

## FAMILYHOOD IN PLATO'S FEMINISM AND THE POLITICS OF FEMALE GENDER IDENTITY

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### ABSTRACT

The question of gender equality has been a perennial concern. Human beings possess different natural capacities in accordance with their dual nature as *homo socius* and *homo politicus*. While some argue that these differences imply inequality, others advocate equality, and still others advance an extreme egalitarian position that assumes all individuals are identical and should receive equal life chances. Using the philosophical methods of exposition and analysis, this study explores the contributions of Plato as a pioneer among those who argue for the abolition of the nuclear family as a means of enabling women to function equally with men in society. It also examines the perspectives of Hannah Arendt and Susan Moller Okin, among others, on the question of gender equality. The paper further argues that Plato's proposal to abolish the nuclear family does not entail the complete elimination of family life, as is often assumed. Rather, it represents a transformation of the private family into a unified collective structure embodied in the state. Supporting this view, the paper draws on the argument of Véronique Mottier, who maintains that the nuclear family cannot be entirely abolished without undermining the very purpose for which it would be replaced, such as a state-run system akin to a well-regulated orphanage. While this study acknowledges that total egalitarianism is largely utopian, it concludes that a more viable approach to addressing gender inequality lies in emphasizing shared human attributes while also encouraging the development of the unique capacities of both men and women.

**Keywords:** Family, Women, men, egalitarian, Plato, etc.

### INTRODUCTION

The journey of women emancipation has had a long history much similar to the development of democracy and democratic rights. Today, women have charted a very broad path in socio-political sphere that the question is no longer whether women should be included in the world political program, but rather to what extent? It is a question that has led to a certain proposal about equality and pushed an understanding of feminism to some form of egalitarian utopia, a belief that in a global society all are identical, must receive equal life chances. This claim was even made by J. S. Mill in his 'Subjugation of Women' on the equality of all human beings, as comprised of living together as equals, claiming nothing to oneself by natural right except what all freely concede to one another, and in terms of politics assigning leadership role to a person out of exceptional necessity, which in any case is only temporary and must be predisposed to alternation and reciprocity (174-175). Mill's regrets are that though men and women are actually equal, nothing in the modern world indicates this idea: « Citizenship in free countries, is partly a school of society in equality; but citizenship fills only a small place in modern life, and does not come near the daily habits or inmost sentiments » (175). He points at family as presently constituted to be part of that problem, for rather than being a school of sympathy in equality, it is a school of despotism in which the virtues of despotism and its vices are largely nourished.

The family has also been fingered by many theorists as one of the main causes of severe inequalities between individuals. Considering the family from the point of view of Rawls' understanding of justice -the equality of life chances, Veronique Munoz-Darde (1999) requested that family be abolished. According to her, "the effects of the family are so profound that it's mere existence...severely impedes the access of individuals to equal life chances" (37). She expressed doubt if there can ever be way of successfully implementing justice in it. First, we can never achieve in this institution a just division of labor or a thorough application of principles of right and justice; thus, a sexism in the family which is responsible for the enduring sexism in society and the reproduction of gender inequalities (40). For her, nuclear family is only compatible with a diminished justice because the constraint is so great meting fair equality of opportunity, or life chances between people who are raised in different families: "As long as there are families, and hence deep inequalities between people's initial circumstances as regards class, social condition, cultivated attitudes to effort, to self-sacrifice, to autonomy and so on, the ideal of equal realization of people's natural capacities and moral powers, including their capability to form, revise and pursue their own conception of the good, shall not be delivered" (40). Her suggestion therefore is that nuclear families be abolished or substituted by "a generalized, well-run orphanage" in which the state has overall control; something like a generalized boarding school with well qualified teachers.

Veronique did not depart essentially from Plato's suggestion regarding nuclear family. whereas she saw sexism and general injustice in the society across all classes of people as based on the nuclear family situations, Plato narrowed his distrust on the family exclusively on its impediments in allowing women live out their natural potentialities in the state and contribute to its wellbeing. And, although he advocated a global sense of family for

women and children, his target was mainly to provide a safe means of liberating women. The obliteration of the major institution of traditional nuclear family was a means to strengthen the framework of philosophic rule of men and women. For, if justice is to be done, there is the need to abolish the provocative institution of the traditional family system. Plato indicates that it is one of the two fundamental institutions which as judged in the axiology of the ideal city are the principal causes of the fatal perversion of the human soul and consequently of the political society. The demands of justice must spread and thus upset all conventional human relationship. But, the questions that must be asked are: Must nuclear family fail in order that women be fully political? Does the emergence of feminism imply the good old egalitarian utopia and belief that in a global society all are identical, and thus must receive equal chances? More importantly, can the nuclear family not be preserved while maintaining women's entrance into the political society? It is the aim of this article to explore the pioneering efforts of Plato in indicating the 'pervasiveness of traditional nuclear families to the women's entrance into the political world and the attempt to abolish it for one global, common family. However, as Veronique offered at the end of her article a tentative reason why nuclear family may not after all be completely abolished because "it will defeat the very purpose that made us envisage its substitution by a well-run orphanage", we shall also see how it is indispensable for women. Although it does not exhaust their vocation, this vocation cannot be fulfilled by mere claim of sameness or egalitarian utopia.

### PLATO ON THE 'WOMAN QUESTION'

The exclusion of women from world political society had been for long circumscribed around the idea about their nature; and even today the question about human nature and the roles desirable for both sexes remains an open one. Cultural assumptions about women sit strongly in many civilizations, collaborated by volumes of work by which pure scholars address unenthusiastically the question of femininity, thus making their admission into the real human world a difficult affair. These works multiply in spite of the obvious contradiction in the non-recognition of the real importance of women as human beings. Aristotle acknowledged this predicament when he tried to justify slavery by denying that slaves, women and children possess and exercise rational virtues. In an attempt to show their essential inferiority and thus their exclusion from the movement of history, he discovered that the two possible ways to justify it were embroiled with problem. But this has not stopped many scholars from seeking and amplifying the differences between men and women. Even scientific researches are ever increasing in this direction towards sex difference. All these simply justify the claims of Ann Oakley (1972:189) that "on the whole ... [our] society is organized around the assumption that the differences between the sexes are more important than the qualities they have in common".

Plato had shown that there exists little or more differences between male and female except those which education makes on them. The education which tries to limit the development of the various human talents on the basis of certain agreed sex-types overlook the interpretation of these types between sexes. Many women partake of the average manly characteristics and thus should receive liberal and professional education to prepare them for the work-world whether they finally enter it or not. Without denying that certain differences exist between men and women and therefore a careful educational plan respecting these differences, it has also been shown that a good part of women's inabilities and differences have been due to prejudicial education (Mill 1970:495), based upon the idea about their body which must be hidden in privacy, as Hannah Arendt summed in her judgment of the history of women's oppression. Women, like laborers must be hidden away with their bodies to minister to the bodily needs of life and guarantee the physical survival of species. But the truth, Arendt (1998) said, has finally prevailed: "The fact that the modern age emancipated the working classes and the women at nearly the same historical moment must certainly be counted among the characteristics of an age which no longer believes that bodily functions and material concerns should be hidden" (72-73). Every citizen, Arendt signaled, belongs to two orders of existence: 'The rise of the city-state meant that human beings receive besides their private life a second life, their bios *politikos*' (24).

Of course, this question of the body constitutes also certain difficulty in Plato's political program though in a different way. Man is composed of body and soul but the nature of women's body is such that it has been particularly identified with them, and since politics dissociates itself enough from the body, women are excluded from political associations. To make his political enterprise for women successful then, Plato expunged them of their biological identity. This is adequately captured by Susan Okin (1977:358) when she said that 'the real significance of treatment of the 'woman question' in the *republic* is that it is one of the very few instances in the history of thought when the biological implications of femaleness have been clearly separated from all the conventional, institutional, and emotional baggage that has usually been identified with them'. Although this attempt largely solves a problem, the dilemma it engulfs women has not ceased to excite attention. Actually, it has now led the sociobiologists to address the question about the relevance of biological differences and scientists seek evidence for inevitable female disadvantages as well as a special excellence.

Having now seen the affirmation of possibility of women's participation in socio-political functions as well as the possible caution that must not be thrown to the wind, it remains to know the extent political theories must adjust to include them in political program. This is necessary because from the way "politics" has been understood and its theories expounded; there is no place for women. Thus, it must significantly adjust if it should incorporate them. Women have been silenced in politics because that which defines them and to which they are inescapably linked – sexuality, childbirth, i.e. the human body had been omitted from political speech, and Plato's intervention by nuclear family abolition is not even redeeming.

A global or common family structure was what Plato proposed to free the best men and women – but especially women from the household drudgery that diverts them from their service. The home, which is so precious to us, was to Plato a stumbling block, a center of exclusiveness where selfish instincts and stunted capacities flourish. He condemned it as a place of waste talents and dwarf powers, where the mind of the wife is wasted on the service of the tables. (*Republic 460d*).

This proposal of one single family which implies a community of wives demands a detailed clarification for although the existence of private families is undoubtedly the greatest restricting conditions of women's freedom to participate in public forum, its abolition and replacement with one global family of wives has in turn more problems than it tried to solve.

Plato knew that what he was going to say about the family was a paradox or in other words, a double irony but he insisted tenaciously "that our guardians and female guardians must have all pursuits in common, ...and all that precedes has for its sequel... that these women shall be common to all these men, and that none shall cohabit with any privately" (*Republic, 457*). This is a proposition that his interlocutors could not allow him take a leave from without proving its possibility and feasibility. Plato attempted a flight from the discussion on the possibility and when he later came to it in 471c and 473c-d he pointed out that it is really difficult, but if it were possible to be realized, everything would be lovely. His only hope of it being realized depended on either the philosophers becoming kings, or those whom we call our kings or rulers take to the pursuit of philosophy seriously.

On how it was going to be done for the propagation of human species, he advocated temporary marriages or copulations to be controlled by the state (*Rep. 4503*). With this then, Plato solved the problem of promiscuity but at the risk of establishing instead the very opposite of promiscuity. Gomperz (1905: 494) considers Plato's attempt here as linked to the most severe prescriptions based on the authority that is inspired from animal rearing'. And Hourdart accuses Plato of forgetting that he is presently in a world of spiritual motif, which is absent in the animal world; and worse was to throw over-board the base of individuality, by removing from men and women the right to dispose of their own body (1951:108). Of course, Plato's motive for the State seemed to have taken him farther than the realities of human facts.

Even, on the problem of how the rearing of the children from these organized copulations should be dovetailed into a plan that exonerate the women from the life of the family, Plato promised that the children would be properly taken care of. In fact, immediately after birth they should be taken from their mothers who should not have seen them and handed over to appointed officials made up of men and women (*Republic 460b-c*). These officials will take these children into public crèches, conducting their mothers to the pen when their breasts are full, otherwise to be fed by other wet-nurse. The children would be taught to think that they are brothers and sisters to one another, a thing which will enhance the bond of unity in the State where its members will feel themselves one body. From the foregoing, it is obvious that Plato's goal in the abolition of nuclear family structure was not really the elimination of family, as people generally think. It is a reformation of private family into one single global family, which is the State. In the reform of marriage, Plato aimed, said Barker, at the nationalization of the family; to secure better stock; to achieve greater freedom to women as well as to men; in order to develop their highest capacities and a more solidarity of the rulers of the State' (261). This aim in itself is very laudable and precisely so had Rousseau (1914) reproached those who criticize Plato from wrong points: "je ne parle point de cette prétendue communauté de femmes dont le reproche tant répété prouve que ceux qui le lui ront ne l'ont jamais lu". Plato's abolished private nuclear family for global family therefore, in order to emancipate women, to rid-off from women the distracting loyalties, affections and interests of the family system. Female guardians are to join the male guardians and devote themselves to the service of the community. Plato carried up this revolution with this aim in mind aware especially of what the household stood in the ancient Greek of his time. According to one of our veritable sources, "it is in the name of emancipation of women that he (Plato) first (451c - 456b) approaches the problem of family life. The seclusion of women in the household, he felt, meant not only that the development of women was stunted, but also that the State lost the service of half of its members" (Barker, 1947:255). If Plato sought equality for women, this cannot be exercised in the family but in the state. Hannah Arendt reporting he political situation of Plato's time in terms of her concern for freedom said, "the polis was distinguished from the household in that it knew only "equals", whereas the household was the center of the strictest inequality. To be

free meant not to be subject to the necessity of life or to the command of another... Thus, within the realm of the household, freedom did not exist, for the household head... was considered to be free only in so far as he had the power to leave the household and enter the political realm, where all were equals" (32).

Although this proposal of the global family is in every sense infamous, it is nevertheless the possible way the equality of sexes and roles can so quickly be achieved. Bertrand Russell who in many ways had opposed Plato's principles set up in the Republic, showed the same equivocal appreciations in respect of this suggestion, praising despite its unpalatable character the global family proposal in many beautiful words. It offers, according to him, a solution to the difficult problem of the family and sex equality a solution which we may dislike, but which does, at any rate, provide a possible issue. It gives children in education from which the anti-social idea of competition has been almost entirely eliminated it creates an economic system, which appears to be the only practicable alternative to one of masters and slaves.... It offers to young men and women a hope which is not chimerical and an activity in the world, as it may do, it will solve most of the major evils of our time (1932:115).

Much as we praise the hopes which this proposal holds for the emancipation of women, one cannot however doubt that the arguments which build it up raise some fears. It is consequent upon that problem, which Plato partially recognized, that he eliminated the scheme completely in the Laws. A scheme of temporary meetings, "unions passagères" and State controlled marriages seem in everyway unacceptable table in the normal sense of the word marriage. Marital union is really a matter of a life-time. It's impossible that men and women should come together merely for sexual intercourse, and instantly depart like the practice in the animal world. Granted, their sexual meeting is primarily to bear children as was the aim in Plato's Greek world, but ultimately, as Aristotle will criticize Plato, his meeting must be for a life's friendship': they are united by a permanent interest in a common welfare and it is not being doubted that a permanent spiritual union of true marriages las one of the greatest influences towards a good life. Indeed, one can say that Plato made an unreal abstraction for the sexual motive when he linked it to State control and by this token made the individual a mere means, worse still in that area where the individual most naturally claims to be an end to himself.

#### **CRITICISM ON THE ABOLITION OF NUCLEAR FAMILY**

Again, let us consider the moral relevance of the body which Plato denied by abolishing what is hitherto known as the nuclear family. Plato deemed the family as the home of all that is erotic and hinders the development of the human powers or concentration of one's efforts to the state affairs. Thus, the body and its need for the family had to be abolished but in order to meet up the demands of reproduction, occasional mating festivals had to be arranged at which temporary unions were to be consummated. The children born out of such unions are sent to nurseries and brought up by appointed wetting nurses. These children collectively belong to the community, just in the same way as wives are no longer private to anyone. By this, Plato hoped that all private advantages over one another had been overcome and women liberated from men, from the domestic shores and everlasting duties of nursing and educating children.

Although this proposal seems the only classical means by which any strict establishment of sexual equality can be achieved, it is nonetheless a bad experiment and most scholars have forcefully denounced it, not only from its point of view of the societal damage but especially for its insensitivity to women's body and needs. According to Aristotle, the proposal is very injurious to the society; and not only is it impracticable, the argument advancing the proposal does not show its workability (*Politics*, 1261a 10-15). Aristotle's basic claim was that the state should be a plurality; the idea of a common or global family advocated would destroy the state. The state is not comparable to a league or a military alliance among similar kinds of people, but is rather a hierarchy of different kinds of groupings. "Reciprocal equality", he said, "is preservative of states... For even among the free and equal this principle must necessarily obtain" (1261a 34-36). We are not equal or identical in the sense of all having the same thing, each has a particular service that is equal to the other's which he brings into the state.

Modern critiques have joined voices here to show how the abolition of private family system destroys the moral structure upon which the world is founded and should be condemned entirely. Schleiermacher, for example, criticizing Plato's abolition of conventional marriage for the purpose of elevating women to leadership roles said: "Christian morality introduced into the world the purest idea of marriage, and the most perfect form of domesticity. Plato's view on the contrary misled him on the ground of similarity to an utter destruction o. both; and this is what every individual of sound mind... would gladly erase out of his work even to the very last trace.... Here is concentrated all that was mistaken in the development of the Hellenic mind" (379). Moreover, said Schleiermacher, by proposing such a community to replace nuclear families, Plato recognized no motive for the determination of sexual passion and therefore it is certain that the destinies of the human race cannot be fulfilled in it (379-381).

While Schleiermacher had called for the rejection of Plato's proposed experiment for the reason that they are contrary to human passion and moral order, M.I. Crombie (1962) expressed just mere hostility, adding simply that the proposal is impracticable. According to him, Plato's thought on sex relation, marriage and family "should be read by connoisseurs of a priori absurdity" (100-101). He maintained that the most charitable comment to make on this part of Plato's reforms is to say that he simply intended by it, "to pull the legs of those who attach unnecessary value to family ties. Yet, Plato himself appeared to have forgotten that those who do not attach due value to tribal loyalties and esprit de corps as his political program intended to achieve are perhaps and even more pernicious class of persons. For Crombie, the proposal is an impracticable ideal. "Experience has taught us" he said, "what Plato could not be expected to know, namely how much ruthlessness and how much tragedy result from the uncritical pursuit of unattainable ideals" (101).

Indeed, what is certain is that Plato struck a wrong note here. He felt that the abolition of nuclear family eliminates all particular attentions to body, a thing which hinders participation in the city-politics. But he failed to realize that such structure as the family, which has existed trans-culturally, cannot be conventional but deep rooted in human nature; the formation center of all human capabilities. "What we call human capacities" Elshtain (1962) 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" (326-327). 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 humanized. And although the belief in family serves some selfish interests related to the body, it is nevertheless enormously respectable.

The family plays somewhat a paradoxical role, it restricts badly women's chances for public services but it seems also that they are not fully and really liberated in the absence of it. No strict equality can be achieved under any system of traditional private family for which reason Plato made effort to destroy it, but its abolition nonetheless, endangers certain aspect of women's destiny.

#### **GENDER IDENTITY AND NUCLEAR FAMILY PROBLEMS -THE WAY OUT**

Members of either sex vary tremendously in height, strength, endurance, dexterity, knowledge etc. In other words, the distributions in both sexes overlap to a great extent that the argument of biological difference as ultimate determinant of our social order and life is not tolerated. There are average differences between men and women but all social practices that construct women and men pure and simple as distinct categories by converting this average difference into a categorical difference negate is major pattern of difference that occurs within sexes rather than between them. Genetic, hormonal and anatomical differences between women and men exist. They play some roles by of setting ranges to limits, but since their distributions overlap and since there are more areas of similarity than difference between both sexes, such differences alone cannot form the foundation of a just social policy.

There are too great a way men and women are alike than different. They differ in some significant ways but they are not as different es day and night, life and death, earth and sky. From the standpoint of nature, women and men are much closer to each other than either anything else and an exclusive gender identity is a suppression of these natural similarities. Women and men have the human 'species characteristics' of capacity for language, intellect and imagination, upright stance, thumb opposition and manipulation, tool-making and tool-using and extended childhood and parenting that mark us off from other species and are constituents of the evolutionary jump to human society. These characteristics are shared between the sexes, and there is no good reason to doubt that the shift from biological evolution to history should also be a shared accomplishment.

Thus, instead of amplifying those aspects mankind differs in virtue of the body with an aim to exclude women from its social political arrangements, the society should decide how best to harmonize this problem for the sake of the individuals and the benefit of the society. We acknowledge but reject at the same time the efforts of those who in an attempt to overcome this difficulty advocated androgyny for both sexes; i.e. encouraging women to become more like men, dropping their womanly qualities, as if they succeed only to the extent they achieve masculine status. This solution is by no means an acceptable one although we grant that it really provides a serious attempt to cutting undue cultural elaborations of human differences aimed at disfranchising women of civic rights. Shanley and Pateman (1991) agreeing with the androgyny group summarized their contention by the following crucial questions: "What exactly is the significance of sexual difference? Do the different natures and capacities of women and men mean that women cannot be citizens? O does it mean that, if women are citizens, their citizenship will differ in some ways from that of men?" (1-2). Surely their citizenship ought not be different but should be exercised with the multi-dimensional riches of nature in view.

Some other scholars have suggested instead that women be encouraged to hold firm to their feminine qualities or 'special virtues' while men be persuaded to become more like women. This solution also fails to address properly the whole dimensions of human reality. One cannot throw aboard the feminine characteristics in the quest for women to be truly political, nor should we abandon the masculine traits for a new reality to evolve in which women are part and parcel of the political life that is lacking masculine quality. The best I think is to find a mean where both must come together in a new synthesis. The masculine abstract thinking as well as the feminine contextual thinking due to the women's bodies should enter the political scene together.

Some theorists think that such synthesis is not possible. They think that the exclusion of women's bodies and reproductive powers played a great positive role in the constructions of "the political" and of what is worthwhile, creative, and "truly human" in Western political thought. They think therefore that most existing political theories cannot include them without some major upheavals and transformations. Elisabeth Gross wrote for instance: "even if women were incorporated into patriarchal discourse, at best they could only be regarded as variations of a basic humanity. The project of women's equal inclusion meant that only women's sameness to men, only women's humanity and not their womanliness could be discussed" (1987:191). Her conclusion then was that though the aspiration toward equality is politically and historically necessary, it is however "problematic and ultimately impossible". For her, what people should aspire toward is simply female autonomy - "women's right to political, social, economic and intellectual self-determination" (192-193). One would agree with Gross that major transformation is needed in politics for women to participate in an equitable way, but her dismissal of this condition as impossible is unwarranted. One could see her fault on the premise upon which her conclusion stands: the consideration of equality as necessarily requiring sameness which is not so.

There is no doubt that some middle way is possible and that political life would improve if the woman body and "maternal" thinking, the care and concern for others and for the natural world influence the political practice which at present is characteristically masculine. Political theories must incorporate women's body in such a way that reproduction, for instance, is taken account of in the political process thus allowing women as well as men to have families and equally exercise social and political activities together. This is a form of recognition of the political significance of women's bodies. This solution goes equally in line with the suggestions made by Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) urging that societies encourage both sides of the traits in each sex rather than insisting on differences. For instance, the society could devote its efforts towards harnessing male aggression and male nurturance activities "Social institutions and social practices", our scientists say, "are not merely reflections of the biological inevitable. A variety of social institutions are viable within the framework set by biology. It is up to human beings to select those that foster the life-styles they most value" (374).

Time has come to see politics not only from the masculine point of view that has so far pervaded political thought and pushed some genuine philosophical efforts that sought to include women in political theory into abolishing the feminine features. There are even some feminists who think of liberating women from pregnancy and child-birth by replacing natural with artificial reproduction; another form of wishful thinking. We must change our perspective; we need both to value the production and reproduction of life and strive towards things such that we are not individually divided creatures and are not impelled to divide the species into those who sustain life and those who live 'freely' by transcending it. This we can do by ending all attempts to exploit and dominate external nature. Nurturing work should be made compatible with economic self-sufficiency and facilitate the sharing of what we have hitherto considered male and female roles. Wendy Brown (1988:211) tells us that time has come when we "construct both gender and politics in ways far more compatible with justice, with life in the largest sense of the word, and above all, with the rich possibilities contained in being human together"

The final issue that remains to be fully addressed in this being human together is: how could all the political exigencies be met in the face of family question' -the problem of childrearing? Certain feminists call it the tyranny of family'. How could this problem be resolved in order to accommodate women in some reasonable way as men in our new understanding of politics? It is clear that any political reform of this kind that fails to confront the family issue is just an exercise in futility. Plato tried to overlook it, destroying it as well as its mothering role after dismissing women's biology in the *Republic*. However, this solution was impossible for family has been seen as the best natural, intimate context for childrearing which responds also to women's natural tendencies. From the modern community that has tried to organize itself according to this aspect of Plato's proposal, i.e. the Israeli Kibbutz, we discovered how virtually impossible the experiment was. All this shows that societies must adapt themselves to the biological facts of sex. The family is not only a form that responds to the universal demand of sex and reproduction but also an order that responds more adequately to women's inner biological system and desire for personal care, especially over the children. Political theories and laws must then be constructed in a way that recognizes the living arrangements that have something to do with family.

Of course, Plato later brought it back in the *Laws*, but he could not properly harmonize it with his egalitarian reform, and this nearly shattered the wonderful aspects of the revolution in the Republic. Indeed, it is precisely on account of that that a Sussan Okin has termed the subject of women in the *Laws* "a study in ambivalence" (60). But Plato was not alone to experience such problem of reconciliation of political life with the family. Mill, who had championed women's liberation and proclaimed equality of nature and roles in unrestricted sense, also failed when he introduced the question of marriage. He resolved the issue by excluding married women from public life: "like a man when he chooses a profession, so, when a woman marries, it may be in general understood that she makes a choice of the management of a household, and the bringing up of a family, as the first call upon her exertions... and that she renounces all (other occupations which are not consistent with the requirements of this" (179). Mill did not take time to examine how the married women who in most cases constitute the greater percentage of women population could be integrated in our world of work and politics. Leslie Goldstein (1978) summarized Mill at this point saying: "The restraints which Mill believed should be imposed on married women constitute a major exception this argument for equality of individual liberty between the sexes -an exception so enormous that it threatens to swallow up the entire argument" (8).

J. Ithurriague's cautious approach in solving marriage issue in Plato's proposals does not help matters either. He identified with Plato's program for the liberation of women but on the issue of family, he concluded his noble sentiments with a warning. He fears that unreasonable ambition might lead women outside their natural paths, 'estranging her from the duties that belong to her alone, from the functions that nature and reason reserve for her' (1931:154). He maintained then that every woman should be entitled to her rights but this is only as long as she knows how to remain within the limits fixed by a sound equity, if in short, she knows how to remain a woman, mother, wife' (154). Certainly, this provides no real solution in resolving the issue. But, all these shows how difficult it is integrating the female half of the human race into a tradition of political theory without major intervention in the concept and traditional order of the family life.

There are some modern feminists who do not exclude the necessity of family in social arrangements but maintain nevertheless that emancipation can never be anything other than a sham as long as women are identified with their private work of childrearing. They criticize it as barrier to political equality, "a source of psychological, economic and political oppression", but they do not venture into the solution. On our own part, we insist that in our reformed political dispensation, the family must be part of the political life. Gone is the time when political institution exists exclusively of its own, independent of the family life. Now, all generally accept, as sociologist T.B. Bottomore (1964: 121-122) wrote, that "the institutions which exist in the differing spheres of society are not merely co-existent but are connected with each other by relations of concordance or contradiction and mutually affect each other". This implies that we cannot ignore the significant relationship that exists between the structure of the nuclear family and the structure of the wider political society of which it is a part. Harris Eckstein (1965) equally developed this idea when he argued that the stability of any political order is dependent upon the "congruence" between governmental authority structures and other such structures in the society, including those of work places, pressure groups, schools and most significantly the family.

The family therefore, must be constructed within the political life and should be lived without any particular ideal that has the capacity to oppress and exploit the other. In fact, to achieve a reasonable access to civil rights and jobs outside the home, there should be a pair bond in rearing of the young; husbands should participate in family task of childrearing, in spite of it constituting an important part of women's space. Just as women should collaborate with men and form partner with them in the external space, serving according to their own capacity in this area, so men should cooperate with women according to the degree of their possibility in private sphere, in order that all would live out the fullness of being, the enrichment of human intimacy and human identity. The husbands and wives' constant partaking of the same things, under mutual sympathy, helps to draw out the latent capacities of each by a real enrichment of the two natures, each acquiring the tastes and capacities of the other in addition to its own. In this way, the similarities and differences in women and men can no other way be understood than as a call to the natural and inevitable complementarity of male and female personalities and roles.

The above suggestion comes close to the arguments of Anne Phillips in *Engendering Democracy* (1991) where which she tried to show that political democracy couldn't be complete without democracy and equality in the household. She considers this very important not only as means to an end but also an end in itself, given the great effects of the inequalities of sexual power on women's lives. She sees democracy as that which is capable of redressing the imbalance that centuries of oppression have wrought and envisaged the end of it to a pleasant future when

"the distinction between public and private spheres would have lost its gendered quality. Men and women would move equally between the responsibilities of household and employment, would share equally in bringing up children and caring for parents, would vary as individuals rather than sexes in their priorities or experience, and

be equally attracted to (repulsed by) a political life. In such a context, the notion of the citizen could begin to assume its full meaning, and people could participate as equals in deciding their common goals" (7).

Democracy in the family however, must take note of the natural strength and weaknesses of each of its member and be guided by mutual understanding and co-operation in various dimensions of the family activities which allows each member develop and live the full human life. It must not go too far to demand strict equality in family matters aware that natural factors predispose one sex better than the other in various spheres. However, men's greater participation in the care of children than is traditionally the case will ease tremendously women's burden and improve their opportunities in the labor market. It will help both parents to combine work and family roles. To make this program work out well, the governments might institute a scheme of parental leave where the father like the mother, should be entitled to salaries with job security at childbirth or adoption. Also, it might be necessary to keep in sight an ideological climate of seeing the well-being of children as the first call of all parents and the state. Once this is done and all realize that both men and women have one major role, that of 'human beings', our present attitude toward the family will change and women will enjoy a greater opportunity to participate in civic and political life.

It is necessary to put an end to barriers upon the way of women who want to live out their human intimacy and identity, and above all, a stop wasting the abilities of more than half of our population. This is truer now than when Plato proclaimed it in the Laws. However, all these can be achieved not by the abolition of marriage or nuclear family for a global common family as Plato and other theorists have overzealously suggested, but possibly by pair bonds in rearing of the young; not by encouraging women to become more like men or worse that men drop their natural habits and become like women. It is rather by overcoming dichotomy of gender through accentuation of human similarities and encouraging special gifts in both sexes.

We feel indebted to Plato in some these measures and insights. Indeed, he has been lately celebrated, said Jacobs, as "one of the few notable exceptions" in our long history of sexism (1978:29). He initiated the struggle for women's recognition by calling attention to the unique qualities shared by men and women alike, and demanding that all be given equal opportunity to live out these potentialities. This is the main promise of Plato to women in his ideal empire. He did not promise them equality with men in sameness of identity but a complete equality of opportunity, to realize their possibilities which they share in kind with men. This is a demand for opportunity that our society might emulate. This may not be perfect but it is one that many people would settle for with gratitude.

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