to Arendt, then, we rely on two mental faculties for this sort of judgment: imagination and reflection (Degryse, 2011). By imagining, we retrieve a past event in our minds, so that, just as with Kant's imagination, we have a proper disinterested stance towards it. Subsequently, we feel whether this imagining gives us a pleasurable feeling or not. To identify then whether the feeling we get possesses a more general validity, we have to reflect on it. After the initial feeling, we can namely still endorse the feeling we experienced, or rather disapprove of it. The reason this reflection could subsequently be more generally valid lays according to Arendt in the fact that it is based on our 'Sensus Communis'.

Although Arendt did not systematically explain what Sensus Communis precisely entails, she nevertheless mentions it repeatedly. Generally, these statements relate the sensus communis to our ability to understand reality. She for example stated that it represents 'our mental organ for perceiving, understanding and dealing with reality and factuality' (Borren, 2013: p. 237). This mental organ represents the human aspect in men that makes him suitable for living in a community, Arendt claims (Arendt, 1982). Apparently, then, Arendt argues that for our understanding of reality, we are somehow dependent on a faculty we possess which presupposes the presence of others.

For explaining how this Sensus Communis works, Arendt bases herself on her phenomenological perspective. Regarding this, she claims that people cannot but experience their lives as meaningful. This is because of the fact that experience of living can only happen when things make sense to us, when we have an understanding of it, while this sense making is simultaneously what we perceive as a meaningful experience (Borren, 2013). As such, Arendt regards human beings fundamentally as 'understanding' beings, meaning that understanding is not merely a tool we use for an external end – for example the causal relation of a specific phenomenon – but rather that understanding is 'our mode of being' (Ibid., 2013: p. 234). Everything we experience is therefore related to our understanding of the world, of our own place in it and how the event we face fits into this.

This understanding is subsequently based on the Sensus Communis. What this then entails for understanding is firstly that it works as a kind of 'sixth sense' that combines our

private five senses to guarantee the assurance that they all point towards the same appearance (Ibid., 2013: p. 238). The way in which such appearances thereafter can receive meaning is dependent on the intersubjective realm that lies between people. In that realm, we can rely on our ability to understand others and for others to understand us based on our ability to communicate with each other, which is dependent on our shared recognition of a particular appearance for which we use the same word (Ibid., 2013). In this way, our inner senses become directed at specific appearances about which we communicate with others. The meaning we subsequently attach to this appearance is then based on 'a common frame of reference', which is based on fundamental human experiences of the world and life (Ibid., 2013: p. 238).[6] Because this is based on such fundamental human features, we are then able to understand the perspectives of others and to think in their place. Arendt thus notices that this ability to communicate with each other and to convey the meaning a particular appearance represents for us is evidence of the presence of a Sensus Communis inherent to us. It is then also for this reason that a person too engaged with his own private senses is soon regarded as retarded; he or she lacks the capacity for communication and we cannot think from his or her perspective (Degryse, 2011).

The Sensus Communis thus makes sure that we are able to think from someone else's perspective, and as such it enables us to agree or disagree with that person's perspectives or actions. It is for that reason that it can serve as a legitimate way to generate general validity for a judgment (Arendt, 1982). It is however important to realize that this general validity is not based on the fact that Sensus Communis leads to objective truth in the form the modern sciences strive for. Rather, its aim is to give people the ability to experience reality (Borren, 2013). Arendt nevertheless saw other areas as indispensible for this experience as well, which means politics could not function without them.

One of these areas is culture, mostly represented by the arts. This focus on art in relation to politics might sound strange for us, but Arendt had good reasons for emphasizing the importance of it. The main reason lies in a temporal aspect, for art has the ability 'of arresting our attention and moving us' (Ibid., 2006: p. 201). This was necessary according to Arendt, because of society's character of continual production and consumption, which is only focused on the using up of products and desiring new ones and as such does not concern itself with the world as a stable human artifact. Art, on the other hand, conveys a beauty by

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[6] In her article on Arendt's understanding of Sensus Communis, Borren mentions the following frames of references Arendt identifies: our being on the earth, our life itself, our being in a human world, the condition of plurality, and the condition of natality – the fact that with each birth a new beginning enters the world (Borren, 2013).

which it is placed above utilitarian considerations, but still is very much part of this world. In this way, art represents an eternal perspective of time by which it is a representation of the stable world which can lie in between men (Ibid., 2006: p. 202). As such, Arendt claims, art can make us aware of a world of appearances, in which we tend to forget our own selves and in which we become free to behold the world (Ibid., 2006).

Specifically in the modern world Arendt regarded art as important, for in the context of emphasis on the process character of nature and the social world, 'beauty is the very manifestation of imperishability (Ibid., 2006: p. 215). And since art, or deeds and words that are regarded as beautiful, are made by human beings, it is able to convey a meaning of men's freedom to interfere and establish an everlasting appearance in our common world. This public character of art and beauty was therefore what Arendt regarded as its relation to politics: both serve as way to make this earth a stable world for human beings to find a home in (Ibid., 2006).

In addition to this emphasis on the public character of beauty, Arendt also returned to the question of truth and facts. As we have seen, she regarded a delusion from facts as a characteristic element of political communities losing the ground underneath them; losing their common sense. For this reason, she had high regard for the public role of historians and poets to 'tell what is'. This telling always implies the creation of a story, which subsequently has the public function to let people accept 'things as they are' (Ibid., 2006: p. 258). These things, then, are the actual things that men have *in common.* And though they are not properly speaking part of the political realm as such, they are part of the public realm, to which both belong. As such, these stories and the examples they disperse may serve as the solid ground upon which to base one's political judgment.

It might seem rather vague how all these considerations on judgment, sensus communis, virtuosity, art and history are related to our overall focus on security, but to Arendt all are very much related to each other, for they fundamentally determine the how we understand the world – they determine how we experience our lives. By analyzing the will, Arendt demonstrated how a reliance on this mental faculty shapes our basic understanding of the world we live in by focusing our attention on those appearances the will deems to be important. Consequently, we saw that events or facts which we encounter, but which are not regarded as relevant to our overall ideal, tend to be neglected, unless they pose a real danger to this ideal, in which case increased security measures are generally the response.

By focusing on our mental faculty of judgment and the associated Sensus Communis, our field of experience therefore radically changes. The events which come to the fore and of which we try to make sense are no longer those related to the will, but rather those which provoke our Sensus Communis, either because they blatantly violate what we regard to be a basic human condition based on our 'common frames of references', or because a specific act carries all the meaning of the Sensus Communis in itself. The political realm subsequently serves as the public space in which action and speech in reaction to these events can take place. This does not mean for Arendt that everyone should only use their faculty of judgment in their social lives. In fact, for this reason Arendt fundamentally separates the political and the social realm (Arendt, 1982). In the social realm, one can base one's existential outlook on one's will, but on the political level, this should be guided by judgment.

The relation between politics and security therefore also changes in a fundamental way, for the political realm can no longer serve as an apparatus of security to produce an understanding of freedom and reality based on the will of the nation. The political realm no longer serves to produce freedom or to make history, but rather provides the platform to act in a free relation with those facts and events that emerge onto the public realm. Action, to Arendt, is therefore only free when it is not dictated by the will or the intellect, but rather inspired by a principle which gives the action meaning by means of the execution itself (Arendt, 2006). Such a principle transcends our experience of continuously passing time by maintaining its meaning. The act is therefore not comprehensible in means-ends categories, but rather preserves its meaning throughout history as being the embodiment of the principle which inspired it, causing it to not being 'bound to any particular person or any particular group' (Ibid., 2006: p. 151).

This naturally does not mean that security has no role whatsoever on the political realm. However, it becomes subservient to the Sensus Communis rather than a guiding feature of the faculty of the will. This not only radically changes the general perspective of domestic politics, but has great implications for the international realm as well. To Arendt, the basic perspectives on domestic and international politics even form two sides of the same coin (Arendt, 2005). When domestic politics is based on free action, freedom comes to be the principle of international politics as well (Ibid., 2005). How this can be the case lies, again, in the basic experience of life that the will or the Sensus Communis provides one with. By focusing on the will, everything outside the produced domestic freedom represents itself as chaos and potentially dangerous to the internal order, until it is undoubtedly established that something might be advantageous to the will. By focusing on the Sensus Communis, on the

other hand, this distinction between internal order and external chaos becomes less rigid, since one is more aware of one's own finitude and the basic plural condition of the world.

Although Arendt's understanding of the Sensus Communis in many ways thus serves the same purpose as Foucault's care of the self, namely to reach an awareness of one's own finitude, the former nevertheless diverges from the latter on the fact that it is based on a faculty that concerns men in their plural being, rather than man in his singular existence. In this way, Arendt's account is not focused on how one person perceives his or her behavior to be morally justified, but on what we as a community of human beings deem to be right or wrong conduct. Moreover, while Foucault in a certain way tries to open up and broaden the political realm by continually contesting its power, Arendt on the other hand aims to lessen its sphere of influence. The reason for this perspective lies in the issue of political authority. One of our critiques on Foucault namely lay in the fact that he fails to give an argument for how political authority could be established. Until now, however, we have not seen how Arendt deals with this issue either.

Concerning political authority, Arendt introduces the whole public realm constituted for example by political action, art and history, for these aspects together give the public realm the character of a stable world that is meant to outlive the lives of the citizens temporarily inhabiting it (Arendt, 2006). What art can provide these people with is therefore an understanding that certain works possess an enduring quality of beauty and as such appear not to be consumed, but whose appearance solely serves to remain in the human world of artifacts, in order to make this world a stable place to dwell in for those who come after us (Ibid., 2006). History, moreover, serves as a reminder of the utter frailty of human action, which most of the time has not resulted in desired outcomes, and often has led to a catastrophe when human hubris desired to make all of existence by itself (Lara, 2008). Because of the stories told about these tragedies, people are however still able to understand them and give them a place in history. It therefore seems that Arendt wants to remind us of our fragility in dealing with the overwhelming forces which we have to confront in our lives on this earth, but that in order to be free, we have to acknowledge this fact, and focus on those events and facts with which we have a free relation. When discussing the influence of the political sphere, Arendt states:

'However, what I meant to show here is that this whole sphere, its greatness notwithstanding, is limited – that it does not encompass the whole of man's and the world's existence. It is limited by those things which men cannot change at will. And

it is only by respecting its own borders that this realm, where we are free to act and to change, can remain intact, preserving its integrity and keeping its promises' (Ibid., 2006: p. 259).

In order for the political realm to remain a public space for free action, and to move outside of the realm of security, it must therefore accept its boundaries and acknowledge what it can and cannot change. One may find this portrayal of politics too naïve, especially in international politics where self-interest is regarded to be fundamental. However, Arendt would argue that if one takes such a cynical outlook, one simultaneously denies the potential for human freedom in the world. In that case, or large scale conflict, or an international sphere of security is not a far-fetched future scenario. Arendt therefore encourages us to realize that our world is not constituted by the sum of our current nation states, but rather by the whole of the historical human world and the potentialities lying dormant in it, and that we are merely the fragile temporary inhabitants of it.

Conclusion

Our discussion of the thoughts of Hannah Arendt on freedom has served as a way to expand our horizons regarding the discussion on the issue of international politics and security. For that reason, the main goal has been to determine how Arendt's understanding of political freedom based on the human condition of plurality can open up new ways for thinking beyond the modern conflation of politics and security. The subsequent phenomenological approach we have taken, which is so typical of Arendt's works, has in many ways illuminated how this might be established.

The initial stimulus for conducting this research has been Foucault's forceful critique on the apparatus of security inherent to a Liberal conception of politics. This critique demonstrates that in order for the Liberal understanding of freedom to appear in reality, the government has to function as an apparatus of security to produce the freedom deemed fit for the population as a whole. To Foucault, this situation has been the result of an appropriation of a 'discourse of war' on the part of governments of nation states after the French Revolution. As a result of this basic outlook, he has mainly stressed the importance of continuous contestation of political power based on a 'taking care of the self' as a means to a constructive ideal of politics.

For Arendt, however, the major shortcoming of this perspective would arguably be that it does not deal with the question of political authority in the modern age, for it does not provide a clear normative basis for political power, while it simultaneously neglects how it would hold a political community together. Consequently, her perspective on the modern political situation stems from a consideration of the entire Western political tradition. As such, she discerns that this tradition has always been influenced by the meaning for which the ancient Greek polis was established: freedom. Under Christianity, however, freedom was no longer based at the political realm, but in the individual and his path towards salvation itself. Simultaneously, the political realm was seen as a necessity in light of man's sins, with its authority lying in the divine right of kings. With the advent of the modern age, however, both this individual sense of freedom and this basis for political authority largely disappeared. Therefore, a new ground for political authority needed to be found, which was done by representing the political realm as the embodiment of the free nation – whether by means of the sovereign Leviathan, the general will, or the general good. Arendt noticed that with this

shift, the traditional understanding of freedom as pertaining to one's individual will-power, came to be transferred onto the political realm.

The subsequent phenomenological analysis based on Arendt's understanding of the will demonstrates that its inherent idiosyncratic and oppressive character can hardly make it suitable as a basis for political freedom. In fact, the belief in the 'making' of history is similar to what Foucault regarded as the 'production' of freedom. Due to the existential outlook that the will provides, it therefore works an excessive focus on security in the hand, for it refuses to face and find meaning in the 'contingent' events and facts that appear in the public world, but which are not deemed to be important for the overall framework of reality.

Our final phenomenological investigations on Arendt's understanding of freedom as based upon judgment and Sensus Communis have then established that this notion of freedom overcomes the idiosyncratic and relativistic understanding of both the will and Foucault's self-care. This perspective indeed serves as a way to perceive reality in a different fashion: to focus on those events that appear in the public realm and to intersubjectively make sense of them based on our Sensus Communis. This different experience of life moreover serves another purpose, namely to encourage the realization that reality is way too great and incomprehensible for us to 'make'. As a result, it gives us the understanding that in order for politics to survive as constituting a free realm, we need to embrace its boundaries. Only when security then comes to be subservient to the Sensus Communis and free action, instead of being our leader in the production of freedom, can the political realm itself be saved.

Now as mentioned beforehand, the aim of these considerations has not been to determine what modern politics should come to look like. That endeavor would anyway be in total incongruence with Arendt, who repeatedly stressed the contingent nature of the political realm. Rather, the thoughts put forward in this research can hopefully serve as a way to encourage other scholars interested in IR or Security Studies to approach the issue from this quite unconventional perspective as well, which, as we have seen, might result in surprising and valuable insights.

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