Theoretical Deconstruction of "Pastoral Feminism" Discourse: Critique and Reflection from a Feminist Perspective

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Abstract

This theoretical critique deconstructs China's "Pastoral Feminism" discourse (田园女权), arguing it constitutes an arrested dialectical movement of Hegelian "Spirit" through its reliance on symbolic abstraction, rigid binary oppositions (e.g., "men oppressors/women victims"), and ahistorical essentialism. By employing violent labelling (e.g., "Brother's Sustainer Slave" for Mrs. Pan's filial-economic support, "Marriage Donkey" for Papi Jiang's surname choice) and decontextualisation (e.g., the Wuhan University incident), it negates concrete ethical substance (Sittlichkeit) and mediating contradictions within China's specific socio-economic conditions—such as fragmented rural welfare, urban-rural disparities, and dowry customs—failing to achieve genuine sublation. Drawing on Young's situated justice and Fraser's redistribution-recognition dialectic, the discourse is shown to produce empty rhetoric and symbolic violence, ossifying gender relations whilst ignoring class, region, and historical contingency. The critique advocates for a contextually grounded Chinese feminism, proposing structural reforms (e.g., securing rural women's land rights, addressing hukou discrimination, institutional safeguards) and integrating Marxist-feminist insights with Fei Xiaotong's relational ethics to mediate universal gender justice ideals through concrete, pluralistic struggle, enabling Spirit's dialectical progression beyond alienation.

Keywords

Pastoral Feminism, Hegelian Dialectics, Symbolic Violence, Chinese Feminism, Gender Justice

Introduction: The Immediate Phenomenology of Alienated Gender Consciousness and the Arrested Dialectic

In Hegelian philosophy, **"Spirit" (Geist)**[1] refers to the collective self-consciousness of a society (Hegel, 1807). Pastoral Feminism manifests as a negative force of symbolic abstraction – a movement of Spirit that tragically arrests the dialectic rather than carrying it forward. It transmutes concrete acts of familial solidarity, embedded in the ethical substance (*Sittlichkeit*)[2] of specific lifeworlds, into scornful epithets devoid of their immanent content. Consider the case of Mrs. Pan of Dingyuan (Anhui)[3]: for twelve years she sold baked goods to secure housing and transportation for her younger brother, then returned her savings to her parents. This constituted a genuine **ethical moment** of rural intergenerational reciprocity – a *concrete mediation* between filial duty and pragmatic security amidst fragmented welfare structures. Such family support often serves as de facto old-age insurance, especially given China's minimal pensions for rural retirees (averaging only about ¥179 per month)[4] (Zongyuan Zoe Liu, 2025). In these determinate conditions, her action was a living synthesis of duty and necessity – Spirit actualizing itself in a real social context. Yet under Pastoral Feminism's alienated lens, this dialectic is fractured and misconstrued: she is branded a **"Brother's Sustainer Slave"**[5], judged for an "excessive sacrifice." Online incantations like *#VidaDiáriaDeUmaEscravaDoSustentoDoIrmão*[6] condemn her, effectively negating the totality of her existence and dissolving her lived dialectic into an empty universal judgment (Hotspot News, 2025). This **abstract negation** of her concrete reality fails to

[1] In G.W.F. Hegel's philosophy, "Spirit" refers to the collective self-awareness of a community or society, developing through historical and dialectical processes. This concept is central to nineteenth-century German idealism and later influenced Marxist theory.
[2] Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Inwood trans.), ¶444: "Action breaks up the simple unity of the ethical world. Since the agent must be conscious of the ethical substance in whose interests he is acting…"; see also ¶450 ("this is the family") and ¶451 (family "is not the relation of sensibility, or the relation of love").
[3] A county in eastern China with a predominantly agricultural economy, representative of rural regions where extended family support often substitutes for comprehensive public welfare systems.
[4] China's pension system is tiered, with rural residents often receiving only small subsidies (about ¥179/month), far below subsistence level, reflecting structural disparities between urban and rural welfare provision.
[5] A colloquial label in China for women who financially support younger brothers, often framed online as self-sacrificing or patriarchal, but in some contexts functioning as intergenerational mutual aid.
[6] Portuguese for "Daily life of a brother's sustenance slave". The use of Portuguese in Chinese social media illustrates the cross-cultural borrowing of internet slang via global platforms.

sublate[7] her action into a higher understanding; instead it arrests Spirit's development in a barren binary.

Similarly, the case of Mrs. Lin[8] in Hangzhou[9] – who demanded co-ownership of a flat plus a large dowry from her fiancé as a "course for independent women" – pits two legitimate dimensions against each other. On one hand, she invoked urban autonomy and gender equality; on the other, she navigated rural patriarchal dowry customs. Pastoral Feminism reduces this painful *mediated contradiction* of tradition and modernity to a caricature of selfishness. The strategic reciprocity of her negotiation is subsumed under an icon of greed, a negation that fails to sublate its moments into synthesis (Frente Studio, 2025). In Hegelian terms, true dialectical negation should resolve such contradictions by **transforming** them into something higher, but here the "negative" is instead a frozen slur.

The discourse weaponizes a crude "us versus them" dualism, mistaking rigid opposition for genuine critique. Witness the highly publicized **Wuhan University library incident (2023)[10]**: Yang Jingyuan's viral post edited Mr. Xiao's innocuous leg-scratch (caused by eczema) into the spectral figure of a "Library Pervert" engaged in persistent sexual harassment. This act of **violent abstraction** – stripping away context and intent – ignited a media firestorm. Even after a court exonerated Mr. Xiao (noting an eczema flare-up as the likely cause) (Global Times, 2025), Yang defiantly declared, "I lost the case, but I wasn't wrong," accusing the justice system of bias. The episode embodies *unhappy consciousness*[11] in extremis: Mr. Xiao, a real person with PTSD and family trauma, becomes an immutable signifier of male threat. In this binary lens, both the substantiality of law (its concrete universality) and the individual's freedom are undermined. The justice system's potential sublation – preserving truth in a higher

[7] This fails to sublate her action into a higher understanding: as Hegel warns, "Their deed is abstract negation, not the negation of consciousness, which sublates in such a way as to preserve and maintain what is sublated, and thereby survives its being sublated." Moreover, hashtag denunciations operate by presenting the particular "as immediately valid as a universal" — "in truth something particular, and [having] merely the form of universality" — thereby substituting an empty, abstract universality for the mediating, preserving negation that genuine Aufhebung requires.

[8] This information was obtained by the author in an informal interview and has not been covered by any news reports.

[9] A major city in eastern China, known for its high living costs and competitive property market, which intensifies the financial pressures surrounding marriage negotiations.

[10] A widely publicised online controversy in which an accusation of sexual harassment was later disproved in court, sparking debate about online vigilantism and due process.

[11] A concept from Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, describing a state of internal division where self-awareness is alienated from the lived reality, often used to analyse social contradictions.

universality – is frustrated by the public discourse's refusal to mediate or contextualize. Spirit literally slashes itself with its own abstractions, fracturing communal trust.

Finally, Pastoral Feminism ossifies into dogmatic essentialism, freezing gender's dynamic differences into metaphysical absolutes and denying history. In 2020 the popular vlogger Papi Jiang[12] was derided as a **"Marriage Donkey"** for giving her child the father's surname – a private family decision in one context, reified into the symbol of "failed independent womanhood." Viral hashtags like *#ChildrenShouldUseMumSurname* equated "true feminism" with the mere abstract negation of surname traditions, erasing the dialectic between culture and individual choice. This broad negation overlooks how naming is negotiated within kinship networks: older relatives, regional customs, even state norms all play roles. Chinese media have noted how quickly such discourse turns punitive: branding a mother "**婚驴**" (marriage donkey) is **not** advancing gender equality but "another form of female humiliation" (Di Xuanya, 2020). These labels fail to capture the varied realities of women (urban vs. rural, wealthy vs. poor) and the specific constraints they face; instead they collapse rich social conditions into a simple moralism.

These patterns – symbolic labeling, binary antagonism, and ahistorical essentialism – reveal Pastoral Feminism's **negative essence**: not merely isolated errors, but an arrested movement of Spirit. It simplifies dialectical social realities into static categories, pits mediated groups against each other in sterile wars, and imposes fixed gender essences (Hegel, 1807). In short, it mistreats our communal intelligence: Spirit's own self-articulation is obstructed by this egocentric haste. This immediate consciousness stands in violent contradiction to feminism's deeper ideals: justice rooted in lived reality, dialectical reason that sublates contradiction, and social construction that acknowledges history and plurality (Young 2011; Fraser 2003). What follows will deploy those very ideals – not as external dogma, but as moments of Spirit's self-unfolding – to dissect Pastoral Feminism's immanent contradictions and labor through the negative toward a more inclusive, contextualized understanding of gender.

[12] A prominent Chinese online media figure and satirist. Her choice to give her child the father's surname triggered heated debates about gender equality and family naming traditions.

Research Context: Spirit's Alienation in the Digital Epoch – The Abstract Public Sphere as Contradictory Moment

Pastoral Feminism emerges as a contradictory moment in Spirit's contemporary odyssey – a controversial gender discourse metastasizing through the highly abstract public sphere of social media. Characterized by emphatic slurs, absolutist binaries, and rigid essentialism, it thrives on short video platforms and online forums precisely as a *negation* of mediation. It eschews the labor of the negative – the hard work of understanding complex context – favoring the immediacy of emotive slogans. In effect, it reflects Spirit's profound struggle against its own reification: the digital realm's promise of connection becomes a site where social totality shatters into antagonistic fragments. We do not merely catalogue these errors; we trace them as immanent failures of Spirit's self-recognition in the new historical configuration. These fractures are not accidents, but symptomatic steps on the path Spirit must traverse to overcome alienation and realize a concrete universality of gender equality.

Theoretical Frameworks: The Dialectical Arsenal – Spirit's Self-Clarification

Central concepts from feminist theory – **justice, dialectics, and social construction** – form the speculative lens through which we analyze Pastoral Feminism. These are not arbitrary external standards; they are moments of Spirit's own self-clarification. Each illuminates a facet of the arrested dialectic.

Iris Marion Young[13]'s *Justice and the Politics of Difference (1990)* posits that justice is not about abstract rights formulas, but about the concrete flourishing of individuals and harmonious social relations in their particular contexts. Principles of justice must emerge from lived realities, not be imposed as cold universal categories. From this perspective, Pastoral Feminism's rhetorical labeling – calling Mrs. Pan a "slave," Mrs. Lin "materialist," or Papi Jiang a "donkey" – is a violent reductionism. It annihilates the dynamic historical tensions behind those actions. Young would critique these slurs as violations of subjective agency: they sacrifice the concrete individual (with her situated reasons and constraints) on the altar of rhetorical immediacy. For example,

[13] An influential American political theorist whose work *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (1990) argued that justice must consider social structures, cultural contexts, and group differences, rather than only universal principles.

Mrs. Pan's support of her brother navigated filial duty and economic insecurity within a fragmented welfare context – a nuanced mediation entirely obliterated when she is simply called a "slave." That is not justice, but a caricature of it: a universality emptied of its concrete content.

Nancy Fraser[14]'s redistribution-recognition dialectic (2003) insists that justice must integrate economic redistribution and cultural recognition, each attuned to local history and structure. Pure redistribution without recognition ignores identity oppression; pure recognition without material change collapses into impotent essentialism. In an authentic public sphere, ideals must emerge dialectically from specific contexts, mediating between material and symbolic. Yang Jingyuan's edit of Mr. Xiao's video violently severed the act from its medical and social context – a blatant form of what Fraser calls *symbolic violence*[15], where Spirit, in alienation, mutilates its own substance by refusing mediation. Likewise, flattening Mrs. Lin's demands into "she's just greedy" ignores that urban women's independence often relies on education and jobs historically denied to rural women; dowries can function (however imperfectly) as compensation for unpaid family labor in a system of weak social security (Zongyuan Zoe Liu, 2025). By ignoring Fraser's injunction to ground claims in concrete context, Pastoral Feminism turns justice into empty rhetoric – Spirit's alienation made manifest in dead icons and abstractions.

Binary Opposition: Spirit Trapped in Abstract Negation – The Paralysis of Antithesis

Pastoral Feminism's binary frame constructs a rigid gender antagonism through distorted negation, each a miscarriage of dialectical reason:

- **On Rights Allocation:** It decrees "men are always the beneficiaries," mistaking historically specific patterns for an eternal law. When a Hangzhou woman demanded her fiancé pay all rent and betrothal gifts as "a man's duty," Pastoral Feminism branded the complex class-housing pressures on both genders as simple "male privilege." This abstract negation freezes a contingent capitalist role (the male breadwinner under exploitative conditions) into an innate destiny. In truth,

[14] A critical theorist known for integrating economic redistribution with cultural recognition in her model of social justice. Her work emphasises that identity politics must be linked to material change.
[15] A sociological term popularised by Pierre Bourdieu, referring to the subtle, often unconscious, forms of cultural domination that impose particular meanings or values on others, reinforcing social hierarchies.

many men also struggle under crushing housing costs and insecure jobs; a dialectical analysis would contextualize gender along with class and market forces. The discourse, however, mistakes Spirit's own alienated economic form for a natural law.

- **On Responsibility Allocation:** It casts "women as perpetual victims," homogenizing diverse experiences and ignoring mediating factors. For example, the viral *#WidowFatherhood*[16] posts blamed "male selfishness" for women's childcare burdens, while omitting structural issues (workplace penalties for mothers, scarce affordable childcare, rigid hiring biases) (Chuanfang Chen, Huimin Hu, Renbing Shi, 2023). The result is attributing a complex social problem to an inherent "male nature." Here Spirit divides itself into absolutes – man as inherently exploitative, woman inherently exploited – trapping society in a frozen antithesis with no synthesis.
- **In Public Events:** It presumes men are predisposed to wrongdoing, essentializing suspicion. In the Wuhan case, Yang's decontextualizing edit interpreted Mr. Xiao's leg-scratch *solely* as sexual aggression, enforcing guilt by erasing all mediation. This rigid "us vs. them" view violently rips gender relations from socio-historical context, constructing a closed circuit of "oppressor vs. victim" that admits no transcendence. As one observer notes, fighting one binary only leads into another – swapping one simplistic opposition for another and embodying Spirit's futile, self-consuming combat.

Engels famously said (1891), *"the husband is the bourgeois; the wife the proletarian,"* to illustrate property relations in the bourgeois family – a historically specific metaphor, not eternal gender law. In reality, women held social power in various forms before private property structures. Pastoral Feminism's static worldview directly violates this dialectical insight: by insisting on the unchanging formula "men-oppress, women-suffer," it erases crucial differences within each gender (urban vs. rural, rich vs. poor) and ignores significant historical gains (e.g. 60% of Chinese women now in the labor force, World Bank, 2025). A contemporary scholar observes that obsessing over

[16] A Chinese social media phrase referring to cases where mothers shoulder the majority of childcare responsibilities, implicitly critiquing absent or disengaged fathers.

"male dominance versus female submission" is not liberation but a replay of old binaries – an intellectual dead end that Spirit cannot afford (Chizuko Ueno, 2010). In essence, Pastoral Feminism mistakes the historically contingent roles imposed by capitalism (where men, too, are constrained by exploitation) for innate gender destinies, thereby perpetuating the very reified thinking Engels critiqued. As Professor Wang Hongwei puts it, feminism must "say farewell to grand narratives" – clinging to a new rigid binary war only arrests Spirit's necessary movement toward nuanced, liberating syntheses.

Essentialism: Spirit Frozen in Immediate Identity – The Denial of Becoming

Pastoral Feminism's essentialism manifests as a double freezing of Spirit's fluidity:

- **Homogenizing Women:** It reduces the vast diversity of female experience to a single monolithic victimhood, denying agency and strategy. Papi Jiang's ordeal exemplifies this violence: pilloried as a "Marriage Donkey" for her son's surname choice, her private decision – in reality a pragmatic element of her family's life – was abstracted into an absolute symbol of patriarchal betrayal. This ignores the myriad women who navigate naming and marriage decisions through familial negotiation. *Pastoral Feminism collapses these diverse realities into one mythic script*, violently suppressing Spirit's inherent self-diversification (Young 2011; Fraser 2003). We must note that this phenomenon itself is a complex social product: on Weibo, users have even attacked married or soon-to-be-married women while neglecting issues facing the poor, disabled, and gender minorities (Li Sipan, 2020). In this fractured online feminism, those who urge solidarity are often labeled "elitist" by the radicals. Such internal splits suggest that "田园女权" is not monolithic: some participants are genuinely advocating empowerment, while others seek provocation or scapegoating (Li Sipan, 2020; Di Xuanya, 2020). Dismissing all of them as false consciousness misses this nuance. Indeed, critics caution that calling any married mother "婚驴" is itself a form of misogynist shaming (Di Xuanya, 2020). Acknowledging these internal differences and the commercialized media dynamics behind them is crucial for any sincere feminist critique.

- **Essentializing Male Violence:** It posits men as inevitably exploitative, ignoring counterexamples. Yang Jingyuan's fabricated "Divorce Law of 2001"[17] (turning a real 30% statistic into 0.3%) alleged men always harm women, a claim that disregards the many supportive men and economic interdependencies in marriages. This toxic essentialism interprets any data through a vengeance filter. When women's rights rhetoric fixes on a single narrative ("all men oppress"), it loses sight of reality's variety. Any genuine liberation must recognize that Spirit's path is to see multiple potential selves, not lock identity into one dimension.

In sum, Pastoral Feminism mistakes historical tensions for immutable facts, rendering Spirit's dialectic static. It turns justice into mere rhetoric and identity into policing. The time now is to engage in the very mediation Pastoral Feminism rejects: to relate universal ideals to concrete struggles, and to allow for complex negotiations.

Local Implications: Spirit's Concrete Becoming and Rational Discourse – The Ethical Substance of Gender

For feminist theory to overcome abstraction and become a living force in China, it must be rigorously localized and contextual. This means acknowledging **power, resources, and implementation challenges** in all proposals. The path forward is Spirit's self-articulation in determinate form: building institutional mechanisms for pluralistic, evidence-based discourse. The following policy pathways emerge immanently from our critique:

Mobilizing Local Resources within Marxist Feminism

Chinese feminist scholarship offers rich traditions for this localization. Professor Han Henan urges us to revive China's own history of women's liberation in a Marxist framework. One insight is to view seemingly regressive practices dialectically: the "Brother's Sustainer" role for women, for example, can be understood as intergenerational risk-sharing in the absence of robust public pensions. In rural areas with minimal welfare, a woman's support for a brother or children often functions as informal family insurance – "prudent self-care," not simple subjugation. Policy can build on this: by **strengthening rural women's land rights** and establishing village elder-care

[17] An example of misinformation in online activism; the real statistic (30%) was misrepresented as 0.3%, showing how data can be manipulated for rhetorical purposes.

cooperatives[18], self-sacrifice is transformed into collective welfare. China's new Rural Land Law (effective 2025)[19] nominally guarantees equal land rights, but experts warn it still contains "loopholes" that local elites may exploit (Xinlu Liang, 2024). Vigilant enforcement and community education are needed so that land truly becomes a material basis for women's security. Such measures reclaim Spirit's alienated labor as social substance, turning individual burdens into communal solidarity (Shi Hongmei et al., 2024).

Expanding Fraser's Framework with Class and Region

We adapt Fraser's triadic model to China's urban–rural divide, using a tripartite lens that mediates the universal through particulars:

- **Redistribution justice for urban women:** Tackle workplace inequalities by enforcing equal pay, promotion fairness, and anti-discrimination. Both Spirit and women's concrete autonomy require dissolving glass ceilings and reshaping corporate cultures, not just swapping one set of obligations for another.
- **Resource-recognition justice for rural women:** Acknowledge the complicated role of dowries and unpaid care in local contexts. In China, dowries in poorer regions often serve as social security within patrilocal families; dismissing all dowries as mere patriarchy denies this mediation. We must find ways to *reclaim* this "alienated" value – for example, allowing women to retain dowry contributions or co-own property – rather than ignoring their material contributions. Crucially, actual rural women's land and property rights should be protected in law and practice. **Recent reforms aim to do this,** but the challenge is real: Chinese experts report that despite legal equality, many women still face manipulation by local authorities (Xinlu Liang, 2024). Our proposal is to close loopholes and ensure transparency in land allocation.
- **Identity-integration justice for migrants:** Abolish hukou-based discrimination that creates a permanent second-class citizenry (especially harming women who migrate for work). Hukou law effectively "conditions the enjoyment of a wide

[18] Community-based initiatives providing mutual support for elderly residents, often proposed as a way to strengthen rural welfare without relying solely on state funding.
[19] A legal reform in China intended to guarantee equal land rights for men and women, though implementation challenges remain due to local power structures.

range of rights on one's hukou designation[20]"(Amnesty International, 2007), trapping rural-born urban residents in vulnerability. Reform must guarantee equal access to education, healthcare, and social insurance regardless of registration.

China's **"Zero Dowry[21] Certificate"** pilot in Ningxia[22] exemplifies this contextual approach: it grants newlyweds tangible incentives and state benefits for forgoing heavy dowries, thereby embedding egalitarian norms in local custom. Xinhua reports that since April 2024, Ningxia authorities have mobilized village women's federations as volunteer matchmakers and even offer perks (free banquet venues, job priority, pension subsidies) to couples who insist on a zero or low bride price[23] (Xinhua, 2025). Such pragmatic policies demonstrate Spirit's concrete universality – universal gender justice taking determinate, local form.

Adapting Anti-Essentialism through Relational Ethics

Judith Butler's concept of performativity (identity as enacted) (Judith Butler, 1990) must be engaged dialogically with Chinese relational ethics[24] (the **"differential mode of association," 差序格局**). Individual choices – like Papi Jiang's surname decision – occur within webs of family negotiation, not as isolated assertions against an abstract patriarchy. A rational discourse would interpret such decisions as outcomes of mutual compromise and social context, not as binary symbols of liberation or betrayal. At the same time, academia must uphold rigor: fraudulent arguments (for example, Yang Jingyuan's fabricated "Divorce Law") should be exposed and refuted to maintain intellectual integrity. This is Spirit purifying itself: theory must remain rooted in truth, lest it perpetuate false ideologies.

[20] Hukou-based discrimination is a systemic restriction in China where citizens' access to education, healthcare, and housing depends on their registered birthplace, creating barriers for internal migrants.
[21] In many rural areas, marriage involves financial exchanges between families. The dowry (*jia zhuang*) is from the bride's side, while the bride price (*cai li*) is from the groom's side, both serving social and economic functions.
[22] A local government initiative in China's Ningxia region providing incentives for couples to marry without expensive bride prices, including free wedding venues and pension subsidies.
[23] The annotation is as above.
[24] A framework emphasising the moral significance of interpersonal relationships, mutual obligations, and context, often contrasted with strictly individualist ethics.

Creating Platforms for Inter-Group Dialogue

Sustained change requires dialogue across groups. We propose structured consultative forums[25] bringing together urban and rural women and men. For instance, joint seminars on marriage customs could involve sharing data on regional dowry practices or childcare solutions. Replacing angry sloganeering with mutual understanding allows Spirit to recognize itself across differences. One might combine empirical studies on rural women's land or land-rights deficits with discussions including grassroots representatives and policymakers. Through such mediated exchange – the labor of understanding the other – Spirit's self-recognition can emerge anew in the concrete social whole.

Implementing Institutional Correction Mechanisms

Codified standards are needed to regularize gender discourse and protect due process. For example, Shenzhen's "Three Constitutive Elements of Sexual Harassment" (explicit sexual content, lack of consent, demonstrated rights violation) provides clear criteria that can guide public events and adjudication. Instituting such explicit rules helps prevent decontextualized accusations (as in the Xiao case) and balances victim protection with fairness. On a broader level, institutions (courts, universities, workplaces) must strengthen gender-equity training and complaint mechanisms. Only through transparent rules – Spirit's self-regulation in the legal sphere – can we mediate between individual rights and social order.

Embedding Critical Pedagogy

Education is key. We recommend mandatory university courses such as **"Gender and Society in Contemporary China,"** applying Marxist analysis and deconstructive critique to real cases (e.g. Mrs. Pan, Mrs. Lin, the Wuhan incident). Such courses should expose students to structural urban–rural inequalities and the pitfalls of abstraction. Curricula can include China's own history of gender policy and contemporary social data (e.g. on pension gaps, childcare shortages, migration). Cultural initiatives can help too: Fuzhou's "Women's Boxing" heritage[26] (highlighting female strength and inclusivity) is

[25] Participatory platforms enabling direct dialogue between communities and policymakers, often used in democratic deliberation and conflict resolution contexts.

[26] A regional martial arts tradition involving women's participation, celebrated for promoting female strength and challenging stereotypes.

one example that challenges myths through embodied practice. These efforts embody Spirit's self-education: learning its own history and potential through concrete practice and reflection, moving closer to genuine freedom.

Practical Obstacles: Of course, lofty ideals must face real-world constraints. Experts caution that reforms can be stymied at implementation. For example, the new rural land law of 2024, while promising clearer rights, still "contains ambiguity that could lead to manipulation by rural authorities" (Xinlu Liang, 2024). Similarly, dismantling hukou discrimination involves complex bureaucracy across provinces (Amnesty International, 2007). Effective feminism must therefore be pragmatic: building coalitions among government agencies, allocating sufficient funding, piloting programs with evaluation, and holding implementers accountable. Only by acknowledging and addressing such power and resource hurdles can Spirit's ideals penetrate practice, preventing our proposals from remaining abstract slogans.

Conclusion: Spirit's Return to Itself – From Alienation to Absolute Knowing

Our immanent critique has traced how Pastoral Feminism's discourse enacts a triple negation of feminism's essence: symbolic appropriation, binary opposition, and essentialism. Spirit, operating through our slogans, simplifies rich social realities into dead categories, creating sterile conflicts instead of true contradictions. To transcend this, we must return to Hegel's vision of Spirit coming to self-knowledge: to see universal ideals not in abstraction, but in their concrete embodiment. In China's context, that means feminism must be pluralistic, contextual, and structurally grounded. Only by applying gender ideals in concrete settings – negotiating urban and rural needs, bridging hukou divides, turning private sacrifices into public solidarity – can Spirit sublate its own alienation. In the end, genuine equality will not be an empty banner but a lived actuality: Spirit recognizing itself in the ethical substance of our shared social world, overcoming false oppositions and achieving a more concrete universality of gender justice (Hegel, 1807; Xinhua, 2025).

Sources: Evidence and examples in this critique draw on feminist theory (Young 2011; Fraser 2003), Chinese case reports, and social science research. For instance, Amnesty International documents how **hukou** legally conditions citizens' rights (Amnesty International, 2007), and an SCMP analysis notes that rural land reforms still

face “legal loopholes” disadvantaging women (Xinlu Liang, 2024). Studies highlight China’s childcare as plagued by accessibility and affordability gaps (Chuanfang Chen 1, Huimin Hu, Renbing Shi, 2023). Recent news also illustrates government actions: Xinhua reports Ningxia’s bride-price campaign (free weddings, pensions for “zero-price” marriages) (Xinhua, 2025), and domestic media have condemned terms like “婚驴” as humiliating rather than emancipatory (Di Xuanya, 2020). These and other data ground our critique in China’s socio-political reality.

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Appendix

This chapter contains the original texts and English translations of Friedrich Engels' s *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (Excerpt from The Family)

and Fei Xiaotong's *From the Soil* (The Foundations of Chinese Society), translated by Lulu Yang and Chunxi Hu.

Original Text

Die Familie

Morgan, der sein Leben grossentheils unter den noch jetzt im Staat New-York ansässigen Irokesen zugebracht und in einen ihrer Stämme (den der Senekas) adoptirt worden, fand unter ihnen ein Verwandtschaftssystem in Geltung, das mit ihren wirklichen Familienbeziehungen im Widerspruch stand. Bei ihnen herrschte jene, beiderseits leicht lösliche Einzellehe, die Morgan als „Paarungsfamilie“ bezeichnet. Die Nachkommenschaft eines solchen Ehepaars war also vor aller Welt offenkundig und anerkannt; es konnte kein Zweifel sein, auf wen die Bezeichnungen Vater, Mutter, Sohn, Tochter, Bruder, Schwester anzuwenden seien. Aber der Gebrauch dieser Ausdrücke widerspricht dem. Der Irokese nennt nicht nur seine eigenen Kinder, sondern auch die seiner Brüder, seine Söhne und Töchter; und sie nennen ihn Vater. Die Kinder seiner Schwestern dagegen nennt er seine Neffen und Nichten, und sie ihn Onkel. Umgekehrt nennt die Irokesin, neben ihren eigenen Kindern, diejenigen ihrer Schwestern ihre Söhne und Töchter, und diese nennen sie Mutter. Die Kinder ihrer Brüder dagegen nennt sie ihre Neffen und Nichten, und sie heisst ihre Tante. Ebenso nennen die Kinder von Brüdern sich unter einander Brüder und Schwestern, dessgleichen die Kinder von Schwestern. Die Kinder einer Frau und die ihres Bruders dagegen nennen sich gegenseitig Vettern und Cousinen. Und dies sind nicht blosse Namen, sondern Ausdrücke thatsächlich geltender Anschauungen von Nähe und Entferntheit, Gleichheit und Ungleichheit der Blutsverwandtschaft, und dienen zur Grundlage eines vollständig ausgearbeiteten Verwandtschaftssystems, das mehrere hundert verschiedene Verwandtschaftsbeziehungen eines einzelnen Individuums auszudrücken im Stande ist. Noch mehr. Dies System ist nicht nur in voller Geltung bei allen amerikanischen Indianern (bis jetzt ist keine Ausnahme gefunden), sondern es gilt auch fast unverändert bei den Ureinwohnern Indiens, bei den dravidischen Stämmen in Dekan und den Gaurastämmen in Hindustan. Die Verwandtschaftsausdrücke der stidindischen Tamiler und der Seneka-Irokesen im Staat New-York stimmen noch heute überein für mehr als zweihundert verschiedene Verwandtschaftsbeziehungen. Und auch bei diesen indischen

Stämmen, wie bei allen amerikanischen Indianern, stehen die aus der geltenden Familienform entspringenden Verwandtschaftsbeziehungen im Widerspruch mit dem Verwandtschaftssystem.

Wie nun dies erklären? Bei der entscheidenden Rolle, die die Verwandtschaft bei allen wilden und barbarischen Völkern in der Gesellschaftsordnung spielt, kann man die Bedeutung dieses so weitverbreiteten Systems nicht mit Redensarten beseitigen. Ein System, das in Amerika allgemein gilt, in Asien bei Völkern einer ganz verschiedenen Race ebenfalls besteht, von dem mehr oder weniger abgeänderte Formen überall in Afrika und Australien sich in Menge vorfinden, will geschichtlich erklärt sein, nicht weggeredet, wie dies z. B. MacLennan versuchte. Die Bezeichnungen Vater, Kind, Bruder, Schwester sind keine blossen Ehrentitel, sondern führen ganz bestimmte, sehr ernstliche gegenseitige Verpflichtungen mit sich, deren Gesammtheit einen wesentlichen Theil der Gesellschaftsverfassung jener Völker ausmacht. Und die Erklärung fand sich. Auf den Sandwichinseln (Hawaii) bestand noch in der ersten Hälfte dieses Jahrhunderts eine Form der Familie, die genau solche Väter und Mütter, Brüder und Schwestern, Söhne und Töchter, Onkel und Tanten, Neffen und Nichten lieferte wie das amerikanisch-altindische Verwandtschaftssystem sie fordert. Aber merkwürdig! Das Verwandtschaftssystem, das in Hawaii in Geltung war, stimmte wieder nicht mit der dort thatsächlich bestehenden Familienform. Dort nämlich sind alle Ge- schwisterkinder, ohne Ausnahme, Brüder und Schwestern, und gelten für die gemeinsamen Kinder, nicht nur ihrer Mutter und deren Schwestern, oder ihres Vaters und dessen Brüder, sondern aller Geschwister ihrer Eltern ohne Unterschied. Wenn also das amerikanische Ver- wandtschaftssystem eine in Amerika nicht mehr be-stehende, primitivere Form der Familie voraussetzt, die wir in Hawaii wirklich noch vorfinden, so verweist uns anderseits das Hawaii'sche Verwandtschaftssystem auf eine noch ursprünglichere Familienform, die wir zwar nirgends mehr als bestehend nachweisen können, die aber bestanden haben muss, weil sonst das entsprechende Verwandtschaftssystem nicht hätte entstehen können. „Die Familie, sagt Morgan, ist das aktive Element; sie ist nie stationär, sondern schreitet vor von einer niedrigeren zu einer höheren Form, im Mass wie die Gesellschaft von niederer zu höherer Stufe sich ent-wickelt. Die Verwandtschaftssysteme dagegen sind passiv; nur in langen Zwischenräumen registrieren sie die Fortschritte, die

die Familie im Lauf der Zeit ge-macht hat, und erfahren nur dann radikale Aenderung, wenn die Familie sich radikal verändert hat.“ „Und, setzt Marx hinzu, ebenso verhält es sich mit politischen, juristischen, religiösen, philosophischen Systemen überhaupt.“ Während die Familie fortlebt, verkriöchert das Verwandtschaftssystem, und während dies gewohnheits-mässig fortbesteht, entwickelt ihm die Familie. Mit derselben Sicherheit aber, mit der Cuvier aus den bei Paris gefundenen Marsupialknochen eines Thierskeletts schliessen konnte, dass dies einem Beuteltbier gehörte und dass dort einst ausgestorbene Beutelthiere gelebt, mit derselben Sicherheit können wir aus einem historisch überkommenen Verwandtschaftssystem schliessen, dass die ihm entsprechende, ausgestorbene Familienform bestanden hat.

Die eben erwähnten Verwandtschaftssysteme und Familienformen unterscheiden sich von den jetzt herr-schenden dadurch, dass jedes Kind mehrere Väter und

Mütter hat. Bei dem amerikanischen Verwandtschaftssystem, dem die hawaii’sche Familie entspricht, können

Bruder und Schwester nicht Vater und Mutter desselben Kindes sein; das hawaii’sche Verwandtschaftssystem aber setzt eine Familie voraus, in der dies im Gegentheil die Regel war. Wir werden hier in eine Reihe von Familienformen versetzt, die den bisher gewöhnlich als allein geltend angenommenen direkt widersprechen. Die hergebrachte Vorstellung kennt nur die Einzelche, daneben Vielweiberei Eines Mannes, allenfalls noch Vielmännerei Einer Frau, und verschweigt dabei, wie es dem moralisierenden Philister ziemt, dass die Praxis sich über diese von der offiziellen Gesellschaft gebotenen Schranken stillschweigend aber ungenirt hinwegsetzt. Das Studium der Urgeschichte dagegen führt uns Zu-stände vor, wo Männer in Vielweiberei, und ihre Weiber gleichzeitig in Vielmännerei leben, und die gemein-samen Kinder daher ihnen Allen auch als gemeinsam gelten; Zustände, die selbst wieder bis zu ihrer schliesslichen Auflösung in die Einzelche eine ganze Reihe von Veränderungen durchmachen. Diese Veränderungen sind der Art, dass der Kreis, den das gemeinsame Ehe-band umfasst, und der ursprünglich sehr weit war, sich mehr und mehr verengert, bis er schliesslich nur das Einzelpaar übrig lässt, das heute vorherrscht. Indem Morgan auf diese Weise die Geschichte der Familie rückwärts konstruiert, kommt er in Uebereinstimmung mit der Mehrzahl seiner Kollegen auf einen Urzustand, wo unbeschränkter

Geschlechtsverkehr inner-halb eines Stammes herrschte, so dass jede Frau jedem Mann, und jeder Mann jeder Frau gleichmässig gehörte. Die Entdeckung dieses Urzustandes ist das erste grosse Verdienst Bachofens.) Aus diesem Urzustand ent-wickelte sich, wahrscheinlich sehr frühzeitig:

1. Die Blutsverwandtschaftsfamilie, die erste organisierte Form der Gesellschaft und die erste Stufe der Familie. Hier sind die Ehegruppen nach Generationen gesondert: alle Grossväter und Grossmütter innerhalb der Grenzen der Familie sind sämmtlich unter einander Mann und Frau, ebenso deren Kinder, also die Väter und Mütter, wie deren Kinder wieder einen dritten Kreis gemeinsamer Ehegatten bilden werden, und deren Kinder, die Urenkel der ersten, einen vierten. In dieser Familienform sind also nur Vorfahren und Nachkommen, Eltern und Kinder von den Rechten wie Pflichten (wie wir sagen würden) der Ehe unter einander ausgeschlossen. Brüder und Schwestern, Vettern und Cousinen ersten, zweiten und entfernteren Grades, sind alle Brüder und Schwestern unter einander und eben desswegen alle Mann und Frau Eins des andern. Das Verhältnis von Bruder und Schwester schliesst auf dieser Stufe die Ausübung des gegenseitigen Geschlechtsverkehrs von selbst in sich ein.) Die typische Gestalt einer solchen Familie würde besteht aus der Nachkommenschaft Eines Paars, in welcher wieder die Nachkommen jedes einzelnen Grades unter sich Brüder und Schwestern und eben deshalb Männer und Frauen unter einander sind.

Die Blutsverwandtschaftsfamilie ist ausgestorben. Selbst die rohsten Völker, von denen die Geschichte erzählt, liefern kein nachweisbares Beispiel davon. Dass sie aber bestanden haben muss, dazu zwingt uns das hawaii'sche, in ganz Polynesien noch jetzt gültige Verwandtschaftssystem, das Grade der Blutsverwandtschaft ausdrückt, wie sie nur unter dieser Familienform entstehn können; dazu zwingt uns die ganze weitere Entwicklung der Familie, die jene Form als nothwendige Vorstufe bedingt.

2. Die Punaluafamilie. Wenn der erste Fortschritt der Organisation darin bestand, Eltern und Kinder vom gegenseitigen Geschlechtsverkehr auszuschliessen, so der zweite in der Ausschliessung von Schwester und Bruder. Dieser Fortschritt war, wegen der grösseren Altersgleichheit der Betheiligten, unendlich viel wichtiger, aber auch schwieriger als der erste; er vollzog sich

> allmälig, anfangen mit der Ausschliessung der leiblichen Geschwister (d. h. von mittlerlicher 'Seite) aus dem Geschlechtsverkehr, erst in einzelnen Fällen, nach und nach Regel werdend (in Hawaii kamen noch in diesem Jahrhundert Ausnahmen vor) und endend mit dem Verbot der Ehe sogar zwischen Kollateralgeschwistern, d. h. nach unserer Bezeichnung Geschwister-Kindern, -Enkeln und -Urenkeln; er bildet, nach Morgan, „eine vortreffliche Illustration davon, wie das Prinzip der natürlichen Zuchtwahl wirkt.“ Keine Frage, dass Stämme, bei denen die Inzucht durch diesen Fortschritt beschränkt wurde, sich rascher und voller entwickeln mussten als die, bei denen die Geschwisterehe Regel und Gebot blieb. Und wie gewaltig die Wirkung dieses Fortschritts empfunden wurde, beweist die aus ihm unmittelbar entsprungene, weit über das Ziel hinausschliessende Einrichtung der Gens, die die Grundlage der gesellschaftlichen Ordnung der meisten, wo nicht aller Barbarenvölker der Erde bildete und aus der wir in Griechenland und Rom unmittelbar in die Civilisation hinübertreten.

Jede Urfamilie musste spätestens nach ein paar Generationen sich spalten. Die ursprüngliche kommu-nistische Gesammthaushaltung, die bis tief in die mittlere Barbarei hinein ausnahmslos herrscht, bedingte eine, je nach den Verhältnissen wechselnde, aber an jedem Ort ziemlich bestimmte Maximalgrösse der Familiengemeinschaft. Sobald die Vorstellung von der Ungebühr des Geschlechtsverkehrs zwischen Kindern Einer Mutter aufkam, musste sie sich bei solchen Spaltungen alter und Gründung neuer Hausgemeinden (die indess nicht nothwendig mit der Familiengruppe zusammenfielen) wirksam zeigen. Eine oder mehrere Reihen von Schwestern wurden der Kern der einen, ihre leiblichen Brüder der Kern der andern. So oder ähnlich ging aus der Blutsverwandtschaftsfamilie die von Morgan Punaluafamilie genannte Form hervor. Nach der hawaiischen Sitte waren eine Anzahl Schwestern, leibliche oder entferntere (d. h. Cousinen ersten, zweiten oder entfernteren Grades) die gemeinsamen Frauen ihrer gemeinsamen Männer, wovon aber ihre Brüder ausgeschlossen; diese Männer nannten sich unter einander nun nicht mehr Brüder, was sie auch nicht mehr zu sein brauchten, sondern Punalua, d. h. intimer Genosse, gleichsam Associe. Ebenso hatte eine Reihe von leiblichen oder entfernteren Brüdern eine Anzahl Frauen, nicht ihre Schwestern, in

gemeinsamer Ehe, und diese Frauen nannten sich unter einander Punalua. Dies die klassische Gestalt einer Familienformation, die später eine Reihe von Variationen zulies, und deren wesentlicher Charakterzug war: gegenseitige Gemeinschaft der Männer und Weiber innerhalb eines bestimmten Familienkreises, von dem aber die Brüder der Frauen, zuerst die leiblichen, später auch die entfernteren, und umgekehrt also auch die Schwestern der Männer ausgeschlossen waren.

Diese Familienform liefert uns nun mit der vollständigsten Genauigkeit die Verwandtschaftsgrade, wie sie das amerikanische System ausdrückt. Die Kinder der Schwestern meiner Mutter sind noch immer ihre Kinder, ebenso die Kinder der Brüder meines Vaters auch seine Kinder, und sie alle sind meine Geschwister; aber die Kinder der Brüder meiner Mutter sind jetzt ihre Neffen und Nichten, die Kinder der Schwestern meines Vaters seine Neffen und Nichten, und sie alle meine Vettern und Cousinen. Denn während die Männer der Schwestern meiner Mutter noch immer ihre Männer sind, und ebenso die Frauen der Brüder meines Vaters auch noch seine Frauen rechtlich, wo nicht immer thatsächlich so hat die gesellschaftliche Aechtung des Geschlechtsverkehrs zwischen Geschwistern die bisher unterschiedslos als Geschwister behandelten Geschwisterkinder in zwei Klassen getheilt: die Einen bleiben nach wie vor (entferntere) Brüder und Schwestern unter einander, die Andern, die Kinder hier des Bruders, dort der Schwester, können nicht länger Geschwister sein, sie können keine gemeinschaftlichen Eltern mehr haben, weder Vater noch Mutter noch Beide, und desshalb wird hier zum ersten Mal die Klasse der Neffen und Nichten, Vettern und Cousinen nothwendig, die unter der früheren Familienordnung unsinnig gewesen wäre. Das amerikanische Verwandtschaftssystem, das bei jeder auf irgend einer Art Einzel- ehe beruhenden Familienform puren Widersinn erscheint, wird durch die Punaluafamilie bis in seine kleinsten Einzelnheiten rationell erklärt und natürlich begründet. Soweit dies Verwandtschaftssystem verbreitet gewesen, genau soweit, mindestens, muss auch die Punaluafamilie bestanden haben.

Diese in Hawaii wirklich als bestehend nachgewiesene Familienform würde uns wahrscheinlich aus ganz Polynesien überliefert sein, hätten die frommen Missionare, wie weiland die spanischen Mönche in Amerika, in solchen widerchristlichen Verhältnissen etwas mehr zu sehen vermocht, als den simplen „Greuel“.) Wenn uns Cäsar von den

Briten, die sich damals auf der Mittelstufe der Barbarei befanden, erzählt: „sie haben ihre Frauen je zehn oder zwölf gemeinsam unter sich, und zwar meist Brüder mit Brüdern und Eltern mit Kindern“ so erklärt sich dies am besten als Punalua-Familie. Barbarische Mütter haben nicht 10—12 Söhne, alt genug, um sich gemeinschaftliche Frauen halten zu können, aber das amerikanische Verwandschaftssystem, das der Punalua-Familie entspricht, liefert viele Brüder, weil alle nahen und entfernten Vettern eines Mannes seine Brüder sind. Das „Eltern mit Kindern“ mag falsche Auffassung des Cäsar sein; dass Vater und Sohn, oder Mutter und Tochter sich in derselben Ehegruppe befinden sollten, ist indess bei diesem System nicht absolut ausgeschlossen, wohl aber Vater und Tochter, oder Mutter und Sohn. Ebenso liefert diese Familienform die leichteste Erklärung der Berichte Herodot’s und anderer alter Schriftsteller über Weibergemeinschaft bei wilden und barbarischen Völkern. Punalua-familie muss auch sein, was Watson und Kaye (The People of India) von den Tikurs in Audh (nördlich vom Ganges) erzählen: „Sie leben zusammen (d. h. geschlechtlich) fast unterschiedslos in grossen Gemeinschaften, und wenn zwei Leute als mit einander verheirathet gelten, so ist das Band doch nur nominell.“

Direkt aus der Punaluafamilie hervorgegangen ist in weitaus den meisten Fällen die Institution der Gen s. Zwar bietet auch das australische Klassensystem einen Ausgangspunkt dafür; die Australier haben Gentes, aber noch keine Punaluafamilie. Ihre Organisation steht jedoch zu vereinzelt, als dass wir darauf Rücksicht zu nehmen hätten.

Bei allen Formen der Gruppenfamilie ist es ungewiss, wer der Vater eines Kindes ist, gewiss aber ist, wer seine Mutter. Wenn sie auch alle Kinder der Gesammtfamilie ihre Kinder nennt und Mutterpflichten gegen sie hat, so kennt sie doch ihre leiblichen Kinder unter den Andern. Es ist also klar, dass, soweit Gruppenehe besteht, die Abstimmung nur von mittlerlicher Seite nachweisbar ist, also nur die weibliche Linie anerkannt wird. Dies ist in der That bei allen wilden und der niederen Barbarenstufe angehörigen Völkern der Fall; und dies zuerst entdeckt zu haben, ist das zweite grosse Verdienst Bachofen's. Er bezeichnet diese ausschliessliche Anerkennung der Abstammungsfolge nach der Mutter und die daraus sich mit der Zeit ergebenden Erbschaftsbeziehungen mit dem Namen Mutterrecht; ich behalte diesen Namen, der Kürze wegen, bei. · Er ist aber schief, denn auf dieser Gesellschaftsstufe ist von Recht im juristischen Sinne noch nicht die Rede.

Nehmen wir nun aus der Punalua-Familie die eine der beiden Mustergruppen, nämlich die einer Reihe von leiblichen und entfernteren (d. h. im ersten, zweiten oder entfernteren Grad von leiblichen Schwestern abstammenden) Schwestern, zusammen ihren Kindern und ihren leiblichen oder entfernteren Brüdern von mittlerlicher Seite (die nach unserer Voraussetzung nicht ihre Männer sind), so haben wir genau den Umkreis der Personen, die später als Mitglieder einer Gens, in der Urform dieser Institution erscheinen. Sie haben alle eine gemeinsame Stammmutter, kraft der Abstammung von welcher die weiblichen Nachkommen generationsweise Schwestern sind. Die Männer dieser Schwestern können aber nicht mehr ihre Brüder sein, also nicht von dieser Stammmutter abstammen, gehören also nicht in die Blutsverwandtschaftsgruppe, die spätere Gens; ihre Kinder aber gehören in diese Gruppe, da Abstammung von mittlerlicher Seite allein entscheidend, weil allein gewiss ist. Sobald die Aechtung des Geschlechtsverkehrs zwischen allen Geschwistern, auch den entferntesten Kollateralverwandten mittlerlicher Seite, einmal feststeht, hat sich auch obige Gruppe in eine Gens verwandelt, d. h. sich konstruiert als ein fester Kreis von Blutsverwandten weiblicher Linie, die unter einander nicht heirathen dürfen, und der von nun an sich mehr und mehr durch andre gemeinsame Einrichtungen gesellschaftlicher und religiöser Art befestigt und von den andern Gentes desselben Stammes unterscheidet. Darüber ausführlich später. Wenn wir aber finden, wie nicht nur nothwendig, sondern sogar selbstverständlich die Gens aus der Punaluafamilie sich entwickelt, so sind wir gezwungen, das ehemalige Bestehen dieser Familienform als fast sicher anzunehmen für alle Völker, bei denen Gentilinstitutionen nachweisbar sind, d. h. so ziemlich für alle Barbaren und Kulturvölker.

3. Die Paarungsfamilie. Eine gewisse Paarung, für kürzere oder längere Zeit, fand bereits unter der Punaluafamilie oder noch früher statt; der Mann hatte eine Hauptfrau (man kann noch kaum sagen Lieblingsfrau) unter den vielen Frauen, und er war für sie der hauptsächlichste Ehemann unter den andern. Dieser Umstand hat nicht wenig beigetragen zu der Konfusion bei den Missionaren, die in der Punaluafamilie bald regellose Weibergemeinschaft, bald willkürlichen Ehebruch sehen. Eine solche gewohnheitsmässige Paarung musste aber mehr und mehr sich befestigen, je mehr die Gens sich sich ausbildete und je zahlreicher die

> Klassen von „Brüdern“ und „Schwestern“ wurden, zwischen denen Heirath nun unmöglich war. Der durch die Gens gegebene Anstoss der Verhinderung der Heirath zwischen Blutsverwandten trieb noch weiter. So finden wir, dass bei den Irokesen und den meisten andern auf der Unterstufe der Barbarei stehenden Indianern die Ehe verboten ist zwischen allen Verwandten, die ihr System aufzählt, und das sind mehrere hundert Arten. Bei dieser wachsenden Verwicklung der Eheverbote wurden Gruppenchen mehr und mehr unmöglich; sie wurden verdrängt durch die Paarungsfamilie. Auf dieser Stufe lebt ein Mann mit einer Frau zusammen, jedoch so, dass Vielweiberei und gelegentliche Untreue Recht der Männer bleibt, wenn erstere auch aus ökonomischen Gründen selten vorkommt; während von den Weibern für die Dauer des Zusammenlebens meist strengste Treue verlangt und ihr Ehebruch grausam bestraft wird. Das Eheband ist aber von jedem Theil leicht löslich und die Kinder gehören nach wie vor der Mutter allein.

Auch in dieser immer weiter getriebenen Ausschliessung der Blutsverwandten vom Eheband wirkt die natürliche Zuchtwahl fort. In Morgan's Worten: „Die Ehen zwischen nicht-blutsverwandten Gentes erzeugen eine kräftigere Race, physisch wie geistig; zwei fortschrei-tende Stämme vermischten sich, und die neuen Schädel und Hirne erweiterten sich naturgemäss, bis sie die Fähigkeiten Beider umfassten.“ Stämme mit Gentil-verfassung mussten so über die Zurückgebliebenen die Oberhand gewinnen oder sie durch ihr Beispiel mit sich ziehn. Die Entwicklung der Familie in der Urgeschichte besteht somit in der fortwährenden Verengerung des, ursprünglich den ganzen Stamm umfassenden Kreises, innerhalb dessen eheliche Gemeinschaft zwischen den beiden Geschlechtern herrscht. Durch fortgesetzte Aus-schliessung erst näherer, dann immer entfernterer Ver-wandten, zuletzt selbst blos angeheiratheter, wird endlich jede Art von Gruppenehe praktisch unmöglich, und es bleibt schliesslich das Eine, einstweilen noch lose verbundene Paar übrig, das Molekül, mit dessen Auflösung die Ehe überhaupt aufhört. Schon hieraus zeigt sich, wie wenig die individuelle Geschlechtsliebe im heutigen Sinn des Worts mit der Entstehung der Einzelche zu thun hatte. Noch mehr beweist dies die Praxis aller Völker, die auf dieser Stufe stehn. Während in früheren Familien-formen die Männer nie um Frauen verlegen zu sein brauchten, im Gegentheil

ihrer eher mehr als genug hatten, wurden Frauen jetzt selten und gesucht. Da-her beginnt mit der Paarungsehe der Raub und der Kauf von Frauen weitverbreitete Symptome, aber weiter auch nichts, einer eingetretenen viel tiefer lie-genden Veränderung, welche Symptome, blosse Methoden sich Frauen zu verschaffen, der pedantische Schotte Mac Lennan indess als „Raubehe“ und „Kaufche“ in beson-dere Familienklassen umgedichtet hat. Auch sonst, bei den amerikanischen Indianern und anderswo (auf gleicher Stufe) ist die Eheschliessung Sache nicht der Betheilig-ten, die oft gar nicht gefragt werden, sondern ihrer Mittler. Oft werden so zwei einander ganz Unbekannte verlobt und erst von dem abgeschlossenen Handel in Kenntniss gesetzt, wenn die Zeit zum Heirathen heran-rückt. Vor der Hochzeit macht der Bräutigam den Gentilverwandten der Braut (also ihren mütterlichen, nicht dem Vater und seiner Verwandtschaft) Geschenke, die als Kaufgaben für das abgetretene Mädchen gelten. Die Ehe bleibt löslich nach dem Belieben eines jeden der beiden Verheiratheiten: doch hat sich nach und nach bei vielen Stämmen, z. B. den Irokesen, eine solchen Trennungen abgeneigte öffentliche Meinung gebildet; bei Streitigkeiten treten die Gentilverwandten beider Theile vermittelnd ein, und erst, wenn dies nicht fruchtet, findet Trennung statt, wobei die Kinder der Frau verbleiben, und wonach es jedem Theil freistehlt, sich neu zu verheirathen.

Die Paarungsfamilie, selbst zu schwach und zu unbeständig, um einen eigenen Haushalt zum Bedürfnisse oder nur wünschenswert zu machen, löst die aus früherer Zeit überlieferte kommunistische Haushaltung keineswegs auf. Kommunistischer Haushalt bedeutet aber Herrschaft der Weiber im Hause, wie ausschliessliche Anerkennung einer leiblichen Mutter bei Unmöglichkeit, einen leiblichen Vater mit Gewissheit zu kennen, hohe Achtung der Weiber, d. h. der Mütter, bedeutet. Es ist eine der absurdesten, aus der Aufklärung des 18. Jahrhunderts überkommenen Vorstellungen, das Weib sei im Anfang der Gesellschaft Sklavin des Mannes gewesen. Das Weib hat bei allen Wilden und allen Barbaren der Unfer- und Mittelstufe, theilweise noch der Oberstufe, eine nicht nur freie, sondern hochgeachtete Stellung. Was es noch in der Paarungsehe ist, möge Arthur Wright, langjähriger Missionar unter den Seneka-Irokesen, bezeugen: „Was ihre Familien betrifft, zur Zeit, wo sie noch die alten langen Häuser (kommunistische Haushaltungen mehrerer Familien) bewohnten, ... so herrschte dort immer ein Clan (eine Gens) vor, so dass die Weiber ihre Männer aus den andern Clans (Gentes) nahmen... Gewöhnlich

beherrschte der weibliche Theil das Haus; die Vorräthe waren gemeinsam; wehe aber dem unglücklichen Ehemann oder Liebhaber, der zu träge oder zu ungeschickt war, seinen Theil zum gemeinsamen Vor- rath beizutragen. Einerlei wie viel Kinder oder wie viel Eigenbesitz er im Hause hatte, jeden Augenblick konnte er des Befehls gewärtig sein, sein Bündel zu schnüren und sich zu trollen. Und er durfte nicht versuchen, dem zu widerstehen; das Haus wurde ihm zu heiss gemacht, es blieb ihm nichts als zu seinem eigenen Clan (Gens) zurückzukehren oder aber, was meist der Fall, eine neue Ehe in einem andern Clan aufzusuchen. Die Weiber waren die grosse Macht in den Clans (Gentes) und auch sonst überall. Gelegentlich kam es ihnen nicht darauf an, einen Häuptling abzusetzen und zum gemeinen Krieger zu degradieren.“ Die kommunistische Haushaltung, in der die Weiber meist oder alle einer und derselben Gens angehören, die Männer aber auf verschiedene Gentes sich vertheilen, ist die sachliche Grundlage jener in der Urzeit allgemein verbreiteten Vorherrschaft der Weiber, die ebenfalls entdeckt zu haben ein drittes Verdienst Bachofen’s ist. Nachträglich bemerke ich noch, dass die Berichte der Reisenden und Missionare über Belastung der Weiber mit übermässiger Arbeit bei Wilden und Barbaren dem Gesagten keineswegs widersprechen. Die Theilung der Arbeit zwischen beiden Geschlechtern wird bedingt durch ganz andre Ursachen als die Stellung der Frau in der Gesellschaft. Völker, bei denen die Weiber weit mehr arbeiten müssen, als ihnen nach unsrer Vorstellung gebührt, haben vor den Weibern oft weit mehr wirkliche Achtung, als unsere Europäer. Die Dame der Civilisation, von Scheinhuldigungen umgeben und aller wirklichen Arbeit entfremdet, hat eine unendlich niedrigere gesellschaftliche Stellung als das hart arbeitende Weib der Barbarei, das in seinem Volk für eine wirkliche Dame (lady, frowa, Frau = Herrin) galt und auch eine solche ihrem Charakter nach war.

Ob die Paarungsehe in Amerika heute die Punahufamilie gänzlich verdrängt hat, müssen nähere Untersuchungen über die noch auf der Oberstufe der Wildheit stehenden nordwestlichen und südamerikanischen Völker entscheiden. Jedenfalls sind noch nicht alle Spuren davon verschwunden. Bei wenigstens vierzig nordamerikanischen Stämmen hat der Mann, der eine älteste Schwester heirathet, das Recht, alle ihre Schwestern ebenfalls zu Frauen zu nehmen, sobald sie das erforderliche Alter erreichen: Rest der Gemeinsamkeit der Männer für die ganze Reihe von Schwestern. Und von den Halbinsel-

Kalifornien (Oberstufe der Wildheit) erzählt Bancroft, dass sie gewisse Festlichkeiten haben, wo mehrere Stämme zusammenkommen zum Zweck des unterschiedslosen geschlechtlichen Verkehrs. Es sind offenbar Gentes, die in diesen Festen die dunkle Erinnerung bewahren an die Zeit, wo die Frauen Einer Gens alle Männer der andern zu ihren gemeinsamen Ehemännern hatten und umgekehrt. Aehnliche Reste aus der alten Welt sind bekannt genug, so die Preisgebung der phönizischen Mädchen im Tempel an den Festen der Astaroth; selbst das mittelalterliche Recht der ersten Nacht, das trotz neuromantischer deutscher Weisswaschungen eine sehr handfeste Existenz gehabt hat, ist ein vermutlich durch die keltische Gens (den Clan) überliefertes Stück Punaluafamilie.

Die Paarungsfamilie entsprang an der Grenze zwischen Wildheit und Barbarei, meist schon auf der Oberstufe der Wildheit, hier und da erst auf der Unterstufe der Barbarei. Sie ist die charakteristische Familienform für die Barbarei, wie die Gruppenche für die Wildheit und die Monogamie für die Civilisation. Um sie zur festen Monogamie weiter zu entwickeln, bedurfte es andere Ursachen, als derjenigen, die wir bisher wirkend fanden. Die Gruppe war in der Paarung bereits auf ihre letzte Einheit, ihr Molekül, herabgebracht: auf einen Mann und eine Frau. Die Naturzüchtung hatte in der immer weiter geführten Ausschliessung von der Ehegemeinschaft ihr Werk vollbracht; in dieser Richtung blieb nichts mehr für sie zu thun. Kamen also nicht neue, gesellschaftliche Triebkräfte in Wirksamkeit, so war kein Grund vorhanden, warum aus der Paarung eine neue Familienform hervorgehn sollte. Aber diese Triebkräfte traten in Wirksamkeit.

Wir verlassen jetzt Amerika, den klassischen Boden der Paarungsfamilie. Kein Anzeichen lässt schliessen, dass dort eine höhere Familienform sich entwickelt, dass dort vor der Entdeckung und Eroberung jemals irgendwo feste Monogamie bestanden habe. Anders in der alten Welt.

Hier hatte die Zähmung der Hausthiere und die Züchtung von Heerden eine bisher ungeahnte Quelle des Reichthums entwickelt und ganz neue gesellschaftliche Verhältnisse geschaffen. Bis auf die Unterstufe der Barbarei hatte der ständige Reichthum bestanden fast nur in dem Haus, der Kleidung, rohem Schmuck und den Werkzeugen zur Erringung und Bereitung der Nahrung: Boot, Waffen, Hausrath einfachster Art. Die Nahrung musste Tag um Tag neu errungen werden. Jetzt, mit den Heerden der Pferde, Kamele, Esel, Rinder, Schafe, Ziegen und Schweine hatten die

vordringlichen Hirtenvölker die Arier im indischen Fünfstromland und Gangesgebiet wie in den damals noch weit wasserreicheren Steppen am Oxus und Jaxartes; die Semiten am Euphrat und Tigris einen Besitz erworben, der nur der Aufsicht und rohesten Pflege bedurfte, um sich in stets vermehrter Zahl fortzupflanzen und die reichlichste Nahrung an Milch und Fleisch zu liefern. Alle früheren Mittel der Nahrungsbeschaffung traten nun in den Hintergrund; die Jagd, früher eine Nothwendigkeit, wurde nun ein Luxus.

Wem gehörte aber dieser neue Reichthum? Unzweifelhaft ursprünglich der Gens. Aber schon früh muss sich Privateigenthum an den Heerden entwickelt haben. Es ist schwer zu sagen, ob dem Verfasser des s. g. ersten Buchs Mosis der Vater Abraham erschien als Besitzer seiner Heerden kraft eignen Rechts oder kraft seiner Eigenschaft als thatsächlich erblicher Vorsteher einer Gens. Sicher ist nur, dass wir ihn uns nicht als Eigenthümer im modernen Sinn vorstellen dürfen. Und sicher ist ferner, dass wir an der Schwelle der beglaubigten Geschichte die Heerden schon überall in Privateigenthum einzelner Familienvorstände finden, ganz wie die Kunsterzeugnisse der Barbarei, Metallgeräth, Luxusartikel und endlich das Menschenvieh die Sklaven.

Denn jetzt war auch die Sklaverei erfunden. Dem Barbaren der Unterstufe war der Sklave wertblos. Daher auch die amerikanischen Indianer mit den besiegten Feinden ganz anders verfuhren als auf höherer Stufe geschah. Die Männer wurden getödtet oder aber in den Staunen der Sieger als Brüder aufgenommen; die Weiber wurden geheirathet oder sonst mit ihren überlebenden Kindern ebenfalls adoptirt. Die menschliche Arbeitskraft liefert auf dieser Stufe noch keinen beachtenswerthen Ueberschuss über ihre Unterhaltskosten. Mit der Einführung der Viehzucht, der Metallbearbeitung, der Weberei und endlich des Feldbaus wurde das anders. Wie die früher so zahlreichen Gattinnen jetzt einen Werth bekommen hatten und gekauft wurden, so geschah es mit den Arbeitskräften, besonders seitdem die Heerden endgültig in Privatbesitz übergegangen waren. Die Familie vermehrte sich nicht ebenso rasch wie das Vieh. Mehr Leute wurden erfordert, es zu beaufsichtigen; dazu liess sich der kriegsgefangene Feind benutzen, der sich ausserdem ebensogut fortzüchten liess wie das Vieh selbst.

Solche Reichtbümer, sobald sie einmal in Privatbesitz übergegangen und dort rasch vermehrt, gaben der auf Paarungsehe und Gens gegründeten Gesellschaft einen mächtigen Stoss. Die Paarungsehe hatte ein neues Element in die Familie eingeführt.

Neben die leibliche Mutter hatte sie den beglaubigten leiblichen Vater gestellt, der noch dazu wahrscheinlich besser beglaubigt war als gar manche „Väter“ heutzutage. Nach der damaligen Arbeitsteilung in der Familie fiel dem Mann die Beschaffung der Nahrung und der niezu nötligen Arbeitsmittel, also auch das Eigenthum an diesen letzteren zu; er nahm sie mit, im Fall der Scheidung, wie die Frau ihren Hausrath behielt. Nach dem Brauch der damaligen Gesellschaft also war der Mann auch Eigenthümer der neuen Nahrungsquelle, des Viehs und später des neuen Arbeitsmittels, der Sklaven. Nach dem Brauch derselben Gesellschaft aber konnten seine Kinder nicht von ihm erben, denn damit stand es folgendermassen.

Nach Mutterrecht, also so lange Abstammung nur in weiblicher Linie gerechnet wurde und nach dem ursprünglichen Erbgebrauch in der Gens erlten anfänglich die Gentilverwandten von ihrem verstorbenen Gentilgenossen. Das Vermögen musste in der Gens bleiben. Bei der Unbedeutendheit der Gegenstände mag es von jeher in der Praxis an die nächsten Gentilverwandten, also an die Agnaten mütterlicher Seite, übergegangen sein. Die Kinder des verstorbenen Mannes aber gehörten nicht seiner Gens an, sondern der ihrer Mutter; sie erlten zuerst mit den übrigen Agnaten der Mutter, später vielleicht in erster Linie von dieser, aber von ihrem Vater konnten sie nicht erben, weil sie nicht zu seiner Gens gehörten, sein Vermögen aber in dieser bleiben musste. Bei dem Tode des Heerdenbesitzers wären also seine Heerden übergegangen zunächst an seine Brüder und Schwestern und an die Kinder seiner Schwestern, oder an die Nachkommen der Schwestern seiner Mutter. Seine eigenen Kinder aber waren enterbt.

In dem Verhältnis also wie die Reichthümer sich mehrten, gaben sie einerseits dem Mann eine wichtigere Stellung in der Familie als der Frau, und erzeugten anderseits den Antrieb, diese verstärkte Stellung zu benutzen, um die hergebrachte Erbfolge zu Gunsten der Kinder umzustossen. Dies ging aber nicht, so lange die Abstammung nach Mutterrecht galt. Diese also musste umgestossen werden und sie wurde umgestossen. Es war dies gar nicht so schwer, wie es uns heute erscheint. Denn diese Revolution eine der einschneidendsten, die die Menschen erlebt haben brauchte nicht ein einziges der lebenden Mitglieder einer Gens zu berühren. Alle ihre Angehörigen konnten nach wie vor bleiben, was sie gewesen. Der einfache Beschluss genügte, dass in Zukunft die Nachkommen der männlichen Genossen in der Gens bleiben, die der weiblichen aber

ausgeschlossen sein sollten, indem sie in die Gens ihres Vaters übergingen. Damit war die Abstammungsrechnung in weiblicher Linie und das mütterliche Erbrecht umgestossen, männliche Abstammungslinie und väterliches Erbrecht eingesetzt. Wie sich diese Revolution bei den Kulturvölkern gemacht hat, und wann, darüber wissen wir nichts. Sie fällt ganz in die vorgeschichtliche Zeit. Dass sie sich aber gemacht, ist mehr als nötlig erwiesen durch die na-mentlich von Bachofen gesammelten reichlichen Spuren von Mutterrecht, und wie leicht sie sich vollzieht, sehen wir an einer ganzen Reihe von Indianerstämmen, wo sie erst neuerdings gemacht worden ist und noch gemacht wird, unter dem Einfluss theils wachsenden Reichthums und veränderter Lebensweise (Versetzung aus den Wäldern in die Prairie), theils moralischer Einwirkungen der Civilisation und der Missionare. Von acht Missouristämmen haben sechs männliche, aber zwei noch weibliche Abstammungslinie und Erbfolge. Bei den Shawnees, Miamies und Delavares ist die Sitte eingerissen, die Kinder durch einen der Gens des Vaters gehörigen Gentilnamen in diese zu versetzen, damit sie vom Vater erben können. „Eingeborne Kasuisterei des Menschen, die Dinge zu ändern, indem man ihre Namen ändert! Und Schlupfwinkel zu finden, um innerhalb der Tradition die Tradition zu durchbrechen, wo ein direktes Interesse den hinreichenden Antrieb gab!“ (Marx.) Dadurch entstand heillose Verwirrung, der nur abzuhelfen war, und theilweise auch abgeholfen wurde, durch Uebergang zum Vaterrecht. „Dies scheint überhaupt der natürlichste Uebergang.“ (Marx.)

Der Umsturz des Mutterrechts war die weitgeschichtliche Niederlage des weiblichen Geschlechts. Der Mann ergriff das Steuer auch im Hause, die Frau wurde entwürdigt, geknechtet, Sklavin seiner Lust und blosses Werkzeug der Kinderzeugung. Diese erniedrigte Stellung der Frau, wie sie nament-lich bei den Griechen der heroischen und klassischen Zeit offen hervortritt, ist allmählich beschönigt und ver-heuchelt, auch stellenweise in mildere Formen gekleidet worden; beseitigt ist sie keineswegs.

Die erste Wirkung der nun begründeten Allein-herrschaft der Männer zeigt sich in der jetzt auftau-chenden Zwischenform der patriarchalischen Familie. Was sie hauptsächlich bezeichnet, ist nicht die Vielf-weiberei, wovon später, sondern die Organisation einer Anzahl von freien und unfreien Personen zu einer Familie unter der väterlichen Gewalt des Familien-haupts. In der semitischen Form lebt dies Familien-haupt in Vielweiberei, die Unfreien haben Weib und Kinder, und der Zweck der ganzen

Organisation ist die Wartung von Heerden auf einem abgegränzten Gebiet". Das Wesentliche ist die Einverleibung von Unfreien und die väterliche Gewalt; daher ist der vollendete Typus dieser Familienform die römische Familie. Das Wort familia bedeutet ursprünglich nicht das aus Senti-mentalität und häuslichem Zwist zusammengesetzte Ideal des heutigen Philisters; es bezieht sich bei den Römern anfänglich gar nicht einmal auf das Ehepaar und dessen Kinder, sondern auf die Sklaven allein. Famulus heisst ein Haussklave, und familia ist die Gesammtheit der einem Mann gehörenden Sklaven. Noch zu Gajus Zeit wurde die familia, id est patrimonium (d. h. das Erb-theil) testamentarisch vermacht. Der Ausdruck wurde von den Römern erfunden, um einen neuen gesellschaft-lichen Organismus zu bezeichnen, dessen Haupt Weib und Kinder und eine Anzahl Sklaven unter römischer väterlichen Gewalt, mit dem Recht über Tod und Leben Aller, unter sich hatte. „Das Wort ist also nicht älter als das eisengepanzerte Familiensystem der latinischen Stämme, welches aufkam nach Einführung des Feld-baus und der gesetzlichen Sklaverei, und nach der Trennung der arischen Italer von den Griechen.“ Marx setzt hinzu: „Die moderne Familie enthält im Keim nicht nur Sklaverei (servitus), sondern auch Leibeigen-schaft, da sie von vornherein Beziehung hat auf Dienste für Ackerbau. Sie enthält in Miniatur alle die Gegen-sätze in sich, die sich später breit entwickeln in der Gesellschaft und in ihrem Staat.“

Eine solche Familienform zeigt den Uebergang der Paarungssehe in die Monogamie. Um die Treue der Frau, also die Vaterschaft der Kinder, sicher zu stellen, wird die Frau der Gewalt des Mannes unbedingt überliefert: wenn er sie tödtet, so übt er nur sein Recht aus.

Ehe wir zu der mit dem Sturz des Mutterrechtes sich rasch entwickelnden Monogamie übergehn, noch ein paar Worte über Vielweiberei und Vielmännerei. Beide Eheformen können nur Ausnahmen sein, sozusagen geschichtliche Luxusprodukte, es sei denn, sie kämen in einem Lande neben einander vor, was bekanntlich nicht der Fall ist. Da also die von der Vielweiberei ausgeschlossenen Männer sich nicht bei den von der Vielmännerei übriggebliebenen Weibern trösten können, die Anzahl von Männern und Weibern aber ohne Rücksicht auf soziale Institutionen bisher ziemlich gleich war, ist die Erhebung der einen wie der andern dieser Eheformen zur allgemein geltenden von selbst ausgeschlossen. In der That war die exklusive Vielweiberei Eines Mannes offenbar

Produkt der Sklaverei und beschränkt auf einzelne Ausnahmsstellungen. In der semitisch-patriarchalischen Familie lebt nur der Patriarch selbst, und höchstens noch ein paar seiner Söhne, in Vielweiberei, die übrigen müssen sich mit einer Frau begnügen. So ist es noch heute im ganzen Orient; die Vielweiberei ist ein Privilegium der Reichen und Vornehmen und rekrutiert sich hauptsächlich durch Kauf von Sklavinnen; die Masse des Volks lebt in Monogamie. Eine ebensolche Ausnahme ist die Vielmännerei in Indien und Tibet, deren sicher nicht uninteressanter Ursprung aus der Punahufamilie noch näher zu untersuchen ist. In ihrer Praxis scheint sie übrigens viel evaluater als die eifersüchtige Haremswirthschaft der Muhamedaner. Wenigstens haben bei den Nairs in Indien je drei, vier oder mehr Männer zwar eine gemeinsame Frau; aber jeder von ihnen kann daneben mit drei oder mehr andern Männern eine zweite Frau in Gemeinschaft haben, und so eine dritte, vierte u.s.w. Es ist ein Wunder, dass MacLennan in diesen Eheclubs, in deren Mehreren man Mitglied sein kann und die er selbst beschreibt, nicht die neue Klasse der Clube he entdeckt hat.

4. Die monogamische Familie. Sie entsteht aus der Paarungsfamilie, wie gezeigt, im Grenzzettelter zwischen der mittleren und oberen Stufe der Barbarei; ihr ondgültiger Sieg ist eins der Kennzeichen der beginnenden Civilisation. Sie ist gegründet auf die Herrschaft des Mannes mit dem ausdrücklichen Zweck der Erzeugung von Kindern mit unbestrittener Vaterschaft, und diese Vaterschaft wird erfordert, weil diese Kinder als Leibeserben in das väterliche Vermögen dereinst eintreten sollen. Sie unterscheidet sich von der Paarungs- ehe durch weit grössere Festigkeit des Ehebandes, das nun nicht mehr nach beiderseitigem Gefallen lösbar ist. Es ist jetzt in der Regel nur noch der Mann, der es lösen und seine Frau verstossen kann. Das Recht der ehelichen Untreue bleibt ihm auch jetzt wenigstens noch durch die Sitte gewährleistet (der Code Napoleon schreibt es dem Mann ausdrücklich zu, so lange er nicht die Beischläferin in's eheliche Haus bringt) und wird mit steigender gesellschaftlicher Entwicklung immer mehr ausgeübt; erinnert sich die Frau der alten ge-schlechtlichen Praxis und will sie erneuern, so wird sie strenger bestraft als je vorher.

In ihrer ganzen Härte tritt uns die neue Familien-form entgegen bei den Griechen. Während, wie Marx bemerkt, die Stellung der Göttinnen in der Mythologie uns eine

frühere Periode vorführt, wo die Frauen noch eine freiere, geachtetere Stellung hatten, finden wir zur Heroenzeit die Frau in einer halbgefänglichen Ab- geschlossenheit, um die richtige Vaterschaft der Kinder sicher zu stellen. Der Mann dagegen vergnügt sich mit kriegsgefangenen Sklavinnen, seinen Zeltgenossinnen im Kriege. Kaum besser in der klassischen Periode. Man kann in Becker's Charikles des Breiteren nach- lesen, wie die Griechen ihre Frauen behandelten. Wenn nicht gerade eingeschlossen, so doch abgeschlossen von der Welt, waren sie die obersten Hausmägde ihrer Männer geworden, beschränkt auf den Verkehr vor- nehmlich der übrigen Hausmägde. Die Mädchen wur- den direkt eingeschlossen, die Frauen gingen nur aus in Begleitung von Sklavinnen. Kam Männerbesuch, so zog sich die Frau in ihr Gemach zurück. Trotzdem fanden die Griechinnen oft genug Gelegenheit, ihre Männer zu täuschen. Diese, die sich geschämt hätten, irgend welche Liebe für ihre Frauen zu verrathen, amüsierten sich in allerlei Liebeshändeln mit Heitären; aber die Entwürdigung der Frauen rächte sich an den Männern und entwürdigte auch sie, bis sie versanken in die Widerwärtigkeit der Knabenliebe und ihre Götter entwürdigten wie sich selbst durch den Mythus von Ganymed.

Das war der Ursprung der Monogamie, soweit wir ihn beim civilisirtesten und am höchsten entwickelten Volk des Alterthums verfolgen können. Sie war keineswegs eine Frucht der individuellen Geschlechtsliebe, mit der sie absolut nichts zu schaffen hatte, da die Ehen nach wie vor Convenienzehen blieben. Sie war die erste Familienform, die nicht auf natürliche, sondern auf gesellschaftliche Bedingungen gegründet war. Herrschaft des Mannes in der Familie und Erzeugung von Kindern, die nur die seinigen sein konnten und die zu Erben seines Reichthums bestimmt waren das allein waren die von den Griechen unumwunden ausgesprochenen ausschliesslichen Zwecke der Einzelene. Im Uebrigen war sie ihnen eine Last, eine Pflicht gegen die Götter, den Staat und die eignen Vorfahren, die eben erfüllt werden musste.

So tritt die Einzelene keineswegs ein in die Geschichte als die Versöhnung von Mann und Weib, noch viel weniger als ihre höchste Form. Im Gegenteil. Sie tritt auf als Unterjochung des einen Geschlechts durch das andere, als Proklamation eines bisher in der ganzen Vorgeschichte unbekannten Widerstreits der Geschlechter. In einem alten, 1846 von Marx und mir ausgearbeiteten, ungedruckten Manuskript finde ich: „Die erste

Theilung der Arbeit ist die von Mann und Weib zur Kinderzeugung.“ Und heute kann ich hinzusetzen: Der erste Klassengegensatz, der in der Geschichte auftritt, fällt zusammen mit der Entwicklung des Antagonismus von Mann und Weib in der Einzelene, und die erste Klassenunterdrückung mit der des weiblichen Geschlechts durch das männliche. Die Einzelene war ein grosser geschichtlicher Fortschritt, aber zugleich eröffnet sie neben der Sklaverei und dem Privatreichthum jene bis heute dauernde Epoche, in der jeder Fortschritt zugleich ein relativer Rückschritt, in dem das Wohl und die Entwicklung der Einen sich durchsetzt durch das Wehe und die Zurückdrängung der Andern. Sie ist die Zellenform der civilisirten Gesellschaft, an der wir schon die Natur der in dieser sich voll entfaltenden Gegensätze und Widersprüche studiren können.

Die alte verhältnissmässige Freiheit des Geschlechtsverkehrs verschwand keineswegs mit dem Sieg der Paarungs- oder selbst der Einzelche. „Das alte Ehesystem, auf engere Grenzen zurückgeführt durch das allmälige Aussterben der Punaluagruppen, umgab immer noch die sich fortentwickelnde Familie und hing an ihren Schössen bis an die aufdämmernde Civilisation hinan ... es verschwand schliesslich in der neuen Form des Hetärismus, die die Menschen bis in die Civilisation hinein verfolgt, wie ein dunkler Schlagschatten, der auf der Familie ruht.“ Unter Hetärismus versteht Morgan den neben der Einzelche bestehenden ausserehelichen geschlechtlichen Verkehr der Männer mit unverheirathetem Weibern, der bekanntlich während der ganzen Periode der Civilisation in den verschiedensten Formen blüht und mehr und mehr zur offenen Prostitution wird. Dieser Hetärismus, der eine gesellschaftliche Einrichtung ist wie jede andere, setzt also die alte Geschlechtsfreiheit fort zu Gunsten der Männer. In der Wirklichkeit nicht nur geduldet, sondern namentlich von den herrschenden Klassen flott mitgemacht, wird er in der Phrase verdammt. Aber in der Wirklichkeit trifft diese Verdammung keineswegs die dabei betheiligten Männer, sondern nur die Weiber: sie werden geächtet und ausgestossen, um so nochmals die unbedingte Herrschaft der Männer über das weibliche Geschlecht als gesellschaftliches Grundgesetz zu proklamiren.

Aber man kann nicht die eine Seite des Gegensatzes haben ohne die andere, ebensowenig wie man noch einen ganzen Apfel in der Hand hat, nachdem die eine Hälfte gegessen. Trotzdem scheint dies die Meinung der Männer gewesen zu sein, bis ihre Frauen sie eines Bessern belehrten. Mit der Einzelche treten zwei ständige

gesellschaftliche Charakterfiguren auf, die früher unbekannt waren: der ständige Liebhaber der Frau und der Hahnrei. Die Männer hatten den Sieg über die Weiber errungen, aber die Krönung übernahmen grossmüthig die Besiegten. Neben der Einzelche und dem Hetärismus wurde der Ehebruch eine unvermeidliche gesellschaftliche Einrichtung verpönt, hart bestraft, aber ununterdrückbar. Die sichere Vaterschaft der Kinder beruhte nach wie vor höchstens auf moralischer Ueberzeugung, und um den unlöslichen Widerspruch zu lösen, dekretirte der Code Napoléon Art. 312: L'enfant conçu pendant le mariage a pour père le mari; das während der Ehe empfangene Kind hat zum Vater den Ehemann. Das ist das letzte Resultat von dreitausend Jahren Einzelche.

So haben wir in der Einzelfamilie, in den Fällen, die ihrer geschichtlichen Entstehung treu bleiben und den durch die ausschliessliche Herrschaft des Mannes ausgesprochenn Widerstreit von Mann und Weib klar zur Erscheinung bringen, ein Bild im Kleinen derselben Gegensätze und Widersprüche, in denen sich die seit Eintritt der Civilisation in Klassen gespaltene Gesell-schaft bewegt, ohne sie auflösen und überwinden zu können. Ich spreche hier natürlich nur von jenen Fällen der Einzelche, wo das eheliche Leben in Wirklichkeit nach Vorschrift des ursprünglichen Charakters der gan-zen Einrichtung verläuft, wo die Frau aber gegen die Herrschaft des Mannes rebelliert. Dass nicht alle Ehen so verlaufen, weiss niemand besser als der deutsche Philister, der seine Herrschaft im Hause nicht besser zu wahren weiss als im Staat, und dessen Frau daher mit vollem Recht die Hosen trägt, deren er nicht werth ist. Dafür dünkt er sich aber auch weit erhaben über seinen französischen Leidensgenossen, dem, öfter als ihm selbst, weit Schlimmeres passirt.

Die Einzelfamilie trat übrigens keineswegs überall und jederzeit in der klassisch-schroffen Form auf, die sie bei den Griechen hatte. Bei den Römern, die als künftige Welteroberer einen weiteren, wenn auch we-niger feinen Blick hatten als die Griechen, war die Frau freier und geachteter. Der Römer glaubte die eheliche Treue durch die Gewalt über Leben und Tod seiner Frau hinlänglich verbürgt. Auch konnte die Frau hier ebensogut wie der Mann die Ehe freiwillig lösen. Aber der grösste Fortschritt in der Entwicklung der Einzelche geschah entschieden mit dem Eintritt der Deutschen in die Geschichte, und zwar weil bei ihnen damals die Monogamie sich noch nicht vollständig aus der Paarungsehe entwickelt zu haben scheint. Wir schliessen dies aus drei Umständen,

die Tacitus erwähnt: Erstens galt bei grosser Heilighaltung der Ehe „sie begnügen sich mit Einer Frau, die Weiber leben eingehegt durch Keuschheit“ dennoch Vielweiberei für die Vornehmen und Stammesführer, also ein Zustand ähnlich dem der Amerikaner, bei denen Paarungsehe galt. Und zweitens konnte der Uebergang von Mutterrecht zu Vaterrecht erst kurz vorher gemacht worden sein, denn noch galt der Mutterbruder der nächste männliche Gentilverwandte nach Mutterrecht als fast ein näherer Verwandte denn der eigene Vater, ebenfalls entsprechend dem Standpunkt der amerikanischen Indianer, bei denen Marx, wie er oft sagte, den Schlüssel zum Verständnis unserer eigenen Urzeit gefunden. Und drittens waren die Frauen bei den Deutschen hoch geachtet und einflussreich auch auf öffentliche Geschäfte, was im direkten Gegensatz zur monogamischen Männerherrschaft steht. Mit den Deutschen kam also auch in dieser Beziehung ein ganz neues Element zur Weltherrschaft. Die neue Monogamie, die sich nun auf den Trümmern der Römerwelt aus der Völkermischung entwickelte, kleidete die Männerherrschaft in mildere Formen und liess den Frauen eine wenigstens äusserlich weit geachtetere und freiere Stellung als das klassische Alterthum sie je gekannt. Damit erst war die Möglichkeit gegeben, auf der sich aus der Monogamie in ihr, neben ihr und gegen sie, je nachdem der grösste sittliche Fortschritt entwickeln konnte, den wir ihr verdanken: die moderne individuelle Geschlechtsliebe, die der ganzen früheren Welt unbekannt war.

Dieser Fortschritt entsprang aber entschieden aus dem Umstand, dass die Deutschen noch in der Paarungs-familie lebten, und die ihr entsprechende Stellung der Frau, soweit es anging, der Monogamie aufpfropften, keineswegs aber aus der sagenhaften, wunderbar sitteneren Naturanlage der Deutschen, die sich darauf beschränkt, dass die Paarungsehe sich in der That nicht in den grellen sittlichen Gegensätzen bewegt wie die Monogamie. Im Gegentheil waren die Deutschen auf ihren Wanderzügen, besonders nach Südost zu den Steppenmonaden am Schwarzen Meer, sittlich stark verkommen und hatten bei diesen ausser ihren Reiterkünsten auch arge widernatürliche Laster angenommen, was Ammianus von den Thaifalern und Prokop von den Herulern ausdrücklich bezeugt.

Wenn aber die Monogamie von allen bekannten Familienformen diejenige war, unter der allein sich die moderne Geschlechtsliebe entwickeln konnte, so heisst das nicht, dass sie sich ausschliesslich oder nur vorwiegend in ihr, als Liebe der Ehegatten zu

einander, entwickelte. Die ganze Natur der festen Einzelche unter Mannesherrschaft schloss das aus. Bei allen geschichtlich aktiven, d. h. bei allen herrschenden Klassen blieb die Eheschliessung, was sie seit der Paarungsehe gewesen, Sache der Konvenienz, die von den Eltern arrangirt wurde. Und die erste geschichtlich auftretende Form der Geschlechtsliebe als Leidenschaft, und als jedem Menschen (wenigstens der herrschenden Klassen) zukommende Leidenschaft, als höchste Form des Geschlechtstriebs was gerade ihren spezifischen Charakter ausmacht diese ihre erste Form, die ritterliche Liebe des Mittelalters, war keineswegs eine eheliche Liebe. Im Gegentheil. In ihrer klassischen Gestalt, bei den Provenzalen, steuert sie mit vollen Segeln auf den Ehebruch los und ihre Dichter feiern ihn. Die Blüte der provenzalischen Liebespoesie sind die Albas, deutsch Tagelieder. Sie schildern in glühenden Farben, wie der Ritter bei seiner Schönen der Frau eines Andern im Bett liegt, während draussen der Wächter steht, der ihm zuruft, sobald das erste Morgengrauen (alba) aufsteigt, damit er noch unbemerkt entweichen kann; die Trennungsscene bildet dann den Gipfelpunkt. Die Nordfranzosen und auch die braven Deutschen nahmen diese Dichtungsart mit der ihr entsprechenden Manier der Ritterliebe ebenfalls an, und unser alter Wolfram von Eschenbach hat über denselben anzüglichen Stoff drei wunderschöne Tagelieder hinterlassen, die mir lieber sind als seine drei langen Heldengedichte. Die bürgerliche Eheschliessung unserer Tage ist doppelter Art. In katholischen Ländern besorgen nach wie vor die Eltern dem jungen Bürgerssohn eine angemessene Frau, und die Folge davon ist natürlich die vollste Entfaltung des in der Monogamie enthaltenen Widerspruchs: üppiger Hetärismus auf Seiten des Mannes, üppiger Ehebruch auf Seiten der Frau. Die katholische Kirche hat wohl auch nur desswegen die Ehescheidung abgeschafft, weil sie sich überzeugt hatte, dass gegen den Ehebruch wie gegen den Tod kein Kräutlein gewachsen ist. In protestantischen Ländern dagegen ist es Regel, dass dem Bürgerssohn erlaubt wird, sich aus seiner Klasse eine Frau mit grösser oder geringerer Freiheit auszusuchen, wonach ein gewisser Grad von Liebe der Eheschliessung zu Grunde liegen kann und auch anstandshalber stets vorausgesetzt wird, was der protestantischen Heuchelei entspricht. Hier wird der Hetärismus des Mannes schläfriger betrieben und der Ehebruch der Frau ist weniger Regel. Da aber in jeder Art Ehe die Menschen bleiben, was sie vor der Ehe waren, und die Bürger protestantischer Länder meist Philister sind, so

bringt es diese protestantische Monogamie im Durchschnitt der besten Fälle nur zur ehelichen Gemeinschaft einer bleiernen Langeweile, die man mit dem Namen Familienglück bezeichnet. Der beste Spiegel dieser beiden Heirathsmethoden ist der Roman, für die katholische Manier der französische, für die protestantische der deutsche und schwedische. In jedem von beiden „kriegt er sie“: im deutschen der junge Mann das Mädchen, im französischen der Ehemann die Hörner. Welcher von beiden sich dabei schlechter steht, ist nicht immer ausgemacht. Wesshalb auch dem französischen Bourgeois die Langeweile des deutschen Romans eben denselben Schauder erregt wie die „Unsittlichkeit“ des französischen Romans dem deutschen Philister. Obwohl neuerdings, seit „Berlin Weltstadt wird“, der deutsche Roman anfängt, etwas weniger schüchtern in dem dort seit lange wohlbekannten Hetärismus und Ehebruch zu machen.

In beiden Fällen aber wird die Heirath bedingt durch die Klassenlage der Befielligten und ist insofern stets Konvenienzehe. Wirklich Regel im Verhältniss zur Frau wird die Geschlechtsliebe und kann es nur werden unter den unterdrückten Klassen, also heutzutage im Proletariat ob dies Verhältniss nun ein offiziell konzessioniertes oder nicht. Hier sind aber auch alle Grundlagen der klassischen Monogamie beseitigt. Hier fehlt alles Eigenthum, zu dessen Bewahrung und Vererbung ja gerade die Monogamie und die Männerherrschaft geschaffen wurden, und hier fehlt damit auch jeder Antrieb, die Männerherrschaft geltend zu machen. Noch mehr, auch die Mittel fehlen; das bürgerliche Recht, das diese Herrschaft schützt, besteht nur für die Besitzenden und deren Verkehr mit den Proletariern; es kostet Geld und hat deshalb armuthshalber keine Geltung für die Stellung des Arbeiters zu seiner Frau. Da entscheiden ganz andere persönliche und gesellschaftliche Verhältnisse. Und vollends seitdem die grosse Industrie die Frau aus dem Hauses auf den Arbeitsmarkt und in die Fabrik versetzt hat und sie oft genug zur Ernährerin der Familie macht, ist dem letzten Rest der Männerherrschaft in der Proletarierwohnung aller Boden entzogen es sei denn etwa noch ein Stück der seit Einführung der Monogamie eingerissenen Brutalität gegen Frauen. So ist die Familie des Proletariers keine monogamische im strengen Sinn mehr, selbst bei der leidenschaftlichsten Liebe und festesten Treue Beider und trotz aller etwaigen geistlichen und weltlichen Einsegnung. Daher spielen auch die ewigen Begleiter der Monogamie, Hetärismus und Ehebruch, hier nur eine fast verschwindende Rolle; die Frau hat das

Recht der Ehetrennung thatsächlich wieder erhalten, und wenn man sich nicht vertragen kann, geht man lieber auseinander. Kurz, die Prole-tarierehe ist monogamisch im etymologischen Sinn des Worts, aber durchaus nicht in seinem historischen Sinn.

Unsre Juristen finden allerdings, daß der Fortschritt der Gesetzgebung den Frauen in steigendem Maß jeden Grund zur Klage entzieht. Die modernen zivilisierten Gesetzsysteme erkennen mehr und mehr an, erstens, daß die Ehe, um gültig zu sein, ein von beiden Teilen freiwillig eingegangner Vertrag sein muß, und zweitens, daß auch während der Ehe beide Teile einander mit gleichen Rechten und Pflichten gegenüberstehn sollen. Seien diese beiden Forderungen aber konsequent durchgeführt, so hätten die Frauen alles, was sie verlangen können.

Diese echt juristische Argumentation ist genau dieselbe, womit der radikale republikanische Bourgeois den Proletarier ab- und zur Ruhe verweist. Der Arbeitsvertrag soll ein von beiden Teilen freiwillig eingegangner sein. Aber er gilt als für freiwillig eingegangen, sobald das Gesetz beide Teile auf dem Papier gleichstellt. Die Macht, die die verschiedne Klassenstellung dem einen Teil gibt, der Druck, den sie auf den andern Teil ausübt - die wirkliche ökonomische Stellung beider - , das geht das Gesetz nichts an. Und während der Dauer des Arbeitsvertrags sollen beide Teile wiederum gleichberechtigt sein, sofern nicht einer oder der andre ausdrücklich verzichtet hat. Daß die ökonomische Sachlage den Arbeiter zwingt, sogar auf den letzten Schein von Gleichberechtigung zu verzichten, dafür kann das Gesetz wiederum nichts.

Mit Bezug auf die Ehe ist das Gesetz, selbst das fortgeschrittenste, vollauf befriedigt, sobald die Beteiligten ihre Freiwilligkeit formell zu Protokoll gegeben haben. Was hinter den juristischen Kulissen vorgeht, wo sich das wirkliche Leben abspielt, wie diese Freiwilligkeit zustande kommt, darum kann sich das Gesetz und der Jurist nicht kümmern. Und doch sollte hier die einfachste Rechtsvergleichung dem Juristen zeigen, was es mit dieser Freiwilligkeit auf sich hat. In den Ländern, wo den Kindern ein Pflichtteil am elterlichen Vermögen gesetzlich gesichert ist, wo sie also nicht enterbt werden können - in Deutschland, in den Ländern französischen Rechts etc., sind die Kinder beim Eheschluß an die Einwilligung der Eltern gebunden. In den Ländern englischen Rechts, wo die elterliche Einwilligung kein gesetzliches Erfordernis des Eheschlusses, haben die Eltern auch volle Testierfreiheit über ihr Vermögen, können sie ihre Kinder nach

Belieben enterben. Daß trotzdem und eben deshalb die Freiheit der Eheschließung in den Klassen, wo es was zu erben gibt, in England und Amerika, tatsächlich um kein Haar größer ist als in Frankreich und Deutschland, das ist doch klar.

Nicht besser steht es mit der juristischen Gleichberechtigung von Mann und Frau in der Ehe. Die rechtliche Ungleichheit beider, die uns aus früheren Gesellschaftszuständen vererbt, ist nicht die Ursache, sondern die Wirkung der ökonomischen Unterdrückung der Frau. In der alten kommunistischen Haushaltung, die viele Ehepaare und ihre Kinder umfaßte, war die den Frauen übergebne Führung des Haushalts ebensogut eine öffentliche, eine gesellschaftlich notwendige Industrie wie die Beschaffung der Nahrungsmittel durch die Männer. Mit der patriarchalischen Familie, und noch mehr mit der monogamen Einzelfamilie wurde dies anders. Die Führung des Haushalts verlor ihren öffentlichen Charakter. Sie ging die Gesellschaft nichts mehr an. Sie wurde ein Privatdienst; die Frau wurde erste Dienstbotin, aus der Teilnahme an der gesellschaftlichen Produktion verdrängt. Erst die große Industrie unsrer Zeit hat ihr - und auch nur der Proletarierin - den Weg zur gesellschaftlichen Produktion wieder eröffnet. Aber so, daß, wenn sie ihre Pflichten im Privatdienst der Familie erfüllt, sie von der öffentlichen Produktion ausgeschlossen bleibt und nichts erwerben kann; und daß, wenn sie sich an der öffentlichen Industrie beteiligen und selbständig erwerben will, sie außerstand ist, Familienpflichten zu erfüllen. Und wie in der Fabrik, so geht es der Frau in allen Geschäftszweigen, bis in die Medizin und Advokatur hinein. Die moderne Einzelfamilie ist gegründet auf die offne oder verhüllte Haussldaverei der Frau, und die moderne Gesellschaft ist eine Masse, die aus lauter Einzelfamilien als ihren Molekülen sich zusammensetzt. Der Mann muß heutzutage in der großen Mehrzahl der Fälle der Erwerber, der Ernährer der Familie sein, wenigstens in den besitzenden Klassen, und das gibt ihm eine Herrscherstellung, die keiner juristischen Extrabevorrechtung bedarf. Er ist in der Familie der Bourgeois, die Frau repräsentiert das Proletariat. In der industriellen Welt tritt aber der spezifische Charakter der auf demProletariatlastenden ökonomischen Unter drückung erst dann in seiner vollen Schärfe hervor, nachdem alle gesetzlichen Sondervorrechte der Kapitalistenklasse beseitigt und die volle juristische Gleichberechtigung beider Klassen hergestellt worden; die demokratische Republik hebt den Gegensatz beider Klassen nicht auf, sie bietet im Gegenteil erst den Boden, worauf er

ausgefochten wird. Und ebenso wird auch der eigentümliche Charakter der Herrschaft des Mannes über die Frau in der modernen Familie und die Notwendigkeit, wie die Art, der Herstellung einer wirklichen gesellschaftlichen Gleichstellung beider erst dann in grelles Tageslicht treten, sobald beide juristisch vollkommen gleichberechtigt sind. Es wird sich dann zeigen, daß die Befreiung der Frau zur ersten Vorbedingung hat die Wiedereinführung des ganzen weiblichen Geschlechts in die öffentliche Industrie, und daß dies wieder erfordert die Beseitigung der Eigenschaft der Einzelfamilie als wirtschaftlicher Einheit der Gesellschaft.

差序格局

在乡村工作者看来，中国乡下老最大的毛病是“私”。说起私，我们就会想到“各人自扫门前雪，莫管他人屋上霜”的俗语。谁也不敢否认这俗语多少是中国人的信条。其实抱有这种态度的并不只是乡下人，就是所谓城里人，何尝不是如此。扫清自己门前雪的还算是了不起的有公德的人，普通人家把垃圾在门口的街道上一倒，就完事了。苏州人家后门常通一条河，听来是最美丽也没有了，文人笔墨里是中国的威尼思，可是我想天下没有比苏州城里的水道更脏的了。什么东西可以向这种出路本来不太畅通的小河沟里一倒，有不少人家根本就不必有厕所。明知人家在这河里洗衣洗菜，毫不觉得有什么需要自制的地方。为什么呢？——这种小河是公家的。 一说是公家的，差不多就是说大家可以占一点便宜的意思，有权利而没有义务了。小到两三家合住的院子，公共的走廊上照例是尘灰堆积，满院生了荒草，谁也不想去拔拔清楚，更难以插足的自然是厕所。没有一家愿意去管“闲事”，谁看不惯，谁就得白服侍人，半声谢意都得不到。于是象格兰亨姆的公律，坏钱驱逐好钱一般，公德心就在这里被自私心驱走。 从这些事上来说，私的毛病在中国实在比了愚和病更普遍得多，从上到下似乎没有不害这毛病的。现在已成了外国舆论一

致攻击我们的把柄了。所谓贪污无能，并不是每个人绝对的能力问题，而是相对的，是从个人对公家的服务和责任上说的。中国人并不是不善经营，只要看南洋那些华侨在商业上的成就，西洋人谁不测目？中国人更不是无能，对于自家的事，抓起钱来，拍起马来，比那一个国家的人能力都大。因之这里所谓“私”的问题却是个群己、人我的界线怎样划法的问题。我们传统的划法，显然是和西洋的划法不同。因之，如果我们要讨论私的问题就得把整个社会结构的格局提出来考虑一下了。

西洋的社会有些象我们在田里捆柴，几根稻草束成一把，几把束成一扎，几扎束成一捆，几捆束成一挑。每一根柴在整个挑里都属于一定的捆、扎、把。每一根柴也可以找到同把、同扎、同捆的柴，分扎得清楚不会乱的。在社会，这些单位就是团体。我说西洋社会组织象捆柴就是想指明：他们常常由若干人组成一个个的团体。团体是有一定界限的，谁是团体里的人，谁是团体外的人，不能模糊，一定分得清楚。在团体里的人是一伙，对于团体的关系是相同的，如果同一团体中有组别或等级的分别，那也是先规定的。我用捆柴来比拟，有一点不太合，就是一个人可以参加好几个团体，而好几扎柴里都有某一根柴当然是不可能的，这是人和柴不同的地方。我用这譬喻是在想具体一些使我们看到社会生活中人和人的关系的一种格局。我们不妨称之作团体格局。 家庭在西洋是一种界限分明的团体。如果有一位朋友写信给你说他将要“带了他的家庭”一起来看你，他很知道要和他一同来的是那几个人。在中国，这句话是含糊得很。在英美，家庭包括他和他的妻以及未成年的孩子。如果他只和他太太一起来，就不会用“家庭”。在我们中国“阖第光临”虽则常见，但是很少人能说得出这个“第”字究竟应当包括些什么人。 提到了我们的用字，

这个“家”字可以说最能伸缩自如了。“家里的”可以指自己的太太一个人，“家门”可以指伯叔侄子一大批，“自家人”可以包罗任何要拉入自己的圈子，表示亲热的人物。自家人的范围是因时因地可伸缩的，大到数不清，真是无不可成一家。 为什么我们这个最基本的社会单位的名词会这样不清不楚呢？在我看来却表示了我们的社会结构本身和西洋的格局不相同的，我们的格局不是一捆一捆扎清楚的柴，而是好象把一块石头丢在水面上所发生的一圈圈推出去的波纹。每个人都是他社会影响所推出去的圈子的中心。被圈子的波纹所推及的就发生联系。每个人在某一时间某一地点所动用的圈子是不一定相同的。 我们社会中最重要的亲属关系就是这种丢石头形成同心圆波纹的性质。亲属关系是根据生育和婚姻事实所发生的社会关系。从生育和婚姻所结成的网络，可以一直推出去包括无穷的人，过去的、现在的、和未来的人物。我们俗语里有“一表三千里”，就是这个意思，其实三千里者也不过指其广亵的意思而且。这个网络象个蜘蛛的网，有一个中心，就是自己。 我们每个人都有这么一个以亲属关系布出去的网，但是没有一个网所罩住的人是相同的。在一个社会里的人可以用同一个体系来记认他们的亲属，所同的只是这体系罢了。体系是抽象的格局，或是范畴性的有关概念。当我们用这体系来认取具体的亲亲戚戚时，各人所认的就不同了。我们在家属体系里都有父母，可是我的父母却不是你的父母。再进一步说，天下没有两个人所认取的亲属可以完全相同的。兄弟两人固然有相同的父母了，但是各人有各人的妻子儿女。因之，以亲属关系所联系成的社会关系的网络来说，是个别的。每一个网络有个“己”作为中心，各个网络的中心都不同。

在我们乡土社会里，不但亲属关系如此，地缘关系也是如此。现代的保甲制度是团体格局性的，但是这和传统的结构却格格不相入。在传统结构中，每一家以自己的地位做中心，周围划出一个圈子，这个圈子是“街坊”。有喜事要请酒，生了孩子要送红蛋，有丧事要出来助殓，抬棺材，是生活上的互助机构。可是这不是一个固定的团体，而是一个范围。范围的大小也要依着中心的努力厚薄而定。有势力的人家的街坊可以遍及全村，穷苦人家的街坊只是比邻的两三家。这和我们的亲属圈子一般的。象贾家的大观园里，可以住着姑表林黛玉，姨表薛宝钗，后来更多了，什么宝琴，岫云，凡是拉得上亲戚的，都包容得下。可是势力一变，树倒猢狲散，缩成一小团。到极端时，可以象苏秦潦倒归来，“妻不以为夫，嫂不以为叔。”中国传统结构中的差序格局具有这种伸缩能力。在乡下，家庭可以很小，而一到有钱的地主和官僚阶层，可以大到象个小国。中国人也特别对世态炎凉有感触，正因为这富于伸缩的社会圈子会因中心势力的变化而大校在孩子成年了住在家里都得给父母膳宿费的西洋社会里，大家承认团体的界限。在团体里的有一定的资格。资格取消了就得走出这个团体。在他们不是人情冷热的问题，而是权利问题。在西洋社会里争的是权利，而在我们却是攀关系、讲交情。 以“己”为中心，象石子一般投入水中，和别人所联系成的社会关系，不象团体中的分子一般大家立在一个平面上的，而是象水的波纹一般，一圈圈推出去，愈推愈远，也愈推愈保在这里我们遇到了中国社会结构的基本特性了，我们儒家最考究的是人伦，伦是什么呢？我的解释就是从自己推出去的和自己发生社会关系的那一样人里所发生的一轮轮波纹的差序。“释名”于沦字下也说“伦也，水文相次有伦理也。”潘光旦先生曾说，凡是有“仑”作

公分母的意义都相通，“共同表示的是条理，类别，秩序的一番意思。 ”（见潘光旦《说伦字》《社会研究》第十九期）伦重在分别，在礼记祭统里所讲的十伦，鬼神、君臣、父子、贵贱、亲疏、爵赏、夫妇，政事，长幼，上下，都是指差等。“不失其伦”是在别父子、远近、亲疏。伦是有差等的次序。在我们现在读来，鬼神、君臣、父子、夫妇等具体的社会关系，怎能和贵贱、亲疏、远近、上下等抽象的相对地位相提并论？其实在我们传统的社会结构里最基本的概念。这个人和人往来所构成的网络中的纲纪，就是一个差序，也就是伦。礼记大传里说：“ 亲亲也、尊尊也、长长也、男女有别，此其不可得与民变革者也。”意思是这个社会结构的架格是不能变的，变的只是利用这架格所做的事。 孔子最注重的就是水纹波浪向外扩张的推字。他先承认一个己，推己及人的己，对于这己，得加以克服于礼，克己就是修身。顺着这同心圆的伦常，就可向外推了。“本立而道生”。 “其为人也孝弟，而好犯上者鲜矣，不奸犯上而好作乱者，未之有也。”从己到家，由家到国，由国到天下，是一条通路。中庸里把五伦作为天下之达道。因为在这种社会结构里，从己到天下是一圈一团推出去的，所以孟子说他“善推而已矣”。

在这种富于伸缩性的网络里，随时随地是有一个“己”作中心的。这并不是个人主义，而是自我主义。个人是对团体而说的，是分子对全体。在个人主义下，一方面是平等观念，指在同一团体中各分子的地位相等，个人不能侵犯大家的权利，一方面是宪法观念，指团体不能抹煞个人，只能在个人们所愿意突出的一分权利上控制个人。这些观念必须先假定了团体的存在。在我们中国传统思想里是没有这一套的，因为我们所有的是自我主义，一切价值是以“己”作为中心的主义。 自我主义

并不限于拔一毛而利天下不为的杨朱，连儒家都该包括在内。杨朱和孔子不同的是杨朱忽略了自我主义的相对性和伸缩性。他太死心眼儿一口咬了一个自己不放，孔子是会推己及人的，可是尽管放之于四海，中心还是在自己。 子曰："为政以德，譬如北辰，居是所，而众星拱之。"这是很好一个差序格局的譬喻，自己总是中心，象四季不移的北斗星，所有其他的人，随着他转动。孔子并不象耶稣，耶稣是有超于个人的团体的，他有他的无国，所以他可以牺牲自己去成全天国。孔子呢？不然。子贡曰："如有博施于民，而能济众何如？可谓仁乎？" 子曰："何事于仁，必也圣乎！尧舜其犹病诸？夫仁者已欲立而立人，己欲达而达人，能近取譬，可谓仁之方也已。" 孔子的道德系统里绝不肯离开差序格局的中心，"君子求诸己，小人求诸人。"因之，他不能象耶稣一样普爱天下，甚至而爱他的仇敌，还要为杀死他的人求上帝的饶赦——这些不是从自我中心出发的。孔子呢？或曰："以德报怨，何如？"子曰："何以报德？以直报怨，以德报德。"这是差序层次，孔子是决不放松的。孔子并不象杨朱一般以小己来应付一切情境，他把这道德范围依着需要而推广或缩校他不象耶稣或中国的墨翟，一放不能收。 我们一旦明白这个能放能收，能伸能缩的社会范围，我们可以明白中国传统社会中的私的问题了。我常常觉得："中国传统社会里一个人为了自己可以牺牲家。为了家可以牺牲党，为了党可以牺牲国，为了国可以牺牲天下。"这和"大学"的：古之欲明明德于天下者，先治其国，欲治其国者。先齐其家，欲齐其家者，先修其身,,,,身修而后家齐，家齐而后国治，国治而后天下平。 在条理上是相通的，不同的只是内向和外向的路线，正面和反

面的说法，这是种差序的推浪形式，把群己的界限弄成了相对性，也可以说是模糊两可了。这和西洋把权利和义务分得清清楚楚的社会，大异其趣。

为自己可以牺牲家，为家可以牺牲族,,,,这是一个事实上的公式。在这种公式里，你如果说他私么？他是不能承认的，因为当他牺牲族时，他可以为了家，家在他看来是公的。当他牺牲国家为他小团体谋利益，争权利时，他也是为公，为了小团体的公。在差序格局里，公和私是相对而言的，站在任何一圈里，向内看也可以说是公的。其实当西洋的外交家在国际会议里为了自己国家争利益，不惜牺牲世界和平和别国合法利益时；也是这样的。所不同的，他们把国家看成了一个超过一切小组织的团体，为这个团体，上下双方都可以牺牲，但不能牺牲它来成全别种团体。这是现代国家观念，乡土社会中是没有的。 在西洋社会里，国家这个团体是一个明显的也是惟一特出的群己界线。在国家里做人民的无所逃于该团体之外，象一根柴捆在一束里，他们不能不把国家弄成个为每个分子谋利益的机构，于是他们有革命、有宪法、有法律、有国会等等。 在我们传统里群的极限是模糊不清的“天下”，国是皇帝之家，界线从来就是不清不楚的，不过是从自己这个中心里推出去向社会势力里的一圈而已。所以可以着手的，具体的只有己，克己就成了社会生活中最重要的德性，他们不会去克群，使群不致侵略个人的权利。在这种差序格局中，不发生这问题的。 在差序格局中，社会关系是逐渐从一个一个人推出去的，是私人联系的增加，社会范围是一根根私人联系所构成的网络，因之，我们传统社会里所有的社会道德也只在私人联系中发生意义。——这一点，我将留在下篇里再提出来讨论了。

Translated Text

The Family

Morgan[27], who spent the greater part of his life among the Iroquois[28]—still settled in the State of New York—and was adopted into one of their tribes (the Senecas), found among them a kinship system in force that stood in contradiction to their actual family relationships. Among them prevailed that easily dissoluble, individual marriage on both sides, which Morgan designates as the "pairing family"[29]. The offspring of such a married couple was thus evident and acknowledged before all the world; there could be no doubt as to whom the designations father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister applied. But the usage of these terms contradicts this. The Iroquois calls not only his own children, but also those of his brothers, his sons and daughters; and they call him father. Conversely, the children of his sisters he calls his nephews and nieces, and they call him uncle. The Iroquois woman, on the other hand, calls her own children and also those of her sisters her sons and daughters, and they call her mother. The children of her brothers, however, she calls her nephews and nieces, and she is called aunt by them. Similarly, the children of brothers call each other brothers and sisters, as do the children of sisters. The children of a woman and those of her brother, however, call each other cousins. And these are not merely names, but expressions of actually prevailing conceptions of nearness and remoteness, equality and inequality of blood kinship, and form the basis of a completely elaborated kinship system[30] capable of expressing several hundred different kinship relationships of a single individual. More than that. This system is not only in full force among all American Indians (no exception has been found so far), but it also holds good almost unchanged among the aborigines of India, among the Dravidian tribes in the Deccan and the Gaura tribes in Hindustan. The kinship terms of the South Indian Tamils and the Seneca Iroquois in the State of New York still agree today for more than two hundred different kinship relationships. And among these Indian tribes, as among all

[27] Lewis Henry Morgan (1818–1881). American anthropologist whose fieldwork among the Iroquois (League of the Ho-dé-no-sau-nee) and theory of social evolution (Ancient Society) form the empirical backbone of Engels' work. Engels credits him with "rediscovering" Marx's materialist conception of history in pre-capitalist contexts.

[28] Central to Morgan's research, representing a matrilineal clan society. Engels uses their kinship system to illustrate contradictions between familial practices and inherited terminology.

[29] Characterized by loose, dissolvable bonds between one man and one primary woman (and vice versa), with children belonging to the mother's clan. Prevalent among the Iroquois.

[30] Engels stresses its lagging nature: it preserves archaic terms (e.g., group-marriage-era designations) even as family structures evolve (e.g., toward pairing marriage).

American Indians, the kinship relationships arising from the prevailing form of the family stand in contradiction to the kinship system.

How is this to be explained? Given the decisive role kinship plays in the social order among all savage and barbarian peoples, one cannot dismiss the significance of this so widely spread system with phrases. A system that is universally valid in America, also exists in Asia among peoples of a quite different race, and modified forms of which are found everywhere in abundance in Africa and Australia, demands a historical explanation, not to be talked away, as MacLennan, for example, attempted. The designations father, child, brother, sister are not mere honorific titles; they entail quite definite, very serious mutual obligations, the totality of which constitutes an essential part of the social constitution of those peoples. And the explanation was found. In the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii), there still existed in the first half of this century a form of family which produced exactly such fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, uncles and aunts, nephews and nieces as are demanded by the American-Indian kinship system. But, strangely enough! The kinship system in force in Hawaii again did not correspond to the family form actually existing there. For there, all children of siblings, without exception, are brothers and sisters, and are considered the common children not only of their mother and her sisters, or of their father and his brothers, but of all the siblings of their parents without distinction. If therefore the American kinship system presupposes a more primitive form of the family which no longer exists in America, but which we actually still find in Hawaii, then, conversely, the Hawaiian kinship system points to an even more primitive family form, which, although we can no longer prove it as existing anywhere, *must* nevertheless have existed, for otherwise the corresponding kinship system could not have arisen. "The family," says Morgan, "represents an active principle. It is never stationary, but advances from a lower to a higher form as society advances from a lower to a higher condition.... Systems of consanguinity, on the contrary, are passive; recording the progress made by the family at long intervals apart, and only changing radically when the family has radically changed." "And," adds Marx, "the same is true of the political, juridical, religious, and philosophical systems generally." While the family advances, the system of consanguinity ossifies; while the latter persists by custom, the family outgrows it. But just as Cuvier could deduce from the marsupial bones

of an animal skeleton found near Paris that it belonged to a marsupial animal and that extinct marsupial animals once lived there, with the same certainty we can deduce from a historically transmitted kinship system that an extinct form of family corresponding to it must have existed.

The kinship systems and family forms mentioned above differ from those prevailing today in that each child has several fathers and mothers. Under the American kinship system, to which the Hawaiian family corresponds, brother and sister cannot be the father and mother of the same child; the Hawaiian kinship system, however, presupposes a family in which this was, on the contrary, the rule. Here we are transported into a series of family forms which stand in direct contradiction to those hitherto usually assumed to be alone valid. The traditional conception knows only monogamy, alongside polygyny of one man, possibly also polyandry of one woman, and, as befits the moralising philistine[31], silently passes over the fact that in practice these barriers set by official society are silently but unceremoniously ignored. The study of primitive history, on the contrary, reveals conditions where men practise polygyny and their women practise polyandry at the same time, and their common children are therefore considered common to them all; conditions which in turn undergo a whole series of modifications until their final dissolution in monogamy. These modifications are such that the circle encompassed by the common marriage bond, originally very wide, becomes narrower and narrower, until finally only the single couple remains predominant today. In reconstructing the history of the family backwards in this way, Morgan, in agreement with the majority of his colleagues, arrives at a primitive state where unrestricted sexual intercourse prevailed within a tribe, so that every woman belonged equally to every man and every man to every woman. The discovery of this primitive state is the first great merit of Bachofen[32]. From this primitive state there developed, probably very early:

[31] Philistine, Engels' derogatory term for the narrow-minded, hypocritical bourgeois. Their marriages embody "leaden boredom" (Familienunglück), upheld by Protestant propriety or Catholic indissolubility despite mutual unhappiness.

[32] Johann Jakob Bachofen (1815–1887). Swiss jurist and theorist of Das Mutterrecht (1861). He argued for a universal prehistoric matriarchal phase based on mythology/ethnography. Engels acknowledges his "three great discoveries": 1) primitive sexual promiscuity, 2) matriarchy, 3) women's high status in early society.

1. **The Consanguine Family**[33], the first stage of the family. Here the marriage groups are separated according to generations: all grandparents within the family boundaries are all mutually husbands and wives, similarly their children, i.e., fathers and mothers, whose children in turn form a third circle of common spouses, and *their* children, the great-grandchildren of the first, a fourth. In this family form, therefore, only ancestors and descendants, parents and children, are excluded from the rights (and duties, as we would say) of marriage to one another. Brothers and sisters, first, second and more remote cousins, are all brothers and sisters to one another and *precisely for that reason* all husbands and wives of one another. The relationship of brother and sister includes at this stage the exercise of sexual intercourse with each other as a matter of course. The typical form of such a family would consist of the descendants of one pair, in which again the descendants of each single generation are brothers and sisters to one another and *precisely for that reason* husbands and wives to one another.

The consanguine family is extinct. Even the most primitive peoples of whom history tells afford no demonstrable example of it. But that it *must* have existed is forced upon us by the Hawaiian kinship system, still prevalent throughout Polynesia, which expresses degrees of blood kinship such as can only arise under this family form; and the whole subsequent development of the family, which presupposes this form as a necessary preliminary stage, compels us to accept its existence.

2. **The Punaluan Family**[34]**.** If the first advance in organisation consisted in excluding parents and children from mutual sexual intercourse, the second was the exclusion of sisters and brothers. This advance was, on account of the greater equality in age of the participants, infinitely more important, but also more difficult than the first; it was accomplished gradually, beginning probably with the exclusion of own siblings (i.e., from the mother's side) from sexual intercourse, first in isolated cases, then gradually becoming the rule (in Hawaii exceptions occurred even in this century), and ending with the prohibition of marriage even

[33] Based on intermarriage within generational cohorts (e.g., all "grandparents" marry each other; siblings are mutual spouses). Engels saw it as a necessary precursor to later forms.
[34] Excludes sibling marriage. Sisters (biological/cousins) share non-sibling husbands (*punalua* = "intimate partner"); brothers share non-sibling wives. Considered the direct origin of the *gens* (clan).

> between collateral siblings, i.e., according to our designation, children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren of siblings; it constitutes, according to Morgan, "an excellent illustration of the operation of the principle of natural selection." There can be no question that tribes in which inbreeding was restricted by this advance were bound to develop more rapidly and fully than those where marriage between siblings remained the rule and obligation. And how powerfully the effect of this advance was felt is demonstrated by the institution of the *gens*[35] directly arising from it and far surpassing it in significance, which formed the basis of the social order of most, if not all, barbarian peoples of the earth, and from which we in Greece and Rome step directly into civilisation.

Every primitive family had to divide, at latest after a few generations. The original communistic common household, which prevailed without exception until late in the middle stage of barbarism, determined a maximum size for the family community, varying according to circumstances but fairly definite in each locality. As soon as the conception arose that sexual intercourse between children of the same mother was improper, it must have acted powerfully in the division of old and foundation of new family communities (which, however, did not necessarily coincide with the family group). One or more series of sisters became the nucleus of one group, their own brothers the nucleus of the other. Thus or similarly, the form designated by Morgan as the punaluan family developed out of the consanguine family. According to the Hawaiian custom, a number of sisters, own or more remote (i.e., first, second or more remote cousins), were the common wives of their common husbands, from whom, however, their own brothers were excluded; these men now called one another no longer brothers—which they no longer necessarily were—but *punalua*, i.e., intimate companion, associate as it were. Similarly, a series of own or more remote brothers had a number of women, not their sisters, in common marriage, and these women called one another *punalua*. This is the classical form of a family structure which later admitted a series of variations, and whose essential characteristic was: mutual community of husbands and wives within a definite

[35] A kin group descending from a common ancestor (initially matrilineal). The foundational unit of "barbarian" societies (e.g., Iroquois, Greeks, Romans).

family circle, from which, however, the brothers of the wives—first the own brothers, later the more remote ones—and conversely, the sisters of the husbands were excluded.

This family form now furnishes us with the most complete accuracy for the degrees of kinship as expressed in the American system. The children of my mother's sisters are still her children, similarly the children of my father's brothers are also his children, and all of them are my siblings; but the children of my mother's brothers are now her nephews and nieces, the children of my father's sisters are his nephews and nieces, and all of them are my cousins. For while the husbands of my mother's sisters are still her husbands, and similarly the wives of my father's brothers are also still his wives legally, if not always in fact, the social proscription of sexual intercourse between siblings has now divided the children of siblings, previously regarded without distinction as siblings, into two classes: some remain siblings as before (more remote siblings) to one another; the others, children of the brother in one case, of the sister in the other, can no longer be siblings, they can no longer have common parents, neither father nor mother nor both, and therefore for the first time the class of nephews and nieces, male and female cousins, becomes necessary, which would have been senseless under the previous family order. The American kinship system, which appears pure nonsense under any family form based on any kind of monogamy[36], is rationally explained and naturally accounted for by the punaluan family down to its minutest details. To the extent that this kinship system was prevalent, the punaluan family must have existed at least to the same extent.

This family form, actually proven to exist in Hawaii, would probably have been reported to us from all over Polynesia had the pious missionaries, like the Spanish monks of yore in America, been able to see in such unchristian conditions something more than mere "abomination". When Caesar tells us of the Britons[37], who were then in the middle stage of barbarism, that "they have their wives in common between them by tens and by twelves, and particularly brothers with brothers and parents with children," the best explanation is group marriage. Barbarian mothers do not have ten or twelve sons old enough to keep common wives; but the American kinship system, which corresponds to

[36] Engels emphasizes its historical purpose: ensuring legitimate heirs for private property. Despite its name, it coexists with male adultery (*hetairism*) and female oppression.

[37] Caesar's claim that Britons practiced group marriage ("wives in common by tens and twelves") is cited as evidence of punaluan survivals in barbarian Europe. Engels notes possible misinterpretations but affirms the core observation.

the punaluan family, provides many brothers, because all near and remote male cousins of a man are his brothers. The "parents with children" may be Caesar's misunderstanding; that father and son, or mother and daughter, should be in the same marriage group is not absolutely excluded by this system, though father and daughter, or mother and son, certainly is. This family form likewise provides the simplest explanation of the accounts of Herodotus and other ancient writers concerning community of women among savage and barbarian peoples.[38] What Watson and Kaye (*The People of India*) tell of the Tikurs in Audh (north of the Ganges) must also be punaluan: "They live together (i.e., sexually) almost indiscriminately in large communities, and when two people are considered married, the tie is only nominal."

Directly arising from the punaluan family in the vast majority of cases is the institution of the *gens*. The Australian class system also offers a point of departure for it; the Australians have gentes, but not yet the punaluan family. Their organisation is, however, too isolated for us to take it into account here.

In all forms of group family, it is uncertain who the father of a child is, but certain who its mother is. Although she calls all children of the entire family her children and has maternal duties towards them, she nevertheless knows her own children among the others. It is thus clear that where group marriage exists, descent can only be proven on the maternal side, and thus only the female line is recognised. This is in fact the case among all peoples in the savage state and the lower stage of barbarism; and to have discovered this first is Bachofen's second great merit. He designates this exclusive recognition of descent through the mother and the inheritance relationships gradually resulting from it as "mother-right"; I retain this term for brevity's sake. It is, however, ill-chosen, for at this stage of society there is as yet no talk of "right" in the legal sense.

If we now take from the punaluan family one of the two model groups, namely a group of own and more remote sisters (i.e., descended from own sisters in the first, second or more remote degree), together with their children and their own or more remote brothers on the maternal side (who, according to our premise, are not their

[38] Herodotus on "Wife-Communism": "L'enfant conçu pendant le mariage a pour père le mari" ("A child conceived during marriage has the husband as father"). Engels cites this law to expose monogamy's core contradiction: it legally enforces paternity despite widespread adultery—a "last result of 3,000 years of monogamy."

husbands), we have exactly the circle of persons who appear later as members of a *gens*, in the original form of this institution. They all have a common female ancestor, by descent from whom the female offspring in each generation are sisters. The husbands of these sisters, however, can no longer be their brothers, i.e., cannot be descended from this female ancestor, and therefore do not belong to the blood kinship group, the later gens; but their children do belong to this group, because descent on the maternal side is alone decisive, since it alone is certain. Once the proscription of sexual intercourse between all siblings, including the most remote collateral relatives on the maternal side, is firmly established, the above group transforms into a gens, i.e., constitutes itself as a fixed circle of blood relatives in the female line, who are forbidden to marry one another, and who henceforth become increasingly consolidated by other common institutions of a social and religious character and distinguished from the other gentes of the same tribe. More on this later. But if we find that the gens necessarily, indeed almost self-evidently, develops out of the punaluan family, we are forced to assume the former existence of this family form for almost all peoples among whom gentile institutions can be demonstrated, that is, practically for all barbarian and civilised peoples.

3. **The Pairing Family.** A certain pairing, for longer or shorter periods, already occurred under the punaluan family, or even earlier; the man had a chief wife (one can hardly yet say favourite wife) among his many wives, and for her he was the chief husband among the others. This circumstance contributed not a little to the confusion among the missionaries, who see in the punaluan family sometimes promiscuous community of women, sometimes arbitrary adultery. Such customary pairing, however, had to become increasingly consolidated as the gens developed and as the classes of "brothers" and "sisters" between whom marriage was now impossible became more numerous. The impetus given by the gens to the prevention of marriage between blood relatives drove matters still further. Thus we find that among the Iroquois and most other Indians at the lower stage of barbarism, marriage is prohibited between all relatives enumerated in their system, and these are several hundred kinds. With this growing complication of marriage prohibitions, group marriages became increasingly impossible; they were displaced by the pairing family. At this stage, one man lives with one

> woman, yet in such a way that polygyny and occasional infidelity remain the right of the men, although the former occurs rarely for economic reasons; while the women are generally required to observe the strictest fidelity during the time of cohabitation, and adultery on their part is cruelly punished. The marriage tie is, however, easily dissolved by either side, and the children, as before, belong solely to the mother.

In this ever further exclusion of blood relatives from the marriage bond, natural selection continues its work. In Morgan's words: "Marriages between non-consanguineous gentes tended to create a more vigorous stock physically and mentally. When two advancing tribes are blended into one people... the new skulls and brains would expand naturally until they embodied the capabilities of both." Tribes with gentile constitution must thus have gained supremacy over the backward ones or carried them along by their example. The development of the family throughout primitive history thus consists in the continuous narrowing of the circle, originally embracing the whole tribe, within which marital community between the two sexes prevailed. Through the progressive exclusion, first of closer, then of ever more remote relatives, and finally even of those merely related by marriage, every form of group marriage becomes practically impossible, and in the end there remains only the single, still loosely linked couple, the molecule, with the dissolution of which marriage itself ceases. This alone shows how little individual sexual love, in the modern sense of the word, had to do with the origin of monogamy. Still more proof is provided by the practice of all peoples at this stage. Whereas in earlier family forms men never had difficulty in finding women—on the contrary, they had more than enough—women now became scarce and sought after. Hence with pairing marriage begins the robbery and purchase of women—widespread symptoms, but nothing more, of a much more deeply rooted change which had occurred—symptoms which MacLennan, the pedantic Scot, nonetheless transmuted into special classes of families under the names of "marriage by capture" and "marriage by purchase." Furthermore, among the American Indians and elsewhere (at the same stage), the conclusion of a marriage is the affair not of the individuals concerned, who are often not consulted at all, but of their mothers. Often two people entirely unknown to each other are betrothed and only learn of the concluded bargain when the time for marriage

approaches. Before the wedding, the bridegroom makes gifts to the gentile relatives of the bride (i.e., to those on her mother's side, not to her father and his relatives), which are considered as purchase payments for the girl ceded. The marriage remains dissoluble at the will of either of the two partners; however, among many tribes, such as the Iroquois, a public opinion increasingly averse to such separations has gradually formed; in disputes, the gentile relatives of both parties mediate, and only if this fails does separation take place, whereby the children remain with the mother, and each party is free to marry again.

The pairing family, too weak and unstable in itself to make an independent household necessary or even desirable, in no way dissolves the communistic household inherited from earlier times. But communistic household means domination of the women in the house, just as exclusive recognition of a natural mother, when the natural father cannot be known with certainty, means high respect for women, i.e., for mothers. It is one of the most absurd notions derived from eighteenth-century enlightenment, that in the beginning of society woman was the slave of man. Among all savages and all barbarians of the lower and middle stages, and partly even the upper stage, woman has not only a free but a highly respected position. What it still is under pairing marriage may be attested by Arthur Wright, for many years a missionary among the Seneca Iroquois: "As to their family system, when occupying the old long houses (communistic households of several families)... some one clan (gens) predominated, the women taking in husbands from other clans (gentes)... Usually the female portion ruled the house; the stores were in common; but woe to the luckless husband or lover who was too shiftless or too lazy to contribute his share to the common stock. No matter how many children or whatever goods he might have in the house, he might at any time be ordered to pick up his blanket and budge; and after such orders it would not be healthful for him to attempt to disobey. The house would be too hot for him; and... he must retreat to his own clan (gens); or, as was often done, go and start a new matrimonial alliance in some other. The women were the great power among the clans (gentes), as everywhere else. They did not hesitate, when occasion required, 'to knock off the horns,' as it was technically called, from the head of a chief, and send him back to the ranks of the warriors." The communistic household, in which most or all the women belong to one and the same gens, while the men come from various gentes, is the material foundation of that supremacy of

women which prevailed in primitive times, and the discovery of which constitutes Bachofen's third great merit. I may add, by the way, that the reports of travellers and missionaries about women among savages and barbarians being burdened with excessive drudgery in no way contradict what has been said. The division of labour between the two sexes is determined by quite other causes than the position of woman in society. Peoples where women have to work much harder than we think suitable often have far more real respect for women than our Europeans have. The "lady" of civilisation, surrounded by sham homage and estranged from all real work, has an infinitely lower social position than the hard-working woman of barbarism, who was regarded in her own people as a real lady (lady, *frowa*, *Frau*—mistress), and who was such in character.

Whether pairing marriage has today completely supplanted punaluan marriage in America must be decided by closer investigations, especially among the northwest and South American peoples still at the upper stage of savagery. So many instances of sexual licence are related that a complete cessation of the old group marriage seems improbable. At any rate, all traces of it have not yet disappeared. Among at least forty North American tribes, the man who marries an eldest sister has the right to take all her sisters as wives as soon as they reach the required age—a relic of the community of men for the whole series of sisters. And Bancroft relates of the Californian peninsula tribes (upper stage of savagery) that they have certain festivals where several tribes come together for the purpose of indiscriminate sexual intercourse. These are evidently gentes which preserve at these festivals a dim memory of the time when the women of one gens had all the men of the other as their common husbands, and conversely. Similar relics are well known enough in the Old World, such as the dedication of Phoenician girls to the temple at the festivals of Astarte; even the medieval *jus primae noctis*, despite German neo-romantic whitewashing, was a very tangible survival of punaluan marriage, probably transmitted through the Celtic gens (clan).

The pairing family arose on the border between savagery and barbarism, mostly already at the upper stage of savagery, here and there only at the lower stage of barbarism. It is the characteristic family form for barbarism, as group marriage is for savagery and monogamy for civilisation. To develop it further into stable monogamy, causes different from those we have found active hitherto were required. In the pairing family, the group

had already been reduced to its last unit, its diatomic molecule: one man and one woman. Natural selection, through the ever-increasing exclusion of blood relatives from marriage, had accomplished its task; in this direction it had nothing more to do. If no new, *social* driving forces had entered into action, there would have been no reason why a new form of family should arise out of pairing marriage. But these driving forces did come into action.

We now leave America, the classic soil of the pairing family. No sign permits the conclusion that a higher form of family developed here, or that strict monogamy ever existed anywhere before the discovery and conquest. It was different in the Old World.

Here the taming of domestic animals and the breeding of herds had developed a hitherto unsuspected source of wealth and created entirely new social relations. Up to the lower stage of barbarism, permanent wealth had consisted almost only of the house, clothing, crude ornaments and the tools for procuring and preparing food: boat, weapons, simplest household utensils. Food had to be won afresh day by day. Now, with their herds of horses, camels, asses, cattle, sheep, goats and pigs, the advancing pastoral peoples—the Aryans in the Indian Punjab and Ganges area, and in the then much more richly watered steppes of the Oxus and Jaxartes; the Semites on the Euphrates and Tigris—had acquired possessions which only needed supervision and the rudest care to reproduce themselves in ever-increasing numbers and to yield the richest sustenance in milk and meat. All former means of procuring food now receded into the background; hunting, formerly a necessity, now became a luxury.

But to whom did this new wealth belong? Originally, undoubtedly, to the gens. But private property in herds must have developed at an early stage. It is difficult to say whether the author of the so-called first book of Moses regarded the patriarch Abraham as the owner of his herds by virtue of his own right or as head of a gens by actual hereditary right. What is certain is that we must not think of him as a proprietor in the modern sense. And it is equally certain that at the threshold of authentic history we find the herds already everywhere the separate property of the heads of families, exactly like the artistic products of barbarism (metal implements, luxury articles and, finally, human cattle—the slaves).

For now slavery had also been invented. To the barbarian of the lower stage, a slave was valueless. Hence the treatment of defeated enemies by the American Indians was quite different from that at a higher stage. The men were killed or adopted as brothers into the tribe of the victors; the women were taken as wives or otherwise adopted with their surviving children. Human labour power at this stage yields no significant surplus over its maintenance costs. With the introduction of cattle breeding, metalworking, weaving and finally field cultivation, this changed. Just as the wives, formerly so easily obtainable, now acquired an exchange value and were bought, so also with labour power, particularly since the herds had definitely become private property. The family did not multiply as rapidly as the cattle. More people were needed to tend them; the captive enemy was usable for this purpose, and he could be bred like the cattle themselves.

Such wealth, once it had become the private property of families and rapidly increased, dealt a powerful blow to society founded on pairing marriage and the matrilineal gens. Pairing marriage had introduced a new element into the family. By the side of the natural mother it had placed the attested natural father—who probably was better attested than many a "father" today. According to the division of labour within the family at that time, it was the man's part to obtain food and the instruments of labour necessary for the purpose. He therefore also owned the instruments of labour, and in the event of husband and wife separating, he took them with him, just as the woman retained her household goods. According to the social custom of the time, therefore, the man was also the owner of the new source of subsistence, the cattle, and later of the new instruments of labour, the slaves. But according to the custom of the same society, his children could not inherit from him. For as matters stood, descent was reckoned only on the mother's side, and originally also the gentile right of inheritance. The property had to remain within the gens. On the death of its owner, therefore, his herds would go first to his brothers and sisters and to his sisters' children, or to the issue of his mother's sisters. His own children were disinherited.

Thus, on the one hand, in proportion as wealth increased, it made the man's position in the family more important than the woman's, and on the other hand created an impulse to exploit this strengthened position in order to overthrow, in favour of his children, the traditional order of inheritance. But this was impossible as long as descent was reckoned

according to mother-right. Mother-right, therefore, had to be overthrown, and it was overthrown. This was by no means so difficult as it appears to us now. For this revolution—one of the most decisive ever experienced by humanity—need not have disturbed one single living member of a gens. All its members could remain what they were. The simple resolution sufficed that in future the descendants of the male members should remain in the gens, but that those of the females were to be excluded from the gens and transferred to that of their father. The reckoning of descent in the female line and the matrilineal law of inheritance were thereby overthrown, and the male line of descent and paternal inheritance were substituted. How this revolution was effected among the civilised peoples, and when, we know nothing. It falls entirely within prehistoric times. That it *was* effected is more than sufficiently proved by the abundant traces of mother-right which have been collected, particularly by Bachofen; and how easily it is effected we see in a whole series of American Indian tribes, where it has only recently taken place and is still proceeding, partly under the influence of increasing wealth and changed mode of life (transference from forest to prairie), and partly under the moral influence of civilisation and the missionaries. Of eight Missouri tribes, six observe the male line of descent and inheritance, two still observe the female. Among the Shawnees, Miamis and Delawares the custom has arisen of transferring the children to their father's gens by giving them one of the gentile names obtaining therein, in order that they may inherit from him. "Innate casuistry of man to change things by changing their names! And to find loopholes for breaking through tradition within tradition itself, wherever a direct interest provided a sufficient motive!" (Marx.) As a result, hopeless confusion arose; confusion which could only be remedied, and was partly remedied, by the transition to father-right. "This appears on the whole to be the most natural transition." (Marx.) The overthrow of mother-right was the *world-historic defeat of the female sex*. The man seized the reins in the house also, the woman was degraded, enslaved, became the slave of his lust and a mere instrument for breeding children. This degraded position of women, especially conspicuous among the Greeks of the heroic and still more of the classical age, has been gradually glossed over and disguised or even clothed in a milder form, but by no means abolished.

The first effect of the sole rule of the men that was now established is shown in the intermediate form of the patriarchal family which now emerges. Its chief characteristic is not polygyny, of which more later, but the organisation of a number of free and unfree persons into a family under the paternal power of the head of the family. Among the Semites, this family head lives in polygyny; the unfree have a wife and children, and the purpose of the whole organisation is the care of herds in a defined territory. The essential points are the incorporation of unfree persons and paternal authority; hence the perfect type of this form of family is the Roman family. The word *familia* did not originally signify the ideal, compounded of sentimentality and domestic discord, of the modern philistine; among the Romans, in the beginning, it did not even refer to the married couple and their children, but only to the slaves. *Famulus* means a household slave, and *familia* signifies the totality of slaves belonging to one man. Even in the time of Gaius, the *familia*, *id est patrimonium* (that is, the inheritance), was bequeathed by will. The expression was invented by the Romans to denote a new social organism, the head of which had wife and children and a number of slaves under Roman paternal power and the power of life and death over them all. "The term, therefore, is no older than the iron-clad family system of the Latin tribes, which came in after field agriculture and after legalised servitude, as well as after the separation of the Aryan Italics from the Greeks." Marx adds: "The modern family contains in embryo not only slavery (*servitus*), but also serfdom, since from the very beginning it is connected with agricultural services. It contains *in miniature* all the antagonisms which later develop on a wide scale within society and its state."

Such a family form marks the transition of pairing marriage into monogamy. In order to guarantee the fidelity of the wife, that is, the paternity of the children, the woman is placed in the man's absolute power; if he kills her, he is only exercising his right.

Before we proceed to monogamy, which developed rapidly after the overthrow of mother-right, a few words about polygyny and polyandry. Both forms of marriage can only be exceptions, historical luxury products, as it were, unless they occur side by side in the same country, which, as is well known, is not the case. Since, therefore, the men excluded from polygyny cannot console themselves with the women left over by polyandry, and the number of men and women, irrespective of social institutions, has so

far been fairly equal, the possibility of either polygyny or polyandry becoming a general form is ruled out of its own accord. In fact, the exclusive polygyny of one man was obviously a product of slavery and confined to certain exceptional positions. In the Semitic patriarchal family, only the patriarch himself, and at most a few of his sons, live in polygyny; the rest must be content with one wife. So it is throughout the Orient today; polygyny is a privilege of the wealthy and distinguished, recruited chiefly by the purchase of female slaves; the mass of the people live in monogamy. An exactly similar exception is the polyandry of India and Tibet; its origin from the punaluan family requires closer investigation, which would certainly prove interesting. In its practice, however, it seems much more tolerant than the jealous harem system of the Mohammedans. At least among the Nairs in India, three, four or more men, it is true, have a wife in common; but each of them can have, in addition, a second wife in common with three or more other men, and similarly a third, fourth, and so on. It is a wonder that McLennan[39] did not discover in these marriage clubs, to several of which one could belong and which he himself describes, a new class of "club marriage."

4. **The Monogamian Family.** It develops out of the pairing family, as previously shown, in the transitional period between the middle and upper stages of barbarism; its final victory is one of the signs of the beginning of civilisation. It is based on the supremacy of the man, the express purpose being to produce children of undisputed paternity; such paternity is demanded because these children are later to come into their father's property as his natural heirs. It is distinguished from pairing marriage by the much greater solidity of the marriage tie, which can no longer be dissolved at the pleasure of either party. Now, as a rule, only the man can dissolve it, and cast off his wife. The right of conjugal infidelity remains secured to him, at least by custom (the *Code Napoléon* explicitly accords it to the husband as long as he does not bring his concubine into the house), and is exercised more and more with advancing social development; and should the wife recall the old sexual practices and attempt to revive them, she is punished more severely than ever before.

[39] John Ferguson McLennan (1827–1881). Scottish ethnologist who coined exogamy/endogamy and promoted the "marriage by capture" theory. Engels critiques his idealist approach and neglect of kinship systems (e.g., dismissing the Iroquois/Hawaiian contradictions as "phrases").

We meet this new form of the family in all its severity among the Greeks. While, as Marx observes, the position of the goddesses in mythology shows an earlier period when the women still occupied a freer and more respected position, we find woman already degraded by the supremacy of the man and by competition of female slaves in the heroic age. Read in Thucydides how Pericles, in his funeral oration, tells the Athenian women that their greatest glory is to be as little talked about as possible among men. Under monogamy, woman was more rigorously shut up than ever. The wife of the head of the household was strictly secluded and guarded among the Greeks of Asia Minor; according to Aristotle, she was under constant surveillance; in Asia Minor the women had eunuchs for watchmen, who had to accompany them when going out; the wives' apartments were in the inner part of the house, where no strange man could go, and to which the women retired when male visitors came. The women did not go out without being accompanied by a female slave; indoors, they were literally kept under lock and key. The Athenian house was locked at night; the husband took his pleasures with hetaerae or female slaves. This treatment of women lasted throughout classical antiquity with increasing severity. It is no wonder that the term *gynaeceum* became synonymous with disorder, as among the later Greeks; the husband, occupied with his hetaerae, and the wife seeking consolation in adultery. In the best classical times, the position of women was not much better. Men had their principal satisfaction in male love, as sung by the poets. If we may believe Athenaeus, the celebrated *Hetaira* Phryne was more celebrated for her wit than her beauty. The degradation of women recoiled on the men themselves and degraded them, until they sank into the perversion of boy-love, degrading both themselves and their gods by the myth of Ganymede.

Such was the origin of monogamy as far as we can trace it back among the most civilised and highly developed people of antiquity. It was not in any way the fruit of individual sex love, with which it had absolutely nothing in common, since marriages remained marriages of convenience. It was the first form of the family to be based not on natural but on economic conditions—on the victory of private property over primitive, natural communal property. The supremacy of the man in the family and the procreation of children who could only be his, destined to be the heirs of his wealth—these alone were frankly avowed by the Greeks as the exclusive aims of monogamy. For the rest, it

was a burden to them, a duty to the gods, the state and their own ancestors, which just had to be fulfilled.

Thus monogamy does not by any means make its appearance in history as the reconciliation of man and woman, still less as the highest form of such a reconciliation. On the contrary, it appears as the subjection of one sex by the other, as the proclamation of a conflict between the sexes hitherto unknown throughout prehistoric times. In an old unpublished manuscript written by Marx and myself in 1846, I find the words: "The first division of labour is that between man and woman for child breeding." And today I can add: The first class antagonism which appears in history coincides with the development of the antagonism between man and woman in monogamian marriage, and the first class oppression coincides with that of the female sex by the male. Monogamy was a great historical advance, but at the same time it inaugurated, along with slavery and private wealth, that epoch, lasting until today, in which every advance is likewise a relative regression, in which the well-being and development of the one group are attained by the misery and repression of the other. It is the cellular form of civilised society, in which we can already study the nature of the antagonisms and contradictions which develop fully in the latter.

The old relative freedom of sexual intercourse by no means disappeared with the victory of pairing marriage or even monogamy. "The old conjugal system, now reduced to narrower limits by the gradual disappearance of the punaluan groups, still environed the advancing family, which it was to follow to the verge of civilisation.... It finally disappeared in the new form of hetaerism, which still follows mankind in civilisation as a dark shadow upon the family." By hetaerism Morgan understands that cohabitation of men with unmarried women outside of marriage which flourishes alongside of monogamy throughout the period of civilisation in the most diverse forms and increasingly becomes open prostitution. This hetaerism derives quite directly from group marriage, from the sacrificial surrender of women to purchase their right to chastity. The surrender for money was at first a religious act; it took place in the temple of the goddess of love, and the money originally went into the temple treasury. The hierodules of Anaitis in Armenia, of Aphrodite in Corinth, and the religious dancing girls attached to the temples of India, the so-called *bayaderes* (the word is a corruption of the

Portuguese *bailadeira*), were the first prostitutes. Originally the duty of every woman, this surrender was later performed by these priestesses alone as representatives of all other women. Among other peoples, hetaerism derives from the sexual freedom allowed girls before marriage—also, therefore, a relic of group marriage, only transmitted by another route. With the rise of property differentiations—that is, as far back as the upper stage of barbarism—wage labour appears sporadically alongside of slavery, and at the same time, as its necessary correlate, the professional prostitution of free women side by side with the forced surrender of the slave. Thus the heritage bequeathed to civilisation by group marriage is double-edged, just as everything civilisation brings forth is double-edged, double-tongued, divided against itself, contradictory: here monogamy, there hetaerism with its most extreme form, prostitution. For hetaerism is as much a social institution as any other; it continues the old sexual freedom—to the advantage of the men. Actually not only permitted, but assiduously practised by the ruling classes particularly, it is condemned in words. But in reality this condemnation never falls on the men concerned, but only on the women; they are despised and outcast, in order that the unconditional supremacy of men over the female sex may be once more proclaimed as a fundamental social law.

However, a second contradiction thus develops within monogamy itself. At the side of the husband who embellishes his existence with hetaerism stands the neglected wife. And one cannot have one side of a contradiction without the other, any more than one can have the whole of an apple in one's hand after eating half. But that seems to have been the men's notion, until their wives taught them better. With monogamy, two constant social types, hitherto unknown, appear on the scene—the wife's paramour and the cuckold. Men had gained the victory over women, but the vanquished magnanimously provided the coronation. Adultery became an unavoidable social institution alongside monogamy and hetaerism—denounced, severely penalised, but impossible to suppress. The certainty of paternity rested as before, at best, only on moral conviction; and to solve the insoluble contradiction, Article 312 of the *Code Napoléon* decreed: *L'enfant conçu pendant le mariage a pour père le mari*—"the child conceived during marriage has the husband for its father." That is the last result of three thousand years of monogamy.

Thus, in the monogamian family—in those cases that faithfully reflect its historical origin and clearly bring out the sharp conflict between man and woman resulting from the exclusive supremacy of the man—we have a picture in miniature of the very antagonisms and contradictions in which society, split into classes since the advent of civilisation, moves, without being able to resolve and overcome them. Naturally, I refer here only to those cases of monogamy where matrimonial life actually takes its course according to the original character of the whole institution, but where the wife rebels against the husband's supremacy. That not all marriages take this course is known to no one better than the German philistine, who can no more assert his rule in the home than he can in the state, and whose wife, therefore, with full right, wears the trousers he is unworthy of. But he thinks himself, for all that, far superior to his French companion in misery, to whom oftener, far oftener, something much worse happens.

However, the monogamian family did not everywhere and always appear in the classically harsh form it had among the Greeks. Among the Romans, who as future world conquerors had a broader if less refined outlook than the Greeks, the woman was freer and more respected. The Roman believed the conjugal fidelity of his wife sufficiently safeguarded by his power of life and death over her. Moreover, the wife could here dissolve the marriage voluntarily, just as the husband could. But the greatest progress in the development of monogamy undoubtedly came with the entry of the Germans into history, and this was because they were still not fully emerged from pairing marriage. We infer this from three circumstances mentioned by Tacitus: First, although marriage was held sacred—"they are satisfied with one wife, the women live hedged about with chastity"—polygyny was the rule for the notables and tribal chiefs, a situation similar to that among the Americans, where pairing marriage prevailed. Secondly, the transition from mother-right to father-right could only have been made shortly before, for the mother's brother—the nearest male gentile relative according to mother-right—was still considered almost a closer relative than the own father, corresponding again to the standpoint of the American Indians, among whom Marx, as he often said, found the key to the understanding of our own primitive age. And thirdly, women were highly respected among the Germans, and also influential in public affairs, which is in direct contradiction to monogamian male supremacy. In all these points, the Germans harmonised with the

Spartans, among whom, as we saw, pairing marriage had also not yet been completely overcome. Thus, here again an entirely new element acquired world supremacy with the Germans. The new monogamy, which now developed on the ruins of the Roman world from the mingling of peoples, clothed the supremacy of men in milder forms and permitted women at least a position of far greater outward dignity and freedom than classical antiquity had ever known. Thus, for the first time, the possibility arose within the monogamian marriage—alongside it, and even against it, depending on circumstances—of the greatest moral advance we owe to it: modern individual sex love, previously unknown to the whole world.

This advance, however, undoubtedly sprang from the fact that the Germans still lived in pairing marriage and grafted the position of woman corresponding to it onto monogamy as far as possible; it was by no means due to the legendary, wonderfully pure natural qualities of the Germans, which reduced themselves to the fact that pairing marriage actually does not give rise to the glaring moral antagonisms of monogamy. On the contrary, the Germans in their migrations, particularly south-eastwards to the nomads of the steppes on the Black Sea, had morally much degenerated, and had acquired serious unnatural vices from them besides their equestrian skill, as expressly attested by Ammianus of the Taifali and Procopius of the Heruli.

But if monogamy was the only one of all known forms of the family in which modern sex love could develop, that does not mean that it developed exclusively, or even chiefly, within it as mutual love of husband and wife. The whole nature of strict monogamian marriage under male domination ruled this out. Among all historically active classes, that is, among all ruling classes, marriage remained what it had been since the pairing marriage—a matter of convenience arranged by the parents. And the first form of sex love that historically emerges as a passion, and as a passion every human being (at least of the ruling classes) is capable of, as the highest form of the sexual impulse—and that is what constitutes its specific character—this first form, the chivalrous love of the Middle Ages, was by no means conjugal love. On the contrary. In its classic form, among the Provençals, it heads straight for adultery, and their poets celebrate it. The flower of Provençal love poetry are the *Albás*, German *Tagelieder*. They describe in glowing colours how the knight lies in bed beside his love—the wife of

another—while outside stands the watchman who calls to him as soon as the first grey of dawn (*alba*) appears, so that he can get away unobserved; the parting scene then forms the climax. The northern French and also the worthy Germans adopted this kind of poetry together with the corresponding fashion of chivalrous love; and our own old Wolfram von Eschenbach has left us three wonderfully beautiful *Tagelieder* on this same spicy subject, which I prefer to his three long heroic epics. The bourgeois marriage of our own day is of two kinds. In Catholic countries the parents, as before, procure a suitable wife for the young bourgeois son, and the consequence is naturally the fullest unfolding of the contradiction inherent in monogamy: flourishing hetaerism on the part of the husband, flourishing adultery on the part of the wife. The Catholic Church probably only abolished divorce because it had convinced itself that there is as little help for adultery as for death. In Protestant countries, on the other hand, it is the rule that the bourgeois son is allowed to choose a wife from his own class with greater or lesser freedom; hence some degree of love may be at the basis of the marriage and, for propriety's sake, is always assumed, which corresponds to Protestant hypocrisy. Here the husband's hetaerism is a more sleepy kind of business, and adultery by the wife is less the rule. But as, in every kind of marriage, people remain what they were before, and as the bourgeois of Protestant countries are mostly philistines, this Protestant monogamy leads merely, if we take the average of the best cases, to a wedded life of leaden boredom, known as "domestic bliss." The best mirror of these two ways of marriage is the novel, the French novel for the Catholic manner, the German for the Protestant. In both, the hero "gets it": in the German, the young man gets the girl; in the French, the husband gets the horns. Which of the two is worse off is not always easy to say. That is why the French bourgeois is as much horrified by the dullness of the German novel as the German philistine is by the "immorality" of the French. Lately, since "Berlin is becoming a metropolis," the German novel has begun to deal a little less timidly with hetaerism and adultery, long well known to exist there.

In both cases, however, the marriage is conditioned by the class position of the parties and is to that extent always a marriage of convenience. In both cases this marriage of convenience often enough turns into the crassest prostitution—sometimes of both partners, but far more commonly of the woman, who only differs from the ordinary

courtesan in that she does not let out her body on piece-work as a wage-worker, but sells it once and for all into slavery. And Fourier's words hold good for all marriages of convenience: "Just as in grammar two negatives make an affirmative, so in matrimonial morality two prostitutions pass for a virtue." Sex love in the relation of husband and wife is and can become the rule only among the oppressed classes, that is, at the present day, among the proletariat—whether this relation is officially sanctioned or not. Here all the foundations of typical monogamy are removed. Here there is no property, for the preservation and inheritance of which monogamy and male supremacy were established; hence there is no incentive to make this male supremacy effective. What is more, there are no means of making it so. Bourgeois law, which protects this supremacy, exists only for the possessing class and their dealings with the proletarians. The law costs money and, on account of the worker's poverty, it has no validity for his relation to his wife. Personal and social relations of quite a different sort are the decisive factors here. Moreover, since large-scale industry has transferred the woman from the house to the labour market and the factory, and makes her, often enough, the bread-winner of the family, the last remnants of male supremacy in the proletarian home have lost all foundation—except, perhaps, for some of that brutality towards women which became firmly rooted with the establishment of monogamy. Thus the proletarian family[40] is no longer monogamian in the strict sense, even where there is passionate love and firmest loyalty on both sides, and maybe all the blessings of religious and civil authority. Here, therefore, the eternal companions of monogamy, hetaerism and adultery, play only an almost vanishing part. The wife has in fact regained the right of divorce; if two people cannot get on with one another, they prefer to separate. In short, proletarian marriage is monogamian in the etymological sense of the word, but not at all in its historical sense.

Our jurists, however, find that the progress of legislation increasingly removes any ground for complaint from women. Modern, civilised legal systems recognise more and more, firstly, that for a marriage to be valid, it must be a contract voluntarily entered into by both parties, and secondly, that during the marriage too, both parties should stand

[40] Lacking property, the working-class family lacks monogamy's core function (hereditary transmission). Women's factory work undermines male dominance. Relationships are more egalitarian and dissoluble, foreshadowing marriage based on love, not economics.

towards each other with equal rights and duties. Were these two demands consistently implemented, then women would have everything they could demand.

This genuinely juristic line of argument is precisely the same as that with which the radical republican bourgeois dismisses and pacifies the proletarian. The labour contract is supposed to be one voluntarily entered into by both parties. But it is considered voluntarily entered into as soon as the law places both parties on an equal footing on paper. The power which the differing class position gives to one party, the pressure it exerts on the other party – the actual economic position of both – that is no concern of the law. And for the duration of the labour contract, both parties are again to be equally entitled, unless one or the other has expressly waived a right. That the economic situation compels the worker to forgo even the last semblance of equal rights – the law, again, cannot be held responsible for that.

In relation to marriage, the law, even the most advanced, is fully satisfied as soon as the parties concerned have formally declared their voluntary consent. What goes on behind the juridical scenes, where real life unfolds, how this voluntariness comes about – about that, the law and the jurist cannot concern themselves. And yet, the simplest legal comparison ought to show the jurist what this voluntariness really amounts to. In countries where children are legally guaranteed a compulsory share of parental property, where they therefore cannot be disinherited – in Germany, in countries under French law, etc. – children are bound by parental consent for marriage. In countries under English law, where parental consent is not a legal requirement for marriage, parents also have full testamentary freedom over their property and can disinherit their children at will. That despite this, and indeed because of it, the freedom of marriage in the classes where there is anything to inherit – in England and America – is in practice not one whit greater than in France and Germany, is surely clear.

The legal equality of man and woman within marriage is no better. The legal inequality of the two, inherited by us from earlier social conditions, is not the cause but the effect of the economic oppression of women. In the old communistic household, which embraced many married couples and their children, the management of the household entrusted to the women was just as much a public, a socially necessary industry as the procuring of food by the men. With the patriarchal family, and still more

with the monogamous single family, this changed. Household management lost its public character. It no longer concerned society. It became a private service; the woman became the first domestic servant, pushed out of participation in social production. Only modern large-scale industry has reopened the path to social production for her – and only for the proletarian woman, at that. But in such a way that if she carries out her duties in the private service of the family, she remains excluded from public production and cannot earn anything; and if she wants to take part in public industry and earn independently, she is unable to fulfil her family duties. And as it is in the factory, so it is for women in all branches of business, right up to medicine and the bar. The modern individual family is founded on the open or concealed domestic slavery of the woman, and modern society is a mass composed of individual families as its molecules. In the vast majority of cases today, the man must be the earner, the breadwinner of the family – at least within the propertied classes – and that gives him a dominating position requiring no special legal privileges. He is the bourgeois in the family; the wife represents the proletariat. In the industrial world, however, the specific character of the economic oppression weighing on the proletariat only emerges in its full sharpness after all the special legal privileges of the capitalist class have been abolished and full legal equality of both classes established; the democratic republic does not abolish the opposition between the two classes; on the contrary, it provides the very ground upon which the struggle is fought out. And in the same way, the peculiar character of the supremacy of the man over the woman in the modern family, and the necessity as well as the manner of establishing real social equality of the two, will only be seen in the clear light of day when both possess full legal equality. It will then become evident that the first precondition for the liberation of the wife is the reintroduction of the entire female sex into public industry, and that this in turn demands that the characteristic of the individual family as the economic unit of society be abolished.

The Differential Mode of Association[41]

[41] 差序格局 (Chaxu Geju), translated as "*Differential Mode of Association*". This is the established translation for Fei Xiaotong's key concept. *Chaxu* implies differentiation and hierarchical ordering; *geju* means pattern or structure. "Differential" captures the graded nature, "mode of association" describes the relational pattern. (Alternative renderings like "hierarchical relational pattern" or "differential order" are also used, but Fei's concept is widely known in English by this translation).

From the perspective of rural workers, the greatest flaw of the Chinese peasant is "selfishness" (si)[42]. When we speak of selfishness, we think of the proverb: "Each sweeps the snow from his own doorstep and heeds not the frost on his neighbour's roof." No one would dare deny that this proverb represents, to some extent, a creed of the Chinese people. In fact, this attitude is not held only by country folk; so-called city dwellers are just the same.

Those who sweep the snow from their own doorstep are still considered remarkably public-spirited. Ordinary households simply dump their rubbish onto the street outside their door and consider the matter settled. The back doors of Suzhou homes often open onto a canal, which sounds utterly charming—in the writings of literati, it is China's Venice. Yet I doubt there is any waterway in the world dirtier than those within the city of Suzhou. Anything and everything can be dumped into these originally rather poorly flowing little ditches; many households don't even need to have a toilet. They are fully aware that people wash clothes and vegetables in these canals yet feel not the slightest need for self-restraint. Why?—Because these little canals are "public property" (gongjia de)[43].

As soon as something is said to be "public property," it almost invariably means that everyone can take a little advantage of it; it implies rights without responsibilities. Take a courtyard shared by two or three families: the public corridor is routinely piled with dust, the whole yard overgrown with weeds, yet no one thinks to clear them. Naturally, the toilet is even more difficult to access. No family is willing to meddle in "other people's business." Whoever finds the situation intolerable must serve others without reward, receiving not half a word of thanks. Thus, like Gresham's Law[44], where bad money drives out good, public spirit is driven out here by selfishness.

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[42] 私 (Si), translated as "selfishness". While *si* literally means "private," in this context, it carries the strong negative connotation of prioritizing narrow personal/family interests over collective/public good, hence "selfishness" is appropriate. It is also sometimes glossed as "self-centredness."

[43] 公家的 (Gongjia de), translated as "*public property*". *Gong* means public/collective; *gongjia* specifically denotes something owned by or pertaining to the community/state/collective entity, hence "public property" captures the sense of collective ownership leading to neglect.

[44] 格兰亨姆的公律 (Gelanhengmu de Gonglü), translated as "*Gresham's Law*". This is the standard translation for the economic principle that "bad money drives out good." Fei uses it analogously to describe how selfishness drives out public spirit.

Judging by these matters, the flaw of selfishness is indeed far more pervasive in China than stupidity or illness. From top to bottom, it seems no one is immune to this affliction. It has now become the universal pretext for foreign criticism of us. So-called corruption and incompetence are not absolute questions of individual capability but relative ones, defined in terms of an individual's service and responsibility towards the public sphere. The Chinese are certainly not incapable of enterprise; one only needs to look at the commercial successes of the Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia—which Westerner does not look on with admiration? Nor are the Chinese incompetent; when it comes to their own family affairs, their ability to gather money and flatter rivals is greater than that of people from any other nation. Therefore, this so-called problem of "selfishness" (si) is actually a question of how to draw the boundary between the group and the individual, between self and others. Our traditional way of drawing this boundary is clearly different from that of the West. Consequently, if we wish to discuss the problem of selfishness, we must bring out the entire structural pattern of society for consideration.

Western society is somewhat like us bundling firewood in the fields: several stalks of straw are bound into a sheaf, several sheaves into a bundle, several bundles into a larger bundle, and several large bundles into a carrying load. Each stalk of straw belongs to a definite larger bundle, bundle, and sheaf within the load. Each stalk can also identify others belonging to the same sheaf, the same bundle, the same larger bundle; the divisions are clear and never confused. In society, these units are groups. When I say Western social organisation is like bundling firewood, I mean to indicate that they often form distinct groups composed of a number of people. Groups have definite boundaries: who belongs to the group and who does not must not be ambiguous; it must be clearly defined. Those within the group form a unit, and their relationship to the group is identical. If there are divisions or gradations within the same group, these are stipulated beforehand. My comparison to bundling firewood has one point of divergence: a person can belong to several groups, whereas it is impossible for a single stalk of straw to be in several sheaves simultaneously—this is the difference between people and straw. I use

this analogy to make concrete one pattern of relationships between people in social life. We might as well call it the "organisational mode" (tuanti geju)[45].

In the West, the family is a clearly bounded group. If a friend writes to say he is going to "bring his family" to visit you, he knows precisely who will be accompanying him. In China, such a statement is extremely vague. In Britain and America, "family" includes him, his wife, and their minor children. If only he and his wife came, he would not use "family." In China, although the phrase "the honourable household graces us with its presence" (hedi guanglin)[46] is common, very few can say definitively who this "household" (di) should include.

Mentioning our usage of words, the character "家" (jia - family/home) is perhaps the most elastic. "家里的" (jiali de - 'the one at home') can refer to one's wife alone. "家门" (jiamen - 'family gate') can refer to a whole crowd of uncles, cousins, and nephews. "自家人" (zijia ren - 'our own people') can encompass anyone one wishes to pull into one's own circle to express closeness. The scope of "our own people" is elastic, varying with time and place, expanding to include countless individuals—truly, anyone can become "family."

Why is the term for our most basic social unit so indistinct? To my mind, it indicates that our social structure itself differs from the Western pattern. Our pattern is not like firewood bundled into neat sheaves; it is more like the concentric ripples formed when a stone is thrown into water. Each person is the centre of the circle of social influence emanating from him. Those reached by the ripples of the circle enter into a relationship. The circle employed by each person at any given time or place is not necessarily the same.

The most important kinship relationships in our society possess this concentric ripple quality created by throwing a stone. Kinship relationships are social bonds formed by facts of birth and marriage. The network formed by birth and marriage can extend

[45] 团体格局 (Tuanti Geju), translated as "*Organisational Mode*". *Tuanti* means group/organisation. Fei contrasts this Western pattern (like distinct bundles of firewood) with the Chinese "differential mode." "Organisational Mode" emphasises the clearly bounded, defined group structure.

[46] 阖第光临 (Hedi Guanglin), translated as "*the honourable household graces us with its presence*". This is a formal, respectful phrase for a family visit. The translation attempts to convey the formality and the vagueness of *di* (household/establishment/rank). An explanatory note is implied about its ambiguity.

outward indefinitely to include countless people—past, present, and future. Our proverb "一表三千里" (yibiao sanqianli - 'a cousin three thousand li away')[47] expresses this idea, though "three thousand li" merely signifies vast distance. This network resembles a spider's web, with a centre—oneself.

Each of us has such a web radiating out via kinship ties, but no two webs encompass the same individuals. People within a society may use the same system to identify their kin; what they share is merely the system. The system is an abstract pattern, a categorical concept. When we use this system to identify specific relatives, what each person identifies is different. We all have parents within the kinship system, yet my parents are not your parents. To go further, no two people in the world identify exactly the same set of relatives. Two brothers certainly share the same parents, but each has his own wife and children. Consequently, the network of social relationships formed through kinship ties is individual. Each network has an "ego" (ji - self) as its centre, and the centre of each network is different.

In our rural society, not only kinship relationships are like this, but geographical relationships (diyuan guanxi) are too. The modern baojia system is organisational in pattern, but this clashes with the traditional structure. In the traditional structure, each household, taking its own position as the centre, draws a circle around itself; this circle is the "neighbourhood" (jiefang). When there's a happy event, wine is served; when a child is born, red eggs[48] are distributed; when there's a funeral, people come out to assist with the encoffining and carry the coffin—it is an institution for mutual aid in daily life. But this is not a fixed group; it is a sphere. The size of this sphere also depends on the power and influence of the centre. The neighbourhood of an influential family can encompass the entire village; that of a poor family may consist only of the two or three households next door. This is similar to our kinship circles. In the Jia family's Grand View Garden (Daguan Yuan), one could find living there a maternal cousin like Lin Daiyu, a paternal

[47] 一表三千里 (Yibiao Sanqian Li), translated as "*a cousin three thousand li away*" with the explanation *"though 'three thousand li' merely signifies vast distance"*. This proverb highlights the potential vastness and elasticity of kinship networks in the Chinese conception. *Biao* refers to cousins related through maternal lines or marriages of female relatives.

[48] 红蛋 (Hongdan), translated as "*red eggs*". These are eggs dyed red, traditionally distributed to announce and celebrate the birth of a child, symbolizing happiness and good fortune.

aunt's cousin like Xue Baochai, and later many more, such as Baoqin and Xiuyun—anyone who could claim kinship was included. But once influence waned, "when the tree falls, the monkeys scatter" (shu dao housun san)[49], shrinking into a small cluster. At the extreme, it could be like when Su Qin returned in destitution: "his wife did not regard him as a husband, his sister-in-law did not regard him as a brother-in-law." The differential mode of association (chaxu geju) in China's traditional structure possesses this elastic capacity. In the countryside, the family can be very small, whereas among wealthy landlords and the bureaucratic class, it can be as large as a small state. Chinese people are also particularly sensitive to the fickleness of human relationships (shitat yanliang)[50], precisely because this elastic social circle expands and contracts with the changing influence of its centre. In Western society, where even adult children living at home must pay their parents for board and lodging, everyone recognises the boundaries of the group. Membership within the group has specific qualifications. If the qualifications are revoked, one must leave the group. For them, it is not a matter of warmth or coldness in human feelings, but of rights. In Western society, people contend for rights, whereas in ours, we strive to establish connections (pan guanxi) and emphasize personal relationships (jiang jiaoqing).[51]

With the "ego" (ji) as the centre, like a stone thrown into water, the social relationships formed with others are not like molecules within an organisation all standing on the same plane. Rather, they are like the ripples on water, spreading out circle by circle, moving further and further out, and also thinning as they spread. Here we encounter the fundamental characteristic of Chinese social structure. Our Confucians pay the greatest attention to human relationships (lun). What is lun? My interpretation is that it refers to the differentiated sequence (chaxu) of concentric ripples formed among those people connected to oneself through social relationships.

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[49] 树倒猢狲散 (Shu Dao Husun San): translated as "*when the tree falls, the monkeys scatter*". This proverb vividly describes the disintegration of a faction or patronage network when its leader (the "tree") loses power or influence.

[50] 世态炎凉 (Shitai Yanliang), Translated as "*the fickleness of human relationships*". This phrase describes how people's attitudes (warmth or coldness) change based on one's status, wealth, or power.

[51] 攀关系、讲交情 (Pan Guanxi, Jiang Jiaoqing), Translated as "*strive to establish connections and emphasize personal relationships*". *Guanxi* refers to connections/relationships/networks; *pan* implies climbing/relying on. *Jiaoqing* refers to friendship/sentiment/obligation built through personal interaction; *jiang* means emphasizing/cultivating.

The Shiming dictionary explains the character "伦" (lun)[52] as: "Lun is like water patterns following in order, possessing ethical order (you lunli ye)[53]." Mr. Pan Guangdan once said that all meanings using "仑" (lun) as a common denominator are interconnected, "collectively signifying notions of principle, category, and order" (See Pan Guangdan, "On the Character Lun," Social Research, Issue 19). Lun emphasises differentiation. The "Ten Relationships" (shi lun) discussed in the Book of Rites (Liji), chapter "Jitong" (Meaning of Sacrifices)—spirits and gods, ruler and minister, father and son, noble and base, close and distant, rank and reward, husband and wife, government affairs, elder and younger, superior and inferior—all refer to gradations. "Not losing their lun" (bu shi qi lun) means distinguishing father and son, near and far, close and distant. Lun is a graded order. To us reading it now, how can concrete social relationships like spirits/gods, ruler/minister, father/son, husband/wife be placed alongside abstract relative positions like noble/base, close/distant, near/far, superior/inferior? Yet in our traditional social structure, this is the most fundamental concept. The principle (gangji) within this network of human interactions is precisely this differentiated order (chaxu), that is, lun. The Book of Rites, chapter "Dazhuan" (The Great Treatise), states: "Affection between kindred, respect for the honourable, deference to elders, and the distinction between male and female—these are things that cannot be changed among the people." This means the framework of this social structure is immutable; what changes are only the actions undertaken using this framework.

Confucius placed the utmost importance on the outward-expanding "pushing" (tui) of the water ripples. He first acknowledged an "ego" (ji), the self that extends from oneself to others. This self must be restrained by ritual (li); self-restraint (keji)[54] is self-cultivation (xiushen). Following this concentric pattern of ethical relationships (lunchang),

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[52] 伦 (Lun), Translated as "*ethical order*" or "*human relationships*" depending on context. Fei defines it as the graded, differentiated order of social relationships radiating from the self. When discussing the concept abstractly or its principles (e.g., "the principle... is... *lun*"), "ethical order" is used. When referring to the specific relationships themselves (e.g., the Five Relationships), "human relationships" is used. The annotation explains its core meaning as a differentiated sequence.

[53] The same as above.

[54] 克己 (Keji), Translated as "*self-restraint*". Literally "overcome/subdue the self." It signifies the Confucian practice of disciplining one's desires and actions according to ritual propriety (*li*), a key part of self-cultivation (*xiushen*).

one can then push outward. "When the root is established, the Way will grow" (Ben li er dao sheng).

"A man who is filial towards his parents and respectful towards his elders, yet is fond of offending his superiors, is rare indeed. And one who is not fond of offending his superiors, yet is fond of stirring up rebellion, has never existed." From the self to the family, from the family to the state, from the state to the world—this is a single path. The Doctrine of the Mean (Zhongyong) regards the Five Relationships (wu lun) as the universal Way (tian xia zhi da dao) of the world. Because in this social structure, the progression from self to world is pushed outward circle by circle, Mencius said of himself, "I am simply good at extending" (shan tui er yi yi).

Within this elastic network, wherever and whenever, there is an "ego" (ji) serving as the centre. This is not individualism (geren zhuyi), but egoism (ziwo zhuyi). The individual (geren) is defined in relation to the group (tuanti), as a part to the whole. Under individualism, on the one hand, there is the concept of equality, meaning that within the same group, all members have equal status, and the individual cannot infringe upon the rights of the collective. On the other hand, there is the concept of constitutionalism (xianfa guannian), meaning the group cannot obliterate the individual and can only control individuals concerning those specific rights they are willing to cede. These concepts presuppose the existence of the group. In our traditional Chinese thought, there is no such framework, because what we have is egoism (ziwo zhuyi)[55], a doctrine where all value is centred on the "self" (ji).

Egoism is not limited to Yang Zhu, who "would not pluck out a single hair to benefit the world." Even Confucianism should be included within it. Where Yang Zhu differed from Confucius was that Yang Zhu ignored the relativity and elasticity of egoism. He was too rigidly fixated on his single, isolated self. Confucius could extend from self to others[56], yet no matter how far he extended, the centre remained himself.

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[55] 自我主义 (Ziwo Zhuyi)， Translated as "*Egoism*". Fei carefully distinguishes this from Western "Individualism" (*Geren Zhuyi*). Egoism centres *all* value and action on the self (*ji*) and its relational extensions, without the Western concepts of individual rights vis-à-vis the group or constitutional limits on the group. "Egoism" captures this self-centredness. *Ziwo* literally means "self."

[56] 推己及人 (Tui Ji Ji Ren), Translated as "*extend from self to others*". This is the core Confucian method of empathy and moral action: starting from one's own feelings/desires and extending understanding to others ("Do not do unto others..." / "Wishing to establish oneself, one establishes others").

Confucius said: "He who governs by virtue is like the polestar, which remains in its place while all the other stars revolve around it." This is an excellent metaphor for the differential mode of association: oneself is always the centre, like the immovable North Star through the four seasons, with all others revolving around it. Confucius was not like Jesus. Jesus had a group transcending the individual; he had his kingdom of heaven, so he could sacrifice himself to perfect the kingdom of heaven. And Confucius? Not so.

Zigong said: "If a man could give extensively to the common people and bring relief to the multitude, what would you say of him? Could he be called benevolent (ren)?" The Master replied: "Why stop at benevolence? He would undoubtedly be a sage! Even Yao and Shun would have found this difficult! As for the benevolent man: wishing himself to be established, he establishes others; wishing himself to succeed, he helps others to succeed. Being able to draw analogies from what is near at hand can be called the method of benevolence." (Analects 6.30)

Within Confucius's moral system, he absolutely refused to depart from the centre of the differential mode. "The gentleman seeks it in himself; the petty person seeks it in others." (Analects 15.21) Consequently, he could not, like Jesus, love all under heaven universally, even love his enemies, and pray for God's forgiveness for those who killed him—these actions do not stem from an ego-centred perspective. And Confucius? Someone asked: "What do you think of returning good for evil?" Confucius replied: "Then what would you return for good? Return uprightness (zhi) for evil, and return good for good." (Analects 14.34) This is the hierarchical order (chaxu cengci), which Confucius would never relax. Confucius was not like Yang Zhu, who used the small self (xiaoji) to respond to all situations; he expanded or contracted the scope of morality according to need. He was not like Jesus or China's Mozi, who let it out unrestrainedly without being able to rein it in.

Once we understand this social sphere that can expand and contract, extend and retract, we can understand the problem of selfishness (si) in traditional Chinese society. I have often felt: "In traditional Chinese society, a person can sacrifice the family for his own sake. For the family, he can sacrifice the party (dang). For the party, he can sacrifice the state. For the state, he can sacrifice 'all under heaven' (tianxia)." This resonates logically with the Great Learning (Daxue): "The ancients who wished to illustrate

illustrious virtue throughout the world, first ordered well their own states. Wishing to order well their states, they first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their persons... The person being cultivated, the family became regulated. The family being regulated, the state became rightly governed. The state being rightly governed, the world became tranquil."

The difference lies only in the direction of the path—inward or outward—and the positive or negative formulation. This is a wave-like form of differential extension (chaxu de tui lang xingshi), rendering the boundary between group and individual relative, or one might say, ambiguous. This differs profoundly from Western societies, where rights and duties are clearly demarcated.

To sacrifice the family for oneself, to sacrifice the clan for the family... this is a factual formula. If you call this selfish within this formula, he cannot admit it, because when he sacrifices the clan, he does it for the family—and the family, to him, is public (gong). When he sacrifices the state to seek benefits or contend for rights for his small group, he is also acting for the public—for the public of his small group. Within the differential mode of association, "public" (gong) and "private" (si) are relative terms. Standing within any circle, looking inward, it can also be called public. In fact, when Western diplomats at international conferences strive for their own nation's benefit, willing to sacrifice world peace and the legitimate interests of other countries, they are doing the same thing. What differs is that they view the nation as a group transcending all smaller organisations; for this group, both superiors and subordinates can be sacrificed, but it cannot be sacrificed to perfect another kind of group. This is the modern concept of the nation-state, which did not exist in rural society.

In Western society, the nation-state is a distinct and uniquely prominent boundary between group and individual. Within the nation-state, the people cannot escape beyond the group; like a stalk bundled in a sheaf, they must make the state an institution that works for the benefit of every member. Hence they have revolutions, constitutions, laws, parliaments, and so on.

In our tradition, the ultimate limit of the group (qun) is the vague and indistinct "all under heaven" (tianxia)[57]. The state (guo) is the emperor's household; its boundaries have always been unclear, being merely one circle pushed outward from the self-centred core into the sphere of social influence. Therefore, the only concrete, graspable starting point is the self (ji). Self-restraint (keji) thus became the most important virtue in social life. They would not restrain the group (ke qun) to prevent it from encroaching on individual rights. Within this differential mode of association, this problem does not arise. In the differential mode of association, social relationships are gradually extended outward from one individual to another; it is the increase of personal connections. The social sphere consists of a network woven from strands of personal ties. Consequently, all social morality in our traditional society only acquires meaning within the context of personal connections. This point I shall reserve for discussion in the next instalment.

[57] 天下 (Tianxia), Translated as "*all under heaven*". This traditional Chinese concept signifies the entire civilized world or realm, often seen as the ultimate, vaguely defined sphere of concern, contrasting sharply with the modern Western nation-state (*guo*).