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## **God in the Fourth Dimension. Re-conceptualising Hannah Arendt's The Human Condition**

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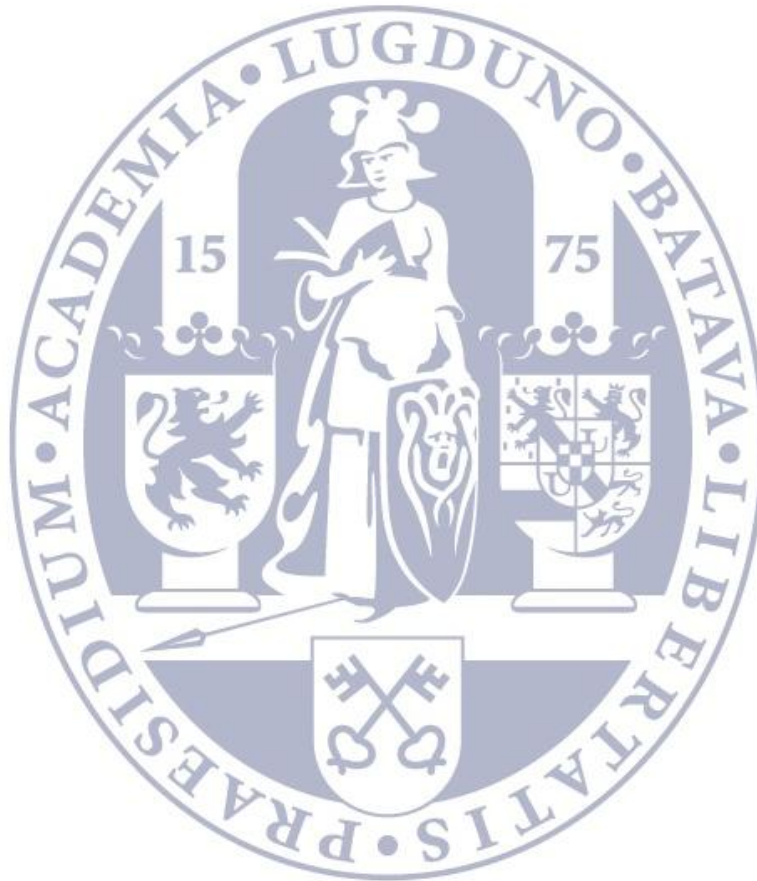
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**God in the Fourth Dimension. Re-conceptualising  
Hannah Arendt's *The Human Condition***

Bachelor Thesis: Readings in the History of Political Thought



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*“it can be shown that a mathematical web of some kind can be woven about any universe containing several objects. If this be so, then the fact that our universe lends itself to mathematical treatment is not a fact of any great philosophic significance”*

(Russell, as cited in Sullivan, 1938, p. 189)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Edwin A. Abbott’s (2008) character is imprisoned for believing and spreading the gospel of the third dimension. *Flatland* tells a story of truths that lie beyond one’s perception and imagination, and yet are just as real as the tangible, familiar world. In a little Victorian science fiction novel about geometry, Abbott wanted to open readers’ eyes to the possibility of a logical existence of realities that at first glance escape the down-to-earth logic. The book intends to show that whatever is known, is not a fixed limit of cognition. *Flatland* was written in the context of scientific developments that undermined Christian beliefs and the possibilities of obtaining truths beyond what can be experienced (Jann, 2008, p. xx). Nearly 150 years after its first publication, the novel is still widely read. The plot that follows Square, living in a two-dimensional world, who is one day visited by Sphere, broadens the horizons of abstract imagination even without contexts. What else could a theory about higher dimensions help to explain?

A case in which I see one could attempt to apply dimensions is understanding Hannah Arendt’s (2018) *The Human Condition*. The book is oriented around three concepts—labour, work, and action—which constitute the main activities of human life (1, pp. 7–8)<sup>1</sup>. As the next section will show, Arendt’s theory has been read in more or less the same way for nearly seventy years. Whether the interpretation of the relationships between the three aspects is traditionally hierarchical or is re-conceptualised in a novel way, it is not common to question if there is something beyond the three. This paper will attempt to follow Abbott’s example to keep an open mind and look for a hidden dimension where there initially does not seem to be one. In the following sections, I will try to find out how Arendt’s theory of labour, work, and action can be re-conceptualised. Firstly, I will present the typical readings of *The Human Condition* and contrast them with more unconventional interpretations. Next, I will describe in detail the ideas behind the usefulness of applying higher dimensions both in physics and in

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this paper, citations of *The Human Condition* will take the form ([Section number], [page number]).

wider contexts. This will allow me to present Arendt's labour, work, and action as respectively one-, two-, and three-dimensional structures. After this is determined, I will take a closer look at which elements of the book do not fit with the tripartition. Hopefully, I will be able to speculate how they can belong to the higher, fourth dimension.

The paper will close with remarks on how this re-conceptualisation allows to see Arendt's thought in a different light. She wanted to analyse the history of human nature to diagnose what had gone wrong and led to world alienation (Prologue, p. 6). Throughout the chapter on action, it is indicated that the solution lies in the realm of politics where people are capable of making new beginnings when acting together (24–34, pp. 175–247). As will be exhibited later, Arendt did not embrace modern developments in science and claimed that scientists should not be trusted in making political judgements (Prologue, pp. 3–4). However, it is hard to embrace the idea that politicians could be trusted to do so when this paper is written against the backdrop of the genocide in Gaza (Hasan & Buheji, 2024, p. 201). I will propose that a fresh look at the role of science as well as religion in *The Human Condition* allows to look for solutions beyond politics and to be more optimistic than Arendt's concerns about the world alienation and the possibility of the human condition being lost.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 TRADITIONAL READING OF *THE HUMAN CONDITION*

Before jumping to any conclusions, it is needed first to properly analyse the book. I will start by examining the state of the literature regarding Arendt's concepts of labour, work, and action. The relationship between the three in *The Human Condition* is traditionally understood as hierarchical (Dikeç, 2015, pp. 55–56; Undurraga, 2019, p. 156). Canovan (2018, p. xxi) describes the organisation of Arendt's book as an analysis of the distinctions and the hierarchy between labour, work, and action that have been neglected by philosophy and religion. Bakan (1979, pp. 49–50) says that this hierarchical differentiation comes from Aristotle and the idea that unlike labour and work, action is an end that does not become means again. The traditional hierarchy is in the idea that labour is only concerned with human life as a species, work is about the human-made world, and action exists between distinct individuals in their plurality (Canovan, 2018, p. xxi). However, much more is needed to be said about each of the three activities to grasp Arendt's theory.

Arendt describes labour as the activity that touches the most animalistic part of the human condition. It is responsible for answering the basic needs and concerns simple instincts and desires (11, pp. 82–85). This is the area where one finds hunger, metabolism, sex, procreation, violence, feelings (Dietz, 2000, p. 96). Its place is in privacy as the sensations present in labour have their strength only when they are hidden (7, p. 50). Privacy allows one to feel the individual intensity of all elements of labour. If they were to appear in public, the experience would need to be normalised into a form suitable to be perceived. Labour is also characterised by cyclicity (Bikhu, 1979, p. 68). Everything has to be in a constant movement—what stays behind, perishes. Products of labour (e.g. food) get rotten when not consumed. People do not last long without sustained nutrition. The species does not survive without new generations replacing the old ones. This perspective of the species is superior over an individual life if only labour is concerned. The linearity of one's birth and death, and everything in between does not matter. *Animal laborans* is only concerned with the prolongation of the species (43, pp. 311–312). The most important task is cultivating nature to produce consumer goods and then using those goods over and over to sustain life.

In contrast to labour, work is concerned with individual life and its rectilinearity from birth to death (3, pp. 18–19). A person is aware of their mortality and focused on the aim to leave something behind—something material and lasting that provides a trace after an individual instead of prolonging the species. To achieve that, *homo faber* produces durable use objects

that outlive the makers (Dietz, 2000, p. 97). They include everyday utensils, furniture, clothes but also everything that constitutes the entirety of the human-made world—houses, cathedrals, bridges, cities (18, pp. 136–138). It creates a space and tools for all human activities and provides stability. The sameness of durable objects stands against the ever-changing nature of an individual life. To fabricate these products, *homo faber* works in the solitude of a workshop but their life is not strictly confined to privacy. The public realm of *homo faber* is the exchange market where interactions take place (22, pp. 159–167). The fabricator can now showcase the effects of work and be esteemed for that. The interactions in the exchange market are not limited to selling and buying. Presenting fabricated products in public leads to producing their value that is dependent on the perceived demand and desire. But work is not only about things one uses. It is also the source of all material types of art—paintings, sculptures, poems (23, pp. 167–174). Even when use objects should not be intended to please the eyes, *homo faber* is responsible for creating beauty through art. Everything that people are surrounded by is a product of work.

In the world that *homo faber* has created, action can take place (Bakan, 1979, p. 50). Action produces and simultaneously happens in an immaterial space of appearance (28, p. 199). The nature of everything that happens within action is that it all can only be perceived. It happens in plurality where everyone acts and speaks and is heard and seen by others (7, p. 50). This is a space where one can achieve immortality not through producing a material object but by proving one's glory and excellence (6, p. 49). It is possible through the plurality which is a necessary condition of action. Plurality allows for the disclosure of one's true self, the essence of a person. Arendt says that it can be easily answered *what* one is—"a specimen of the most highly developed species" (1, p. 11). But the question of one's nature, the *who* can only be answered through disclosure, not words. It is the characteristic of everything found in action—they are the elements of human life that can take form only thanks to the presence of others to witness it. Things like politics and theatre only matter when they are performed (Kateb, 2000, p. 138). Plurality allows for even more. According to Arendt, power is a potential that is only actualised between people as it cannot be stored up (28, pp. 199–200). One is powerful only when they are perceived so by others. Despite the possibilities that action creates, it is also dangerous in a way that it starts processes that cannot be reversed and that are unpredictable in their consequences. Arendt claims that the solution to action's downsides still lies within it. She brings up the power of promises and the power of forgiveness (33, pp. 236–243; 34, pp. 243–247). Promises are about creating and agreeing on

a common belief that people abide. They can count on the word of others to act as they promised in the face of the consequences of the processes that they had started. Forgiveness allows to forgo mistakes and consequences and gives a chance to start anew despite the irreversibility of action.

## 2.2 NOVEL CONCEPTUALISATIONS OF LABOUR, WORK, AND ACTION

With the traditional interpretation of *The Human Condition* presented and the definitions of key concepts of labour, work, and action stated, I can now follow by moving away from the strict core of Arendt's thought. This section will review more unconventional readings of her theory. Several scholars attempted to conceptualise labour, work, and action differently than the typical reading. Markell (2011, p. 16) challenges the idea that the partition is territorial and each aspect of life has a certain place in either labour, work, or action. He suggests that the three relate to each other rather than being separated by impenetrable boundaries (p. 17). Arendt (pp. 182–183) wrote that most of action is about worldly things. The space of appearances emerges from the world that was built by *homo faber*, it does not thrive on its own (Markell, 2011, p. 17). In the face of such issues and blurred boundaries, Markell (p. 18) proposes to view Arendt's theory as two pairs of concepts: labour-work and work-action. In his view, it allows to look at the Arendtian activities through the way they interact. It should also stress the difference in how the interactions work within those pairs: labour to work is not what work is to action. Markell (pp. 28, 30-31) shows that the distinction between labour and work is prone to collapse, as the linearity of work starts to resemble labour's cyclicity when ends of fabrication become means again. Arendt introduced a third domain—action—that would be an end in itself. Markell claims that an attempt to simply bring up a concept of a new domain that *is* separated does not resolve the problem of collapsing territoriality.

Dikeç (2015, p. 55) agrees with Markell about the fact that labour, work, and action depend on each other. He stresses that action “has an inherent tendency to force open all limitations and cut across all boundaries” (Arendt, 2018, p. 190, as cited in Dikeç, 2015, p. 56). Crossing the boundaries is a crucial aspect of action and politics. Moreover, political action is capable of “opening up new spaces of appearances” (Dikeç, 2015, p. 60) which could mean that Arendt did not limit the space in which active life takes place. Markell suggests that the separate territoriality of labour, work, and action may be “a symptom of Arendt's confusion, which we can resolve on her behalf by being clearer than she was” (Markell, 2011, p. 17).

The door to novel interpretations of *The Human Condition* that Markell (2011) has opened is also Undurraga's (2019) starting point. He claims that the relationships between labour, work, and action are not fixed "but change in meaning and scope as her theoretical work in the book unfolds" (p. 158). *The Human Condition* in his view is a story of how the hierarchy changes through history (Undurraga, 2019, p. 167). He disagrees with Markell's (2011) argument that work is the most important in Arendt's theory. The top of the hierarchy depends on the historical moment. The rise of the social has risen labour to be the most praised activity—the win of *animal laborans* over *homo faber*—but the atomic bomb has elevated scientists and action (Undurraga, 2019, pp. 164, 167).

These arguments show that the way to understand *The Human Condition* is not fixed. Arendt left spaces for diverse interpretations of how labour, work, and action interact. Markell claimed that Arendt's attempt to solve her theory by adding the third domain was not successful. However, I will now explain why—according to the theory of dimensions—there is a chance that the issue lies not in adding a new dimension but in not having a sufficient amount of them. The next section will introduce my idea of how to portray labour, work, and action in a way that might allow for new interpretations.



### 3. ANALYSIS

#### 3.1 DIMENSIONALITY

The hypothesis about the existence of higher dimensions belongs primarily to physics. In string theory (and other related theories) higher dimensions are used to simplify the laws of nature (Kaku, 1995, pp. 152–155). A reader without a scientific background can easily grasp the idea of width, height, and depth, and how they are comparable. However, other aspects of the physical world—e.g. power, light, energy—are very distinct entities and do not interact as intuitively. String theory looks for a way to explain all such phenomena with a single equation. The higher dimensions are used to ‘transform’ these phenomena into entities that work within a prolongation of the logic of width, height, and depth. For instance, light is explained as vibrations (i.e. a movement) in the fifth dimension and becomes much more tangible (p. 16). Kaku summarises it by saying that “the laws of nature become simpler and more elegant when expressed in higher dimensions” (p. 12). Higher dimensions provide space to unify various physical factors within the same theory. My idea is to imagine Arendt’s theory in a similar way. Where there are elements packed together in her tripartition that do not all necessarily fit together (as will be shown in subsequent sections), more space may help to give more clarity to the theory. This paper will attempt to use dimensionality to search for this increased elegance and clarity in Arendt’s theory by analysing whether this idea can be successfully followed through and help to find something new in the reading of *The Human Condition*.

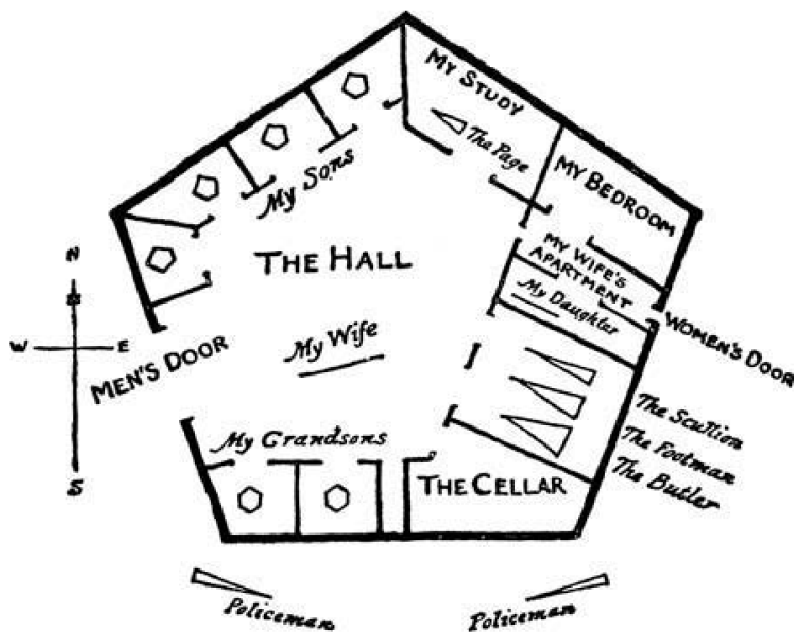
To illustrate how dimensions interact and how to imagine dimensions that are beyond one’s perception, it is useful to go back to where this paper has started—Abbott’s *Flatland*. This is the general idea behind the spatial dimensions in physics (the temporal dimension is not relevant for this paper). What Abbott brought in, is a plot of the novel that makes the concept more graspable for the general audience. The book follows Square who lives in a two-dimensional world. One day he experiences a dream about a one-dimensional world—Lineland and is frustrated about the inability of the Line King to understand the limitations of his world (Abbott, 2008, p. 69–79). Lines cannot comprehend the idea of the possibility of moving not only forward and backward but also sideways (p. 76). The same issue comes up when creatures in Spaceland reject the idea of moving upward (pp. 111–113). The movement is an important aspect of dimensionality. Movement *creates* new dimensions. A non-dimensional point moved forward becomes a one-dimensional line. A line moved sideways

becomes a two-dimensional square. A square moved upward becomes a three-dimensional cube (pp. 89–91).

Square is visited by Sphere who attempts to explain the existence of the third dimension and Spaceland (pp. 80–83). Sphere was responsible for Square's dream to prepare him to understand the possibility of a higher reality by analogy. Abbott shows that the way to comprehend a higher dimension is a realisation of how an  $N$ -dimensional reality relates to  $N-1$  reality and extrapolating it to the respectable difference between  $N+1$  and  $N$  realities (pp. 84–91).

**Figure 2.1**

*Square's house. From Flatland. A Romance of Many Dimensions (p.97 ) by E. A. Abbott*



Enlightened Square realises that every new dimension allows seeing an  $N-1$  'from above'. The locks of his house which could be drawn on a piece of paper prove no barrier for Sphere as from the third dimension the house can be observed all at once and penetrated without using the door (pp. 96–99). Every new dimension provides a 'superior', overall insight of the realities constructed in less dimensions. If one—as a three-dimensional creature—looked at the Square's house (Figure 2.1), it is seen in its entirety. A two-dimensional creature sees its world from the perspective of being on a flat surface—as if one puts eyes at the level of the

table and sees only a straight line. In such a world, the creature is trapped if one draws a circle around it, as there is no ‘upward’ through which to escape.

This paper will soon show how dimensions understood in the aforementioned way can be applied to Arendt’s concepts. I will attempt to present that action can relate to work in the way that work relates to labour and how each element adds an additional level of insight.

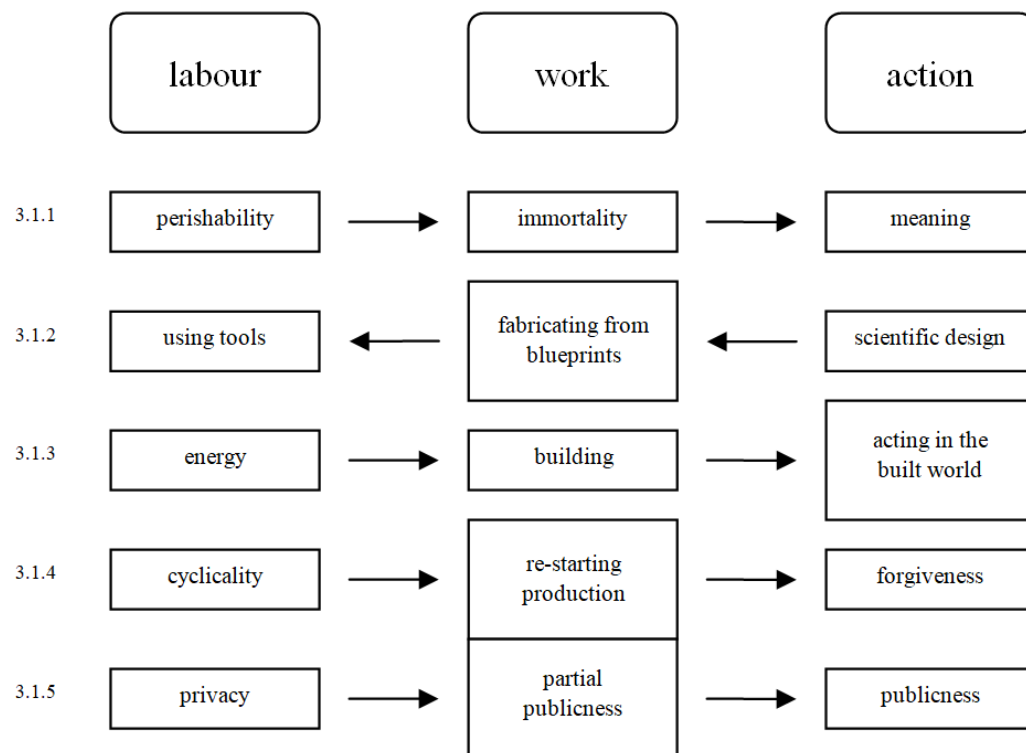
There are, however, more reasons that justify the idea of using dimensions to look at Arendt’s theory in a different light. Apart from the apparent abstractness of *Flatland’s* narrative, Abbott was interested in theological questions. He claimed that both science and faith are similar in a way that it is not important if something can be proved as long as it is accepted that it works. It might not be crucial to prove God’s existence if the sole idea of God makes people act better, and scientific theories are good enough if they explain phenomena even when they cannot be confirmed (Jann, 2008, p. xxii). *Flatland* was intended to show that there is a space for believing in a higher power but Abbott (1897, pp. 32–33) himself said that the mere possibility of imagining God does not bring anyone closer to God’s existence. Abbott’s deliberations constitute an interesting take on the discussion about reliability versus reality that Arendt considers in *The Human Condition*. She claimed that despite Cartesian doubt about whether anything outside of oneself is real, “even if there is no truth, man can be truthful, and even if there is no reliable certainty, man can be reliable” (38, p. 279). The apparent similar way of thinking in these matters between them makes one curious if Abbott’s way of opening eyes would work on Arendt. It cannot be answered in any certainty but I will now try to show that there are reasons to believe it could. As indicated in the introduction, the ideas of faith and science will be discussed further. It is important, however, to first outline the dimensions of labour, work, and action.

### 3.2 THREE DIMENSIONS OF LABOUR, WORK, AND ACTION

Although they seem like separate entities at first, labour, work, and action closely interact at all times (Markell, 2011, p. 17). As labour sustains life, there can be no work and action without it. And as work builds the human world, without work there would be no action which takes place in this world. To conduct my conceptualisation of the relationships between the three as dimensional, in this section I analyse how defining elements of labour, work, and action build upon each other. I divided those elements into 5 groups and arranged them in

chains of equivalents among labour, work, and action that show the ‘dimensional’ interactions. A line when moved sideways becomes a square, and a square moved upwards becomes a cube. The concepts of Arendt’s theory behave similarly: one thing in labour can become something else and yet similar in work, and then analogically turns into a certain element of action. This is shown in Figure 3.1.

**Figure 3.1**



Dimensions grow upon each other and enlarge the realities they contain. This growth is present in chain 3.1.1. It starts with the perishability of labour, of how everything involved in it gets consumed to become means again, to simply sustain the process. Work adds another layer and allows things to leave a trace behind. With work, an idea of immortality is introduced. Arendt explains that the products of *homo faber* are people’s attempts to not only prolong the species (as in labour) but to have an impact as an individual and have something that will outlive them. It is allowed through the durability of use objects that do not perish when they are not consumed as the consumer goods do. Yet another layer comes with action—meaning. Through interactions with others, one can be remembered not only by lasting objects but also by one’s great deeds and excellence. Meaning is an end in itself (21,

pp. 154–155). The products of labour are permanently being used up, products of work apart from their lasting durability are still only use objects that are utilised as means, but the product of action—meaning—is lasting *and* self-sufficient in a way that it does not serve other purposes to justify its presence.

The idea of a ‘special insight’ from higher dimensions to lower is present in Arendt’s theory in a way that something originating in a higher activity can be brought upon to the lower one. Going back to the example of Square’s house—a three-dimensional creature can put something in a closed space in two dimensions or appear in it ‘out of nowhere’ as Sphere did. In *The Human Condition*, one can notice that *animal laborans* uses tools that were produced by *homo faber* to perform labour. But *homo faber* also does not perform their activity without help from ‘above’. The fabrication process is based on ideas and blueprints for the use objects that are being created. The mental image behind work is an outcome of thought and design—it comes from science. Scientists, as people who are able to start new processes and move things into being, operate within action (45, pp. 323–324).

The lower dimensions provide a foundation for building higher dimensions on them. Labour is a base for all activities. Producing food for energy and addressing all essential needs keeps a person alive so that they can proceed with work and action. *Homo faber*, then, engages with fabrication that results in tangible objects. Work is responsible for the emergence of the human world, building houses, constructing cities. Only when such a world is built, action can take place—in parliament, in theatre.

As defined in section 2.1, labour contains a collection of elements that move in a cyclical way and perish so that they can be replaced—human life, live nature, energy conversion. The cyclicity is about ends that become means again. These processes are being renewed all the time by the nature of things that are concerned. In work, there is a space for agency. In the process of fabrication *homo faber* can choose to toss the unfinished product and start anew. An end can be seen as definite—a finished chair is a durable object and will not perish when unused (19, p. 143). From a perspective of utility, a finished chair becomes a means of comfort for a person who uses it (21, p. 153). Nevertheless, *homo faber* is the master of their product and is free to destroy an object of their work (19, p. 143–144). Action, then, allows for even more agency. An acting person possesses the ability to cease processes that had been put in motion by others. The agency goes beyond the acts of oneself. This is possible through the power of forgiveness. “Forgiving and acting are as closely connected as destroying and making” (33, p. 241). Arendt sees forgiveness as a solution to one of the main dangers of

action—irreversibility. The danger is in the fact that every deed done by people initiates new processes that are out of one's control and cannot be undone (32, pp. 232–233). Forgiveness allows to stop such processes, release an actor from the consequences, and give space for new beginnings (33, pp. 237, 241).

Another aspect that 'grows' while moving from labour to work and action is publicness. Labour takes place in complete privacy. All activities of *animal laborans* should be hidden within a household as they concern individual needs. In work, one still engages in their endeavours in the solitude of a workshop but *homo faber* has their dimension of partial publicness. They leave the workshop to enter the exchange market, their version of a public realm (22, pp. 159–167). There, the produced objects can be seen and one gets an opportunity to interact with other members of the community. However, it is only in action where full publicness can be observed. Action is about the space of appearance where one can be seen and heard by others. When one enters the public realm, one discloses oneself to the audience of peers and gains the possibility of showing their true self, their individual exceptionalism. All action originates in plurality, in the ability to be with others, to act together, to create a shared reality in which further action takes place.

### 3.3 ELEMENTS IN *THE HUMAN CONDITION* BEYOND LABOUR, WORK, AND ACTION

With more clarity of how labour, work, and action could work as dimensional structures and understanding which elements fit within those structures, it is now possible to identify those elements of Arendt's theory that do not fit this conceptualisation.

It was explained that the acting person provides *homo faber* with the ideas for the blueprints but where do those ideas originate? Initially, Arendt says a lot about scientists using the language of mathematics instead of normal speech and sees it as a danger to politics (Prologue, pp. 3–4). However, later she presents mathematics as the only thing that can be perceived as real without external proofs—in everyone's mind, there is logic that makes two plus two being four, independently of the outside world (39, p. 283). She calls it a new common sense and "the science of the structure of the human mind" (36, p. 266). It shows the importance of mathematics but Arendt talks about it as if it is "given to the eyes of the mind" (36, p. 266). It does not seem to originate in any of the three activities.

Another aspect that seems to escape beyond action (and so labour and work as well) are the recurring questions of *what* and *who*. The *what* is easily answerable—one is "a specimen of

the most highly developed species” (1, p. 11). The *who*, however, can only be perceived in action, through an act of disclosure and perception. It is not in the human capacity to answer it with words. It would only be possible for God to answer it as if it was *what*, as they have a special insight from ‘above’ (Kiess, 2016, p. 49n.52).

It is not the only place in which God appears in *The Human Condition*, despite Arendt’s lack of faith. She contrasts God in their one-ness with the plural, human-like gods of Greeks and Romans (3, p. 18). This comparison shows that polytheist gods were thought to share the shape and nature of humans but differed in the fact that gods were immortal. The idea of God in their one-ness transcends life, time, and universe. The separation from the image of human nature being projected onto the higher power allows for the idea of eternity that is beyond the worldness of human activities, beyond mere prolongation of life into immortality. God is also unique in their possibility to combine both strength and power in order to reach the demiurgic capacity. Arendt claims that power is accelerated by being actualised in plurality (28, pp. 200–202). The increase of power comes from being shared among more people. In contrast, strength is an indivisible, measurable, stable quality of an individual. Arendt describes omnipotence as a combination of both—strength and power—in the hands of one—something only possible if a person was capable of *possessing* power. Because “human power corresponds to the condition of plurality to begin with” (28, p. 201), omnipotence is imaginable only as an attribute of one God.

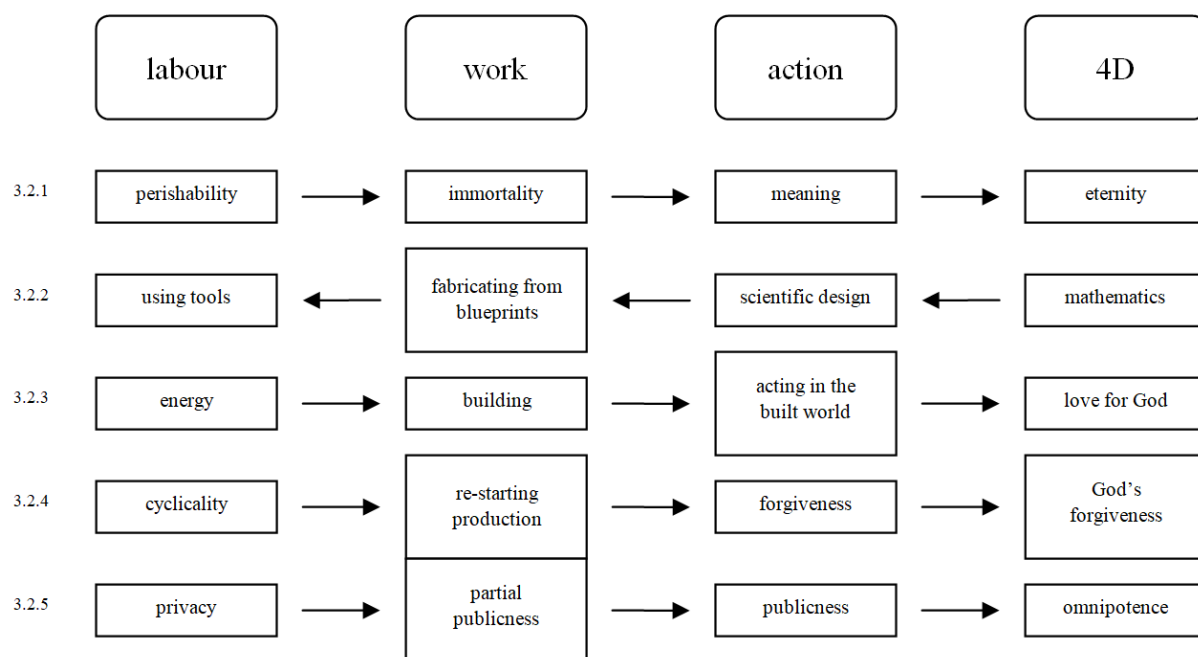
There is also a question of forgiveness. When introducing this topic in the section *Irreversibility and the Power to Forgive*, Arendt brings up a thought that what “saves man ... comes from the outside ... of each of the respective activities” (33, p. 236). The salvation of *animal laborans* comes from work, and the salvation of *homo faber* comes from action. She claims that forgiveness, as a remedy of action, lies within action itself. But why would an acting person be able to save themselves? I argue that the fact that forgiveness is an action does not mean it comes from action. Labour with the use of tools is still labour even when the tools come from work. In the same way, Arendt’s idea of forgiveness is a tool used in action that—as Kiess (2016) and Strandberg (2019) point out—originates in the Bible, in God’s power of forgiving. Forgiveness in action is not intended to be able to remove guilt and undo an act in a godly way but is adapted for human capacities. It takes a form of reconciliation and is about dealing with the consequences of an act that is already done. Arendt reminds Jesus’ teaching that people should not forgive each other *because* God forgives them, but that God

forgives when people forgive (33, p. 239). It indicates that there exists a possibility of a higher form of forgiveness that is beyond what people can do among themselves in action.

### 3.4 FOURTH DIMENSION IN *THE HUMAN CONDITION*

In the previous sections, it was established how one can see the connections between labour, work, and action as dimensional. I presented then certain elements that escape the original tripartition. It is time to analyse where they actually fit. Those with a keen memory can recall how these dimensions were presented in the form of chains in Figure 3.1. The next step of this dimensional conceptualisation is to update them with the introduction of a possible fourth dimension in *The Human Condition*. For clarity, the updated chains are presented in Figure 3.2

**Figure 3.2**



Chain 3.2.1 starts with perishability and takes it through immortality and meaning. The four-dimensional correspondence of these elements is eternity. As described in section 3.3, eternity is in a way a higher form of immortality and transcends life and the universe. If it is possible to transcend the nature of human life, the meaning of things in the world is not something that has to be discovered through action and plurality. Eternity is above it as it



provides an overall insight. Just as looking at a two-dimensional house in its entirety, from the transcendent point of eternity, all life and the meaning of worldly things are visible at once.

Chain 3.2.2 is about the source of everything that is created in the world. Through action, ideas are designed which are then reified by *homo faber* in the form of producing objects according to blueprints. Those objects are then used i.a. to facilitate the activity of labour—tools for cultivating land or houses that provide privacy. As indicated above, as everything that exists has to originate somewhere, there is an implication that these ideas for blueprints also have a source. I argued that the creation of ideas—of something new—takes place in action and can be the role of scientists, designers, and other related professions. Arendt says that their language is mathematics and that it does not originate in the human mind. If it does not start within the people who act but is given to them, mathematics seems to be a natural prolongation of the one-, two-, and three-dimensional structures of labour, work, and action.

The next chain also focuses on the origins of creating things but in the opposite direction. It is not about things that come down from action but how they gradually grow from labour. Energy gained through answering the basic needs of *animal laborans* allows *homo faber* to perform their work and build the objects used in action. The idea of how these elements can be stretched into the fourth dimension comes from Kiess' (2016, p. 126) analysis of the role of cathedrals. He points out that Arendt admits the worldly impact of faith. "In a departure from her usual anxieties about the otherworldly effects of the love of God" (Kiess, 2016, p. 126) Arendt finds a moment to comment on how godly things can contribute to creating reality. She brings up the example of the beauty of cathedrals that transcends the basic functions they have but that cannot transcend the material world. In this way, faith led to building things that are unprecedented and which have much more durability than many other human creations. Cathedrals built for God stay in the world for the people but the faith and love for God that is expressed in a material building transcend into a higher dimension. The religious feelings originate in the plurality that the building in its beauty allows to gather.

Chain 3.2.4 describes the various aspects of starting anew—cyclicity, the ability to toss a product, and forgiveness among people. As seen in Kiess (2016) and Strandberg (2019), Arendt's idea of forgiveness originated from God's forgiveness. The way she described its working in action is adapted for how people are able to forgive others in the face of the irreversibility of the processes they start. The concept of God's forgiveness is about removing the guilt or even undoing an act (Strandberg, 2019, pp. 197–199). Transcendent God is above the restrictions of time and so potentially they can manipulate events that have already taken

place (3, p. 18). This form of forgiveness is beyond human capabilities and yet the indication of its possibility is present in *The Human Condition*. Thus God's forgiveness is the four-dimensional representation of the possibilities of restarting processes.

The last chain discusses privacy versus publicness. It was discussed above how labour, work, and action are characterised respectively by privacy, partial publicness, and full publicness. It can appear challenging to find a distinct faculty that would be beyond these three. However, Arendt provides an answer. There is a way of transcending the publicness of plurality. Normally power can only be present among people who are needed to contribute to its actualisation and to perceive it. Arendt provides one exception—the one-ness of God that transcends the need for plurality. According to Arendt, God has demiurgic abilities to perform power not achievable by an individual human. Individuals on their own have only strength, not power. God is capable of both at the same time—this is a faculty of their omnipotence. This omnipotent one-ness is neither private nor public, it is beyond any characteristic of labour, work, and action.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

This paper is focused on Arendt's concepts of labour, work, and action in *The Human Condition*. I have started with presenting the traditional reading of the book and defining the core terms. I have then explored other views which tried to re-conceptualise Arendt's theory. I proceeded with explaining my idea for presenting labour, work, and action in a novel way by arranging them in one-, two-, and three-dimensional structures. My theory got more controversial at the point where I started to argue for the possibility of expanding Arendt's theory to include a fourth dimension. The analysis above indicated several times that elements in Arendt's fourth dimension are related to God and faith. I do not necessarily mean that the entirety of the fourth dimension is religiously characterised but I would not say it is insignificant. In this section, I will reflect on the potential implications of this additional dimension for interpreting *The Human Condition*.

Arendt is not famous for having positive views about religion, she did not like the idea of relying on it. She blamed the Reformation for being one of the main reasons for world alienation (35, pp. 249–250). Kiess (2016, p. 107) noticed that for Arendt, freedom for Christians constituted freedom from politics. For her, salvation from world alienation comes only through politics and thus she did not see religion as any form of solution. Although she does not necessarily say that faith led people astray, she does not seem to like the idea of God who cannot be seen just like she does not like science that cannot be tested (40, pp. 285–289). She finds it problematic how Christianity tries to keep people together. A Christian community does not fit her vision of action. She notices that relationships between the members were modelled on family ties (7, pp. 53–54). For her, family does not allow for new beginnings, but only for the prolongation and multiplication of already existing perspectives (7, pp. 57–58). The existence of the common world relies not on the sameness of common nature, but rather on the fact that everyone perceives the same common world from different perspectives, allowing for its reality. A simple multiplication of perspectives destroys the common world as without distinction, the reality of the world is not guaranteed. Moreover, the selflessness of goodness that lies at the heart of Christianity is corrupt and—again—destroys the common world (10, pp. 74–77). Whatever good deed one performs, it loses its goodness once the act is known to the public. A good-doer remains lonely, their acts hidden and worldless, as no trace shall be left behind. Any act of goodness uses the space “where everything and everybody are seen and heard by others” (10, p. 77)—and yet hides in it which perverts the public realm. To avoid this corruption, what appears in publicity should be seen

and should be heard. Kiess (pp. 97, 127) argues that Arendt would not agree to look at the church as an alternative place for achieving the plurality in which action can happen. She wanted to explain that through action people can find love for the world again. She sees that faith has a worldless character. Arendt claims that in order to reach a certain goal, people use everything else as tools to achieve it (Kiess, 2016, pp. 108–109). In this instance the goal is God. When the common world is not seen as the goal itself, it is being used for the sake of reaching God and not for its own sake. The world is treated just like consumer goods of labour are used to enable work and action.

Sections 3.3 and 3.4 showed that despite Arendt's reluctance to admit there is value in faith, in her book there is space for finding this value. I argued for a way of seeing a dimension above action. I believe there is enough room in *The Human Condition* to justify such an interpretation. If one keeps seeing labour, work, and action as hierarchical, the faith-related elements would have superiority over action. Arendt looks for humans' salvation from the world alienation in action but she might not realise that she gives reason to believe that the solution "comes from the outside" (33, p. 236). Eternity, omnipotence, forgiveness that removes guilt and undoes action, and the religious feelings that originate in the man-made beauty of worldly buildings are all concepts that Arendt either defines or implies. Moreover, not only forgiveness originates in the Bible—but so do her ideas about plurality and the power of promises (Kiess, 2016, p. 141). Along Abbott's way of thinking, I do not say that any of that proves God's existence or that Arendt is secretly religious. All of this only follows the original goal of this paper to let one's eyes be opened wider and accept the possibility of finding in Arendt's theory something that is not visible at the first glance.

However, the fourth dimension revealed in this paper is not entirely about God. In chain 3.2.2 the element beyond action was mathematics. Interestingly enough, Arendt's views on science are not dissimilar to her views on faith. She expresses her reservations about scientific claims that cannot be empirically tested just like about God whose existence cannot be proved. Another parallel is in the joined responsibility for world alienation. The process of people losing the human condition was initiated not only by the Reformation but also by the invention of the telescope (35, p. 248). She continues to criticise the scientific developments and especially the mathematisation of science, blaming them for the transition of the Archimedean point outside of the world and into the human. It does not help the worldliness and the plurality that she cherished. The telescope made people distance themselves more and more to explore un-Earthly phenomena (36, pp. 257–261). The new knowledge about the

universe led people to be able to explain everything in mathematical formulas, although they are impossible to be applied to the actual world (40, pp. 287–288). The general laws of macrocosm despite being universally true, are too large-scale to be adequately applied to the microcosm of human life, hence people are unable to conduct empirical experiments and so they will not be sure of the certainty of the discovered truths. Arendt is also sceptical of knowledge that is obtained in contemplation, as it is always performed in alienation (42, p. 290). If what is accepted as reality exists only between people in their agreement, the solitude necessary for contemplation means a withdrawal from that reality (38, p. 279). Gray (1981, p. 126) claims that thinking is an opposition to action, as action is defined by plurality. The human condition relies on the plurality of people inhabiting the common world—a solitary thinker is a contradiction to it. Tijmes (1992, p. 401) looks at it differently. He refers to Helmuth Plessner and says that alienation does belong to the human condition. The paper argues that one is able to transcend oneself “to consider his own position” (p. 401). Arendt described contemplation as a dialogue of one with oneself (10, pp. 75–76) but according to Tijmes (1992), the process does not happen in a complete, worldless alienation. The dialogue takes place between one’s centric position, *connected to the world*, and an eccentric one that allows for consideration from the outside.

Tijmes (1992) does not agree with Arendt that technological developments, the new Archimedean points, and solitary contemplation lead to the human condition being lost. Conversely, it has the capacity to transcend the human condition and provides an ability to see its meaning. The alienation from plurality which is necessary for contemplating, gives one a new ability to enter one’s eccentric position. He claims that this “eccentric faculty” is natural and makes one prepared “for leaving the world ... [and to] meet a new alienation” (p. 402). In his eyes, the dangers that Arendt sees in the modern world are just a consequential development of human thought. The invention of a telescope was not necessarily *the* event that started the inevitable process of losing the human condition, but it likely facilitated it in its natural advancement. The telescope is not a perversion of the known world that invalidates the senses but only extends the sight just like glasses.

Both science and faith appear to be able to be defensible *within* Arendt’s theory. Upon further consideration, they appear to be valid components of human activities that should not be questioned due to their inability to be empirically proved. Conceptualising labour, work, and action in a dimensional way and adding the fourth dimension let me analyse Arendt’s theory in a way that allows to see something beyond her original ideas and fears. I believe that

I have succeeded in finding a way to have a more open mind in reading *The Human Condition*. If religion and faith are considered more generously, in line with Tijmes' (1992) and Kiess' (2016) interpretations, it appears that human nature is not as doomed as Arendt presented it. If the salvation of action was to come from beyond it, it could lie in faith and science. As Tijmes proposed, scientific developments may lead to natural developments of the human conditions that Arendt did not foresee. And as Abbott believed, mere faith in God can work in a way that makes people be better even if God does not exist.

Naturally, I do not attempt to say that it is the only way to read *The Human Condition*. The traditional interpretations or novel ways of Dikeç (2015), Markell (2011), or Undurraga (2019) are perfectly valid. The unconventional conceptualisations even fulfils the point that I try to make: to keep an open mind and look for something that is beyond the familiar. I believe that my humble contribution to interpreting Arendt allows to be more optimistic about the future of the human condition, despite her concerns.

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