

FAMILY STRUCTURE AND THE HEGELIAN INTERPRETATION

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to analyse family in its trans-cultural pattern using Hegelian interpretation. Using the method of exposition and analysis, this paper shows how the human family is not mere human convention but a determined natural design through which natural safeguards for offsprings are guaranteed and human societies are founded. This paper studies Hegel's interpretation to family and family love as it expresses the structure of Geist (Spirit). Thus the family is the externalisation of the inner structure of man. The family's status is well known as a moral imperative, where man learns language which distinguishes him from the rest of animals and constitutes the essence of man as a species. In other words, it is in the family setting that man is humanised. According to Hegel, the symbolic transcendence of death is obvious through rituals of burial when the family takes upon itself the final duties of consigning the dead individual to the sphere of abstract negativity, thus preventing him from falling prey to the unconscious forces of mere nature. Unfortunately, Plato tried to abolish the family in favour of his political revolution. On appraisal, this study shows that Plato failed to realise that such structures as the family which has existed trans-culturally cannot be conventional but deep rooted in human nature and thus cannot easily be obliterated. Hegel maintains that just as the individual is shown to be immanently contradictory in terms of being, as both self-sufficient and dependent upon others, so too is the family. Not only is the family both a self-sufficient unity and a dependent part of a greater whole, but also, the aim of its unity which is the cultivation of self-sufficient individuals, is achieved only by its dissolution into larger body of family, the civil society.

Keywords: Hegel, family structure, man, Plato, society,

Introduction:

Seen by majority of mankind as one deep-seated natural¹ institution in the world, family is also considered by some as a mere conventional² establishment. This division of opinions signals the polemic which has greeted it across human history and development. From the ancient times when Plato tried to abolish it in favour of his political revolution aimed at inserting women into public life, to modern and contemporary eras where liberal philosophers and radical feminists ferociously attacked it, considering it as the most unjust creation of menfolk to subjugate women, the issues it raises go on.

To make possible the male and female leadership in the state, Plato had suggested eliminating the traditional private marriage and abolishing therefore the nuclear family. He felt that the abolition of private family removes all particular attentions to body, a thing which hinders participation in the city politics, but he failed to realise that such structures as the family which has existed trans-culturally cannot be conventional but deep rooted in human nature and thus cannot easily be obliterated. It is even where the founding of states first takes its root. For Hegel, family love expresses the structure of Geist (Spirit) – that of only first finding oneself in the other and the state is simply a more universal expression of this relation. The family is the externalisation of the inner structure of man. Hegel maintains that just as the individual is shown to be immanently contradictory in terms of being, as both self-sufficient and dependent upon others, so too is the family. Not only is the family both a self-sufficient unity and a dependent part of a greater whole, but also, the aim of its unity which is the cultivation of self-sufficient individuals, is achieved only by its dissolution into larger body of family, the civil society. To demonstrate the truth of this seemingly paradoxical development, Hegel sketches in great detail the trajectory of the development from the entrance into marriage through the acquisition of common familial property to the upbringing of children, culminating in the dissolution of the family and the formation of others. This is for him an ideal structure of the family, the form through which humanity goes through birth into independent adult citizens.

It is the aim of this work then to analyse family in its trans-cultural pattern using Hegelian interpretation and thus show with him, how the human family could not be an outcome of human convention but a determined natural design through which natural safeguards for offspring are guaranteed and human societies are founded.

¹ G.W.F. Hegel, (2001). *Philosophy of Right*, trans. S.W. Dyde, Ontario: Batoche Books Ltd., § 163.

² I. Kant, *The Science of Right*, trans. W. Hastie, Digireads: 2006; J. Locke, *Concerning Civil Government, Second Essay*, Chicago: Robert P. Gwinn, 1991.

Definition

Today, while the term 'family' is faced with various sorts of attacks, many social scientists prefer to reject the possibility of a definition expansive enough to capture features common to radically diverse social forms existing today which might be called "family". On the other hand, some thinkers resist this conclusion and attempt some functional definition that can both capture the common essence of myriad social forms sharing a similar resemblance to "family", avoiding therewith the dangers of "persuasive" definitions masquerading as neutral, descriptive definitions. One of these social constructionists is David Archard who in the light of the essential functional role of the family defined it minimally as "a multigenerational group, normally stably co-habiting, whose adults take primary custodial responsibility for the dependent children".³

He hoped by the above definition, to have opened up to us the possibility of assessing a wide range of forms of families, cutting through many contemporary disputes centred on form (e.g. families headed by opposite versus same sex parents). Since 'care' is widely considered as an essential activity of the family going by the surveys of philosophical and social scientific literature, he hoped then that this definition would have a wide and well-reasoned appeal among liberal philosophers and citizens. He argued that parents do not have rights to family; that family is justified not by rights, but -- to the extent that it is -- by the interests of children and the society of which they, ideally become good members.⁴ It is a definition which appears to satisfy or appeal to varieties of contemporary human compositions (esp. same-sex parents) which parade as 'family', given that they satisfy the obligation of 'care' or provisions of adequate life chances to the offspring assumed universally as the essential motive for the family. But, what is lacking in this thought process is the fact that the caring obligation which is a tradition as old as Locke can be incurred only if parents bring into existence other human beings which nature has made possible through the union of man and woman. This is said without prejudice to the fact that modern man can now produce children through the experimental laboratories no matter how abominable! It is for this other side of the coin then that Hegel's hermeneutics appear still relevant; that the family is completed through three phases: marriage, private property and education of children.⁵ But before delving into Hegel's analysis, let us see how he discharged the claim that the family is a contract.

Family as Natural, not a Contract:

Right at the beginning of his analysis on the Family, Hegel tells us that the family begins first with marriage which is an ethical tie⁶ and consequently has the activity of spiritualising the natural relations among its members. Because it is ethical, its principle is intrinsically universal⁷. Hence, Hegel charades every posture and claim that family is a contract. He mentions Kant in particular to have given-in to that position of those who paid attention to marriage only on the physical side and therefore treat it only as a sex relationship, a reciprocal use of one's sexual attributes. This is a misconception because on this level of understanding, he said, "the parties are bound by a contract of mutual caprice, and marriage is thus degraded to the level of a contract for reciprocal use"⁸. He describes Kant's theory as a 'crude' and 'disgraceful' notion, linking marriage and the state as institutions that could be "subsumed under the concept of contract".⁹ This is not possible, says Hegel. In his article, "Hegel's radical idealism: family and state as ethical communities" Merold Westphal brought out this very idea clearly, that one defining feature of Hegel's notions of both 'family' and 'state' is that, unlike civil society, neither could be grounded on contractual relationships.¹⁰ There are three reasons for this: contractual relationships are firstly, abstract; secondly, contingent; and thirdly, self-centred.

Hegel argues that being abstract, the contractual relations in civil society only concern, 'the abstract personality as such' and not the substantial ties that link people together in families and political life. Substantial ties treat

³ D. Archard, (2010). *The Family: A Liberal Defence*, Hampshire-U.K: Palgrave Macmillan, 10.

⁴ D. Archard, *The Family: A Liberal Defence*, 10..

⁵ G.W.F. Hegel, (2001). *Philosophy of Right*, trans. T.M. Knox, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967, § 158. I used mainly however the edition from Hegel-by-HyperText Home Page @ marxists.org

⁶ G.W.F. (2001). Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §161

⁷ H. M. Ravven, "Has Hegel Anything to Say to Feminists?" in *Owl of Minerva*, vol.19, no.2 (Spring, 1988), pp. 149-68, p. 154. She cites here Phenomenology, para. 451. Another commentator who argues against reading Hegel as a reductionist for whom the family is merely a natural, biological entity is Susan Easton, "Hegel and Feminism" in *Hegel and Modern Philosophy*, ed. David Lamb; Croom Helm, New York, 1987 pp. 30-55.

⁸ G.W.F. Hegel, *op. cit.* § 161

⁹ *Ibid.* § 75

¹⁰ M. Westphal, "Hegel's Radical Idealism: Family and State as Ethical Communities" in Z.A. Pelczynski (ed.), *The State and Civil Society. Studies in Hegel's Political Philosophy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1984, pp. 77-92.

people in their whole, concrete human existence, whereas in the case, for instance, of commerce, the participants exist for each other only as the owners of property they are exchanging for the other's property, i. e., as a tinny abstraction of their whole existence.¹¹ Again, contractual relations are contingent for they are based on the arbitrariness or caprice of the parties. In contrast, Hegel maintains that neither state nor marriage is an arbitrary relation. There is something essential and absolutely necessary in one being part of a family and a state that affects the whole being of the self-consciousness. Being a family member or a citizen is some sort of 'internal relations' as opposed to 'external relations' such as contracts.¹² Finally, contractual relations are self-centred, motivated only by a wish for personal gain. People enter into them only for the sake of personal advantage, not to share and find themselves with someone else or to create a new reality larger than themselves.¹³ For Hegel, on the other neither family relations nor relations within the state are instrumental, nor intended to serve the private ends of an individual. He sees marriage "to be more precisely characterised as ethico-legal (*rechtlich sittliche*) love, and this eliminates from it the transient, fickle, and purely subjective aspects of love".¹⁴ Although Hegel acknowledged that marriage generally begins with certain point of view of a contract – that is, from the standpoint that the partners are individual, self-sufficient personalities – he claims that marriage does so in order to supersede the contractual view.¹⁵

The family, with its immediate beginning in marriage, has a prior basis in nature; the role of the state is to understand, honour, and protect it, not to alter it radically. The common fallacy that marriage is "just a contract" ignores the fundamental reality that the contract serves to confirm. The contract does not determine marriage. Writing on Family, Jean Marc Berthold re-echoed this substantial unity of family as a social form created by God. On tracing its biblical origin, he tells us that "it bears the character of a permanent substantial form (like the biological species or chemical elements) and as a result, like all created forms, cannot ... be destroyed by man."¹⁶ He compared its naturalness with certain natural organs of the body: "all human beings irrespective of their religious (or irreligious) belief can no more escape this divinely established framework than they can stop breathing, or refuse to use their digestive system, or reject the circulation of their blood".¹⁷

Hegel asserts in § 255 that the state has two 'ethical roots': the first one is the family, and the second one is the 'root' based on civil society. Here, what is crucial is that he considered both family and the 'second family' (civil society) to be spiritual structures in which the individual finds his truth and being. Furthermore, both structures unite the moments of particularity and objective universality within themselves. In the family these moments are contained in "substantial unity". Thus, the reason Hegel theorises marriage as the beginning and ethical root of the state is that the marriage relation and the family already realise the unification of universality and particularity that characterises the concept of the state. This unity is still immediate in the family, but in the state it realises itself in a reflected way.

Family Structure (Form): Hegel's interpretation

Marriage: For Hegel, as already mentioned, the immediate form assumed by the family is marriage. Subjectively, it begins with personal reasons such as a particular feeling or inclination of the two persons who are entering upon the marriage tie or in the anticipation and contrivance of the parents, etc. In the end, however, its objective source, says Hegel, "lies in the free consent of the persons, especially in their consent to make themselves one person, to renounce their natural and individual personality to this unity of one with the other. From this point of view, their union is a self-restriction, but in fact it is their liberation, because in it they attain their substantive self-consciousness".¹⁸

¹¹ Ibid. p. 78; Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* (Werke in 20 Bänden 7). Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1986, § 40.

¹² T. Pulkkinen, *The Postmodern and Political Agency*. Jyväskylä: Sophi, 2000, p. 125.

¹³ Westphal, *op. cit.*, p. 80

¹⁴ Hegel, (2001). *Philosophy of Right*, § 161.

¹⁵ Hegel, (2001). *Philosophy of Right*, . § 163; *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* (Werke in 20 Bänden 7). Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1986, 313; *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, trans. H.B. Nisbet. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1991, p. 203.

¹⁶J.M. Berthold, "The Role of Family in Christianity", The Paper read for the Second World Congress of Families, held in Geneva, Switzerland, between the 14th and 17th November, 1999, p. 3. The fuller exposition of the views developed in the paper is found in the author's work: *L'école et la famille contre l'utopie, L'Age d'homme*, Lausanne, 1997.

¹⁷ J.M. Berthold, "The Role of Family in Christianity".

¹⁸ G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, § 162

The ‘consciousness of my unity with another’ for instance, is based upon my feeling that the other completes me, that if I were isolated on my own “I would feel deficient and incomplete”¹⁹. But at the same time, I feel as though “I find myself in another person”²⁰, meaning that I recognize my own independent existence in the independent existence of the other person, who in turn recognizes his/her independent existence in mine. In other words, “Love is ... the most immense contradiction”²¹, the simultaneous feeling of both incompleteness and completeness, of both unity and individuality. Because the family is determined by love, and love is this feeling of both incompleteness and completeness, “the disposition appropriate to the family is to have self-consciousness of one’s individuality within this unity as essentiality that which has being in and for itself, so that one is present in it not as an independent person but as a member”²². Thus, just as love is an immense contradiction, so is membership: While as a member one recognizes and identifies with the greater whole of which one is a part, one is also self-conscious of one’s own independent existence, one’s own wholeness.

Hegel reminds us that the ethical aspect of marriage consists in the fact that the parties are conscious of their unity as their substantive aim and thus in their love, they trust and commonly share their entire existence as individuals. At any moment of their physical union, “their physical passion sinks to the level of a physical moment, destined to vanish in its very satisfaction. On the other hand, the spiritual bond of union secures its rights as the substance of marriage and thus rises, inherently indissoluble, to a plane above the contingency of passion and the transience of particular caprice.”²³ This is what makes the whole difference between marriage and concubinage: “the latter is chiefly a matter of satisfying natural desire, while this satisfaction is made secondary in the former.”²⁴ Consequently, Hegel says: “marriage is not to be dissolved because of passion, since passion is subordinate to it”²⁵. He advised the legislators, then to make its dissolution as difficult as possible and uphold the right of the ethical order against caprice.

Given all of the above, Hegel believed, that marriage and especially monogamy, is one of the absolute principles on which the ethical life of a community depends. And this is also how marriage has come to be recorded as one of the great moments in the founding of states by gods or heroes.²⁶ When Hegel speaks of marriage as an outcome of voluntary surrender by *both sexes* of their personality which in every possible manner is *unique* in each of the parties, he not only shows that marriage is to exist between heterogeneous sexes alone but also states why it cannot be entered by two people of identical stock since in this circle of relationship, they share no special personality different from each other. They must therefore be drawn from separate families and their personality different in origin (not blood-relations). For marriage is not a tie grounded in the physical organism and its desires but a freely entered ethical transaction.²⁷

In the light of the natural powers of the couple, Hegel thinks that it follows the order of nature that males show leadership in the family: “The family as a legal entity in relation to others must be represented by the husband as its head”²⁸. This is where Hegel has faced barrels of attack. Indeed, modern philosophy has neglected social institutions that fail to fit within the traditional Kantian or Utilitarian frameworks. The family being one of these institutions, they have either ignored it or advocated abolishing it. But the modern contemporary ‘rights-based’, Kantian-type theories of morality, which focus upon the abstract equality of all human individuals, and derive moral positions on the basis of principles of universal equality, fail to recognize that women generally do not approach moral questions from such perspective. Whether the reason is biological or social, Starrett asserts that

¹⁹ G. W. F. Hegel, (1991). *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, trans. H. B. Nisbet, New York: Cambridge University Press, § 158.

²⁰ G. W. F. Hegel, (1991). *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, § 158.

²¹ G. W. F. Hegel, (1991). *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, § 158.

²² G. W. F. Hegel, (1991). *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, § 158.

²³ G. W. F. Hegel, (1991). *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, § 163.

²⁴ G. W. F. Hegel, (1991). *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, § 163.

²⁵ G. W. F. Hegel, (1991). *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, § 163.

²⁶ G. W. F. Hegel, (1991). *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, §164. Kant makes this claim also about monogamy as the marriage principle: “Consequently marriage is only truly realized in monogamy” I. Kant, *The Science of Right*, trans. W. Hastie, (Digireads:2006), nos. 24-27.

²⁷ G. W. F. Hegel, (1991). *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, § 168

²⁸ G. W. F. Hegel, (1991). *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, § 171

woman's way of moral thinking is in terms of "co-active, connective (and spiritual) being-with-others as opposed to individual being-for-self."²⁹

In fact, everyone needs to be concerned with the family structure because it is a representative microcosm of the larger issues of society and the associated hierarchies. The assumption of the male as the dominant figure in the predominance of patriarchal societies presupposes a natural state of affairs. Both Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, however, reject the theoretical construct of a divine plan in which the order in society is understood to be a natural plan of a divine being. They maintain that social order is an artificial construct and that civilization over time has formed an artificial connection between the development of the family order and the larger social order. Interestingly, both held in *Leviathan* and *Second Treatise* respectively, that though everyone is born equal, responsibilities and duties conspire to create the various hierarchies and social classes. The supreme power at the top is analogous to the father, and social strata resonates with the duties and responsibilities applied to spouses, children and relatives. Both Hobbes and Locke equate the state of nature as a dualistic concept that applies to both the family and to society, both philosophers agree on the internal logic of the covenant of the family and society. An unspoken covenant exists within the family structure to work together for common or shared goals. Another thinker, J.M. Berthold maintained the leadership of the father in the family only for reasons of expediency, and insisted that it does not imply the family is to be "governed by the sole monolithic authority of the father and husband but by a kind of bi-cameral system of government. The authority of the wife counterbalances that of her husband".³⁰

Family Property: The second phase of the structure of family, according to Hegel, is the property. This is so because family is a universal and enduring person requiring possession as a way of ensuring its stability and security. As person, the family, he says, "has its real external existence in property; and it is only when this property takes the form of capital that it becomes the embodiment of the substantial personality of the family".³¹ In the histories of the institution of states, or at least of any social and orderly life, the insertion of permanent property goes with the establishment of marriage; and it is the prerogative of the father as the head of the family to go out and work for its living, to attend to its needs, and to control and administer its capital.³² This property is held as common possession; every member of the family has right in the common stock for no member has property of his own. It is for the maintenance of all the members of the family. The right of every member to the family possession may occasionally come into collision with the head of the family's right of administration owing to the fact that the ethical temper of the family is still only at the level of immediacy (see § 158) and so is exposed to partition and contingency.

Indeed, although family capital aims at guaranteeing stability and care arrangements to children, it seems also that it threatens justice. David Archard offers three counts on which the family can be rightly so accused. First, the parents are often unfairly subsidized by polities. Second, as Susan Moller Okin famously argued, within families, power and resources are unequally distributed. And third, families sustain inequality among citizens by conveying unequal material and social benefits to their members. Children of the well-to-do, better educated, and healthier are likely to be better off. This fact motivated, according to Archard, John Rawls' famous query: "Is the family then to be abolished?"³³

Against those who advocate the abolition of family on the ground that it sustains inequalities across society, Archard insists that eliminating this feature would come at too great a cost to freedom. Thus, alongside those who promote families, he claims there is simply the undeniable fact that it is impossibly hard to think of any other social institution that could do as a good a job of protecting children from their natural vulnerability and dependence upon adults, and in preparing them for the assumption of their adult responsibilities.³⁴ To eliminate the shortcomings of the family and properties, he thought of Plato's 'family state' but the overwhelming coercive force and lack of individual choice involved in such an option make it an impossible choice. His submission then

²⁹ S. N. Starrett, "Women, Family and the Divine" in *Feminist Interpretations of G.W.F. Hegel*, edited by Patricia J. Mills (Re-Reading the Canon Series, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996) Ch. 11, p. 257

³⁰ J. M. Berthold, op. cit. p. 6

³¹ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, § 168

³² Ibid. § 171

³³ D. Archard, (2010). *The Family: A Liberal Defence*, 85

³⁴ D. Archard, (2010). *The Family: A Liberal Defence*, 100

runs thus: "the existence of the family is not the best solution without qualification to the problem of bringing up children; rather it is, on the balance of considerations, the most feasible and desirable".³⁵

Education of Children/Family Dissolution: According to Hegel, the last phase that completes the family structure is the education of children, which then leads to the dissolution of family into a bigger one, the state. The family is fully completed by begetting of children and training them for adult life. This is why some authors have defined marriage as "a comprehensive union of two sexually complementary persons who seal (consummate or complete) their relationship by the generative act—by the kind of activity that is by its nature fulfilled by the conception of a child."³⁶ In marriage, both parties are united in substance but this unity is only an inward one because externally they are still sundered in two parties. According to Hegel, only in the children does the unity itself exist externally, objectively, and explicitly as a unity, because the parents love the children as the embodiment of their own substance.³⁷ The union or relation of love between husband and wife receives objectivity first in their child; both have their love objectified for them in their child. In the child, the father loves its mother and she its father.

Now, for Hegel, each one of these children has the right to maintenance and education at the expense of the family's common capital. This right is based upon the fact that any given person has to acquire for himself the position which he ought to attain; but since one is not already in possession of it by instinct, it means that he/she has the right to education that helps to achieve these positions. The children are not things and therefore cannot be treated either by parents or others as property, —they are potentially free and their life embodies potential freedom.

What the education does on the child in relation to the family is that it aims at "instilling ethical principles into him in the form of an immediate feeling for which differences are not yet explicit, so that thus equipped with the foundation of an ethical life, his heart may live its early years in love, trust, and obedience".³⁸ On the other hand, the same education is aimed to liberate the children from the family instinctive, physical, level on which they are originally, to self-subsistence and freedom of personality and so to the level on which they have power to leave the natural unity of the family.³⁹

The state of nature as exists in the family or the society extends equally to the nature of ethics and morality. It is the onus of the heads of the family then and possibly also the wives, to shape the ethical and moral beliefs of the children and other members of the family. Women have also significant roles to play in the family. In his *Phenomenology of Mind*, said Shari Neller Starrett, "Hegel has a radical and potentially empowering notion of women in the realm of the family."⁴⁰ Sharrett applauds Hegel for his view of the family as a 'natural ethical community', recommending it as a valuable antidote for the sterile, male-dominated visions of societal order characteristic of contemporary culture. She interprets Antigone's courageous resolve to bury her brother, and so reclaim him from nature, as suggesting a transgenerational vision of family bonds implicitly opening up onto those, living or dead, with whom we feel real genetic ties.

In this play and Hegelian tragedy, one sees how Antigone was so infuriated that Creon has denied her brother, Polynices, proper burial rights. Creon held that since Polynices was a traitor going against the state that, "He is to have no grave".⁴¹ He contends that by not giving Polynices his death rights and a proper burial he is actually protecting the state and warning others not to act as he did. Antigone who had strong family ties insists that she would rather please the dead than the King because she has, "All eternity to love the dead," (*Antigone*, 128). Not to do so was like defying "the holiest laws of Heaven" (*Antigone*, 128). In her mind there is no other course of action except burying her brother. Defying the laws of Heaven simply goes against her conscience, feelings and instincts. In a society such as that of Ancient Greece, where religion is vital to their lifestyle, this is Antigone's strongest argument. Although Antigone had the duty to obey the King, she said to Creon that she knows "where true duty lies" (*Antigone*, 129) —to obey and trust the Gods than a ruler stepping beyond his powers.

³⁵ D. Archard, (2010). *The Family: A Liberal Defence*, 99

³⁶D. DeMarco, "Doing Justice to the Notion of Marriage" in *Social Justice Review*, Vol. 102, No. 5-6 May-June, 2011. Reprinted with permission by Minnesota Catholic Conference, March, vol. 1, Issue 3.

³⁷ G. W. F. Hegel, (1991). *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, § 173

³⁸ G. W. F. Hegel, (1991). *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, § 175

³⁹ G. W. F. Hegel, (1991). *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, § 175

⁴⁰ S.N. Starrett, *op. cit.* p. 253

⁴¹ Sophocles, *Antigone*, edited by R. Jebb, London, 1962, no. 131

Without the parents (husband and wife) leading the way on the standard of concepts of good and evil, there would be no acceptable standard throughout the family unit. It does not make any sense to leave the child without belief and ethical imperatives, on the pretext of respecting the freedom of the child to decide his religion and moral imperatives. Children must be prepared to encounter the world on basis of some defined visions of life, which can be adjusted through contact with the world or completely dropped by contact with other ideologies or philosophies. This calls to mind the current issue in Europe, especially in Germany where the religious (Jewish) right of circumcision is denied parents because as they say, it is harmful to the baby and the baby should be left until age of reason to decide if he/she likes to submit willingly to the practice. This argument not only goes against the primary end of marriage of raising "dependent and vulnerable children to adult independence"⁴² but is also non-philosophical. In the first place, was the baby ever asked whether he would love to come into the world or not? He is an embodiment or externalisation of the love of the parents who have the duty to prepare the child ready to leave the family unit and face the hostile world.

As the adult children leave the family into a bigger family (the civil society), the family gets dissolved. The family is dissolved after the children had become free, self-sufficient individuals capable of holding property and of entering into marriage. The existing marriage between the parents remains and it is due to this point that there is no transfer of property accompanying this ethical dissolution. In a sense, the dissolution of the family could be likened to the death of the individual; the body of the family persists even though the spirit of the family has departed. It is only with the end of the marriage that the body of the family dissolves: "The natural dissolution of the family through the death of the parents, particularly of the husband, results in Inheritance of the family's resources".⁴³

Hegel's foregoing analysis demonstrates that the completion of the family lies in its dissolution into free, self-sufficient individuals, and the formation of new families.⁴⁴ Such new formations, however, necessarily presuppose civil society. This is not only because marriage cannot take place between members of same family,⁴⁵ but also because of the requirements for the "formal conclusion and actuality of marriage"⁴⁶ requiring the civil society. Insofar as the family and civil society produce and presuppose each other, then, one can see the relationship between the two as similar to that between generations.⁴⁷ Having completed his analysis of the family, the first moment of ethical life, Hegel went further to explain the civil society, which consists of the external relations of the plurality of families and free, self-sufficient individuals.

Conclusion: Continued Importance of Nuclear Family Structure

The expositions and analysis shown in this study professes without equivocation that the nuclear family ought to be defended and protected for better society. Numerous studies comparing the various types of household arrangements indicate conclusively that no other family structure produces such consistently positive outcomes as the natural family — a married couple (mum and dad) and child. Indeed, structure matters in important ways when it comes to living arrangements. This explains why the institution of marriage is so universal and so pervasive across otherwise diverse societies throughout history. Civilised societies have always considered marriage as a foundation of the natural family and stable societies.

The family is the formation centre of all human capabilities. "What we call human capacities" Elshtain rightly maintained, "could not exist outside a familiar mode, for human beings to flourish a particular ideal of the family is necessary. The family's status as a moral imperative derives from its universal, pan-cultural existence in all known past and present societies"⁴⁸. The family is where man learns language, a thing that distinguishes him from the rest of animals and constitutes the essence of man as a species. In other words, it is in the family setting that man is humanised. And although the belief in family threatens justice, it is nevertheless enormously respectable. The world has held on to it and it seems very important that it be maintained.

The structure which Hegel analysed shows how human development and life in general goes through a certain ideal of family. It is a recognition of how our incompleteness is compensated through unity and our completeness

⁴² D. Archard, *op. cit.* p. 68.

⁴³ G:W.F., Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §178.

⁴⁴ G:W.F., Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, § 181

⁴⁵ G:W.F., Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, § 168

⁴⁶ G:W.F., Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, § 164

⁴⁷ G:W.F., Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, § 173.

⁴⁸ Elshtain, J.B., *Public Man, Private Woman*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981, pp. 326-327

perfected through individuality; all achieved within an ideal family set-up. As an immediate ethical whole, the family is a unity of purpose, and each family member has as his end the spiritual purpose of the whole family. Part of that purpose Hegel identifies as the symbolic transcendence of death: through rituals of burial the family takes upon itself the final duties of consigning the dead individual to the sphere of abstract negativity, thus preventing him from falling prey to the unconscious forces of mere nature. This universality which the individual as such attains is pure being, death; it is a state which has been reached immediately, in the course of nature, not the result of an action consciously done. The duty of a member of a Family is on that account to add this aspect, in order that the individual's ultimate being, too, shall not belong solely to Nature and remain something irrational, but shall be something done, and the right of consciousness be asserted in it.⁴⁹ Our bond with nature and with those who share our blood is the immediate and unconscious substance of our ethical life, the soil from which ethical relations grow. But this substance becomes conscious of itself, reflects on itself, and rises above the level of the particular (my own kin) to the level of the universal (all citizens) through the state.

⁴⁹Hegel, G.W.F., *Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J. B. Baillie, New York: Harper & Row, 1967, para. 452.