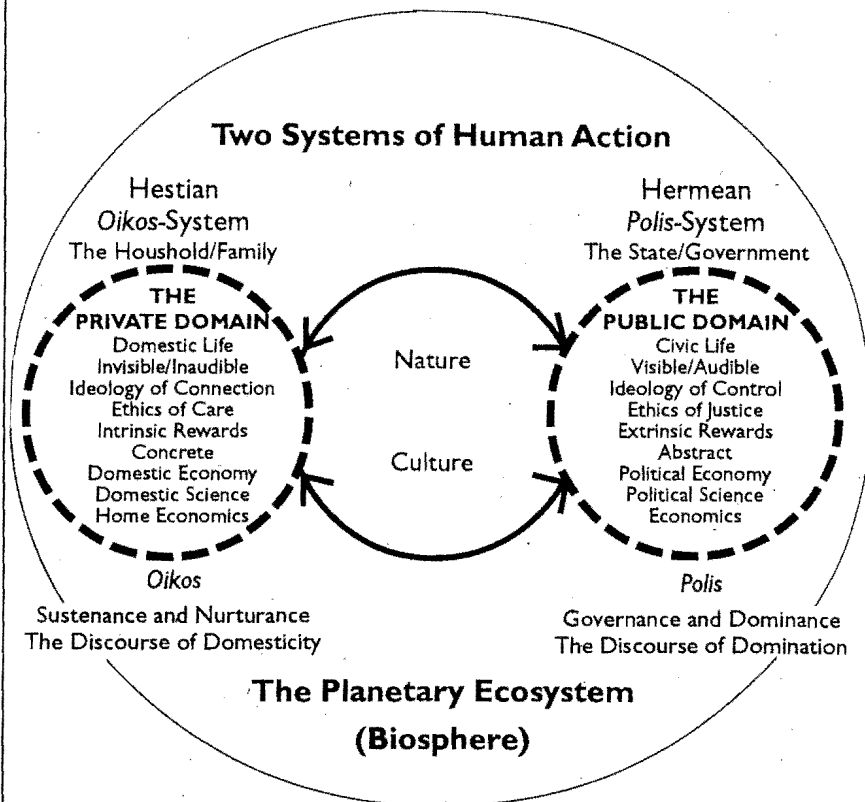


FIGURE 5.2

THE HESTIAN/HERMEAN DUAL SYSTEMS PARADIGM



The elements of a system are a "bounded set" defined by unique relationships that join the elements in a shared purpose. In this case, the overarching purpose of the hestian system is sustenance and nurturance, and the overarching purpose of the hermean system is governance and dominance. The goals of the systems are supported by discourses; a discourse of domesticity in the private domain and a discourse of domination in the public domain. The relationships among elements in a bounded set are stronger than links to elements that are not part of the set's "whole." Some systems are relatively open, and some are relatively closed. System boundaries have "admit" and "exit" points. "Admit points" allow for inputs and "exit points" allow for outputs. Systems exchange energy and information across boundaries at their interfaces. They also admit inputs from other systems and exit outputs to other systems. Output that returns to the original system as input is called feedback. Each system supports sub-systems such as economic systems and symbolic systems that meet each system's overarching goal. The family ecosystem is a subsystem of the hestian *oikos*-system.

Figure 1

HESTIAN/HERMEAN PARADIGM

TWO SYSTEMS OF HUMAN ACTION

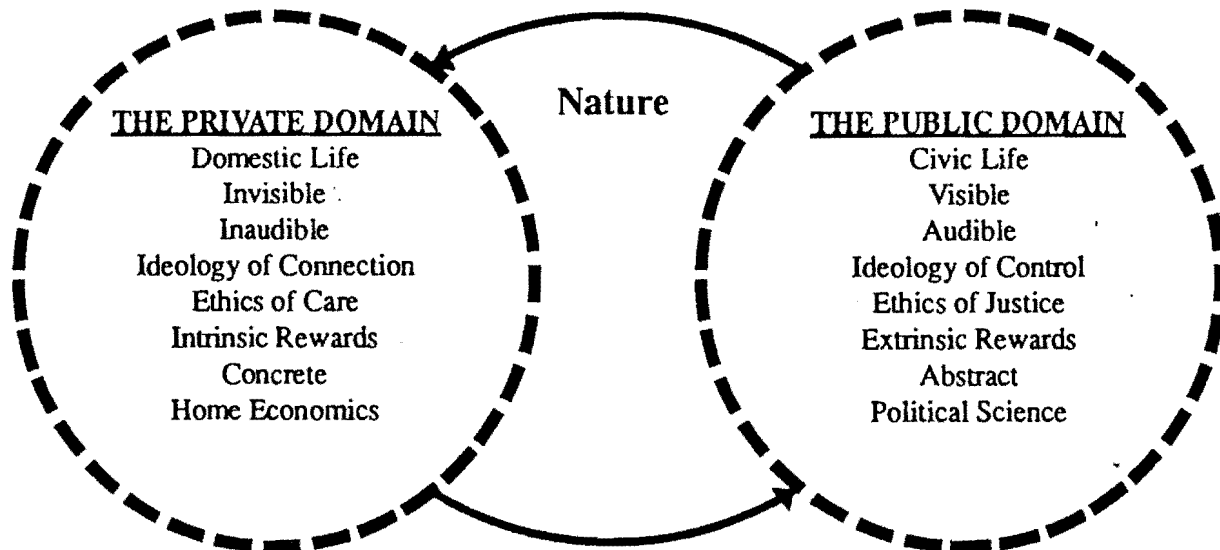
Hestian System

The Household/Family

Hermean System

The State/Government

Culture



THE PLANETARY ECOSYSTEM

FIGURE 9.1

DECONSTRUCTING HERMEAN LANGUAGE

Two Frames of Intelligibility

Hestian Concepts

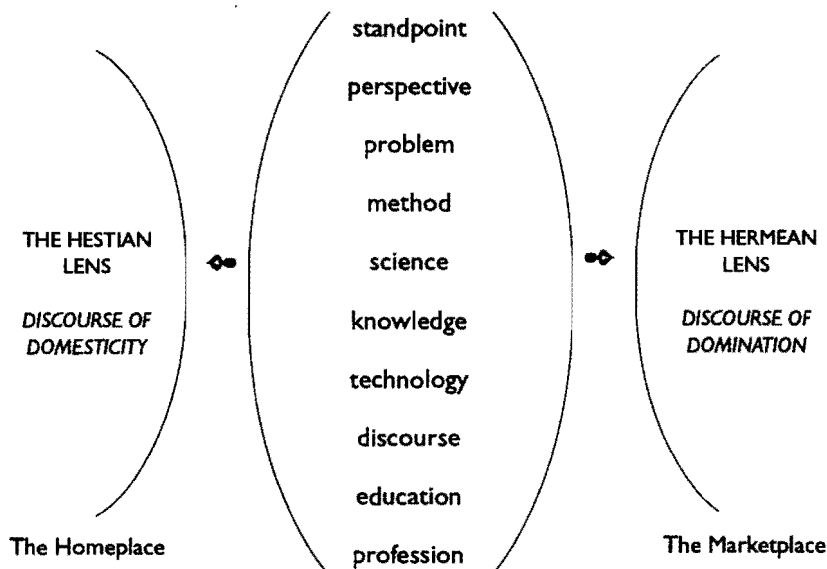
Caring/Connecting

Sustenance/Nurturance

Hermean Concepts

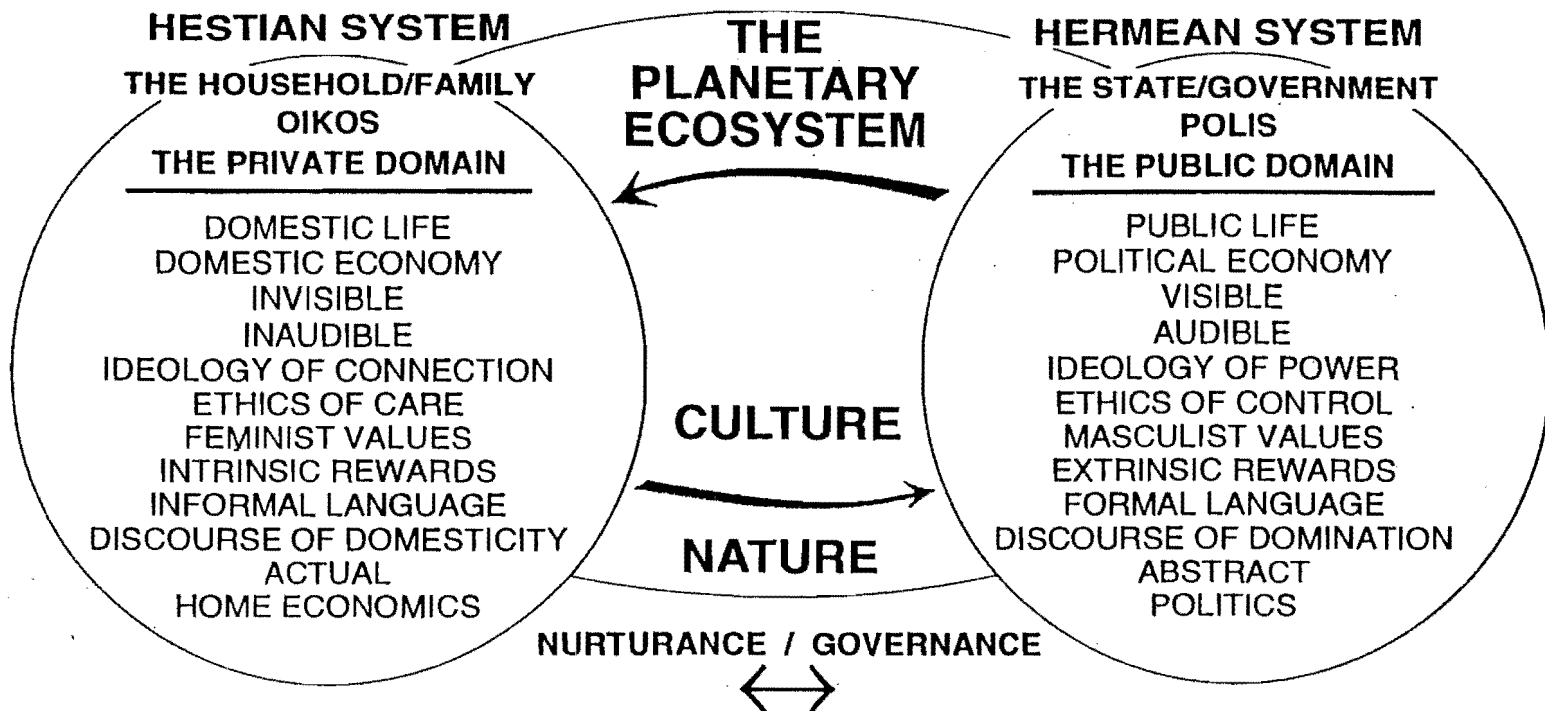
Controlling/Dominating

Governance/Dominance



The post-structuralist view that language itself is contradictory can be subjected to a hestian/hermean analysis so that the contradictions—in the English language at least—can be disclosed as representing two linguistic “turns” with contesting subliminal messages in the discourse of domesticity and the discourse of domination. Each word will “mean” something different, depending on one’s standpoint and frame of intelligibility, i.e., whether seen through a hestian or a hermean lens.

TWO SYSTEMS OF HUMAN ACTION



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RECONCEPTUALIZING *Oikos* AND *Polis*

In the 5th c. B.C.E., philosophical discourse (commencing with Plato and Aristotle) was largely bent on separating the "private world" of the *oikos* from the "public world" of the *polis*. In this process, the domestic was gradually eclipsed by the civic. The interests and ideologies of women and slaves of both sexes were equally adumbrated, which makes gender an "unstable" category for sustained forms of inquiry. Ever since, the power imbalance between the domestic and the civic domains has had profound consequences for the conduct of "family life" in Western societies. It has made the State, rather than the Family, the exclusive subject/object of theory and philosophy (Thompson, 1994).

To the ancient Greeks, the *oikos* was the domestic (household/family) unit where the process of *oikonomeia*, by which they meant the management of household resources, i.e., the domestic economy, occurred. The *oikos* was not just a space, territory, or "house" in our current understanding of such concepts. It was an ecosystem (*oikos*-system), a life support system for its inhabitants, in the same way Hook and Paolucci (1970) conceptualize the modern family as an ecosystem. As Aristotle described it, *oikonomeia* was the system of basic life support activities that sustained a domestic unit, some of whose members were related by kinship, but all of whom identified with the same domestic hearth, or *hestia*, whose presiding goddess was also called Hestia.

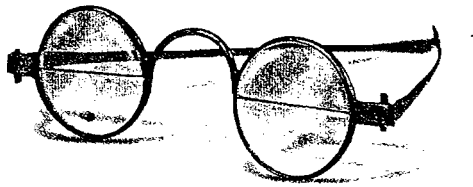
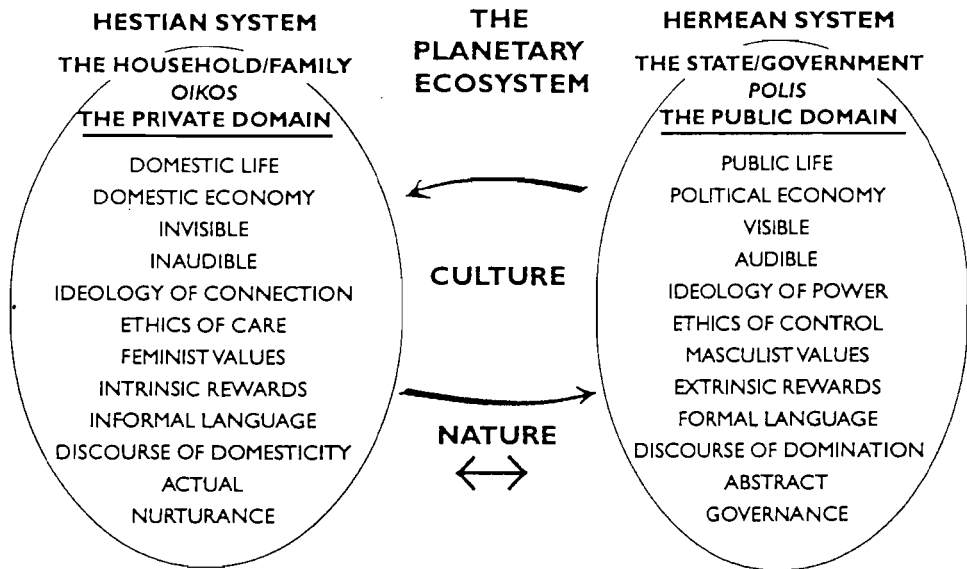


Figure 1

TWO SYSTEMS OF HUMAN ACTION

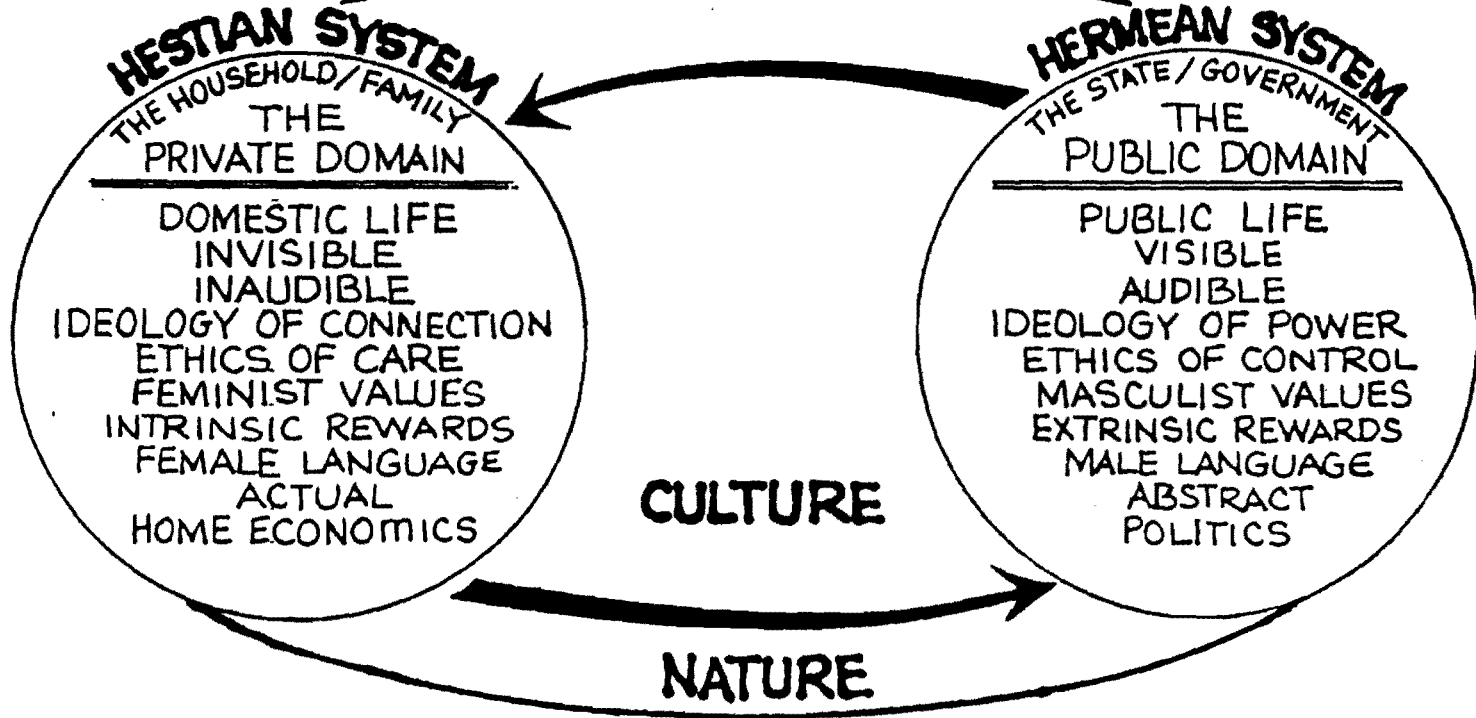


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TWO SYSTEMS OF HUMAN ACTION



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