

fyi, here's how a true theorist writes, deciphering the distortions in the relationship between public and private spheres, by "foregrounding" what is "backgrounded" to flatten the misogynist distortions in our language...

"the other" has been an issue for feminist theorists in a number of disciplines. The caveat is that by placing "Woman" within such an "unmarked" context as the household/family/home, one may invite the tendency to "essentialize." Shifting from inherently biological categories to the contextual categories unmarked/marked helps to overcome this invidious tendency and can help feminist theory cross the delimiting threshold of gender. If we foreground what has been "unmarked" with respect to the *oikos*, and identify it as "hestian," we can maintain a balanced focus on issues related to the familial and the political that goes beyond gender.

The Hestian/Hermean Dual Systems Paradigm challenges the relationship (and implied superiority) of the marked *polis* over the unmarked *oikos* and marked political over the unmarked familial. By attending only to women who have crossed the "presentational threshold" from private to public, we distort some critical features of the unmarked in everyday life. In so doing, we re-mark the patriarchally legitimated category of public life and privilege it (for women at least) over private life. By naming the "hestian" as a distinct social space and boundarying it as a system enclosing a cultural space usually unmarked as "domestic," I seek to turn the hestian domain into a "positive negative space" as well as to recognize it as a distinctive discursive space. As Brekhuis comments:

We can reverse any markedness relationship by explicitly foregrounding that which is typically unmarked. I refer to reverse marking as an explicit strategy for foregrounding the unmarked as though it were unusual and ignoring the marked as though it were mundane. (43)

And, with respect to the example of architecture, Brekhuis continues:

Whereas architects had once treated space between structures as a shapeless background upon which objects simply exist, they now perceive that space as having its own shape. Within architecture this conception, whereby the void between structures is articulated as a positive shape with as much form as the structures themselves, is referred to as 'positive negative space.' (Citing Kern 1983, 153)

In his discussion of this spatial concept, Brekhuis refers to Betty Edwards (1979) "by using the right brain to draw the space between structures we also inadvertently draw the structure. We draw it, however, from an angle that prevents us from relying on our prior expectations (44)." This evokes

... 'theory' approached as deep contemplation of the real...  
(page from P. Thompson 2004 *Fatal Abstractions* p 85