Mafte'akh
Lexical Review of Political Thought

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Ba'it (Home / Household)

Hagar Kotef

Download Paper

B * The word *ba'it* in Hebrew encapsulates an array of meanings that in English are distributed among several concepts. It is a home and a household – or perhaps house-hold (a house that holds), as it marks a space containing (holding) within it a variety of elements, both literally and metaphorically. It is hence also a place: the place of the sick (the Hebrew word for hospital is literally the *ba'it* of the sick), of the bulb (in Hebrew a light socket is the *ba'it* of the light bulb), of sanctity (the temple is the *ba'it* of holiness). It is the *domus* of the domestic sphere and it entails (or is contained within) the *oikonomia* of the *oikos*. These concepts will therefore be used interchangeably in my definition that follows.

1.

Ba'it–Home/House-Hold(/The Domestic Sphere): a territorial unit which is also an organizing unit. A space that contains and unites an array of functions and orders: the family and kinship,[1] reproduction, private property, nutrition, and nurturing. Perhaps here, right at the outset, we should state that these are also the attributes of the state: it is a demarcated territorial unit, which is also an institution that organizes within (or "under") it the assemblage of citizens (and some non-citizens), regulates and regularizes private property, and provides (on varying levels) an array of social functions (such as healthcare, education, or welfare). We will return to the significance of this equivalence later, but first let us refine our definition. As even this short allusion to the state reveals, none of the above elements is an "attribute" in any rigorous sense. None provides either a necessary or sufficient condition for making a unit into what we may term a *ba'it* (a household, a home). Each of the above aspects can also be found outside of the home, or scattered between several households; on the other hand, many homes do not carry out all, or even some of these functions. This definition is therefore neither precise nor fixed, and it provides an ideal-type more than an accurate portrayal; an ideal-type that does not remain stable through time or across space.

2.

Ba'it–Home/(Household/)The Domestic Sphere: the place of Woman (or: women's place). But in what sense? Is this merely a historical definition, which crystallized in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century as part of the now defunct ideology of separate spheres? Is it a historical definition whose validity is nonetheless sustained through the traces it has left on our perceptions of femininity and domesticity, traces dominant enough to sustain a definition even beyond its socio-historical applicability? In other words, can we still define the home as the woman's place (and women as domestic creatures) even though statistically this connection no longer applies (or perhaps it still does?)? And if so, is this how definitions work – how they *can* work? Are definitions bound to freeze time and space? And for what purpose? For whose sake? In whose name? What should we do – ethically, politically – with such definitions? Should we simply abandon them? Or would it be more desirable to reproduce them, as this opens up the possibility of critique and exposes something about the power relations that stand at their foundations and the power relations that they establish?

3.

Ba'it–(Home/)Household/The Domestic Sphere: the product of the shifting demarcation of the political; a unit that can be defined according to its changing appearances within western political philosophy: the Other of the political, incorporating that which has been excluded from the political, and thereby defining (or constituting) it. Women, children, slaves, property, biological needs (from the fact of birth, to growth, and to death) – all these are at times the building blocks of the household, at times utterly political, and at times hybrid creatures: domestic functions or entities with a suspended political presence (a suspended presence that is actualized in response to what is seen as a "malfunction" of the home, as in the case of family courts, for example). These functions/entities shift their positions as the borders demarcating the political sphere are modified and redrawn. The exclusion of the household from the political does not disconnect the two but rather creates a structural (essential) relationship between them, a relationship that takes the form of Agamben's "inclusive exclusion" or Derrida's (and, following him, Butler's) "constitutive outside". Therefore, we have here an opposite structure to that revealed by Definition 1. We will return to this opposition later; in the meantime, let us note that here, again, the definition is not sufficient and comes under threat from at least three directions. First, the political has many other Others: nature, the "private", even the "social". Second, the borders of the political constantly shift (a function of history and theory entangled together). Finally, the border that constitutes both the household and what lies beyond it (the political sphere) turns out to be diffuse and unstable even while it appears to be sealed and is marked as such.

***

We have, then, three partial definitions, which form the foundation of my analysis. No single one provides either a necessary or a sufficient defining principle; even as a group they do not form a sufficient and exhaustive whole. At the end of this lexical entry we will encounter a fourth definition, and others are surely possible. We could, for example, define *ba'it* by reference to its absence – focusing on acts of expulsion and the status of refugees; on the need of individuals (at least of modern individuals) to sever ties with their childhood homes, to symbolically kill the head of the household in the process of establishing one's own home and selfhood; on the need of the many to demolish and erase homes whose ruins then become the foundations of a new homeland; or on the yearning of both, individuals and nations, for a return: a return to a ruined or a newly established home(land) – each positioning the home as a site/concept whose meaning resides outside the present, in a past or a future, and hence never in its actual existence. Alternatively, we could

think of the home through the concept of the family or through the status of guests, that is, via those bodies that are contained within the structure of the home and give it meaning, whether they are regular inhabitants or passersby whose very transience highlights the stability of the home (or: whose very needs and lacks reveal the functions of the home).

These three definitions were chosen, therefore, not because of their privileged status but because they form a sort of whole that orbits one major axis: the contrast between the domestic and the political. In so doing, this whole situates the *bai't* at the center of political theory. The links between these three definitions, like their points of divergence, reveal the politicality of the home from three different directions. There is therefore a web of tensions and ties between these three definitions that enables us to think about the possibility of offering a definition (this one in particular but also definitions in general).

And since the project of which this entry is a segment is a political lexicon, I will open with the latter definition, which lies within the field of political philosophy.

3.   Ba'it (Home/)Household/The Domestic Sphere

It was probably Aristotle who first excluded the home from the political sphere. It seems that after him (and maybe up until the feminist claim that the personal is political, a claim that politicized a whole host of objects and fields, including the home/household), the "home" remained a specter within political theory, lingering between presence and absence. It is present within political theory as a metaphor or foundation, but remains absent not only because it is not subjected to (or does not participate in) any systematic theorization, but also because, even when the home does seem to underlie a particular strand or argument within political theory, it is rarely explicitly named. Schematically, we may argue that the domestic sphere (like the sphere marked as the natural, and sometimes as a symbol of the natural sphere, a paradigm of it, or its outermost edge) is marked, placed and *defined* as that which is – or should be – beyond the reach of the political, beyond its rightful interests and legitimate realm of intervention.

We can find this understanding of the home in the vast majority of political theories. It is also shared by institutional-historic analyses that depict the emergence of the modern state from the royal court. According to this analysis, even though the state in its embryonic form was inseparable from the king's household, the modern state is defined as such *because* of the disentanglement of the sovereign from the persona of the king and of the state's bureaucracy from the management of the king's household. The product of this disentanglement is not merely a separated entity but rather an inverted one: an abstract being, as opposed to a concrete personality.

What is the home that is demarcated as the Other of the political? What is the political that is defined by the home's exclusion? We may argue that, if any definition (on a linguistic level) or any constitution (on an ontological level) requires purification, then in the tradition that began with Aristotle and whose imprint is still felt throughout political philosophy, the home and the political are mutually dependent: we cannot think of the one without the other and neither can exist without its exclusion from the other. Such an argument would follow a rather familiar pattern, appearing in other contexts in the work of Giorgio Agamben, Judith Butler, or Jacques Derrida, among others. But I would like to take a different path here, showing that the separation itself is impossible. In other words, I will argue that this supposed otherness is not a constitutive (and therefore immanent) element in the formation of the political but is in fact not otherness at all.

Aristotle defined the household (*oikos*) in contradistinction to the *polis*. The *oikos* is "this association of persons, established according to nature for the satisfaction of daily needs".[2] An "*oikos*", then, is a "natural" thing and a site organized according to natural needs, or, in other words, a site determined by necessity. As such, the *oikos* is the opposite of the political – the realm of human action and of the possibility of transcending necessity. Not only in these functions is the *oikos* the other of the *polis*, but also in its form: the household is based on unification and unity, while the polis is based on plurality and variation.[3]

Yet even here, in Aristotle, this opposition is revealed to be impossible. The Aristotelian identification of *telos* with nature leads to a mutual infiltration of the political (the *telos* of man) and the domestic (the realm of nature within human space). Being the ultimate end, and hence also the end of the household, the political becomes the nature of the domestic; the nature (read: essence) of the household resides in the *polis*. In other words, the political organization is not only the *outcome* of what Aristotle terms "natural associations" – the households, villages, and, prior to them, the pairs of man-woman and man-slave (to which we will return later). Since the political organization is their end, and since "end", "essence", and "nature" are conflated in Aristotelian teleology, the political turns out to be the *nature* of the household, while the essence of the household is revealed to be *political* (these are not two sides of a dichotomy; the meaning of the two parts of this conclusion is identical within the Aristotelian framework). Simultaneously, the naturalness of the household becomes an attribute of the political (being the *nature*, i.e. the *telos*, of the human realm). Or, to put it differently, since for Aristotle parts gain their essence from the whole, and since the *polis* is composed of households and can be seen as the whole of which they are parts, the essence of the household is political. On the other end, the *polis* "exists by nature" precisely because it is composed of households, which in turn imbue it with their attributes (above all with their naturalness – the very attribute that supposedly distinguishes them from the *polis*):

> Therefore every state exists by nature, as the earlier associations too were natural. This association is the end of those others, and nature is itself an end; *for whatever is the end-product of the coming into existence of any object, that is what we call its nature.*[4]

This sharp – and yet impossible – division between the domestic and the political runs through the entire history of political philosophy. As we will see, it is central to liberalism; it underlies the dichotomy identified by Max Weber between the pure form of rational authority in the modern bureaucratic state on the one hand, and the traditional state, drawing its form from the household, on the other; and, mediated by civil society, this opposition also appears in Hegel. Rushing forward in time (even if only to remain within the borders of the *polis*), we find that Hanna Arendt enables us to refine the Aristotelian claim that it is crucial to maintain a sealed and stable border between the domestic and the political. Such a separation, she argues, is necessary if we are to open up a space (the political space) ruled by a logic that is not submerged by necessity. It is only by distinguishing a *separate* site (the household), in which biological needs are attended to, that the political space as a space of freedom is possible. Akin to the Hegelian story of the master and bondsman, Arendt argues that a political existence is dependent upon one's willingness to risk one's life. Only this willingness makes it possible to detach life (*zoē*, as political life) from *bios* (biological existence). Since, by definition, the household is that which is entrusted with the maintenance of biological life, the political sphere has to be external to it.[5] What emerges from this separation is an opposition whereby reproduction, stability, (over-) determination, and need (a term in which necessity, nature, and biological conditioning merge) are all contained within the household, while

plurality, change, the possibility of transcending and creating (the possibility of action) are all enabled by the political. Being the creatures that we are, we need the former; to be the humans that we can be, we also need the separate existence of the latter.

We can also think about these relations through the concept of the law, which in Greek thought was not conceived as integral to political practice but rather as forming its constitutive frame (a frame that precedes and hence is separate from the possibility of political action). The law was therefore thought of as a wall that delimits (and thereby constitutes) the *polis*, and indeed, etymologically, it relied on the walls of the *oikos*.[6] Like the law, which is the set of limitations within which (and against which) the political sphere is constituted as a sphere of freedom, the *oikos* is an array of borders: the borders demarcated by its physical walls, the limitations on novelty set by the repetition of reproduction, and the very boundaries of life – the house (home, household) is the site of birth and death.[7] The former encapsulates the *polis*, the civic, political existence; the latter contains the family and biological existence.

The dissolution of the borders between the two spheres is a concrete historical problem that is marked in Arendt as the appearance of the social. As the social expands, necessity becomes the principle governing the public sphere, and a myriad of normalizing apparatuses produce a unification of its potential plurality. Hence, the loss of the two sides of this now-defunct border corrupts the political, brings the household to burst its banks, and degrades and reduces the human. With the appearance of the social, argues Arendt (who, in this regard, is a forerunner of the Foucauldian concept of bio-politics), man became no more than a species. Yet while the political dissolves with this overflow of the household's functions, the domestic is maintained as a separate site, albeit with different attributes. The domestic becomes primarily the space of intimacy, of family life. When the functions of the household (here in its narrower sense) can no longer provide a differentiating definition for the *ba'it*, home appears. The household remains the signifier of the family as an economic unit, and, as mentioned above, becomes the organizing principle of the state. However, it no longer provides the defining *difference*.

Yet here we can go beyond Arendt and argue that the state, in turn, becomes a *home*land (in Hebrew: the "home of the nation", or a "national home"): the locus of a family of a different order. The modern state is not merely an apparatus aimed at providing the conditions required for the maintenance of life (and sometimes even some of the conditions necessary for the flourishing of lives), thereby taking upon itself the role of the *oikos* in the Greek tradition. It is also seen as a space in which a certain kind of intimacy, albeit fragile and frail, should be produced. A national exile is a "destruction of the home":[8] it entails the displacement of the family, its dispersion across foreign territories, and the consequent loss of its intimacy. Once again, the distinction between the domestic and the political collapses.

Arendt, and Foucault and Agamben after her, argued that this distinction collapses with something we can vaguely term "modernity". With this collapse, they argue, we are witness to a new mode of managing common space, a space that is therefore categorized by Arendt as non-political and that, with Foucault and Agamben, becomes a constituent of the concept of bio-*politics* (or governmentality[9]). Derrida, however, shows that this distinction cannot be sustained even within the Greek framework, which Arendt craved to reconstruct. From the *polis* through the French Revolution and all the way to Rawls, argues Derrida,[10] the political sphere is contaminated (always-already) with the logic of the household. From classic times until today, we share a political space founded upon the principle of fraternity, of *brother*hood, wherein the civic players are the sons of the same mother – the motherland. Thus constituted, the political not only takes place within the borders of the family, it also subjects itself to the necessity embedded in nature: it becomes (or perhaps always was) a sphere of blood, of dynasty. Moreover, within this sphere of fraternity, the decision about the boundaries of the political community (the distinction between friend and enemy – the primary political decision, according to Schmitt) is handed over to nature. Therefore, the plurality within this sphere is actually mere duplication; it is the multitude of the identical: the many friends who are, precisely, those who are similar to one another and cite each other's names,[11] thereby reproducing one another. This is a plurality without difference. (Indeed, difference – substantial difference, the difference between citizens and those who are not, gender- and sex-based differences, class differences, racial differences – was removed from the *polis* and (presumably) restrained within the household). It was precisely this expulsion, this "privatization" of difference, which enabled and characterized the particular political design of the Greek *polis*. Only with this removal of difference to a different sphere, dedicated to material existence, was it possible to condition citizenship on the devotion of substantial time to politics.

The distinctions in whose name the household was banished beyond the borders of the political sphere in both Aristotle and Arendt thus fail: the distinction between freedom and necessity, between the political and the natural (or biological), between plurality and unity, between (free) action and conditionality (being conditioned), between change and reproduction. Both sides of the desired dichotomy thereby appear as subject to the same logic. And when the logic of the household surfaces, almost spitefully, in the kernel of the political, the politics of fraternity begins to spin out of control. Together with freedom and plurality, the many, too, fade away; the very many that comprise the "public" and that are therefore a precondition for a public sphere. This fading is not merely metaphorical, a result of a form of reproduction that produces a many that are merely the duplication of the one. It is also a function of the hierarchy underlying the Greek notion of friendship: this hierarchy indicates that friendship exists in its purest form when the other vanishes. Loving is superior to being loved; the presence of the friend therefore contaminates the active element within friendship. Only when the other(s) are gone does friendship materialize is its pure form.[12] Like Arendt, Derrida also plays here with Hegel's model of the master and bondsman,[13] and like her, the consequences of this twist in the relations between the domestic and the political go beyond the loss of the political. This spiral ends with an inward collapse of the entire system, in a manner that precludes any form of relation – not only to the other but also to one's self, namely, the possibility of reflection (which presupposes some distance, some difference, within the one). What is at stake, then, is the very possibility of a reflexive subject.

As I've suggested above, the assumption that the political and the domestic exclude each other and that this exclusion conditions the very possibility of both also underlies the rigid distinction between the private and the political that liberalism both assumes and demands. Here we return to a link that was suspended while discussing Arendt: the link between the home/household and property. (Private) property requires a private sphere, and the fence, both as a physical obstacle and signifier, demarcates a sphere that ties together "private" property and the home/household. It is precisely this fence that we find in Locke[14]; at the opening of the second part of Rousseau's **On the Origins of Inequality**[15]; and as defining the home as that which the political – among other Others – cannot penetrate. The political sphere that crystallizes with the (physical or ideological) erection of this fence will be, at least ideally, a narrow space, which is thought of only through the figures of laws and institutions, and is entirely aimed at securing the distinction.

We can arrive at this same conclusion by examining the ontology of the liberal autonomous subject. The autonomous subject is a self-sufficient individual enclosed within the borders of its body – the initial and primary "private", which is

often thought of in terms of home. "Home", because this body is not seen as an integral part of the subject but rather as the locus in which it resides, as a site protecting the subject (a thinking subject; a mind) from the reach of other individuals and institutions, including political intervention. The subject itself is configured as an abstract juridical entity, tying together rights and liberties. It is a rationality stripped of corporeality. Just like the political sphere itself, the liberal individual is also conceptualized (and constituted) through the figure of the home: not just as a signifier or a metaphor for its body, or as a mode of organizing space (a confinement of a subject in a body), but also through the kind of links established between space and property. The liberal individual is primarily[16] a property holder: the owner of his own body – which is but his home – a home owner, and the owner of what is inside the home. The political sphere that is constituted by this demarcation will be, at least ideally, an array of rights, liberties, and limitations, intended to protect the boundaries of this individual to the greatest possible extent. Here, the classical hierarchy is inverted: whereas in the classical framework the household, as a substance for biological existence, appeared as the precondition for a superior political existence, now the political emerges as that which is dedicated to sustaining the household. Instead of a model in which the subject actualizes its *telos* by transcending the household (and becoming a political being), in the current model the political space is merely the "night guard" protecting the home. Only in this narrow, reduced sense does it still serve as a condition for the full actualization of the subject's potential.

Nevertheless, such readings ignore the extent to which the home – as both a concept and an entity – troubles the liberal political ontology that is founded on the centrality of the autonomous individual. In the **Second Treatise of Government**, for example, the term home/household is almost completely absent, as if Locke was aware of the degree to which this entity would disturb his framework. Locke's aforementioned fence is largely metaphorical and does not physically demarcate the home, the lot, the estate. It is metaphorical to the extent that Locke seems to feel obliged to ask his readers' permission to call it a "fence".[17] Its physical presence is so diluted and disintegrated that it has to be ceaselessly marked and re-marked by labor.

It is rather intriguing, then, that a clearly demarcated household never materializes on the pages of the treatise. This absence is even more conspicuous and perplexing in light of the space that Locke devotes to a discussion of the family. It seems almost inevitable that Locke should superimpose the space (insubstantial and unstable as it may be) delimited in the fifth chapter on property, onto the institution of family depicted in the subsequent chapter. But this superimposition, which would construct the concept of household, is absent. Perhaps we can understand this absence if we realize that to construct the home as a unity would mean deconstructing the liberal ontology of the subject. It would expose the (inter-) dependency, the essential openness and vulnerability of the subject (its precariousness, in Judith Butler's terms[18]), which could therefore no longer be thought of as autonomous. As a site of birth, nurturing, fostering and education, the home exposes our being, always-already, in plural;[19] it demonstrates that we are always given to others, dependent on a social network that sustains us and, quite literally, gives us life and shapes this life. The seemingly impervious boundaries of the self-sufficient autonomous subject appear within the home as fragile and easily breached. It is the same site, then, (the home) that gives rise to a capitalist-liberal political sphere – a thin sphere, whose institutions are legitimate only insofar as they protect the home (or the house) as property, as entailing property, and as symbolizing property – while at the same time threatening the assumptions underlying this demarcation of the political.

With this understanding of the subject as always-already given in a form of relation (or form*s* of relation*s*) to others, we can return to Aristotle. After he characterizes *oikos* as the basic unit of which the *polis* is composed, we discover that it conceals a more basic unit, namely, the couple, "those which are incapable of existing without each other".[20] We find that, by himself, the citizen cannot form a (political) unit; he cannot appear in the singular, and "must be united"[21], either with a woman or a slave. He depends on the slave for his material existence and on the woman for reproduction, for fulfilling "the natural urge…to propagate one's kind".[22] The *oikos* is therefore political (as it is a sphere of co-existence), and presents us from the outset with a very specific political model: a model not only of territory and nationality (as the nation is the extension of the family in a given territory) but also a hierarchical model. The foundation of the *oikos* is a double couple united by a single head – a man and a slave; a man and a woman. And the foundation of the couple, according to Aristotle, is domination. The household is therefore constituted by a twofold domination (the man's domination over the woman and the slave), a natural domination anchored in the natural need to reproduce and the natural need to survive (and, taken together, the natural need to exist in time). A new criterion distinguishing the household from the *polis* thus emerges: the nature of *domination* or *rule* and the fundamental difference between ruling those who are "free and equal"[23] and ruling those who are by their very nature unfree (women and slaves). Accordingly, the household can be defined as that place in which the unfree are ruled;[24] and rule, says Aristotle, is a function of difference.[25]

With difference, and more concretely, with this difference that founds domination, we move on to the second definition – no. 2 above – and with it, to another discourse concerning the relations between the domestic and the political: the discourse of feminism.

2. Ba'it–Home/(Household/)The Domestic Sphere:

The domestic/political dichotomy has clear parallels to the man/woman dichotomy, not only on the metaphorical level or because they exhibit analogous structures and share the same model of hierarchy, but also in terms of space and content: the place of the woman – who is the other of man just as the domestic is the other of politics – is at home. Or: this is how this relation is often perceived and configured. Or: this is how things used to be, as historical fact (and perhaps still are, as sociological fact). Or: this is how the two are defined: the home *is* woman's sphere, and, as the realm of biology, corporeality, and sexuality, it is a feminine site; *therefore*, it stands in opposition to the political.

We have here more than just a definition whose content is cast into the same mold of negation (i.e., the home, the other of the political – the sphere traditionally considered as the sphere of men – is configured as the sphere of Woman, the other of Man). There is an immanency here that is constitutive in the case of both home and Woman, and there is perhaps even *a single* definition:

Home is the place of differences. It is a site that produces differences, contains them, or hides them within its walls. And perhaps here, with this definition, all the definitions we have encountered – and those we shall encounter below – become entangled in a single knot: *home is that which can be – indeed is – differentiated (from the political), and that within which difference resides – it is the place of Woman (she who is different from Man), and at the same time the signifier of private property (which produces class differences); it is the site in which those who are different are governed and in which differences appear as ungovernable: unity, which is a primary attribute of the home (in Aristotle, Rousseau, Arendt), and which should be contradictory to the plurality of the political sphere, is reincarnated as a*

political attribute, and its new opposite ("difference" instead of "plurality") appears within the home; the home is the function through which forms of government are differentiated, and the site within which rule produces differences – differences between those who are thoroughly and fully governed (as they are anchored to necessity, i.e. nature) and those who can, in some fields, transcend being governed and are therefore "free" and "equal".

Although there is a sense in which this paragraph summarizes the current definitional move, I would like to linger over the entanglement of woman with home as constitutive of the latter's definition. Through a particular organization of the home/house and of women within houses, women are constructed as creatures whose body always imperils their mind – creatures whose corporeality, and in particular their sexuality, possess some excess, and should therefore be restricted to specific contexts (rooms) so as to prevent its perilous overflow. "Any place reserved for women ought to be treated as though dedicated to religion and chastity", writes Alberti in his **On the Art of Building in Ten Books** (a book that was central to the formation of architecture in the fifteenth century).

> I would have the young girls and maidens allocated comfortable apartments, to relieve their delicate minds from the tedium of confinement. […] The husband and wife must have separate bedrooms, not only to ensure that the husband be not disturbed by his wife, when she is about to give birth or is ill, but also to allow them, even in summer, an uninterrupted night's sleep, whenever they wish. Each room should have its own door, and in addition a common side door, to enable them to seek each other's company unnoticed.[26]

The particular arrangement of the house laid out here protects women's bodies – but also offers protection *from* those bodies. This protection constitutes these bodies as particularly vulnerable, but also as dangerous and excessive. At the same time, the configuration of women's bodies as excessive (and hence vulnerable-dangerous) dictates particular forms for the building of homes: the bedrooms, the men's salons, which are separated from the dining rooms, and later the kitchens separated from the living areas all came together to create a gendered organization of the social space, which in turn genders its inhabitants.

It may be interesting to note that feminism – the movement that sought to change the connection between women and homes, as well as the very structure of otherness – has almost never put forward analyses of the architectonic dimension of the home or proposed alternative possible constructions of space in the home.[27] Notable exceptions to this can be found in the writings of Margaret Fuller (1810-1850) and later Charlotte Perkins-Gilman (1860-1935), who argued that the struggle for women's emancipation and equality must be integrated with changes to the very structure of the home such that it would include communal kitchens and common areas for laundry.

Yet despite this scarcity of feminist critiques of the architecture of the home, feminism nonetheless enables us to (re)examine the dichotomy between the political and the domestic and with it the definition of 'home' that relies on this dichotomy. We can understand at least one part of the feminist claim that the personal is political as arguing that power relations within the domestic sphere are both an instance and a foundation of political power relations. In other words, what happens in the home establishes a particular political structure while also being shaped by this structure. According to a predominant feminist critique (which appears most lucidly in the work of Simone de Beauvoir[28] and Carole Pateman[29]), the constitution of the democratic-liberal state is conditioned upon a sharp divide between the domestic and the political, resulting in the former's banishment to other domains – where it is supposedly protected in space and is presumed to precede the state in time. This banishment enables a political form that is based on discrimination, domination, and subjugation (of women, but also of slaves and those who have no property) to mask itself with a façade of equality. The political, then, is demarcated here on two levels. On the first, we have a political sphere defined by the exclusion of the home. However, this exclusion is precisely that which renders the home political on another, more fundamental plateau: the act of exclusion (of demarcation; of *definition*) is a political act in and of itself, with political consequences and meanings that reach beyond its own walls, impinging on the juridical sphere, state institutions, public discourse, and citizenship.

With the assertion of Second Wave feminism (in the late nineteen sixties) that the personal and the political cannot be fully separated (and may even be *equivalent*), and with the critique of the ideal of domesticity as expressed by Betty Friedan[30], de Beauvoir before her, and much earlier by suffragists such as Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth C. Stanton, feminism had become engaged with displaying phenomena that take place in the home (whether by virtue of their very essence or as a matter of statistical significance) and uncovering both their political nature and their role as founding and facilitating particular political relations. From the identification of femininity with domesticity – which rendered women economically dependent (and hence dependent in general), and which precluded their equal political representation – to wife beating or rape, feminist critiques see women's oppression as occurring primarily within the home, through their confinement within the home, and through the definition of the home and everything within it as non-political (thus rendering women's political claims meaningless). These feminist claims (and political practices) expose the political as a masculine space, and the home – even if still a feminine space – as political. In other words, against Aristotle (or Arendt, or Agamben, or Locke), we may argue that the power of men over women is political; that the act by which woman is excluded from full citizenship is political; that the distinction between the life of women or daughters and that of sons (the latter are subject to political power while the former are simply, apolitically (naturally), subjugated)[31] is a political distinction.

(It may be worth noting that this particular mode of politicizing the home (and the private) undermines – if not collapses altogether – another key element in all the definitions offered above (and all those to come), namely, the intimate, which is revealed here as an ideology that does not always reflect reality. I do not intend to argue that the home cannot provide intimacy, nor even that it is a marginal or secondary site in providing it. Yet after the exposure by feminists of the frequency of violence and oppression within the home and of the very political structure constituted by the dual act of demarcating the home as non-political and identifying it as Woman's sphere, we can no longer regard insecurity within the home as a breach, a deviation within what ordinarily provides intimacy, belonging, and protection. Therefore, the intimate is neither a sufficient nor a necessary mark of the home. This is not only because it is, as argued above, also a defining element within the modern nation state, but also because it does not accurately reflect what actually takes place inside many homes. Nevertheless, we must bear in mind that the power of ideologies is not merely political; it is also (and perhaps the two conflate here) epistemological. Our ability to apprehend, comprehend, recognize, and name is often (if not necessarily) mediated by ideology. Therefore, even while we want to undermine the identification of the intimate and the domestic, we cannot ignore it.)

It would seem that this call to expose the political nature of the home and to disrupt the identification of home with Woman and vice versa presents an alternative to the pattern of exclusion that defines the home and the political by contrasting them. Yet perhaps those who have argued that the home is the primary site of women's oppression and who

have understood the politicization of the domestic sphere to be the condition for their liberation rely on the same rigid distinction between the two spheres? Perhaps the real challenge to this dichotomy is to be found elsewhere, in a different school of feminism, which endorsed the identification of women with domesticity and saw in their political liberation a means of achieving domestic-oriented goals? This feminist school (which was the main strand of feminism in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century, and whose key notions were arguably Frances Willard's *home protection* doctrine[32] and Perkins-Gilman's notion of *civic housekeeping*) assumed a rather different relation between the home and the political. During the progressive era in the United States, groups of suffragists joined a process of redefining the political, turning political practice into what Jane Addams called a form of "enlarged housekeeping". Addams referred, in an almost Schmittian manner, to an "original" political sphere as a sphere connected to the distinction between friends and enemies. But this era of politics, she argued, had already passed, or, at least, was suspended during times of peace. Adams – and many of her contemporaries – defined their era as that of the "new politics", the era in which politics was completely subordinated to the mechanisms and structures of the household (sanitation, workplace safety, street cleaning, education, etc.).[33] This gave women the right – indeed, the duty – to engage in politics. Thus the bond between women and the home is preserved but the boundaries of the home dissolve, as it spills into the political:

> Women's place is in the Home. But home is not contained within the four walls of an individual home. Home is the community. The City full of people is the Family. The public school is the real Nursery. And badly do the Home and the Family and the Nursery need their Mother.[34]

Bearing in mind this strand of feminism may be of value not only as part of an effort to define feminism inclusively but also because it suggests an alternative to understanding the home as a locus whose relation to women must be understood through the prism of oppression, and because it articulates new relations between the vertices of the home-woman-politics triangle.

Feminism also provides a new avenue for conceptualization: it allows us to think of the home as a political technology. With this we turn to the attempt to formulate a content-based definition of the home (one of essence or history), as opposed to a structural definition that proceeds via its contrast with the political sphere. We turn, in other words, to definition no. 1 above: a functional definition of the home, which endeavors to conceptualize it through its modes of operation, its practices and roles.

1. *Ba'it*–Home/House-Hold(/The Domestic Sphere):

We can think about the home first and foremost as a type of space, as a delineation of and within space that holds something together. This definition emerges from the Hebrew usage but may be carried over to the English concept of house-hold (i.e. a building that holds). In its broadest meaning, when coupled with another noun and mediated by the possessive form, the house holds various things, groups and subjects. It holds graves (and maybe the dead) in the cemetery—in Hebrew, the *ba'it* of burial; it holds the students (and teachers, and the practice of learning) in the school—in Hebrew, the *ba'it* of the book; it holds the act of examining whether a certain law applies to a specific action in the court—in Hebrew, the *ba'it* of judgment. More specifically, we may argue that in this grammatical form (in Hebrew, the form of *status constructus*), home is a place of *residence* – the place wherein things of different orders reside. To put it differently, it is that which contains elements whose being-together entails some stability (the prisoners in prison—the *ba'it* of imprisonment in Hebrew; the light bulb in the light socket—in Hebrew, the *ba'it* of the lamp; divinity in the temple—the house of holiness, etc.).

In a narrower sense, when it stands on its own, home is perhaps the place where the family resides, where the family is held together. But "family" is itself an amorphous concept, with many different appearances and forms, not all of which are contained within a single building or can be defined through kinship. Instead of "family" we may therefore propose that home is that which holds the functions of reproduction, sex, nutrition, nurturing, and care. It is the place in which one is born, grows up, and dies. It is also that which belongs to us and which contains what belongs only to us: private property, but also, metaphorically (and sometimes not metaphorically), other people.

It would seem, however, that this direction, too, cannot release the home from the grip of the political. Firstly, although it is often cast in concrete, the spatial construct known as "home" is not impervious to the political. Its demarcation changes with modifications to the organization of the political sphere; it does not always function as a home; it does not always function as non-political; and its functions are not always differentiated from the functions of other zones in the public domain (hospitals, restaurants, day care centers, or rehabilitation centers). The domains we call "domestic" are not stable in time: at any given moment another field and another relationship can be politicized. Nor are they stable in space: the political constantly penetrates the borders of our homes, whether via television, dinner table conversation, the power relations between the home's inhabitants (men and women, parents and children, employers and employees), or even through the practice of birthing, raising, and educating (shall we say "constituting"?) citizens.

Second, as we saw at the conclusion of our previous attempt at a definition, many of the home's functions shape it as a political technology. This is a technology that enables the preservation – and reproduction – of the entire social order in terms not only of gender. Following Foucault, we may think about the modern home also as part of a wider bio-political and disciplinary scheme. Specifically, the home is one of the sites that produce and form subjects as governable individuals (and is thus a disciplinary site); it is also a population-managing technique – a technique that turns the population into a manageable object (and is thus a bio-political site). As such, the home is part of a scheme that grants authority to certain forms of power and produces an infrastructure for recognizing the authority to implement this power. Therefore, it is a political site. As a political technology, the home has many facets and modes of operation: distributing individuals inside the house, between its various rooms, is part of the regulation and normalization of gender, sexuality, hygiene, and age, as well as of the organization of labor (the home as a space of leisure, but also the home-office).

Different ways of building houses – from the working class houses of the nineteenth century[35] to prisons[36] – reflect new ways of comprehending the subject and at the same time produce new forms of subjectivity (the appearance of childhood, of bourgeois sexuality, self-discipline, the aforementioned female corporeality, etc.). These modes of construction thereby produce new surfaces for the grip of power. Simultaneously, the fragmentation of the population into households (as spatial sites, but also as institutions: one family per household, under one address)[37] is essential for the state's ability to produce statistics (which, since the eighteenth century, has been both a central *means* of power and a significant *mode* of power). Along with statistics, the distribution of populations into and within households gives rise to a wide range of technologies by which populations, but also many other things (from diseases to parliamentary representatives), are managed, registered, distributed, contained, set, or individualized. We can in this context recall the plague at the end of the seventeenth century and the attempts to contain and manage it through the individuation provided by the house: locking the doors of all houses once the outbreak erupts, registering families/households and requiring people to stand at their windows so that sick (and healthy) could be counted, suspending the space of the city – in an

effort to contain the plague – by banning all unauthorized movement between houses (and sometimes between rooms). We can recall the making of suffrage conditional on having a permanent address – a regulation that in some states has the power to decide the makeup of government – or the outcomes of public opinion surveys and their similar dependence on the designation of people to particular homes. And we can recall taxation, or social service agencies, or, – leaving the domain of the state – marketing strategies. All this can be consolidated within one key claim made by Foucault: ever since the eighteenth century, the architectonic organization of houses and the spatial organization of the city's elements (including houses) have become a core political problem and a crucial political technology. Alongside schools ("houses of books"), prisons ("houses of imprisonment"), and hospitals ("houses of the ill"), the house (just "house" – as a component in each of the above but also as a free standing entity) becomes a site in which individuals and behaviors are observed, sorted, converted, incited, and inspected.

Third, we may argue that the home is by nature a form of control: it is a form of controlling space but also a way in which space controls the people who are proximate to or contained within it. This control is produced, for example, through the arrangement of the walls and windows, and with them of the gaze (think of the potential gaze inward and outward, between the rooms, between the street and the home – a potential gaze that defines the relationships between private and public, whose obstruction is the very constitution, or at least a condition for the constitution, of the private; think of the lack of partitions within the nobility's homes in France, the privacy provided by the bourgeois home, the transparent high rises recently built in many big cities). It is produced through the configuration of the neighborhood, the streets, and the proximity of rooms within the home, designed to isolate people or bring them together, to facilitate or hinder contact, to separate the veiled from the exposed (think of the bedrooms and the master bedroom; the servants' quarters or the au pair's room; the kitchen and its position vis-à-vis the living room; the lack of a kitchen in the family home and the common dining room in the first decades of the kibbutz; think of living above one's shop, or in the suburbs, or in a gated community; a public park compared with a patio). It is also produced by the arrangement of doors, light, windows, and other articles, which manufactures different levels of intimacy and different modes of relations between the inhabitants of the house as well as their guests (think of the positioning of the television; the open-plan loft compared with the partitioned house; the number of bedrooms in relation to the number of tenants; the placement of the sofas in the living room or the place where meals are eaten).

Finally, the political re-inscribes itself within the walls of the house through the latter's functions and roles. The attempt to map the functions of the home shows that they resemble, if not overlap, those of the state. This is not because the rule of the father can be thought of in terms of the rule of the sovereign, or because the rule of the sovereign is derived from the father's rule. It is, rather, because, like the home, the state regulates relations between the members of a given group, a group that is "given" precisely by virtue of cohabitating within a defined territorial unit; because, like the state, the home is also based on more or less rigid rules of entry and exit that regulate its population, its content, and the elements (objects or subjects) that it contains; because, like the home, the state is also an array of institutions seeking to preserve the biological existence of its members (a function that is fading with the disintegration of the welfare state and the social-communist option but that is intensified in other domains with the rise of bio-politics); because, like the home, the state is interested in reproduction (marriage and divorce laws, abortion and contraception policies, the criminalization of certain forms of sexual relations), the size of the population (censuses, demography, immigration policies), and dynasties (which determine the identity of the king in a monarchy or citizenship in a nation state).

The state – at least the modern state – is a *homeland*.[38]

And yet, the term *homeland* is only a metaphor. Indeed, it is a metaphor that relies on a structural resemblance, a metaphor that the state needs as a justifying mechanism (the state is "natural" and hence "good" or "worthy" because it is a type of home), as a recruitment mechanism (whose paradigm is perhaps the notion of "brothers in arm"), as a mechanism of exclusion and inclusion ("we are all brothers", it is said, deploying an "all" that always excludes: migrant workers, immigrants, Palestinians, and other Others). And yet, it is (only) a metaphor. After all, the state is not a home, and the home is not a state, and the definition – any definition – should point to difference/s while avoiding the trap posed by difference (in other words, definitions should not make differences into an apparatus of control).

This functional definition, then, is not sufficient either. And so we start anew, re-mapping, re-demarcating, and unraveling the home from this intricate entanglement that seems to prevent us from understanding it separately – and as separate – from the state.

***

Yet precisely here, where the definition fails again, we find a possible new direction, namely, understanding the home as a metaphor. It is a metaphor that holds within it a sense of familiarity, of protection, even warmth. Its roots can be traced, even if anachronistically, to the etymology of the Greek *oikos*. Alongside the functions and orders that composed our latest definition (reproduction, property, family), the *oikos* (as a concept) contains the concept of the *hearth* – a fire burning within the walls.[39] Thinking about the home as a metaphor for the intimate transcends the Greek concept but is nonetheless encapsulated within it, for us, in the fireplace. And at the cost of symbolically erasing so many homes that lack this sense of intimacy, home can nonetheless be defined through this metaphor, which is anchored in a specific relation to space, followed by a specific action on space: what differentiates a particular space – four walls and a roof, an entire state or the street corner, a table at the neighborhood café, etc. – from any other space and turns it into a "home" is the process of rendering it a locus that contains or produces a sense of belonging.[40] It contains a certain feeling that the space belongs to me and I to it. We might say that I feel like I belong to something that belongs to me; that I own my property but also that I am constituted by and through it. "Belongs" is not a juridical or formal function here but rather a certain *feeling*, and so it is conditioned upon an ongoing action – a perpetual creation of the sense of belongingness. It is, then, a perpetual becoming-of a home (one may say "homemaking," "nesting", or "domestication"): an ongoing process and not a given demarcation; a diffused feeling rather than a set of functions and roles; a fluctuating sense that can never be reduced to a list of necessary and sufficient conditions.

This process, by virtue of which a site is made a home, can be carried out by individuals (at the edge of this individualism we can talk, again, about the body as a privileged home: if homemaking is a process of acquiring belongingness for something spatial that is interwoven with the formation of identity, then the body remains within this definition a "home", perhaps even the primary home). But it is not necessarily carried out by individuals. Even if the sense of intimacy bound up with the home is, as Arendt argues, a product of modern individualism,[41] it is nonetheless a process that can be shared by many (a couple, a family, a community, a nation). Its goal can be the formation of an intimate *public* space.

The process of "homemaking" is one whose end can be an open and inclusive space, or, alternatively, a process seeking to close spaces, to create hiding places, shelters, fortresses, and hence a process of entrenchment. It can be a process of annexation or of withdrawal.

"Homemaking" can be a harmful process – destructive to space, people, or both. It can be a process of expulsion, deportation, settlement, and eradication; a process that destroys nature, demolishes walls, nationalizes land, and effaces other histories (erasing the traces of former residents). But it can, at the same time, (sometimes literally simultaneously) be a process of development and cultivation: posting signs in the village or cleaning the beach, renovating, bringing a plant and a picture to one's new office, or simply doing the dishes. Each of these can be a significant component in creating a sense of home in a given place. The inclusion of others in this (new; always renewed) space does not have to entail deportation and eradication, or to require the subjection of others to the new "house rules". It can be a radical version of hospitality – "my home is your home", in its deepest and fullest meaning.

It is therefore a process that unites the production of intimacy, comfort, and belongingness with the establishment of rule (and in so doing grants new meaning to the critique of intimacy in definition 2). As in the case of domesticating animals, and like the process by which women were assigned to the domestic sphere and became homemakers, the domestication of a space – the process of making it a home – works in tandem with processes of taming and constraining (or even incarcerating). Yet if in the former definitions it was the association of the domestic with the natural that justified domination, the domination we find with the concept of domestication is rooted in the negation of nature. The prison, the *ba'it* of imprisonment, thereby appears here as a paradigmatic *ba'it*. It is not the product of a metaphor, a concept *borrowed* to *mask* the absence of intimacy, as it may have seemed before. It is rather a *direct* use in a metaphor *representing* a quintessential element within the (already metaphoric) concept: the act of restraining and disciplining space and a manner by which space restrains its residents. As in the prison, which has all but become a symbol of the operation of Foucauldian disciplinary power, and as in the case of the rooms assigned to women in the citation from Alberti above, the process that makes a place into a home is one in which the individual simultaneously constructs (a space or a relation to space) and is constructed, domesticates and is domesticated.

Hence, the appeal to this notion of homemaking does not necessarily present us with a preferred ethical-political model. But it does entail a potential that is absent from the previous definitions. The turn to constant work, to creation and to repetition opens up a time and a space for learning, adapting, and changing. In other words, the potential encapsulated in Butler's concept of performativity vis-à-vis identity or agency can, with the concept of homemaking, be transferred to the relation between the individual and the world around her, whether big or small. The concept of performativity only bears the promise that the norm is never total; it makes no guarantees about the ethical or political value of what will escape the norm, emerging from between its cracks. Likewise, the concept of homemaking does not guarantee that the ongoing production of the domestic space will construct it as a site of liberty, or that it will be attuned and attentive to the environment or to its other inhabitants. Nevertheless, since the process of homemaking usually takes place in a space containing a number of people (sometimes entire nations), it incorporates an element that may promote processes of sensitive production: the constant making and remaking of the home facilitates – or at least enables – constant negotiations concerning the borders and their surroundings, negotiations that can always include (but which may just as easily exclude) more voices and groups.

Ultimately, however, the appeal to the notion of homemaking stems not from its ability to shed new light on the particular concept at hand but from the fact that it allows us to rethink definitions in general. The model that it suggests transcends the structure of definitions for which *ba'it* has served here as an object (the object of definition), but for which it can also serve as an analogy (or even a logic): home (house) as a logic of space, of stable and sealed walls/borders forming a precise demarcation. Derrida[42] seeks to replace the topo-economy of the household with a model of movement or dance. With the particular knot in which the home is both the form and the matter of the definition, thinking of and through the model of homemaking may produce something similar. Like dancing, so too the sense of belongingness cannot be stabilized, even as it remains differentiated and allows for differentiation; like dancing, home*making* is an ongoing movement that undermines the very presumption of location and without which the object (dance, home) is empty.

The border constituted by acts of homemaking (the border of the home, but analogically also the border of the concept, i.e. the definition) is radically different from the type of borders we encountered in the first part of this essay (definitions 2 and 3). It is not unchanging, stable, and firm; it is founded upon a diffused feeling and not upon a given set of functions yielding necessary and sufficient conditions for something to constitute a home (a list that is, as we have seen, impossible); and finally, it does not rely upon the logic of otherness. Even though homemaking is a *movement aimed at creating differences in space*, these differences do not form a dichotomy (even the dichotomy between what is mine and what is not is temporary), and they do not assume a structure of radical otherness (between the political and the natural, the domestic and the public, the masculine and the feminine); indeed, perhaps they assume *no* otherness (the entire world can be my home). "Difference" appears here as if caught between the two sides of the singularity-plurality dyad: numerous elements contribute to my sense of being (or not being) at home in a given space, and each and every one of them is a potential substance for action (on it or on myself), triggering a process of inclusion whose end is the sense of being-at-home. Yet since this sense can never be obtained once and for all, and since neither of these elements is sufficient for producing it, the above tension never creates a permanent opposition between that which is home and that which is not. This movement of differences therefore hinders the logic of purity, even if it cannot entirely evade it. The act of definition, accordingly, does not seek to identify a pure object or to purify a given object. Hence, even if this model remains limited as a linguistic model – and it certainly remains limited as a political model – it nonetheless suggests an alternative that is somewhat more open, more enabling, and that holds a greater potential for liberty.

Endnotes

1. And metaphorically also other groups: the elderly in the senior citizens' home, the poor in the soup kitchen, which in Hebrew is translatable to the home of the cauldron, the inmates and detainees in the prison – in Hebrew: the home of imprisonment. [↵]
2. Aristotle, *The Politics*, translated by T.A. Sinclair (Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics, 1981), 1252b9. [↵]
3. Ibid., 1261a10, 161a22. [↵]
4. Ibid., 1252b27, emphasis added. [↵]
5. Hannah Arendt *The Human Condition* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 36-37. [↵]
6. Ibid., pp. 63-64. [↵]
7. This finiteness of human life, surfacing in the household at both of its edges, is transcendable in the political, where man can leave a mark and thereby immortalize himself. [↵]
8. And while it might be argued that this expression refers primarily to the temple, to the house of God, and not to the home of the nation, I think that its transformation into the symbol of the collapse of the state and the start of exile lets us make the argument that, in the Jewish world, this

function of the state is not a result of modernity. Following Derrida, I will presently argue that the same is true of the Greek *polis*. [↵]

9. A different route (which nonetheless intersects the Arendtian path at a number of points) might be offered here through Foucault's concept of governmentality and his analysis of the notion of economy. By means of these concepts, Foucault describes a double shift: first, from the governance of life, events and things in the home, to their governance by the state; and second, from the household being a model for government to its being a part of the population (which in turn becomes a central object of management in the paradigm of governmentality. See: Michel Foucault, ***Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-1978***, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), especially lecture no. 4. [↵]

10. Jacques Derrida, ***The Politics of Friendship*** (London & New York: Verso, 1997); Jacques Derrida, ***Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*** (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005). [↵]

11. According to Derrida, this is the most significant expression of friendship in the Greek ideal. [↵]

12. The centrality of the quotation to the idea of friendship makes it even more sought after with the death of the friend: this is when quoting his name has most significance. [↵]

13. Derrida, ***The Politics of Friendship***, p. 4, 76. [↵]

14. John Locke, ***Second Treatise of Government*** (New York: Macmillan Co., 1956), §32-35. [↵]

15. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Discourse on the Origin of Inequality", in ***The Basic Political Writings***, translated by D.A. Cress (Indoanapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1987), pp. 25-109. [↵]

16. Primarily" only if we have in mind one particular (if dominant) current in liberal thought, namely, that which has its roots in Locke and ultimately was assimilated by capitalism. Mill would disagree with this hierarchy, as would many of his followers, such as Berlin or Dworkin. See: Isiah Berlin, ***Four Essays on Liberty*** (London: Oxford University Press, 1969); Roland Dworkin, "Liberalism", in ***Public and Private Morality***, edited by Stuart Hampshire (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 113-143. [↵]

17. Locke, ***Second Treatise of Government,*** § 32. [↵]

18. Judith Butler, ***Precarious Life*** (London & New York: Verso, 2004). [↵]

19. I borrow this expression from Jean-Luc Nancy. See: Jean-Luc Nancy, ***Being Singular Plural*** (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000). [↵]

20. Aristotle, ***The Politics***, 252a24. [↵]

21. Ibid. [↵]

22. Ibid. [↵]

23. Ibid., 1255b16. [↵]

24. A parallel distinction can be found in Agamben, who turns to Rome rather than Greece. Following Foucault, Agamben characterizes sovereign power as power over vulnerable life and over death. Agamben sees its first appearance in the power of the *pater familia* over his children – a power that resides within the space of the home and penetrates the political when the Caesar adopts the citizens as his sons (that is, at the moment when the boundaries between the home and state are – once again – blurred). The father's power over the lives of his children is precisely what makes them (and the subjects) free citizens – their lives only become political lives through the possibility of killing them. The father's relationship with his children defines the political by means of the distinction between this relationship and its almost permanent antithesis – the home: the *vitae necisque potestas* is the power imposed on free citizens that thereby defines them as such, and is to be distinguished from the power that the same function (the *pater familia*) enacts on people in the home. And once again, the political is defined and demarcated through (among other things) the exclusion of the home. Therefore, even though the home contains the father's relationship to those subjugated to him, a relationship characterized by his ability to kill them, Agamben excludes this relationship from the political: while the father's power over his sons defines and constructs the model of political life, the father's power over his daughters, his wife and his servants is "only" power. Like Arendt, Agamben also characterizes modernity as the dissolution of those boundaries: "In the camps" – which, according to Agamben, are the paradigm of modernity (the concentration camp or the death camp, but also the refugee camp) – "city and house become indistinguishable". See: Giorgio Agamben, ***Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare life***, translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 105. [↵]

25. Aristotle, ***The Politics***, 1254a28. [↵]

26. Cited in: Mark Wigely, "Untitled: The Housing of Gender", in ***Sexuality & Space***, edited by Beatriz Colomina (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992), p. 332. [↵]

27. Ibid, p. 331. [↵]

28. Simone de Beauvoir, ***The Second Sex – Book One: Facts and Myths***, translated by H.M. Parshley (New York: Vintage Books, 1974). [↵]

29. Carole Pateman, ***The Sexual Contract*** (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988). [↵]

30. Betty Friedan, ***The Feminine Mystique*** (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965). [↵]

31. See note 24. [↵]

32. Frances E. Willard, ***Woman and Temperance: or: The Work and Workers of the Women's Christian Temperance Union*** (New York: Arno press, 1972). [↵]

33. Jane Addams, "The Modern City and Municipal Franchise for Women, Addams Addressing the NAWSA Convention, 1906″, in ***The Concise History of Woman Suffrage***, edited by Mary Jo Buhle and Paul Buhle (Urbana, Chicago, London: University of Illinois Press, 1978), p. 371. [↵]

34. Rita Childe-Dorr; cited in: William H. Chafe, ***The Paradox of Change: American Women in the 20th Century*** (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 15. [↵]

35. Michel Foucault ***The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction*** (New York: Vintage Books, 1990). [↵]

36. Michel Foucault ***Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*** (New York: Vintage Books, 1977). [↵]

37. It can be argued that the house that constitutes the pairing (house-hold) is nothing but a metaphor, and that the term actually refers to the "family", or, more accurately, to a certain way of registering families. But this argument exposes two fundamental aspects of the definition of the home: the difficulty – or perhaps inherent impossibility – of defining it separately from the family; and its being the very thing that holds the members of a family together and makes them into a single unit. [↵]

38. In Hebrew the connection is stronger, as the literal translation of the Hebrew equivalence is the home of the nation (*ba'it le'umi*). [↵]

39. Jacques Derrida ***Given Time*** (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 6. [↵]

40. Thus, the concept of the intimate here goes beyond Arendt's notion of it. While here, as in Arendt, intimacy is the "subjective [state] of the human condition", for Arendt it is important to highlight the fact that intimacy is "of the heart", a product of a new place, a new component *within the individual* that must be protected, and that, "unlike the private household, has no objective tangible place in the world" (Arendt, ***The Human Condition***, p. 39). In this context, intimacy is a function of being related to a defined space, though here, too, it involves the need to offer protection, and here, too, unlike the household, its definition is much less stable, in both space and time. [↵]

41. Arendt, ibid., p. 38. [↵]

42. Jacques Derrida ***The Ear of the Other*** (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1988). [↵]

תגיות :Home/Household

Leave a Comment

Name(required)

Mail (will not be published)(required)

Website

Submit Comment

Minerva Humanities Center
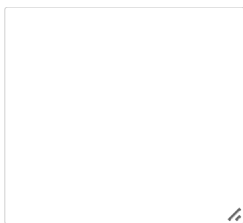
Hagar Kotef

Society of Fellows,
Columbia University

Issue 2e –
Winter 2011

Download Issue
About Issue

The Lexicon
Group

- Lexicon Videos
  and More
- The Political
  Lexicon Group

Issues Index

- Issue 1e –
  Summer 2010
- Issue 2e – Winter
  2011

External Links

- Dictionary of War
- Lexicon of
  ResetDoc
- Stanford
  Encyclopedia of
  Philosophy
- TCS
  Encyclopaedia
  Project

Concepts

- Author-ity /
  Confession /
  Declaration /
  Home/Household /
  Life / Minoracy /
  Photography / Place /
  Refugees / State /
  Translation /
  Witnessing/Testimony /
  Women Migrant
  Workers /

Contact Us

Write to us:
mafteakh@post.tau.ac.il

| Search & Hit Enter |

Join our newsletter

Your E-Mail Address

| |

| subscribe |

(for in-depth updates please
subscribe to the Hebrew edition)