

## Abstract of Doctoral Dissertation

# A Search for the Positive Significance of the Concept of “Private Realm” in Hannah Arendt’s Political Thought: Restructuring Her “Private Realm” Theory as a Philosophy to Ensure the Stable Existence of the “Common World”

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The German-Jewish female philosopher Hannah Arendt (1906-75) who is considered in this research has attracted attention as a creative thinker in the history of political and social thought in the 20th century. The purpose of this research is to clarify the positive significance of the concept of “private realm” in Arendt’s thought that has been overlooked in conventional research, and to restructure her “private realm” theory as a philosophy intended to ensure the stable existence of the “common world.”

The following three points can be mentioned as reasons to focus on Arendt’s “private realm” theory.

Firstly, the lack of prior research focusing on this theory.

Secondly, the influence of common interpretations on Arendt’s argument of public-private division in research history and associated problems. In this interpretation, it has been pointed out that the salient feature of her classification theory is the emphasis on the “public realm” over the “private realm” and the emphasis on the exclusive relationship between the public and the private. However, it must be said that this interpretation is a one-sided understanding that overlooks the positive significance of the concept of “private realm” in Arendt’s thought.

Thirdly, to consider Arendt’s “private realm” theory, by focusing on its positive significance, it is possible to clearly grasp the “worldly” character of the concept of “private realm.”

In this research, based on the critical examination of previous studies, I focused on three points of Arendt’s theory concerning (1) “private property,” (2) “totalitarianism” and “moral philosophy,” and (3) “child education” as fundamental issues in reconsidering her “private realm” theory from a more positive perspective. As a result, the following three points were clarified.

Firstly, by considering Arendt’s theory of private property, it becomes clear that protected by “private property” as the “shield” expressed metaphorically as the “four walls,” “private realm” has a positive significance as a “worldly home” where human beings can “reside” with peace of mind. Arendt understood “private property” as an effective system to guarantee the “private realm,” and “property” is strictly distinguished from “wealth” to mean sustenance, money, and products. She regards the “private realm”

connected with “private property” as fundamentally important as a realm with two positive values; the principle of “security” and the dimension of the “depth” of the human life.

Secondly, by considering Arendt’s theory of totalitarianism and moral philosophy, it becomes clear that the “private realm” has a positive significance as a space to cultivate the spontaneity and pluralities of human beings as individuals through the activity of “thinking.” Arendt regards the private realm including also an aspect of “the personal” as fundamentally important to resist totalitarianism. She claims that it is a crucial issue to secure the private realm including an aspect of “the personal,” because there must be inviolable private space that can cultivate the activity of “thinking” in the personal mind.

Thirdly, by considering Arendt’s theory of child education, it becomes clear that the “private realm” has a positive significance in providing asylum spaces securing the basic conditions necessary for the growth and development of children and fostering the activeness of children as future “citizens” who will renew the “common world.” Establishing a “private realm” as a protective space for nurturing activeness of children such as “family” and “school” is an essential condition for her educational theory, which focuses on the revival and sustenance of the “common world.”

Through a series of considerations in this research into Arendt’s thought, unlike those of many previous interpretations which have overlooked the positive significance of “private realm” by emphasizing only “discontinuity” of the “public” and “private,” and regarding the latter as the “lack” of the former, “private realm” is recognized as positive and significant, an indispensable condition to support the stable existence of the “common world” which is the stage where human “freedom” as “new beginning” is expressed.

In this research, by elucidating the various aspects of the positive significance of the concept of “private realm” in Arendt’s thought, I tried to restructure her “private realm” theory as a philosophy to ensure the stable existence of the “common world.” It can be said that the theoretical significance of this research is the aspect of presenting a new interpretation viewpoint in Arendt studies.

Furthermore, it can be said that Arendt’s problems of “deprivation” and “deterioration” of the “private realm” in modern society are becoming more serious in postmodern society. Resisting the logics of economic exploitation and social exclusion, her submission that the need for the stable existence of the “private realm” as a “worldly home” where human beings can “reside” in the “common world” should be accepted as a problem with great contemporary significance.