Public Vs. Private Spheres Essay, Research Paper

Our society is divided into two spheres, public and private. Between the realms of public and private, there is a wall. This wall, however, is weakening. The wall is our last line of distinction. If our society s wall is collapsed, our society will take a drastic course for the worse. Our society will take a course that will make us all the same, a society whose citizens know everything about everyone. A society that is stagnant. This can not be allowed. The wall that divides us so well, must be maintained.

Back in the 60 s and 70 s a person could punch out of their job and go home. That person would then arrive at their house, get out of the car, go inside their house, and close the door. Once the door was closed, no one had any way of knowing what that particular family was doing. The family was living their “private” lives, that is, no outside influence whatsoever. There was no “public” in the “private” realm. The two spheres where distinctly separate.

Now in the 90 s, a person will punch out of work, arrive home, and close their door. However, closing the door is not enough to keep the public out of the private. The person would then check their messages, listening to all the telemarketers that somehow, have happened to get your number. The person would then sit down at their computer and log on to the Internet. Once logged on to the internet, the person would have to search and sort through all of their e-mail messages, over half of them are yet again, from telemarketers. Once again you wonder how did these people get my e-mail address. The person then begins exploring the web. They choose to go to their friend s personal web-site, which has pictures and family information on it. Private pictures and information, where almost everyone who has a computer can see it. This is just another example of the private shoved into the public.

However, the Internet is an important tool in bringing private facts into the public arena. The police use the Internet to post pictures of law offenders. This advantage could be used by the local neighbors to identify the criminals. The classifieds could also be posted on-line; this would bring people s private belongings for sale into almost everyone s home. The Internet can also keep citizens informed on the latest news and government issues. These are examples of the public intertwining with the private. In this case it is acceptable for the wall to be surpassed.

The world is moving toward globalization. All over the news one can observe all the gibberish about the “New World Order” and how the United States is going to lead the way. We hear of all the national alliances, NATO, the European Union, OPEC, and wonder, are we all becoming the same. We look towards Europe and see the 11 mighty European countries, all adopting one currency, all the same. The wall is crumbling. Soon everyone will be using the same currency, the same bank, and live the same boring lives.

The wall should be maintained, but it can not. According to Arendt “The conventional distinction between public and private conjures up an image of the public as occupying a specific place: the grandiose chambers of the national assembly; the scaled down versions of the local town hall” (Public Spaces, Private Lives pp93). This brings me to my next point, government. Our government is slowly but surely eroding the wall. Our legislators pass bills that affect our very lives and half the time we do not even realize it. The government will pass laws that will monitor what we say on the Internet. If the government monitors what we express on the Internet, is that not a violation of our 1st Amendment as citizens of the U.S. of A. Our lawmakers pass bills in which you must reveal your income for taxing purposes. They regulate our phone services. Our local governments are helping to crash the wall as well. In our government s goal to bring the public into the private, they have arrested people for, once again, expressing their opinion. Take for example the recent anti-abortion protests on campus. The University Police came and arrested, unlawfully, some students whom where exercising their 1st amendment privilege. The university, in this case, has trampled on people s private beliefs. Can we no longer bring our private feelings into the public realm? If we do, do we have to pay for it by being arrested and hauled of to some cold prison cell.

Why should the wall be maintained? The reasons for maintaining the wall are privacy and dignity. We must maintain some semblance of dignity. If, in our society everyone were equal due to the private becoming public, absolutely no work would get done. We must never totally intertwine the two realms. Combining public and private would mean disaster. What if your boss knew everything about you, your darkest secrets, and your private objects? On the other hand, what if a worker knew everything about their boss? Just how much work would get done? Everyone would fear each other. We must maintain our privacy in order for our world to run smoothly. We have seen what happens to a classless society, the USSR, and it did not look good. There must be distinction, distinction between the worker and the manager, the private and the sergeant, the president and the people. With a rankless society where everyone knows everything about everyone what would be accomplished, what kind of goals would we establish for ourselves? There must be a clear distinction.

This is my argument for distinction between public and private. The wall separating public and private must be held at all costs. Yes, of course there will be some interaction between the two, but they must never, ever totally merge with each other. The wall is the last measure of assurance that the average citizen has for privacy. The wall is crumbling. The debate between public and private wages on.