

In The Name Of God



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**A Postcolonial Study of Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* with Special
Reference to Hannah Arendt's Model**

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts (MA) in
English Language and Literature**

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To my family

“Allah does not change what is in a nation unless they change
what is in themselves”

—Holy Book of Quran, Chapter Al-R'ad

Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to analyze the issue of colonialization based on modern human identity as represented in Yann Martel's *life of Pi*. By applying Hannah Arendt's theory of public and private realms of life, this study seeks to identify the way Arendt's theory illustrates the origin of colonialization in the novel through the rise of modern self. According to Arendt, life is divided into public and private spheres. Private is the realm of necessity, and public is the realm of speech and action. With the rise of society, the private and public spheres of life blurred and the private realm dominated the public activities. Consequently, modern man felt lonely and focused on his private interests. This obsession turned him to self-centeredness and he considered the rest of people as The Other who should be sacrificed for his economic interests; therefore, colonialization emerged. This study attempts to identify this theory in Yann Martel's *Life of Pi*. The Canadian Martel whose homeland has been the subject of colonial regimes, depicts elements of colonialism through animal- human relationships in the novel according to identity of modern man. Pi Patel an Indian teenager, at first, is a public Arendtian figure. As in postcolonial studies that animal is the locus of colonized group, Pi, as colonizer, observes animals as inferior race. But, by confronting private realm, Pi, abandons all his individuality and beliefs, and is reduced to the assumed inferior level of animality. However, animal, the colonized group, has the same right of living as human, the colonizer in this novel. As is shown through the mutual contribution of Pi and the Bengal tiger to their survival, Arendt proposes that survival of Pi and tiger, colonizer and colonized, is possible only through a collective cooperation between these two groups.

Key Words : Public, Private, colonialization, consumerism, plurality

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Chapter I: Introduction

The present chapter deals with an introduction to the existing study. First, an overview of the thesis concerning *Life of Pi*, its relation to human identity and colonialization, is presented in section 1.1. Then, in section 1.2, the statement of problem will be explained. The significance of the study and research questions will be depicted in sections 1.3. and 1.4. Also, the methodology used for the investigation of this study will be presented in the next section. Section 1.6 provides a review of studies carried out in the similar theoretical domain. Finally, section 1.7 provides outline of this thesis.

1.1. General Overview

Yann Martel (1963-), a Canadian writer, achieved a sudden international fame with his novel, *Life of Pi* (2001). The novel's great achievement and the cause of its attraction to 2002 Man Booker's committee of judges, is its exploration of man's system of belief in God (Stratton 1). *Life of Pi* is the story of an Indian teenager, Pi Patel, who seeks to give meaning to his life through pursuit of three different religions of Islam, Christianity and Hinduism. Despite this religious context, the novel, as a postmodern work of art, does not end here and focuses further on the crisis of identity in the modern world. The novel for sustaining the basic animalistic needs, between human agents and animals, shows Pi's condition in the modern world whose strife for sheer living and domination and sacrificing other groups for that, brings him to the point of being, not much different from animal species whom he differentiates himself from as a superior race. The pluralism apparent in the novel is the feature of the postmodern world which emphasizes on the tolerance between different groups and ideas, as the novel, too, is written in the postmodern age. This situation is added to another important notion in the novel. The notion of superiority of the human race over animal species which is emphasized in the novel through the relationship between the Protagonist Pi Patel, and the Bengal tiger named Richard Parker. However, the survival of both of them happened through a collective cooperation between Pi and the tiger.

Therefore, through animal other, the novel deals with the issue of otherness and postcolonialism by emphasizing on othering of the Bengal tiger, as colonized, and dominance of Pi as colonizer. These features make the novel a good candidate for the postcolonial studies, as animal is the locus of colonized people in this field. Also, Pi is living in a postcolonial turbulent time in India which reinforces the theme of colonialism.

Postcolonial studies originated from a group of south Asian scholars under the name of "subaltern study group" in early 1980s. It was officially recognized with Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) who was a member of that group. The theoretical foundation of post colonialism is to analyze the process of silencing and to give voice to the voiceless marginalized people. It concerns the formerly colonized peoples who have been subjected to the political domination of another population. The colonizers believed that only their own Anglo-European culture was civilized and sophisticated; therefore, native peoples were defined as savage, backward, and undeveloped.

Hannah Arendt (1906-75), one of the early theoreticians of postcolonialism, whose role is known less than her contemporary postcolonial theoreticians, relates colonialism to identity crisis of modern age and is among the first theoretician who focused on the collective cooperation among the plurality of different groups in the postmodern world, as the solution to the crisis of identity. She has done an extensive analysis of human condition in modernity. The rise of totalitarian regimes and the two world wars were so shocking to Arendt that she attempted to analyze the root of totalitarianism. In her analysis, she considers the period of West's imperialism and consequent colonisation as the origin of totalitarianism. She wrote two seminal works: *the Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) and *Human Condition* (1956), which contain her core political theories. Because of her focus on the cause of oppression and colonisation under the imperialistic system, her ideas fit into the category of post colonialism.

In the *Origins of Totalitarianism*, Arendt asserts that the phenomenon of totalitarianism has turned most of our moral and political categories meaningless. She believes that with the loss of tradition and thus identity, we should look for new grounds for our life. So, her approach does not follow tradition. She just refers to the past to redeem from the fragments of the past those parts which illuminate our situation. Arendt returns to the experience of Greek polis to rediscover this forgotten, displaced authority which was marginalized in history.

She traces the crisis of colonialism back to the time of modernity. She believes that the rise of society in modern age with emphasis on the private interests and wealth accumulation has privatized man's freedom by indulging him in consumerism. So, man only deals with private matters of his life and has abandoned the public life of plurality and activity. Following ancient Greek lifestyle, Arendt separates life into two spheres of public and private. The Private realm deals with natural and basic needs of sheer life, and is the realm of necessity and violence. On the other hand, the public is the realm of political activity and speech, which exercises man's freedom in plurality of activities. Modernity and the rise of social sphere blurred the public and the private spheres and the private needs dominated the public activities. The privatization of freedom and self-centeredness took away man's potential and entered him into the realm of violence and necessity, which

was epitomized in man's labor and obsession with economic interests. Consequently, man wanted to exclude others from the domain of his life to satisfy his own never ending economic interests, this is what West did through colonialization of the East.

The postcolonial implications as the result of modern man's crisis of identity and his obsession with materialism, uncovers new aspects of the novel, *Life of Pi*.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Modernity starting from the age of enlightenment, with advances in science and technology, seemed to guarantee promising futures for mankind. Emphasis on reason instead of previous religious beliefs, and the expansion of the knowledge of universe assured man that he can be the master of his own life. He tried day by day for his welfare. But, resources at home seemed not to satisfy this modern ambitions intellectual. He sought it in other lands, and thus colonialization began; the age of torture and oppression under the cover of bringing civilization. Many people question that what the achievement of the age of reason was. Wasn't it the most destructive weapon which killed man's identity? In the current era many nations are either suffering from the domination of the totalitarian regimes, or they are suffering from the consequences of their once colonized nation.

Maurizio Passerin D'Entrèves in his book *The Political Philosophy of Hannah Arendt* (1994), analyzing Arendt's political theory, writes that colonialization happened because of the loss of the world. By the loss of the world she means that modern man no longer defines his freedom in public sphere of action and speech. He is turned to a private realm of life, withdrawing from the multitude of the public life that different people with different groups are active and none wants to exclude others. So, he is stripped of his potential humanly identity which is capable of bringing change and that distinguished him as the most developed creature in the world from animals.

Martel's protagonist, Pi, who narrates two versions of the story of his survival at Pacific Ocean, pictures his and the other creatures' helpless efforts to sustain the natural sphere of life. In fact, the ruthless modern consumer society does not leave a room for a religious person like Pi to live comfortably with his religious beliefs. It makes him abandon his beliefs and fight violently to achieve his basic natural needs of private realm. As we see, he studies two majors of religious studies and zoology at the same time. This anticipates his later animalistic behavior, despite his religious beliefs. Although he is religious, he does not observe animals to have the same right of living as human, and like west colonizers, believes them to be the inferior species, compared to human race. At sea, Pi as the public active human being, confronts animals who belong to the natural sphere of life, public and private blurs, the violence of private realm becomes public, and makes Pi to exclude the animal from his right of living, and do violent, animalistic actions.

The Analysis of *Life of Pi* through Hannah Arendt's political theory, that is delineating public and private spheres of life in analysis of human condition and their displacement resulting in the process of oppression, presents a new perspective on the relationship between the modern man's identity and oppressive regimes. Arendt asserts that what guarantees freedom is the plurality of different groups engaging in public activity. so, As

Graham mentions in *Postcolonial Ecocriticism* (2010), survival in the novel became possible only after the two species of human and animal ;i.e. Pi and the tiger, did their parts and engaged in the collective identity.

The crisis of losing humanity which, leads to power domination in the novel, is not limited to this novel and its characters; this is a universal crisis starting from modern time that has challenged man. *Life of pi*, as a postmodern novel, suits well to represent modern world's realm of lost identities and the rise of oppression system out of this shattered human condition.

1.3. Significance of the Study

Life of Pi won the honorary Man Booker Prize for the novel in 2002. It received an international acclaim for the way it dealt with religion in the book. In the context of religion, it portrayed deep concepts which plagues the man of modern world. Meaningfulness has been removed from today's postmodern world. Pi, at the early stages of his life attempts to search for the truth in life. He finds comfort and refuge in diversity of religious creeds. His religion is a postmodern one in which he does not believe in one specific religion but plurality of three different religions. So, the crisis of unstable identity seems to have touched him. Yet, he cannot hold on even to these plural religious beliefs, when his life is endangered by his natural surroundings that he once worshipped. Now Pi is experiencing a bitter side of humanity; animality which grants him the will to exclude animal as the colonized group for his survival, which makes human "the most dangerous animal"(Martel23).

This study is of particular importance to the researcher as a student of literature because, Pi's trauma is the result of modern world identity crisis which is led to colonialization. The crisis of human condition and colonialization is not specific to this Indian boy which is projected onto the tiger, and his country. It has a worldwide application.

Hannah Arendt's political theory of the origins of totalitarianism which is rooted in the philosophical field of modern human condition is of much significance, in that, it offers a novel aspect of postcolonial studies of *Life of Pi*.

1.4. Research questions

This thesis attempts to provide some insights into the following questions:

1. What are public and private spheres in *Life of Pi*?
2. How do modern age and the rise of society blur public and private spheres of life in *Life of Pi*?
3. How does this blurring affect human condition in *Life of Pi*?
4. How does the disturbed human condition result in colonialization in *Life of Pi*?

1.5. Methodology

This project is library-oriented, that intends to discuss the relationship between postcolonialism and human identity in the postmodern world. For this purpose, different articles, theses, and books were read. Arriving at a unified theory of Arendt was such a difficult task, because her ideas sometimes contradict each other and sometimes are not clearly stated. The book which was of most help for the researcher was the work by Maurizio D'Entreves named the *Political Philosophy of Hannah Arendt*. This author has deeply understood Arendt's ideas and elaborated on them in a simple language. This book focuses on the modern human condition. For the link between the human condition and postcolonialism, parts of Arendt's *Origin of Totalitarianism* was, too, studied. So, a general understanding of Arendt's theory was grasped. Then, lots of articles and books were read to further illuminate Hannah Arendt's political theory.

For the purpose of better analysis, this project has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter presents a brief introduction to the thesis. In the second chapter, which is the most challenging one for the researcher, it has been tried to illustrate Hannah Arendt's political ideas as much as possible. This chapter is divided into three parts: The first part deals with the human condition starting from modernity, then it discusses how this modern, indifferent man, by relying on the economic affairs situated in private realm, commits totalitarian acts and engages in the acts of colonialization. In the next part, the solution for this modern, materialistic, totalitarian man is proposed in the form of collective identity to rescue man from his obsession with exclusion of others and, to be active in the plurality of groups and ideas in the community. Accordingly, the discussion of the study, which analyzes theories of Hannah Arendt, concerning identity and postcolonialism, on the novel, *Life of Pi*, is carried out in chapter three. In this chapter, a detailed analysis of the theoretical foundations applied to the novel, is provided. It has been categorized into three phases: The first phase, based on Arendt's theory of action, emphasizes on the active role of the separate private and public realms of the protagonist, Pi Patel in his community. In the second phase, the private and public realms of life are blurred and public Pi resorts to his private realm of life and for this reason, he wants the tiger dead. In the third phase, as the target of public activity is collective identity of people, Pi understands that survival at sea is not possible, unless a collective action with the tiger be established. In the last chapter the researcher concludes the thesis by providing reasonable responses to research questions.

1.6. Review of Literature

Since the publication of the *Life of Pi*, many works have been written on this novel and each addresses a specific aspect of the novel. Some address the ethical aspect of the novel, some deal with the imaginative perspective depicted in the novel. Some others are about the theme of identity, and some works deal with postcolonial discourse whose signs are dispersed throughout *Life of Pi*.

It was said earlier that Arendt believes that the economic issues were the origin of colonialism; because it made western modern man so self-centered for his economic benefits, that he decided to colonize other nations for more interests and exclude them

from the domain of his private interests. This situation was created because man's identity was privatized for his materialistic obsessions, and he stopped being an active individual in the public life of plural ideas. The works mentioned in this section address Pi's colonized place in his country. But, his colonized situation by West is projected on his relationship with animal, who in postcolonial studies is referred to as the oppressed colonized group. West colonizers assume the colonized to be like animals and not fully human. Thus, the works dealing with Pi's identity will be mentioned first and then the theme of postcolonialism and its root, economic matters and consequent materialism and consumerism, will be mentioned in this section.

Marcin Obolewicz in his article, "The Search for Identity in *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel, *Quarantine* by Jim Crace and the *Sea* by John Banville" (2009), analyzes the issue of identity in these novels. Regarding *Life of Pi*, he writes about Pi and the change in his identity. The first step of change in his Edenic Garden of Zoo and Pondichery Botanical Garden comes when father by using a goat in the tiger's cage, teaches Pi and his brother, Ravi, that the law of nature is the survival of the fittest. The second phase of his identity change came when the name of twelve year old Pi was teased by students through comparing his name with the act of pissing urine. He tries to overcome this difficulty by replacing his name with Greek alphabet, Pi. He succeeds and other students accept this new identity. Identity is formed by change in life. The journey for him stands for the journey to find his identity, and like a displaced colonized, finds his hometown to be Canada. He remains as an unfixed character because of his name, his journey, and his resident. Also, the time of the novel is during the unstable postcolonial time in India characterized by the rule of Indira Gandhi. The instability also shows itself through pursuit of three different religions. The author also mentions Pi's dependence on the tiger, that if the tiger were not there, he would have died. Pi finds himself responsible for both himself and Richard Parker. For this, his creativity again comes to his aid. His zoological knowledge helps him to make tiger understand that he is the superior one. Another shift of identity is when Pi, after spending a dream like time in island, comes to his senses and understands that the algae island consumes human flesh. He is strong enough to take action and free himself from this madness or illusion. (Obolewicz 24).

Ka Riley in his article, "Pi's Individuality in His Personal Societies and a Postmodern World" (2004), illustrates the characteristics of the identity of the protagonist, Pi Patel, as the micro society around him changes and he encounters different societies with different experiences. First, in the society of his family; then, the academic society, society of India, society of Canada, society of man and animal, religious society and the postmodern society of pluralism which all of them demand him a specific action and contribute to development of his identity.

Bonnie Joy Etherington in her thesis named "Cannibals and Survivors: Narrative Strategies in Third Culture Literature" (2013), mentions that novels like *Life of Pi* cannot be considered as traditional post-colonial novels. As the world becomes more globalized and multicultural, the boundaries between nations and cultures become more fluid. She mentions that Pi is the example of globalized culture. The most obvious example of Pi's globalized state is having more than one religion. His narrative is a narrative of in between (Etherington 6). The ship that carries Pi and his family sinks between India and Canada. The novel is always about being in between, not fixities, just like the changing identities,

like agnostics who Pi hates, his pursuit of three religions, and his change of name with the mathematical illusive irrational number, Pi. Also, this work discusses Pi's consumerist characteristics through different references to food, eating, and cannibalism. He also mentions that the allusions of the novel to different sources ,adds to its consumptive feature and a hybridized narrative style forms Pi's story through multiple voices and emphasizes the commodity lust in the novel epitomized in cannibalism. The consumption quality is further emphasized by the algae island populated by meerkats. The animal – human agents, both depend on each other in these narratives and boundary between animal and human is blurred.

Susanna Johanna Smit Marais in her thesis, "Castaways and Colonists from Crusoe to Coetzee" (2012), discusses that *Life of Pi* involves postmodernist and postcolonial themes of hybridity, duality and otherness relating to the construction of identity. It is a postmodernist work which resists the closure and leaves it to the reader to decide which story to believe in. It also stresses on the postcolonial subjects of multiculturalism, migration and displacement. She also says this novel is critical of consumer capitalism and materialism.

Rosy Piets in her article, "Conceiving Ocean Space: Globalization and the Ocean as Metaphor in Yann Martel's *Life of Pi*" (2010), writes that ocean plays the role of a connector or a road in the areas of slavery, immigration and trade. The ocean acts as a space of transit. She says statistics shows that in the 18th century through three main water routes, more than 200 million slaves were taken to the North America. Also, the ocean had an important role for immigration. In the 18th century, millions of people went past the Atlantic to go to the assumed dreamy land of America. We see the talk of ocean and water all over the novel. So, the economic concern of the novel and its relation with colonialism in the novel is implied in this article.

One branch of postcolonialism, is postcolonial ecocriticism that has become popular in recent years. Aristotle's hierarchical system places human above natural world. This division turned into a western world view that always privileges one group over another. Such worldview justifies west invasion of nonwestern culture that equates west with humanity and culture and considers nonwestern as natural inhuman beings. Therefore, there are similarities between othering of nature and othering of nonwestern culture. As *Life of Pi* deals with othering of animal ,as part of natural world, as oppressed group and Pi, as the civilized colonizer in the background of postcolonial turbulent time of Emergency in India, it has been the subject of much postcolonial ecocritical studies.

Laura Wright In her excellent book *wilderness into civilized shapes, Reading the Postcolonial Environment* (2010), writes that the animal metaphor to represent the subjugated group has always been seen in the works of literature, and animal body has been considered as the representative locus of human othering who undergoes the pain of oppression (racial pain), as the result of relationship between master and slaves brings colonized down to the same level with animals.

In *Postcolonial Ecocriticism* (2010), Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin examine the relationships between humans, animals and the environment in postcolonial texts. This books, in the section named 'Cannibalism and Carnivory', discusses that cannibalism was a term coined by Europeans when they colonized the native peoples and labeled them as

cannibal. They had the fear of being consumed by native people who looked savage to them, which made them obsessed with this term. The book shows that *Life of Pi* removes the boundary between animal and human beings. Man (the dominant group) shows the same savagery as the oppressed assumed savage group (animal); as is evident in the example of Bengal tiger who has a human name. Also, the book mentions that everywhere in the novel is seen the fear of being eaten, either by animals, humans or by the algae island. This is an indication of the imperialism which is marked by consumption, and causes violent actions and domination.

In his essay “Postcolonialism, Ecocriticism and the Animal in Recent Canadian Fiction” (2007), Graham Huggan asserts that ecocritical and postcolonial studies are interconnected fields. He shows this connection through speciesism/racism parallels in two works, one of which is *Life of Pi*, and discusses animal- human relationship with regard to animal captivity and their basic moral rights.

James Mensiah in his article the “Intertwining the Incommensurables” (2007), states that *Life of Pi* is a tale of alterity concerning the animal and God; that they are both outside ,and at the same time ,within us .He argues that our humanity is understood in relation with both of these others.

Kurt Koenigsberger in *The Novel and the Menagerie Totality, Englishness, and Empire* (2007), states that zoological novels lead the readers to perceive menagerie as the exotic landscape it evokes. He states that *Life of Pi* is about the familiar forms of exoticism and that the novel has orientalist perspective. Pi is presented as circus handler that subjugates the tiger. The novel connotes the sense of wonder, unknown and exotic and Pi, as the colonizer, shows mastery over the exotic beast, as colonized.

In “Hearing the Better Story; Learning and the Aesthetics of Loss and Expulsion” (2006), Dina Georgis writes that like Western modernity’s dehumanization of raced subjects, animal is the other on which knowledge of what it means to be human has been imagined. She argues that nowadays stories like *Life of Pi* prepare the condition for us to listen to the marginalized and expelled voices. She states that narratives are resources for political imagination and recovery. She proceeds by delineating the difference between real and fictional stories. She believes Martel shows us how to recognize the voice of alterity in the novel, whether fictional or real. She also mentions that Pi finds that his survival is possible if and only if he keeps the tiger alive and satisfied and not remove him. So, Pi should have recognized the alterity. When Pi speaks of the actual facts of his trauma that the Japanese officials of the ship treated his family not respectfully, and those who interrogated him after his trauma, could not hear what he is saying. So, his statements about his experience of injustice went unnoticed and he is the embodiment of an oppressed group.

Florence Stratton In her article “Hollow at the core: Deconstructing Yann Martel’s *Life of Pi*” (2004), has a deconstructive approach and argues against the Enlightenment belief in the power of reason and materialistic truth in favor of imaginative truth. One indication of the enlightenment materialism is the modern consumerism. He observes that the algae island with its meerkats are representative of consumer society "in which freedom and individuality is eliminated" (Stratton15). The consumption quality of the island and the insatiability of French cook for killing and eating human flesh represents

the imperialism's drowning of the identity that causes human cannibalism, the turning of religious Pi to savagery ,allure of power and colonialism.

The pluralism and unfixity qualities which are characteristics of a postmodern post colonialized society are emphasized in the novel through the protagonist's pursuit of three different religions, different interpretations of the protagonist's two versions of the story, lack of closure and fixed framework for the story, different borrowings from different origins, in the collective living of different animals together and at last, the survival of different species of human and animal, as colonizer and colonized. As was discussed before, survival through pluralism and recognition of the other, is the focus of Hannah Arendt's political theory. The exchange of names between tiger and human agent shows that the tiger, as the colonized, has the same right to live as human being, as the colonizer, does. This reinforces the postcolonial theme of the novel. Arendt's theory further emphasizes on the identity crisis of the modern individual as the origin of totalitarianism. The issue of identity of Pi, the protagonist of the story, is analyzed in the articles written by Marcin Obolewicz and Ka Riley. They argue that Pi has an active participation in his community, before the time that he was caught in the crisis of identity at sea, and also after his hopes come back to him again at sea and he and Richard Parker together survived; this matches Arendt's ideas on active participation of the individual in plurality of groups and ideas in public atmosphere.

Chapter II: Theoretical Considerations

The theoretical framework of this study, namely the political theory of Hannah Arendt concerning public and private realms of life and their blurring resulting in colonialization, will be explained within this chapter. Section 2.1 provides Critical Perspectives on Hanna Arendt's Ideas. Section 2.2 discusses the traditions of thought that Arendt was after under the title 'Background to Arendt's Political Theory'. Following that, the core elements of Arendt's theory will be presented in the sections 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, under the titles 'Modernity and Human Condition', 'Racism and Imperialism', Theory of Action and finally 'Collective Identity' respectively.

Hannah Arendt (1906-75) is a known figure for anyone who is troubled with twentieth century European history, and in general, for whoever that believes in the faculty of thought to make sense of the world around us. Arendt is known for her achievements in the fields of political theory, philosophy, modern history, and cultural studies. Beside her political and philosophical ideas, Arendt's theories are applicable to literary studies. Her works can illuminate the role of literature specially, literary narrative and its relation to history and cultural and political identity. They challenge the hegemonic notions of truth and proposes the new ways of understanding the relationship between the self, community and the world.

But, Arendt is less known than her peers. The dominant critical concepts and theories and cultural studies have been usually from French and often males who attracted English departments around the time of Arendt's death in 1975. Arendt was a precursor of the revolution of theory and her death almost coincided with appearance of theory in English departments around the world. Arendt was a Jewish intellectual whose life span constituted three – quarters of the previous century. She was a refugee from Nazi's attacks and a stateless person for almost twenty years. She had controversial stance towards Israel and did not support their political stance. In 1951, she became an American citizen and actively engaged in public life. She experienced the horrors that totalitarianism imposed, in her life time. She considered Nazism and Stalinism as new and unprecedented events. Under any systematic political categorizations, these events were unjustifiable. In Arendt's view, any understanding of totalitarianism based on classical political concepts of tyranny would distort newness of these events. So, existing philosophical systems could not

provide satisfactory answers for them. In fact, the two world wars had destroyed the political and moral grounds we believed in. she suggests that to make sense of the events we no longer can go in the line of tradition. Arendt's work is characterized by an attack on traditional forms of philosophical thinking and theory. She traces the origin of totalitarianism in the age of Enlightenment in which modernity started. In her analysis, she categorizes colonialization as a form of totalitarianism which ended up with the two world wars. Arendt devotes one complete section of the book, *Origin of Totalitarianism*, to the issue of imperialism, its causes, and colonialization. As was said earlier, she knows the beginning of these forms of totalitarianism, especially colonialization which is the focus of this study, to be in the human condition of the modern man. In Arendt's view, philosophy tended to withdraw from the public realm into solitary contemplation. This caused inappropriate decisions of philosophers at the time of political crisis. Heidegger, Arendt's teacher and lover, in Arendt's view, had such position. He became a member of Nazi party in 1930s and, in which was kept in silence until after his death. Arendt was shocked to see such contrast between Heidegger's philosophical background and his failure to understand Nazi's real nature.

Arendt came to this conclusion that philosophical thinking has been distorted by the tradition that had dominated in the west for two thousand years, and goes back to the work of Plato which had not had a proper ground for politics. When philosophers talk about politics, such as Plato's plan for a political state in the *Republic* (380 BC), Arendt claims that they usually ignore the importance of the political realm.

Philosophers see politics as a problem that should be dealt with, not as something which is important in its own right. Politics that constitutes dialogue, persuasion and the claims of others, is merely, according to Arendt, too chaotic and baffling for most philosophers and theorists. They think it disturbs the quiet space needed by philosophical thought with the noise and uncertainty of a public realm. Plato's ideas were important for Arendt because he was the first who defined the public sphere as a world of illusion and deceptive appearances, and resorted to the realm of pure ideas, that as a source of meaning only philosopher can access it. Arendt's aim was to illustrate how the philosophical tradition was just theorizing without any action and that this, according to her, caused violence in the public world.

2.1. Critical Perspectives on Arendt's Ideas

The focus of this project is on Arendt's seminal works, *Human Condition* (1958) and parts of the book, *Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), which have been illustrated in details in the work of Arendt's scholar, Maurizio Passerin D'Entreves, named *the Political Philosophy of Hannah Arendt* (1994). In this book, D'Entreves traces the evils of the modern age to the economic interests of the mass society starting from modernity which leads to totalitarianism and colonialization. In her excellent book, She reconstructs Arendt's political philosophy under four major concepts; modernity, action, judgment, and citizenship. For each of these concepts, a chapter is allocated. This book illustrates the uniqueness of Arendt's philosophy which focuses on participatory democracy based on freedom, plurality and solidarity. D'Entreves emphasizes on the citizenship and communication of the individual in society with influential political agency. So, she shows