

〈研究ノート〉

Why Judgment Matters: Reexamining Hannah Arendt's Works

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1. Japanese Context of Hannah Arendt Studies

Before trying to state the concept of Judgment and the Arendt/Jaspers relationship, let us first look at how the Japanese introduction to Arendt took place and its historical background. It took a long time to recognize Arendt and Arendt's influence has been limited.

The first time when the Japanese read Arendt was with her article entitled "The Philosophy of Karl Jaspers" which was translated into Japanese and appeared in a philosophy magazine *Riso* (Ideal) in the 1930's. Then, in the middle of the 1960's, after 30 years several of her works were introduced with the translation of her *On Revolution*. Regarding the Japanese image of the political world, I don't know of a better phrase to describe the political attitude of average politically minded Japanese person than the words of Noboru Takeshita who is one of the successors of Kakuei Tanaka, the prototype of Japanese clientelism after the Second World War. He was the prime minister of Japan from 1987 to 1989. He said Japanese politics is like a small ramen noodle stand between two tall buildings. It expresses in reality and masochistically, the self recognition of the lack of political principle and political power in Japan.

It seems that there were three typical understandings about what is the political in among average politically minded Japanese person. First, "Distribution model" expects politics as a budget (re)distribution function, for example the bridge in our town, the tax reduction for my corporation. LDP administrations from 1955 to 1993 (and 1996~2009) remaining the members of Upper and Lower Chamber covered this function. Second, "Liberal model" thinks the politics as the means for the defense of peace and civil liberty. It seemed that legitimacy of their desire was crystallized in the clauses of the Japanese Constitution (1947). They tended to access political powers only reluctantly. The third is many versions of Marx-Leninism which included the spectrum from Japan Communist Party to radical Maoism. They want to grasp the politics as the class struggle.²⁾

It is clear there was a gap between these current Japanese beliefs about politics and Arendt's thought on the political, and therefore we might expect the latter's fresh impact on the former. For instance, Arendt's concept of "action" brought a new sense to the Japanese understanding of politics. The idea that power depends on not the material force but the human consents through actions or people's opinions, and moreover, we as a people are to be able to grasp the revolution not as the change of ruling class but the constituting a public realm.³⁾

It took a long time for Japanese academics or lay people to accept Arendt's thought and we are not sure whether it is sufficiently accepted to be part of our political frames of reference. Common readers who take Arendt's books and academic scholars who have interest in Arendt seem to be increasing. Most of the main works of Arendt have been translated into Japanese and several of

them were listed in “Bunko” (like Reclam or Pelican Books), and many papers about Arendt are now presented at academic meeting. There has also been a parallel rise in interest in voluntary association for community service and aid for calamities following the later part of the 1990’s. If we consider these facts, Arendt’s ideas are not as well accepted like those of D. Riesman, E. Fromm, or P. Drucker.

2. Meaning of Judgment

The concept of judgment is characteristic in the context of thought of Hannah Arendt. First, it compliments for the fault of the action which is the most significant of Arendt’s ideas, as it presents new type of political freedom, but pays its price as its swiftness and lack of criterion for validity of the action. Second, she thought that judgment is appropriate to a political space because the enlarged mentality in judging suitable for the plurality as the character of public realm. Third, there is no decisive text on judgment for she died before beginning to write it. We can only see its form as half-finished in the lecture of New School for Social Research in 1970 in which she interpreted Kant’s *Critique of Judgment* originally.⁴⁾ Moreover we can see that Arendt continues to think about the problem of judgment and she treated many philosophers as thinkers of judgment throughout time.⁵⁾ Therefore, the problem of judgment involves multiple phases of our life over the Arendt’s context.⁶⁾

Just as the hermeneutics started from the skills and resolutions of interpretative problem of the text: scripts, codes, turned to the philosophical hermeneutics as trying to illuminate the condition of the human being (F. Schleiermacher, M. Heidegger, H. G. Gadamer), judgment also started as practical suggestion of the concrete situations of human life: strategy, rhetoric, it has ontological-existential phase of concerning the human conditions. We can read it in Kant’s *Critique of Judgment* where he stated the three negative definitions within four elements as conditions of judgment.⁷⁾

After Nietzsche, the theme that without absolute standard confirms life comes to the surface. How to judge the meaning of life became the task of judgment.⁸⁾ Affirmation of life is not only the problem of decision but also every day’s judgment.⁹⁾

As Arendt said in her essay “Isak Dinesen,” storytelling has a merit which expresses “who I am” without the definitions. It is suitable to judge the concrete and the individual in the relation to the general standard which is unknown for the present. Judgment works there as integrating imaging (configuration) of telling story.¹⁰⁾ It is close to Kant’s “the necessity of the contingency,” namely the casual which the individuals have in a concrete affair is changed to the necessity in the story by telling story. It means originating the meaning in telling story. But in fact storytelling is inescapable from imparting one’s self-centered influence and there is no way to prevent this in storytelling. In other words, there is no way to avoid self-deceit in storytelling. Moreover, power relations between the tellers and the listeners or other tellers which were formed before the beginning storytelling; the minorities and subaltern in the national stories. And in reverse, there are those who could not tell what to be told; the interviewed people in “Shoa,” or Japanese women who were left by their families in Man-Zou¹¹⁾ shortly after Second World War. We need to reconsider the roll of judgment

in storytelling. We judge the stories not only in constructing the plot of stories but also listen to the stories and tellers carefully, discreetly, critically.¹²⁾

3. Arendt/Jaspers Relationship in the Discussion on Judgment

As is well known, Arendt and Jaspers had a close relationship, which included her husband and his wife. What influences they had on each other in their thought? It seems that the influences were complex and manifold.¹³⁾ We can remember that the influence from Arendt to Jaspers, the radical democracy in *The Future of Germany* which Jaspers stated the need for the resistance of German people against monopoly of power by the coalition government of CDU and SPD in 1966, it seemed to be suggested by Arendt. Moreover, one of Jaspers's posthumous manuscripts which he tried to complete till shortly before his death and presenting the theme of the independence of thinking, treated Arendt as its main model.¹⁴⁾

Especially I wish to take up the topic that Arendt judgment concept was influenced by Jaspers.¹⁵⁾ Elisabeth Young-Bruehl suggested Arendt's concept of judgment was suggested Jaspers.¹⁶⁾

For the sake of this study, it is necessary to analyze Jaspers's works especially his *Origin and Goal of History* in reference to the works of Kant's philosophy of history. It belongs to the research of their personal histories and needs to examine *Correspondence* and their collections including Hannah Arendt and Heinrich Bluecher Collection in Bard College.

In review this study is basically an extension in the area of reflective judgment as it connects individuals (technology and bureaucracy of modern times in Jaspers case) to the large trend of history (the goal of history), and as to seek the reference for validity (the thinkers in axial period). In addition, this study is designed to allow one to rethink the concept of the republicanism of Arendt from polis model to world civil model. Moreover, it will be connected to the problem that "the communicative philosophies in 20th century" which tried to treat reason as communication: Jaspers, Habermas and Karl Popper.¹⁷⁾

- 1) This text is the copy draft for the report of the research seminar at Bard College Hannah Arendt Center on 5.13.2010. I am grateful to Roger Berkowitz, Frank Campagna, Olivia Custer, Ryan Gustafson, Josh Kopin, Jeffrey Katz, William Mullen, Sean White, for the useful suggestions to the report and discussion.
- 2) There may be a fourth conception, "Political Indifference" which needs to be researched and analyzed more to consider whether its influence has increased, especially after the establishment of the Koizumi administration in 2000. Among academics, "exclusive using of violence" (M. Weber), "decision of friends or enemies in exceptional situation" (Carl Schmitt), "authoritative distribution of values" (D. Easton) were known, including their critics like in Bernard Crick's *American Science of Politics*, University of California Press, 1959.
- 3) It was Mitsuro Muto (1914-1998) who was the one to introduce Arendt to Japan. He was an economic philosopher and the author of the platform of the Democratic Socialist Party in Japan (now Democratic Party Japan), and translator of Karl Jaspers's Philosophy, who wrote essays which treated Arendt's work in a timely fashion. Hitoshi Abe (1933-2001) started from study of political thought in the foundation of America (*Democracy and the Concept of the Public*, 1966), introduced *On Revolution*, translated *Men in Dark Times*.
- 4) Hiroshi Murai, "The concept of Judgment in Hannah Arendt," (Japanese), *Seikei Hogaku*, No.42-43, 1995.

- 5) Arendt mentioned Aristoteles's "phronesis" in *Nicomachean Ethics* and Baltasar Gracian.
- 6) Ronald Beiner, *Political Judgment*. University of Chicago Press, 1984.
- 7) See § 1~22. About "devoid all interest," see Olivia Custer "Is there an 'I' of the Beholder? Remarks on Kant's First Condition for a Judgment of Beauty," in Volker Gerhardt, Rudolf-Peter Horstmann and Ralph Schmacher, (eds.), *Kant und die Berliner Aufklärung: Akten des IX. Internationalen Kant-Kongresses*, Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 2001.
- 8) Medieval aphorism: where I come from/ no one know it/ where I go to / no one know it/ I please strangely.
- 9) Leslie Paul Thiele, *The Heart of Judgment*, Harvard University Press, 2006.
- 10) Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*.
- 11) About Man-Zu, see Ian Bruma, *Inventing Japan 1853-1964*, The Modern Library, New York, 2003.
- 12) Moreover, need to introduce the theory of the recognition (Paul Ricoeur, *Parcourse of Recognition*).
- 13) See Roger Berkowitz, "Solitude and Activity of Thinking," in Roger Berkowitz, Jeffrey Katz, and Thomas Keenan, (eds.), *Thinking in Dark Times*, Fordam University Press, New York, 2010.
- 14) Jaspers observed *Eichmann in Jerusalem* is the testimony of independence of thinking. See Jaspers, *Provokationen*, München, 1969.
- 15) Arendt said Jaspers is only one pupil of Kant today, Hans Saner is only one pupil of Jaspers. Saner's dissertation was *Kant's Way of War to Peace (Kants Weg vom Krieg zum Frieden)*. Arendt's important student, Elizabeth Young-Bruehl's dissertation was *Freedom and Karl Jaspers's Philosophy*.
- 16) Elisabeth Young-Bruehl described "In my estimation, the book of Jaspers's she most engaged with then was his Origin and Goal of History," *Why Arendt Matters*, Yale University Press, 2006, p.163ff.
- 17) Jaspers, *Reason and Existenz*, Jürgen Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Act*, Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*.