Chapter 3
Public- Private Syndrome

When you invoke something transcendent you arrest movement, introducing interpretations instead of experimenting.

Gilles Deleuze

We have examined the formation of the political subject on the basis of a given emancipatory identity in different theoretical apparatuses, particularly in Marxist Lacanism and French Lacanist feminism. We have also seen how the thinkers, in spite of themselves, resort to a transcendental identity, a certain understanding of the subject as the only weapon of struggle. The weapon has turned out to be its deficient and one-dimensional.

But from another interpretive angle, the theories could also be read in terms of a rigid distinction between the Real, the Symbolic and the Imaginary orders, or a distinction between public and private realms. Each of the above-mentioned thinkers, in their own way, reappropriates the distinction. Some idealize the private, the Real or Imaginary as the emancipatory realms, and some other focus on the public or the Symbolic to open a door to freedom. Some are concerned with the Imaginary which, by definition, is beyond the repressive realm of Law and language. And some conceive the public or
private as extraordinary places in which the emancipatory politics could be fulfilled. For example, Jacques Rancière reverses Arendt's formulation to address the same distinction. He maintains that the private realm as the place of those who have no right is the authentic place of the subject of right, the 'Wrong'; and hence is the origin of which true political action would be born. By emerging from the private realm, the true actors, the *demos* would destabilize the repressive public, the *police*, and finally stabilize their own revolutionary order. The recognition of hierarchical distinctions by both groups indicates a very powerful tradition of thought which is based on transcendental philosophy. By preventing the subject from adventuring in undiscovered domains and exploring new roads of freedom and new weapons of struggle, the attitude restricts thought and action in a certain determinist framework which just reproduces the same absolute Law in the new formulation of feminine Law or 'politics proper'. And finally it would reduce actors to the a-priori definition of the *true* subject, as 'proletariat', 'woman', 'none-part'... who have a given ontological status in social or political orders, and exclude the others as 'male-dominated', 'passive'...subjects. In other words, each canon grapples with the distinction in its own manner to find the transcendent in its theory.

In the feminist canon, there is a wide range of attitudes toward the distinction; and feminism has taken different stances toward the concepts of private and public. For example, radical feminists condemn the private as a barrier to female liberation; but French feminists are skeptical of the public as a phallic-repressive realm of the Symbolic. They contend that in the social realm women are led to reproduce the same masculine roles and at best a woman in society — by denying her femininity — is a *man as such*. Accordingly, Kristeva argues that "regardless of any professional or other
attractions that society may offer a woman ... we must acknowledge that women are suffering."^2

Hence, the distinction between the private and public spheres would lead us to review Hannah Arendt's concern with politics and its related concepts. Then we will deal with the different feminist discussions which are influenced by her theory.

**Hannah Arendt and the Theory of Distinction**

Arendt's theory of politics indicates the priority of the political over the social, the authenticity of the public over the private and the excellence of action over labor and work. Her theory is a compound of different components which is partly derived from her understanding of politics in ancient times and partly from her interpretations of Marx, Nietzsche, Heidegger and other thinkers.

Referring to the politics of ancient Greece, particularly Athens circa 500 BC, Arendt points to the *Polis* as the origin of democracy, an ideal place for the flowering of political life, acting together and equality between citizens. According to Arendt, in the Athenian experience, there is a rigid distinction between private and public life, a distinction that she later equates with the distinction between the social and the political. In Arendt's thought, the ancient Greeks defined the private in terms of household duties or matters related to biological reproduction and the basic needs of the body. Though this part of human life was necessary, it was the primary responsibility of slaves, women and non-citizens. She says:

> The private realm of the household was the sphere where the necessities of life, of individual survival as well as continuity of the species, were taken care of and guaranteed. One of the characteristics of privacy, prior to the
discovery of intimate, was that man existed in this sphere not as a truly
human being, but only as a specimen of the animal species, man-kind.³

On the contrary, the public realm is known as the realm of free
association, debate and decision making between free and equal citizens about
their common concerns. Hence, the public realm, to Arendt, is the place of
activity of the common world, speech act, politics and freedom, and the
private is the place of necessity and violence:

Freedom is exclusively located in the political realm, that necessity is
primarily a prepolitical phenomenon, characteristic of the private household
organization, and that force and violence are justified in this sphere because
they are the only means to master necessity - for instance, by ruling over
slaves - and to become free. Because all human beings are subject to
necessity, there are entitled to violence toward others, violence is the
prepolitical act of liberating oneself from the necessity of life for the
freedom of world.⁴

Hence, the private realm, as a pre-political space, could not be the
realm of freedom; rather as a place of meeting necessities, it is the realm of
force and violence. But force and violence as the main elements of the private
sphere are the pre-conditions of having stability and solidarity in life, and
paradoxically are the prerequisites of freedom. In other words, without private
life and its necessary elements, force, violence, etc., no one could step in
public life and benefit from its potency of freedom: "without owning a house a
man could not participate in the affairs of the world because he had no location
in it which was properly his own."⁵

In effect influenced by Aristotle's distinction between zoe and bios,
Arendt traces the roots of democracy in Athens. Zoe by definition refers to
'mere life' which then Arendt equates with the private realm, the realm of necessity, need, work and labor. And *bios* corresponds to politics, the public realm of free discussion, action, *praxis* and freedom in which free citizens (because of their difference from slaves, non-citizens, women and non-Athenians) could participate in the *polis*, namely the sphere of rights, plurality and democracy. She says:

*Bios politikos* denoted explicitly only the realm of human affairs, stressing the action, praxis, needed to establish and sustain it. Neither labor nor work was considered to possess sufficient dignity to constitute a *bios* at all, an autonomous and authentically human way of life; since they served and produced what was necessary and useful, they could not be free, independent of human needs and wants.

On the other hand, arguing that life on the earth is conditioned by some activities from which one can not escape, Arendt deals with two distinct faculties or two different ways of life in the ancient world: *vita contemplativa* (the way of thinking) and *vita activa* (the way of activity). She contends that in traditional terms, contemplation is of a higher order than action. In other words, she believes that the tradition of philosophy places the life of philosophizing or the contemplative life of the mind above praxis. But on the contrary, Arendt gives a central place to public life in the Greek *Polise*, *Vita activa*, as an ideal type. Arguing that contemplation is dependent upon all sorts of activity, she valorizes political action or the active life over the life of the mind. Although not directly asserting that thinking is less important than acting, Arendt speaks in favor of action over thought by saying that contemplation "depends upon labor to produce whatever is necessary to keep the human organism alive, it depends upon work to create whatever is needed to house the human body, and it needs action in order to organize the living
together of many human beings in such a way that peace, the condition for the quiet of contemplation is assured." In order words, for Arendt, one can live without thinking, but without labor, work or action no one could think.

Hence, by returning to ancient Greece to elaborate her theory of politics, she divides human activity into three main categories: labor, work and action. They are fundamental because each corresponds to one of the basic conditions under which life on earth has been given to man. The private realm is the place of labor, while the public realm is the place of action or politics. Arendt relates labor to biological processes of the body or metabolism between man and nature. By laboring man produces vital needs for his/ her body. It is a circular repetitive process which produces the less durable, the most natural and the most necessary products. Labor produces consumer goods, and as John Locke says it is under the sign of the "necessity of subsisting".

Work, in contrast to labor, produces more permanent structures, such as shelter which corresponds to the unnaturalness and worldliness of human existence. The products of labor are to be consumed and destroyed, but the products of work are to be used and reused. In John Locke's terminology, the difference between the two is the difference between "the labor of our body and the work of our hands." Work fabricates artifice. The products of the work are not consumer goods, but use-objects, in other words, they are not made to be destroyed or consumed, but are made in order to be used. Hence Arendt considers humans in their laboring aspect as *animal laborans* and describes the worker as *homo faber*.

Arendt argues that products of work "give the world the stability and solidity without which it could not be relied upon to house the unstable and mortal creature that is man." The work process is not associated with the circular repetition of nature; hence it is more durable than the products of labor. Unlike the compulsory repetition of labor in which "one must eat in
order to labor and must labor to eat"\textsuperscript{13}, the logic of work is based on producing to multiply the products, which probably relies on the demands of the Market. Moreover, she believes that work appears to be more destructive than labor, since it must violently use raw materials of nature to make stable objects:

From the viewpoint of nature, it is work rather than labor that is destructive, since the work process takes matter out of nature's hands without giving it back to her in the swift course of the natural metabolism of the living body.\textsuperscript{14}

Although acknowledging the necessity of work and labor in the human condition, Arendt is dissatisfied with their means-ends process. She contends that in this process everything and everybody are reduced to means, and, in the final analysis, it is the means that justify the ends. The object is an end, but it is not an end in itself, as it would be immediately transformed into the means in another means-ends process. In other words, it becomes the means to obtain an other object. It is the logic of the utilitarian world which justifies violence and destruction. She says:

Here it is indeed true that the end justifies the means; it does more, it produces and organizes them. The end justifies the violence done to nature to win the material, as the wood justifies killing the tree, and the table justifies destroying the wood [...] Hence, everything and everybody is judged here in terms of suitability and usefulness for the desired end product and nothing else.\textsuperscript{15}

By the same token, Arendt draws a rigid distinction between the political and the social. Society as an assemblage of households is meant to satiate private needs and intimate demands. Hence it promotes a community of
laborers or *idiots* who focus on maintaining the needs and wants of life, rather than political actors who care about the activity of the common world and free political activities: "outside the world of common is 'idiotic' by definition".\textsuperscript{16} To Arendt, the emergence of society dissolves the possibility of praxis and it brings about human loneliness and alienation by reducing the possibility of immortal political action. Further she contends that modern society is guided by the concept of conformism. In this sense, society is understood as an assemblage of 'equals' in which all the members of the enormous family, namely society, work and act as if they have only one opinion and one interest. In this way the conformity and the equality which are characteristics of modern society result in sinking individuality and political action:

Modern equality, based on the conformism inherent in society and possible only because behavior has replaced action as the foremost mode of human relationship [...] The public realm, in other words, was reserved for individuality; it was the only place where men could show who they are really and inexchangeably were.\textsuperscript{17}

Hence the necessity of preserving the dividing line between the private and the public is crucial to her. On the other hand, society depoliticizes people by encouraging its members to follow certain type of normalizing behavior and by excluding spontaneous actions as "asocial or abnormal"\textsuperscript{18}. To Arendt the introduction of the private into the public dissolves the politics into the anti-political demands of society.

Although valorizing *vita activa*, Arendt argues that all its distinctions and articulations have not been completely discovered after the modern break with tradition. Accordingly, she held that in the modern age, thinkers like Marx and Nietzsche reversed the hierarchical order and put an emphasis on *vita activa*. But they just turned the philosophic hierarchies upside-down and left the
conceptual framework intact. In other words, she believes that in Marx's theory human beings are primarily laborers and politics is engaged with laboring. She believes that the actual goal of the Marxist revolution is not only emancipation of the laboring, or working class, rather it is emancipation of man from labor, from the necessity of life, and in the strictest sense of the word, from the condition of life. In other words, by focusing on work and labor, Marx diverts his attention to class equality rather than freedom.

The danger that the modern age's emancipation of labor will not only fail to usher in the age of freedom for all but will result, on the contrary, in forcing all mankind for the first time under the yoke of necessity, was already clearly perceived by Marx when he insisted that aim of a revolution could not possibly be the already accomplished emancipation of the laboring classes, but must consist in the emancipation of man from labor. At first glance, this aim seems utopian, and the only strictly utopian element in Marx's teachings.¹⁹

Accordingly she draws a line between emancipation (liberation) from the necessity of life on the one hand, and freedom as common political action on the other hand. She critically engages with the "utopian" theory of Marx and with the way he neglects action and political freedom. She says:

This is due in no small measure to the fact that Karl Marx, the greatest theorist the revolutions ever had, was so much more interested in history than in politics and therefore neglected, almost entirely, the original intentions of the men of revolutions, the foundation of freedom.²⁰

On the other hand, Arendt argues that although humans are equals, each is unique. In other words, they are equal as members of the human species and because they share a common world. But they are unique, since no two
individuals are alike. According to Arendt, through birth a human being enters the world in which he shares with all other beings the quality of otherness that is an important aspect of plurality. Hence birth is a miraculous event, by which one is created in the singular and starts a new beginning: natality. By entering the world or by the gift of natality, man could distinguish his singularity through plurality. In this sense, the speech act would be the birthplace of politics in the public realm and action is a communicative action which involves words and deeds by which man inserts himself in the human world and expresses different views with others. And this is the crucial task of free citizens who leave the private sphere and risk their lives to step into the public sphere, act publicly and perform their political actions in the speech arena. Arendt argues that "only in the household was one primarily concerned with one's own life and survival. Whoever entered the political realm had first to be ready to risk his life, and too great a love for obstructed freedom, was a sure sign of slavishness".21

Furthermore, to Arendt, action should be unpredictable and irreversible. It is unpredictable, because no one can determine its consequences in advance, and when it occurs no one can take it back, change its direction, obstruct it or control it. Hence, she believes that it is the main feature of plurality and freedom which involves a lack of control over action:

Man's inability to rely upon himself or to have complete faith in himself (which is the same thing) is the price human beings pay for freedom; and the impossibility of remaining unique masters of what they do, of knowing its consequences and relying upon the future, it is the price they pay for plurality.22
So the distinction between private and public, or labor and action relates to the opposition between necessity and freedom. Unlike the public realm which is the realm of plurality, citizenship, speech acts free discussion, action and freedom; the private domain or the household is the realm of bodily necessities, violence, physical needs and labor is the realm of laborers, slaves, non-citizens and women. Believing that women with their bodies guarantee the physical survival of the species and the natural needs of the household, Arendt contends that both women and slaves "belonged to the same category and were hidden away not only because they were somebody else's property but because their life was 'laborious', devoted to bodily function."23

Besides this, there are a number of examples that are related to her approach to femininity, women's occupations, the household and the private realm in which one could hardly find any sign in favor of feminist concerns. Arendt says:

Yet, of course; there is always the problem as such ... I always thought that there are certain occupations that are improper for women ... It just doesn't look good when a woman gives orders. She should try not to get into such a situation if she wants to remain feminine.24

On this ground, feminists take different positions — mainly, two opposite positions — to Arendt's theory. On the one hand, some feminists, like Adrienne Rich25 believe that Arendt is a male-oriented thinker and her thought is based on masculinist ideology, and her so called 'great' work is hostile to feminist aims. On the other hand, others like Norma Clair Moruzzi26 and Julia Kristeva in their own ways try to rehabilitate Arendt by rediscovering the feminine potentiality or a kind of feminist approach in her notorious
distinction of the public and the private. A distinction which most contemporary thinkers could hardly avoid.

Adrienne Rich's critique of Arendt

For Adrienne Rich, Arendt is a male-oriented thinker who prioritizes the public sphere of males over the feminine role of women in society, household and private life. In other words, Rich criticizes the way Arendt demeans the private realm of women and their non-public labor. Being distressed by Arendt's masculine ideology, she believes that Arendt ignores the every day conditions of women's lives. She also contends that Arendt's 'great' book, *The Human Condition*, is a 'lofty and crippled book', disconnected from female experiences and from the female body, and its structure is based on a 'diet of masculine ideology', which instead of giving women what they need, poisons them. Hence Rich articulates Arendt's formulation of the *vita activa* and the common world as follows:

The withholding of women from participation in the *vita activa*, the "common world", and the connection of this with reproductivity, is something from which she does not so much turn her eyes as stare straight through unseeing. This "great work" is thus a kind of failure for which masculine ideology has no name, precisely because in terms of that ideology it is successful, at the expense of truths the ideology considers irrelevant. To read such a book, by a woman of large spirit and great erudition, can be painful, because it embodies the tragedy of a female mind nourished on male ideologies.27

Accordingly, Rich finds faults with Arendt because of the strict split between the private and the public through which women's work is reduced to
the valueless private realm, and men's work is raised to the highly valued public realm, the realm of politics and freedom. Rich strongly criticizes Arendt's theory of work, labor and action in which women and slaves belonged to the same category away from the life of the *polis*, the life of free and equal citizens. And finally she concludes that the condition of women in the Arendtian private realm is associated with the "efforts of women in labor, giving birth to stillborn children, children who must die of plague or by infanticide; the efforts of women to keep filth and decay at bay, children decently clothed, to produce the clean shirt in which man walks out daily into the common world of men".  

Rich rightly diagnoses the Arendtian syndrome of the public/private gap, the dichotomy of male citizenship/female slavery. But apparently the distinction is traditionally so contagious that which she herself suffered from it and could not eradicate it completely. The failure is echoed implicitly in her critique and voiced clearly in her solution. In her disappointment with Arendt's political philosophy and with the historically inferior position of women, Rich says:

> It is quite clear that the universities and the intellectual establishment intend to keep women's experience as far as possible invisible and women's studies a barely subsidized, condescendingly tolerated ghetto.  

Rich like Arendt affirms the existence of the distinction. But Arendt holds that in order to 'remain feminine' a true woman should avoid playing male roles, getting into the common world which is improper for women. Rich, on the contrary, argues that the inferior position of women is not essential rather it is historical; and by stepping out of the inferior private domain women have to step into the denied realm of the public. In other
words, both believe that the public realm has an emancipatory nature. Conceiving the public as a proper place for the free male citizen, Arendt dissuades women from stepping into the realm in order to sustain their femininity. But Rich encourages women to engage public affairs to stay away from the inferior position imposed by private affairs. This can be done by establishing a female island, a feminine "community", in which women can develop their networks by working with, helping and listening to each other as females. She says:

It is a question of the community we are reaching for in our work and on which we can draw; whom we envision as our hearers, our co-creators, our challengers; who will urge us to take our work further, more seriously, than we had dared; on whose work we can build. Women have done these things for each other, sought each other in community, even if only in enclaves [...]. Denied space in the universities, the scientific laboratories, the professions, we have devised our networks.³⁰

Although Rich faults Arendt for separating the public and the private, her main object is not dismantling the split, rather it is reversing the direction and allocating public roles to women. Undoubtedly, the autonomous female network and community in Rich's thought remind us of the transcendental distinctions which also entrapped French feminism as well: "Our own territory" of Luce Irigaray; "feminine writing" of Helen Cixous and "detachment" through "vaginal bodies" of Julia Kristeva: a female territory which they fail to deterritorialize.
Norma Clair Moruzzi and the concept of Mask

Norma Clair Moruzzi underlines the feminist potentialities of Arendt's philosophy by attempting to overcome the notorious public-private distinction and challenging the so-called Arendtian hostility toward the private and consequently toward female identity.

We have already seen that in *The Human Condition*, Arendt constructs a political definition in which the private life and the public space are demarcated. This demarcation allows a clear definition of political identity, which allows of a certain understanding of politics in the Greek *Polis*, the public space, which is open to male free citizens and closed to women and slaves. According to Moruzzi, Arendt's hostility toward the private or the social arises from its subjection to the rules of necessity and reproductivity. In Arendt's theory, the body is associated with necessity and labor, and woman in particular is identified with the body's laborious necessity. But the embodied identity could be transcended by getting out of the house, of the private life and by entering political life and finally accessing freedom. Hence, the private realm is necessary prelude to the public realm. Moruzzi says:

> The private is absolutely necessary as a backstage area from which citizens emerge to be seen in public performance, but some of those who labor in the background never emerge at all.\(^{31}\)

Accordingly, Moruzzi argues that some selves are confined to their bodies and the necessities of private life; and some selves are able temporarily to leave the concern for the necessities of physical embodiment and the feminine roles associated with the private domain. The implication of her theory is that "if women and slaves could emancipate themselves from the
reproductive necessity, without lapsing into the social question, they too could enter the public sphere."

Dealing with the possibility of women's emancipation in Arendt's theory, Moruzzi also returns to ancient Greece. She believes that Alcibiades as a respectable masculine Athenian hero and, at the same time, as a notorious person for his feminine luxuriating in pleasure could be considered as a combination of masculine and feminine characters. Accordingly, he could be an Athenian exemplary of the embodiment of feminine identity and the masculine agency. In other words, he could demonstrate how the feminine features of private life could integrate into the masculine and democratic character of public life. By doing so, "Alcibiades combines an ideal masculinity with a masquerade of femininity". To Moruzzi Alcibiades provides us the possibility of male agency behind the mask of femininity, possibility of private life through performance in the public sphere. That is, as a theatrical actor, he plays two roles at once: the role of gender and the role of dynamic identity. He is not only the man of sexual demands, but also possesses the specifications of a political actor. Hence, the social/private masquerade occurs within political/public realm:

A virtuosic masculine actor, Alcibiades also enacted a consistent feminine masquerade. In doing so, he confounded the most entrenched norms of political identity, not because his private life became publicly notorious, but because he challenged the exclusion of the feminine from the public life.

Hence, Alcibiades was notorious because of his so called 'feminine' and 'slavish' luxuriating in pleasure and was an "Athenian popular democratic hero" because of his "political" and "personal flamboyance". He performed
his potentiality as a theatrical actor by playing with the gender of the private and the political identity of the public.

Moruzzi affirms that women were excluded from public life. But she believes that if Alcibiades could find ways of smuggling the political into the private and challenging the exclusion of the feminine, women may also do so. Accordingly, the mute-body, the object body of private life could be replaced by the political speaking body of public life. To do so, wearing the mask had two functions, "[...] it had to hide, or rather to replace, the actor's own face and countenance, but in a way that would make it possible for the voice to sound through."

Moruzzi also tries to show that although Arendt does not mention Alcibiades, he is an exemplary Arendtian political actor. By challenging the strictly demarcated lines between the public and the private and by not relegating women to an undervalued private sphere, Moruzzi attempts to rehabilitate Arendt's political philosophy by offering a particular interpretation of the Plato's dialogue, Alcibiades. On this ground, Moruzzi concludes that the gender implications of the public/private distinction are not as absolute as they seem. And despite Arendt's critics who find in her text no space for feminism, she considers the feminine body to be capable of performing political roles, and believes that the lines demarcating the feminine/masculine, public/private and social/political realms are not resolute and could be transcended and transgressed.

In a culture in which slave and free, male and female, and thus public and private were supposedly clearly divided, Alcibiades embodied an apex of free masculinity that was also precisely the point at which the defining limits were transcended and transgressed.
In this way the feminine/private masquerade could serve as a strategy of negotiating the public/political realm to achieve a political presence. Moruzzi argues that Alcibiades was, on the one hand, notorious for his luxuriating in pleasure, which is considered to be both slavish and feminine; and on the other hand, he was appreciated because of his "political and personal flamboyance which made him the Athenian popular democratic hero." He as a virtuosic masculine actor compounds an ideal masculinity with a masquerade of femininity. Alcibiades provides us the possibility of 'male agency' behind the 'mask of femininity'. On this ground, it is also possible for the Athenian women or women as such to do so and to step outside the household and accomplish an action in public world.

In effect, what turns a subject into a true political actor in the political arena is the ability of integrating the private into the public and masking the feminine behind the masculinity, in order to politicize the social realm, as Alcibiades "politicizes the social identity". Moruzzi contends that, despite Arendt herself, her text reveals a certain concern with social and feminist issues: "masquerade is the leverage by which we can enact ourselves as political beings in an inevitably social world". Hence, she seeks to reappropriate and reactivate the Arendtian theory of political agency relating to the masquerades of feminine or social identity.

But, if we recognize the significance of the masquerade in combining the realms, we cannot ignore that the elements or the values of the combination are still distinguishable, and the transcendental hierarchies are still valid: the private sphere is necessary, but it should be left as a 'back-stage area'; 'the embodied identity', namely the female identity, must be transcended to male one in political life; women and slaves should 'emancipate themselves' from the 'reproductive' necessity; the masculinity corresponds to the 'democratic hero' and femininity relates to 'notorious' sexual demands; the feminine
masquerade is nothing but the 'leverage', the means, for the higher ends of politics; politics means "transcending the feminine"^43, the 'mute', 'abject' body of the private, woman who is inferior to the 'political', 'speech' body of the public, man; 'stepping outside the household' corresponds to freedom, and finally the gender distinctions of public and private realms are as absolute as Arendt's discussion would have us believe.^44

In fact, Moruzzi fails to overcome the distinction, and to dedicate a respectable status to the female subject. In other words, in both Arendt's and Moruzzi's accounts, femininity and the private are necessary in so far as they provide the sustainability which is needed to act in the public. Hence, femininity should be there, but should be kept in shadow, if one seeks to be recognized as a political subject. To pretend being a man or to behave as a man is the ultimate object of a female subject in order to act, to be heard and to be respectable in the political arena. By keeping her femininity in the back stage area or by strategically wearing a mask a woman could act as a male democratic hero.

Julia Kristeva and the concept of 'who'

In Kristeva's exploration of Arendt's theory, Hannah Arendt: life is a narrative, one could find an almost similar attempt. By deconstructing the realms and by breaking the hierarchies of vita activa/vita contemplativa, mind/body and bios/zoe, Kristeva tries to discover a feminine potentiality in Arendt's political philosophy. According to Kristeva, in Arendt's philosophy, vita activa is composed of the elements of work, labor and action and vita contemplativa is made of "thought, will and judgment"^45

As it's mentioned before, Arendt was dissatisfied with the traditional philosophy which emphasized on the vita contemplativa, the life of the mind; therefore, she focused on the vita activa. Kristeva asserts that Arendt assigns
greater value on *vita activa* than on *vita contemplative*, because "activity means life". But at the same time she seeks to draw the excluded mind into a dialectical relation with action. Hence, Kristeva argues that life cannot be fulfilled unless it is anchored in 'meaning and action'. On the other hand, the inquiry of life is the possibility of understanding and representing birth and death in time and explaining them to others, "that is *the possibility of narrating*" which is the specificity of human life and is quite non-animal and non-physiological. On this ground she believes that Arendt rehabilitates the praxis of narrative by articulating that "only action as narration, and narration as action can fulfill life." To Kristeva the inquiry into meaning and action corresponds to interrelation of speech and action. But what is speech? She looks for the meaning of speech in the meaning of poetry, which in the Arendtian sense implies that "poetry, whose substance is language, is by that very fact 'the most human art [...]. Poetry therefore is not reified, does not become a utilitarian object." And finally, it is the poetic speech which, by definition, could manifest itself within the *polis* by the "virtuosity of its heroes". But how can we recognize the heroes? To Kristeva, the answer is hidden in the question *who are you*? And it is related to the narrative which is the composition of story and history. According to Kristeva heroic action does not indicate the actor alone. Action should be memorable in order to immortalize the human act; and the memory needs spectators who through thinking the acts make it complete. By such analysis Kristeva seeks to afford some value to the valueless element of *vita contemplativa* and dismantles Arendt's hierarchical conceptions. Hence, it is through the narrative that the one is able to act in the political sphere: "to act, see, remember, complete memory through narrative: that seems to be the royal road to the revelation of the *who* that constitutes, in Arendt, a truly political narration". But at the same time, Kristeva draws a clear line between
language and narration-speech-poetry. Language per se does not have any political potentiality, unless it serves as a medium to convey a dimension of bios.

It is through narrative not language in and of itself (which nonetheless is the means and vehicle in play here), that essentially political thought is realized [...]. Narration is the initial dimension in which man lives, the dimension of a bios — and not of a zoe.\(^{52}\)

On the other hand, Kristeva defines 'who' as an 'excess' rather than 'essence' which comes to be at the center of the contradictions of life. 'Who' as an 'excess' tears away from biological life, from reification of work, and from products. It comes to be at the center of the conditions of life. On the other hand, 'body', as an 'a-political' entity, as the expression of biological life, zoe, is considered opposed to the political 'who'. In the same vein, she attempts to show that the 'body' in Arendt's theory has the possibility of being sublimated by tearing away from the social dimension and from the biological demands of zoe. Kristeva contends that Arendt opens a way for 'who' which by tearing away from zoe, from the objectifying process of reproduction, production, biology and labor associated with the body, is able to present itself as a political subject of bios: "the 'who' extricates itself from nature and society which objectify it as an element belonging either to the species, or to the 'managing' group of producers."\(^{53}\) But what is the status of women in her scheme?

Kristeva contends that in Arendt's texts femininity is a refutable 'given'. The given or the body is implicated in the 'who's tensions. And out of the tensions or the contradictions, 'who' as a political subject can constitute the plurality of the world. In other words, "femininity does not confine itself to the body as self, but indeed constitutes the plurality of the world, the plurality in
which it participates. She argues that the tension between the contemplative life and the active life, or the dialectic between body and mind could generate a "beautifully developed woman."

We can sketch Kristeva's interpretation of Arendt's political philosophy as follows:

\[\text{vita activa} \rightarrow \text{thought} \rightarrow \text{vita contemplative} \]

\[\text{zoe} \rightarrow \text{bios} \rightarrow \text{will} \rightarrow \text{judgment} \]

\[\text{private} \rightarrow \text{public} \]

\[\text{social (apolitical)} \rightarrow \text{political} \]

\[\text{body} \rightarrow \text{who} \rightarrow \text{action} \rightarrow \text{beautifully developed woman} \]

\[\text{woman} \rightarrow \text{biography - reproduction} \rightarrow \text{human nature (non-animal)} \rightarrow \text{speech (narrative - poetry)} \rightarrow \text{non-reified} \rightarrow \text{non-mortalized} \]

\[\text{language (non-poetry)} \rightarrow \text{language (non-poetry)} \rightarrow \text{reified} \rightarrow \text{mortalized} \]
In *The Human Condition*, Arendt maintains that the life on the earth is conditioned by some activities from which one cannot escape. And then in the prologue, she states that the main concern of the book is *what we are doing*. Accordingly she deals with the binary prevalent in the ancient world: *vita activa* and *vita contemplative*. Contrary to the traditional understanding, Arendt assigns a higher value to the life of activity than to the life of the mind—a fact which is confirmed by Kristeva.\(^5^6\) By the same token, Ardent stated that "with the term vita activa, I propose to designate three fundamental human activities: labor, work, and action. They are fundamental because each corresponds to one of the basic conditions under which life on earth has been given to man".\(^5^7\)

In the preface to *Hannah Arendt*, Kristeva maps her work as clarifying 'some Arendtian contradictions as well as some misapprehensions of her positions'. By overturning the Arendtian distinction between the public and the private through Derridean deconstruction, Kristeva tries to go beyond the strict 'values' that are assigned to some categories and to revive those which are denied any. She attempts to overcome the traditional hierarchy, so as to rehabilitate Arendt's theory and open up a respectful space for femininity which by definition is inherent in the notorious private realm. Hence, Kristeva resorts to Hegelian dialectics and Derrida's deconstruction. She claims that Arendt's political philosophy is able to dismantle the hierarchical realms through deconstruction of the mind and shows that life is not a value in itself as it needs to be investigated in terms of action and meaning.

Arendt makes History resonate with the deconstruction of the Mind, in order to show that life is not a 'value' in and of itself, as is believed by humanist ideologies. Life does not fulfil itself unless it never ceases to inquire into both meaning and action.\(^5^8\)
Although one may ask how the deconstruction of the mind as vita contemplative could bring about the dismantling life as vita activa. But if we accept the initial presupposition, the rest of the process of deconstruction would still under question.

Derrida challenges Saussure's structural linguistics through deconstructive method. In Saussure's theory meaning is conveyed by the signifying relation of signifier and signified. In this sense, the arbitrary relation of signifier and signified is the product of the syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations specific to a particular language-relations which are inscribed in the speech chain. In the signifying system a signifier refers to a signified according to a certain associative mechanism. Hence, a certain direction of meaning is introduced into the chain of signification which allows a certain hierarchical movement from one signifier to another. Accordingly the meaning of a linguistic product is given. For example 'rose' always refers to 'love' in a given language. Derrida attempts to overturns the linear and fixed movement of meaning by introducing an unlimited movement. By dismantling the signifying system which is based on certain distinctions and judgments, he deconstructs the process of meaning designation which avoids the free play of signification. On the same ground, he argues that speech is traditionally privileged because it assumes that in speech the speaker is present who can explain the meaning. Hence, by overturning the 'metaphysics of presence' Derrida argues that the meaning is deferred and is never present. In reverse, he takes writing as the possibility of free signification. By deconstructing the privilege of speech over writing, he shows how speech depends on a prior field of signification or on 'archi-writing'.

But paradoxically, the free play of signification which was supposed to move permanently, stands still on a Master signifier, on a fixed transcendental
archi-writing. In other words, the chain of signification reaches to the end of its history by the victory of writing over speech or language. Derrida says:

> For some time now, as a matter of fact, here and there, by a gesture and for motives that are profoundly necessary, whose degradation is easier to denounce than it is to disclose their origin, one says "language" for action, movement, thought, reflection, consciousness, unconsciousness, experience, affectivity, etc. Now we tend to say "writing" for all that and more: to designate not only the physical gestures of literal pictographic or ideographic inscription, but also the totality of what makes it possible; and also, beyond the signifying face, the signified face itself.\(^{59}\)

In the same vein, Kristeva following Derrida could not avoid certain archi-values in her theory. By glancing over the diagram, one can observe that Kristeva may overturn the inferior value of the mind, but she is not ready to deconstruct the archi-values of bios, politics, who and action. Besides, through the hierarchical dialectic between the elements of \textit{vita activa}, the final end of the contradictions is expected and predicted in advance: the triumph of public over private, who over body, bios over \textit{zoe}, narrative over language, etc. In other words, Kristeva is exposed to the same hierarchical value-based mechanism which she opposed strongly. Therefore, by tearing away from the demeaning biological and animal aspects of life, the body as an inferior entity could immortalize and transcend itself in political space, and free itself from objectification or reification:

> 'Who' as excess is reached through a constant tearing of one's self away from biological life, from metabolic symbiosis with nature and from reification of 'works' and 'products'.\(^{60}\)
Hence, Kristeva follows the same road that Arendt has already passed over. To Arendt the private is nothing but a precondition, a vehicle, or a means for reaching the final end of politics. And femininity as a 'given' needs to be transcended from its biological demands in order to transform itself into a 'beautifully developed woman'. A human being is divided into 'body' as a biological life and 'who' as a dynamic, plural and political life. Although Kristeva attempts to convey that the body is dialectically intrinsic to the 'who', she could not avoid the transcendental position of 'who' in comparison with the animal position of the body. That is to say, despite her theoretical efforts, the transcendental distinction has still survived and she has failed in removing it from her theory and from Arendt's thought as well. Hence, following structuralism, a certain direction of evaluation is introduced into her philosophy. As a rose refers to love, politics refers to freedom. In the final analysis the deconstruction process should be controlled; and thoroughly overturning the values may threaten "life and thought by destroying both". Kristeva could not get rid of the symptomatic distinction and hierarchical evaluation of values. She instead plays with them in order to reach a certain favorite result: the triumph of bios over zoe.

Deleuze and Guattari and the concept of Deterritorialization

In opposition to the deconstructive approach, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari offer deterritorialization as a 'line of flight'. Through a reference to the concept of territory, they are concerned with the geographies and the idea of movement. The territory in their definition does not refer to firm borders and rigid meaning; rather it is a flexible space which can move toward the fixity of borders and pass into some other territories and meanings. In this sense the line of flight is the possibility of traversing the lines and passing over the
determined territory through the process of deterritorialization. The line of flight as a political possibility is immanent to a given assemblage, to a certain territory, which by decoding the codes and deterritorialising determined boundaries unfolds new territories, new ways of behaving, and finally creates a new territory: reterritorialization. On this ground, Deleuze and Guattari argue that deterritorialization "must be thought of as a perfectly positive power that has degrees and thresholds (epistrata), it is always relative, and has reterritorialization as its flipside or complement. An organism that is deterritorialized in relation to the exterior necessarily reterritorializes on its interior milieus."\(^\text{62}\)

Hence, the line of flight is the internal dynamic of the new made territory. It evades any ideal conceptualization of realms, namely it escapes what I call the bios-ization of politics. Contrary to Derrida's deconstruction, the process of deterritorialization does not have a Master signifier to which the dialectics should be led; and any Master signifier or any Absolute one would be decoded and deterritorialized through the line of flight. The signifying system, whether in Saussure's or even in Derrida's deconstructive thought, needs a hierarchical mechanism. It needs a 'scapegoat' which should be sacrificed in favor of the final and transcendental object of the signifying regime. Besides, one should control the process of deconstruction, since the system cannot tolerate the line of flight which may dismantle and destroy the Master elements and the main values of the whole system. On this basis, the signifying system always consists of two opposite faces: 'despot and God', speech and writing, zoe and bios, body and who, the social and the political.... Deleuze and Guattari enunciate it as follows:

Finally, and especially, it incarnates the line of flight the signifying regime can not tolerate, in other words, an absolute deterritorialization; the regime
must block a line of this kind define it in an entirely negative fashion precisely because it exceeds the degree of deterritorialization of the signifying sign, however high it may be. The line of flight is like a tangent to the circles of significance and the center of signifier. It is under a curse. The goat's anus stands opposite the face of the despot or god. Anything that threatens to put the system to flight will be killed or put to flight itself. Anything that exceeds the excess of the signifier or passes beneath it will be marked with the negative value. Your only choice will be between a goat's ass and the face of the god, between sorcerers and priests.63

By the same token, through the concept of deterritorialization, they challenge the idea of stable understanding of identity which obstructs 'becoming' by offering fixed territorial borders for subjectivity. They argue that "the face or body of the despot or god has something like a counterbody [...] There is no question that these two bodies communicate, for the body of the despot is sometimes subjected to trials of humiliation or even torture, or of exile and exclusion".64 And, in reverse, the face of the priest could be condemned for commuting rape!

But how do some thinkers, despite themselves, reactivate and recapture the 'distinction' theory? How does it happen that the theorists, who are supposed to overcome the transcendental hierarchy, are finally overcome by it? How does the belief in the absolute play a decisive role in their philosophy? How is it that access to 'transcendence' is the main theoretical motivation for their political approach?

According to Deleuze the relations of transcendence can be traced back to theological roots through which the lower realm finds its values from higher realms, that is, the lower realm is dependent on higher ones. Accordingly, the cause and effect relationship in terms of transcendence is based on the distinction of essences, between cause and effect. Therefore, Deleuze sketches
the transcendence as a relation 'to' something which indicates separation and differentiation. The relation of body to mind in which body is secondary to mind, or the relation of Creation to God through which God is independent of His Creation are based on negation, a separation in which the lower attains its value from the higher. Accordingly, the lower is devalued in the light of the higher: "Deleuze turns on one of the main targets of his philosophy of immanence through a critique of Hegelian dialectics, where a principle of negation itself becomes that which transcends."65

By denouncing the transcendental relations, Deleuze radicalizes immanence. He argues that the immanence indicates a form of relation 'in' something rather than 'to' something. Immanence implies something rather than excludes something. Hence the causal relation in immanence theory is based on the effect which remains in its cause, and the cause remains in the effect. From this viewpoint, there is no essential distinction between cause and effect, and immanence is defined in terms of connections rather than distinction. In this approach, there is no hierarchy on the basis of transcendental causal relations between body and mind, that is no one is subordinated to the other. Deleuze says:

The significance of Spinozism seems to me this: it asserts immanence as a principle and frees expression from any subordination to emanative or exemplary causality [...]. God is the cause of all things in the same sense that he is cause of himself, he produces as he formally exists [...]. He thus produces things in the very forms that constitute his own essence.66

To Deleuze, there is nothing exemplary in the idea of God, since, it itself is produced. From the political point of view, immanence relations are opposed to any absolute power, universal centralization or unity. They are rather accounting for the processes of becoming in multiplicities through
unfolding the possibility of participating and experimenting. By denouncing the transcendental idea, he argues that:

There are no such things as universals, there's nothing transcendent, no Unity, subject (or object), Reason; there are only processes, sometimes unifying, subjectifying, rationalizing, but just processes all the same. These processes are at work in concrete "multiplicities", [...] It's multiplicities that fill the field of immanence, rather as tribes fill the desert without it ceasing to be a desert.  

For Deleuze, unlike neo-Platonists, there are no dividing lines between body and mind, private and public, zoe and bios. Mind is not independent of body; and body is not subordinated to mind. These are not two distinctive substances, in which one is the cause of the other. From this point of view body and mind, public and private have to be understood in terms of processes which do not have any special or hierarchical status. Here, we are dealing with two metaphysics: transcendence and immanence. Transcendental philosophy as a deep-rooted traditional philosophy which is based on a vicious circles of negation, distinction and differentiation obstructs the movement and prevents the growth of multiplicities. And its end product would be nothing but the absolute One, namely 'writing', 'feminine', 'public', or 'political'. In opposition to the transcendental One, immanence implies the world of processes, compositions and participations. By demolishing the dividing lines between animal/human, political/social, body/who, public/private, writing/speech immanent relations provide the possibility of deterritorialization, becomings, struggles and resistances. There is no hierarchy on which a substance finds a permanent priority to another substance; there is no trace of a-priori policy or everlasting prescription as stepping into public or becoming "who" as a policy
of freedom. It is the field of life, realm of tactics and strategies which have no one-way direction 'to' something. Deleuze says:

Processes are becomings, and aren't to be judged by some final result but by the way they proceed and their power to continue, as with animal becomings or nonsubjective individuations.68

As an example of immanent thought, we may refer to the way that Michel Foucault sees the first dialogue of Plato, *Alcibiades*. His reading of Alcibiades would be significant, particularly if one bears in mind Moruzzi's attempt in narrating *Alcibiades* in terms of the Arendtian potentiality of demolishing the distinction between polar realms, and of course her failure in fulfilling the aim.

Pointing out the dialogue in the light of the concept of 'care of self', Foucault discusses Alcibiades' relation with himself, with his lover, Socrates, and with his society:

Alcibiades is about to begin his public and political life. He wishes to speak before the people and be all-powerful in the city. He is not satisfied with his traditional status, with the privileges of his birth and heritage. He wishes to gain personal power over all others both inside and outside the city. At this point of intersection and transformation, Socrates intervenes and declares his love for Alcibiades. Alcibiades can no longer be the beloved; he must become a lover. He must become active in the political and love game. Thus, there is a dialectic between political and erotic discourses. Alcibiades makes his transition in a specific way in both politics and love.59

Here, one can see the 'intersection' of erotic attachment and politics, namely the immanent relation of private and public. In order to be a politician or a good ruler Alcibiades needs to govern his personal life. He needs to make decisions for his private as well as public life. In other words, the way he
governs his personal life is interwoven with his public life. Alcibiades stands at the intersection of his erotic life and his political life "he wanted to be dominant, not dominated". In his most revealing analysis, Foucault does not seek to give us any general code for living or a model for action. Hence when he is asked whether you find in Greek life an attractive or plausible alternative, he emphatically responds:

No! I am not looking for an alternative; you can't find the solution of a problem in the solution of another problem raised at another moment by other people. You see, what I want to do is not the history of solutions — and that's the reason why I don't accept the word alternative. I would like to do the genealogy of problems, of problématiques.74

He gives an example of Greek ethics to show the immanent relation between private and public, between self mastery and mastery of others. In other words, he attempts to present how governing a city is associated with caring for oneself or governing oneself. Here, it is impossible to distinguish government of the self from government of others; it is impossible to separate the individual from the citizen of the polis. One cannot determine which realm is the precondition for the other, which one is subordinated to the other or which one is the ultimate end of politics. Here, the concern for freedom relates to the care of self; and governing oneself and governing the other has a reciprocal relation: the way one governs the private determines one's public life, and the codes of the public determine one's private life in turn. It is on the intermingling borders that the self is constituted and the personal choice is made through the communication of political and erotic discourses. Now, we can refer to what Deleuze, based on Antonin Artaud's concept of the 'genital' designates as 'genitality of thought'. Deleuze believes that thought "comes
from an outside that is farther away than any external world, and hence closer than any internal world."\textsuperscript{72} From this point of view, biological demands have not to be passed over or sublimated in order to step into the emancipatory realm of politics; hence it is not possible to determine which one is the cause of the other or which has priority over the other. To Deleuze it is "Foucault's version of the novelty of Greeks".\textsuperscript{73} They are examples which folded outside back to inside, bent public to private and intermingled the innate with the acquired. As a result, the force which affects others is inseparable from the force which affects oneself. In other words, "there is a 'relation to oneself' that consciously derives from one's relation with others; on the other there is equally a 'self-constitution' that consciously derives from the moral code as a rule for knowledge".\textsuperscript{74}

Hence, Alcibiades could never manage his private life without referring to social, political and economic life. And at the same time, he could not govern his public life without considering the choices of the private. The choices may account for freedom. Hence, Socrates tells Alcibiades:

\begin{quote}
You want to become a politician, to govern a city, to care for others, and you haven't even taken care of yourself. If you do not care for yourself you will make a poor ruler.\textsuperscript{75}
\end{quote}

In this sense, the realm of politics is the realm of power relations, transmission of singularities, the sphere of multiplicities which extends from the private to public, \textit{zoe} to \textit{bios}, inside to outside, innate to acquire, a continuation without any dividing line or any hierarchical regime. Politics is deployment of forces, throwing dice and the scene of unpredictability of wars rather than predictability of Master signifiers. It is the realm of struggles rather than the sphere of hopes, the realm of tactics rather than long-term programs
and strategies. Through such understanding of politics choices are made, possibilities are formed, new ways of life are unfolded, actors are constructed, actions are carried out, revolts are made and the Iranian 'Green Movement' has emerged.

Notes

4. Ibid., p. 31.
5. Ibid., p. 29-30.
10. Ibid., p. 103-104.
11. Ibid., p. 136.
13. Ibid., p. 368.
17. Ibid., P. 41.
18. Ibid., p. 42.
22. Ibid., p. 244.
23. Ibid., p. 72.

25. Adrienne Cecile Rich born in Baltimore, Maryland on May 16, 1929 is an American poet, essayist and feminist. Rich taught and lectured at Scripps College, San Jose State University, and Stanford University during the 1980s and 1990s.

26. Norma Claire Moruzzi is Associate Professor, Political Science, Gender & Women's Studies, and History in the university of Illinois at Chicago. In "Out of the Frying Pan, Into the Fire: Young Iranian Women Today" Moruzzi deals with women's issues in Iran.


28. Ibid., p. 333.
29. Ibid., p. 331.
30. Ibid., p. 335-336.
32. Ibid., p. 141.
33. Ibid., p. 147.
34. Ibid., p. 143.
35. Ibid., p. 143.
36. Ibid., p. 143.
37. Ibid., p. 36.
38. Ibid., p. 144.
39. Ibid., p. 143.
40. Ibid., p. 150.
41. Ibid., p. 152.
42. Ibid., p. 154.
43. Ibid., p. 59.
44. It is a play on Moruzzi's words who says "the gender distinction of public and private realm were not as absolute as Arendt's discussion would have us believe." (Ibid., p. 151).
46. Ibid., p. 7
47. Ibid., p. 8.
48. Ibid., p. 8.
50. Ibid., 15.
51. Ibid., p. 19.
52. Ibid., pp. 26-27
53. Ibid., p. 58.
54. Ibid., p. 70.
55. Ibid., p. 48.
56. Ibid., p. 7.
61. Ibid.
63. Ibid. pp. 128-129.
64. Ibid., p. 128.
68. Ibid., p. 146.
70. Ibid.
73. Ibid., p. 100.
74. Ibid.
75. Michel Foucault, "The Ethics of the Concern of the Self as a Practice of Freedom", *Ethics*, p. 293.