

change is in itself, of course, an innovation, their reciprocal interaction and cumulative effect deserve special recognition as an integrative process.

The history of the automobile during the present century in our own culture provides an excellent example. The changes brought about by this technological invention are described by Professor Leslie Spier in Chapter X. A similar story could be told for other modern innovations such as the telephone, the airplane, the radio, and electrical household gadgets, and all of them pale before the potentialities of atomic energy.

Certain anthropologists have erroneously assumed that the elements of any culture are in a state of nearly perfect integration, or equilibrium, at all times. Actually, however, perfect equilibrium is never achieved or even approached. The adjustment of other elements of culture to an innovation, and of it to them, requires time—often years or even generations. In the meantime other innovations have appeared and set in motion new processes of integration. At any given time, therefore, a culture exhibits numerous instances of uncompleted integrative processes as well as examples of others which have been carried through to relatively satisfactory completion. What we always encounter is a strain toward internal adaptation, never its full realization.

The period of time which must elapse between the acceptance of an innovation and the completion of the integrative readjustments which follow in its train Ogburn has aptly called 'cultural lag.' During such a period of lag people attempt, through variation, invention, tentation, and cultural borrowing, to modify old customs and ideas to accord with the new, and to adjust the new to the old, so as to eliminate inconsistencies and sources of friction and irritation. In a modern democratic society, politics is a major scene of such efforts.

The net effect of the various processes of cultural change is to adapt the collective habits of human societies progressively over time to the changing conditions of existence. Change is always uncomfortable and often painful, and people frequently become discouraged with its slowness or even despair of achieving any genuine improvement. Neither history nor anthropology, however, gives grounds for pessimism. However halting or harsh it may appear to participants, cultural change is always adaptive and usually progressive. It is also inevitable, and will endure as long as the earth can support human life. Nothing—not even an atomic war—can destroy civilization.

XII

The Family

THE WORD FAMILY is so plain, the kind of reality to which it refers is so close to daily experience that one may expect to be confronted in this chapter with a simple situation. Anthropologists, however, are a strange breed; they like to make even the 'familiar' look mysterious and complicated. As a matter of fact, the comparative study of the family among many different peoples has given rise to some of the most bitter arguments in the whole history of anthropological thought and probably to its more spectacular reversal.

During the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, anthropologists were working under the influence of biological evolutionism. They were trying to organize their data so that the institutions of the simpler people would correspond to an early stage of the evolution of mankind, while our own institutions were related to the more advanced or developed forms. And since, among ourselves, the family founded on monogamic marriage was considered as the most praiseworthy and cherished institution, it was immediately inferred that savage societies—equated for the purpose with the societies of man at the beginning of its existence—could only have something of a different type. Therefore, facts were distorted and misinterpreted; even more, fanciful 'early' stages of evolution were invented, such as 'group marriage' and 'promiscuity' to account for the period when man was still so barbarous that he could not possibly conceive of the niceties of the social life it is the privilege of civilized man to enjoy. Every custom different from our own was carefully selected as a vestige of an older type of social organization.

This way of approaching the problem became obsolete when the ac-

cumulation of data made obvious the following fact: the kind of family featured in modern civilization by monogamous marriage, independent establishment of the young couple, warm relationship between parents and offspring, et cetera, while not always easy to recognize behind the complicated network of strange customs and institutions of savage peoples, is at least conspicuous among those which seem to have remained on—or returned to—the simplest cultural level. Tribes like the Andaman-ernmost tip of South America, the Fuegians of the south—the Bushmen of South Africa—to quote only a few examples—live in small, semi-nomadic bands; they have little or no political organization and their technological level is very low since, in some of them at least, there is no knowledge of weaving, pot-making, and even sometimes hutting. Thus, the only social structure worth speaking of among them is the family, mostly monogamous. The observer working in the field has no trouble identifying the married couples, closely associated by sentimental bonds and economic co-operation as well as by the rearing of children born from their union.

There are two ways of interpreting this pre-eminence of the family at both ends of the scale of development of human societies. Some writers have claimed that the simpler peoples may be considered as a remnant of what can be looked at as a 'golden age,' prior to the submersion of mankind to the hardships and perversities of civilization; thus, man would have known in that early stage the bliss of monogamic family, only to forego it later until its more recent Christian rediscovery. The general trend, however, except for the so-called Vienna school, has been that more and more anthropologists have become convinced that familial life is present practically everywhere in human societies, even in those after they had claimed for about fifty years that the family, as modern societies know it, could only be a recent development and the outcome of a slow and long-lasting evolution, anthropologists now lean toward the opposite conviction, i.e. that the family, consisting of a more or less durable union, socially approved, of a man, a woman, and their children, is a universal phenomenon, present in each and every type of society.

These extreme positions, however, suffer equally from oversimplification. It is well known that, in very rare cases, family bonds cannot be claimed to exist. A telling example comes from the Nayar, a very large group living on the Malabar coast of India. In former times, the warlike

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type of life of the Nayar men did not allow them to found a family. Marriage was a purely symbolical ceremony which did not result in a permanent tie between a man and a woman. As a matter of fact, married women were permitted to have as many lovers as they wished. Children belonged exclusively to the mother line, and familial as well as land authority was exercised, not by the ephemeral husband but by the wife's brothers. Since land was cultivated by an inferior caste, subservient to the Nayar, a woman's brothers were as completely free as their sister's temporary husband or lovers to devote themselves to military activities. Now, the case of the Nayar has been frequently misunderstood. In the first place, they cannot be considered as a vestige of a primitive kind of social organization which could have been very general, in the past, among mankind. Quite to the contrary: the Nayar exhibit an extremely specialized and elaborate type of social structure and, from that point of view, they do not prove very much.

On the other hand, there is little doubt that the Nayar represent an extreme form of a tendency which is far more frequent in human societies than is generally acknowledged.

There are a large number of human societies which, although they did not go quite as far as the Nayar in denying recognition to the family as a social unit, have nevertheless limited this recognition to the family as tenuous admission of patterns of a different type. For instance, the Masai and the Chagga, both of them African tribes, did recognize the family as a social unit. However, and for the same reason as among the Nayar, this was not true for the younger class of adult men who were dedicated to warlike activities and consequently were not allowed to marry and found a family. They used to live in regimental organizations and were permitted, during that period, to have promiscuous relations with the younger class of adult girls. Thus, among these peoples, the family did exist side by side with a promiscuous, non-familial type of relations between the sexes.

For different reasons, the same type of dual pattern prevailed among the Bororo and several other tribes of central Brazil, the Muria, and other tribes of India and Assam, et cetera. All the known instances could be arranged in such a way as to make the Nayar appear only as the more consistent, systematic and logically extreme case of a situation which may eventually reappear, at least in embryonic form, in modern society.

This was well shown in the case of Nazi Germany, where a similar cleavage was beginning to appear in the family unit: on the one hand,

the men dedicated to political and warlike activities, with a great deal of freedom resulting from their exalted position; and on the other hand, women with their '3K' functional assignment: *Küche, Kirche, Kinder*, i.e. kitchen, church and children. One might very well conceive that, had the same trend been maintained for several centuries, this clear-cut division of functions between men and women, together with the accompanying differentiation of their respective status, could very well have led to a type of social organization where the family unit would receive as little recognition as among the Nayar.

During recent years anthropologists have taken great pains to show that, even among people who practice wife-lending, either periodically in religious ceremonies or on a statutory basis (as where men are permitted to enter into a kind of institutional friendship entailing wife-lending among members), these customs should not be interpreted as survivals of 'group marriage' since they exist side by side, and even imply, recognition of the family. It is true enough that, in order to be allowed to lend one's wife, one should first get one. However, if we consider the case of some Australian tribes as the Wunambal of the north-western part of the continent, a man who would not lend his wife to her other potential husbands during ceremonies would be considered as 'very greedy', i.e. trying to keep for himself a privilege intended by the social group to be shared between numerous persons equally entitled to it. And since that attitude toward sexual access to a woman existed along with the official dogma that men have no part in physiological procreation (therefore doubly denying any kind of bond between the husband and his wife's children), the family becomes an economic grouping where man brings the products of his hunt and the woman those of her collecting and gathering. Anthropologists, who claim that this economic unit built up on a 'give and take' principle is a proof of the existence of the family even among the lowest savages, are certainly on no sounder basis than those who maintain that such a kind of family has little else in common than the word used to designate it with the family as it has been observed elsewhere.

The same relativistic approach is advisable in respect to the polygamous family. The word polygamy, it should be recalled, refers to polygyny, that is, a system where a man is entitled to several wives, as well as to polyandry, which is the complementary system where several husbands share one wife.

Now it is true that in many observed cases, polygamous families are

nothing else than a combination of several monogamous families, although the same person plays the part of several spouses. For instance, in some tribes of Bantu Africa, each wife lives in a separate hut with her children, and the only difference with the monogamous family results from the fact that the same man plays the part of husband to all his wives. There are other instances, however, where the situation is not so clear. Among the Tupi-Kawahib of central Brazil, a chief may marry several women who may be sisters, or even a mother and her daughters by former marriages; the children are raised together by the women who do not seem to mind very much whether they nurse their own children or not; also, the chief willingly lends his wives to his younger brothers, his court officers, or to visitors. Here we have not only a combination of polygyny and polyandry, but the mix-up is increased even more by the fact that the co-wives may be united by close consanguineous ties prior to their marrying the same man. In a case which this writer witnessed, a mother and daughter, married to one man, were together taking care of children who were, at the same time, stepchildren to one woman and, according to case, either grandchild or stepbrother to the other.

As to polyandry proper, it may sometimes take extreme forms, as among the Toda where several men, usually brothers, share one wife, the legitimate father of the children being the one who has performed a special ceremony and who remains legal father of all the children to be born until another husband decides to assume the right of fatherhood by the same process. In Tibet and Nepal, polyandry seems to be explained by occupational factors of the same type as those already stated for the Nayar: for men living a semi-nomadic existence as guides and bearers, polyandry provides a good chance that there will be, at all times, at least one husband at hand to take care of the homestead.

If the legal, economic, and sentimental identity of the family can be maintained even in a polygynous or a polyandrous set-up, it is not sure that the same would be true when polyandry exists side by side with polygamy. As we have already seen, this was to some extent the case among the Tupi-Kawahib since polygynous marriages existed, at least as a chief's privilege, in combination with an elaborate system of wife-lending to younger brothers, helpers, and visitors from different tribes. Here one might argue that the bond between a woman and her legal husband was more different in degree than in kind from a gamut of other bonds which could be arranged in order of decreasing strength: from rightful, semi-permanent lovers to occasional ones. However, even

in that case, the children's status was defined by the legal marriage, not by the other types of unions.

We come closer to the so-called 'group marriage' when we consider the modern evolution of the Toda during the nineteenth century. They had originally a polyandrous system, which was made possible through the custom of female infanticide. When this was prohibited by the British administration, thus restoring the natural sex-ratio, the Toda continued to practice polyandry; but now instead of several brothers sharing one wife, it became possible for them to marry several. As in the case of the Nayar, the types of organization which seem remotest to the conjugal family do not occur in the more savage and archaic societies but in the relatively recent and extremely sophisticated forms of social development.

Therefore, it becomes apparent why the problem of the family should not be approached in a dogmatic way. As a matter of fact, this is one of the more elusive questions in the whole field of social organization. Of the type of organization which prevailed in the early stages of mankind, we know very little, since the remnants of man during the Upper Paleolithic Period of about 50,000 years ago consist principally of skeletal fragments and stone implements which provide only a minimum of information on social customs and laws. On the other hand, when we consider the wide diversity of human societies which have been observed since, let us say, Herodotus' time until present days, the only thing which can be said is as follows: monogamic, conjugal family is fairly frequent. Wherever it seems to be superseded by different types of organizations, this generally happens in very specialized and sophisticated societies and not, as was previously expected, in the crudest and simplest types. Moreover, the few instances of non-conjugal family (even in its polygamous form) establish beyond doubt that the high frequency of the conjugal type of social grouping does not derive from a universal necessity. It is at least conceivable that a perfectly stable and durable society could exist without it. Hence the difficult problem: if there is no natural law making the family universal, how can we explain why it is found practically everywhere?

In order to try to solve the problem, let us try first to define the family, not by integrating the numerous factual observations made in different societies nor even by limiting ourselves to the prevailing situation among us, but by building up an ideal model of what we have in mind when we use the word family. It would then seem that this word serves to

designate a social group offering at least three characteristics: (1) it finds its origin in marriage; (2) it consists in husband, wife, and children born out of their wedlock, though it can be conceived that other relatives may find their place close to that nuclear group; and (3) the family members are united together by a) legal bonds, b) economic, religious, and other kinds of rights and obligations, c) a precise network of sexual rights and prohibitions, and a varying and diversified amount of psychological feelings such as love, affection, respect, awe, et cetera. We will now proceed to a close examination of these several aspects in the light of the available data.

MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY

As we have already noticed, marriage may be monogamous or polygamous. It should be pointed out immediately that the first kind is not only more frequently found than the second, but even much more than a cursory inventory of human societies would lead to believe. Among the so-called polygamous societies, there are undoubtedly a substantial number which are authentically so; but many others make a strong difference between the 'first' wife who is the only true one, endowed with the full rights attached to the marital status, while the other ones are sometimes little more than official concubines. Besides, in all polygamous societies, the privilege of having several wives is actually enjoyed by a small minority only. This is easily understandable since the number of men and women in any random grouping is approximately the same with a normal balance of about 110 to 100 to the advantage of either sex. In order to make polygamy possible, there are definite conditions which have to be met: either children of a given sex are voluntarily destroyed (a custom known to exist in a few rare cases, such as female infanticide among the Toda already referred to), or special circumstances account for a different life expectancy for members of both sexes, as among the Eskimo and some Australian tribes where many men used to die young because their occupations—whale-hunting in one case, warfare in the other—were especially dangerous. Or else we have to look for a strongly hierarchical social system, where a given class: ancient, priests and sorcerers, rich men, et cetera is powerful enough to monopolize with impunity more than their share of the womenfolk at the expense of the younger or the poorer people. As a matter of fact, we know of societies—mostly in Africa—where one has to be rich to get many wives (since there is a bride-price to pay), but where at the same time the increase in wives

is a means to increase wealth, since female work has a definite economic value. However, it is clear that the systematic practice of polygamy is automatically limited by the change of structure it is likely to bring up in the society.

Therefore, it is not necessary to wonder a great deal about the predominance of monogamic marriage in human societies. That monogamy is not inscribed in the nature of man is sufficiently evidenced by the fact that polygamy exists in widely different forms and in many types of societies; on the other hand, the prevalence of monogamy results from the fact that, unless special conditions are voluntarily or involuntarily brought about, there is normally, about just one woman available for each man. In modern societies, moral, religious, and economic reasons have officialized monogamous marriage (a rule which is in actual practice breached by such different means as premarital freedom, prostitution, and adultery). But in societies which are on a much lower cultural level and where there is no prejudice against polygamy, and even where polygamy may be actually permitted or desired, the same result can be brought about by the lack of social or economic differentiation, so that each man has neither the means, nor the power, to obtain more than one wife and where, consequently, everybody is obliged to make a virtue of necessity.

If there are many different types of marriage to be observed in human societies—whether monogamous or polygamous, and in the last case, polygynous, polyandrous, or both; and whether by exchange, purchase, free-choice or imposed by the family, *et cetera*—the striking fact is that everywhere a distinction exists between marriage, *i.e.* a legal, group-sanctioned bond between a man and a woman, and the type of permanent or temporary union resulting either from violence or consent alone. This group intervention may be a notable or a slight one, it does not matter. The important thing is that every society has some way to operate a distinction between free unions and legitimate ones. There are several levels at which that distinction is made.

In the first place, nearly all societies grant a very high rating to the married status. Wherever age-grades exist, either in an institutional way or as non-crystallized forms of grouping, some connection is established between the younger adolescent group and bachelorhood, less young and married without children, and adulthood with full rights, the latter going usually on par with the birth of the first child. This three-fold distinction was recognized not only among many primitive tribes

but also in peasant western Europe, if only for the purpose of feasts and ceremonies, as late as the early twentieth century.

What is even more striking is the true feeling of repulsion which most societies have toward bachelorhood. Generally speaking it can be said that, among the so-called primitive tribes, there are no bachelors, simply for the reason that they could not survive. One of the strongest field recollections of this writer was his meeting, among the Bororo of central Brazil, of a man about thirty years old: unclean, ill-fed, sad, and lonesome. When asked if the man were seriously ill, the natives' answer came as a shock: what was wrong with him?—nothing at all, he was just a bachelor. And true enough, in a society where labor is systematically shared between man and woman and where only the married status permits the man to benefit from the fruits of woman's work, including delousing, body painting, and hair-plucking as well as vegetable food and cooked food (since the Bororo woman tills the soil and makes pots), a bachelor is really only half a human being.

This is true of the bachelor and also, to a lesser extent, of a couple without children. Indeed they can make a living, but there are many societies where a childless man (or woman) never reaches full status within the group, or else, beyond the group, in this all important society which is made up of dead relatives and where one can only expect recognition as ancestor through the cult, rendered to him or her by one's descendants. Conversely, an orphan finds himself in the same dejected condition as a bachelor. As a matter of fact, both terms provide sometimes the strongest insults existing in the native vocabulary. Bachelors and orphans can even be merged together with cripples and witches, as if their conditions were the outcome of some kind of supernatural malediction.

The interest shown by the group in the marriage of its members can be directly expressed, as it is the case among us where prospective spouses, if they are of marriageable age, have first to get a license and then to secure the services of an acknowledged representative of the group to celebrate their union. Although this direct relationship between the individuals, on the one hand, and the group as a whole, on the other, is known at least sporadically in other societies, it is by no means a frequent case. It is almost a universal feature of marriage that it is originated, not by the individuals but by the groups concerned (families, lineages, clans, *et cetera*), and that it binds the groups before and above the individuals. Two kinds of reasons bring about this result: on the one

hand, the paramount importance of being married tends to make parents, even in very simple societies, start early to worry about obtaining a suitable mate for their offspring and this, accordingly, may lead to children being promised to each other from infancy. But above all, we are confronted here with that strange paradox to which we shall have to return later on, namely, that although marriage gives birth to the family, it is the family, or rather families, which produce marriage as the main legal device at their disposal to establish an alliance between themselves. As New Guinea natives put it, the real purpose of getting married is not so much to obtain a wife but to secure brothers-in-law. If marriage takes place between groups rather than individuals, a large number of strange customs become immediately clearer. For instance, we understand why in some parts of Africa, where descent follows the father's line, marriage becomes only final when the woman has given birth to a male child, thus fulfilling its function of maintaining her husband's lineage. The so-called *levirate* and *sororate* should be explained in the light of the same principle: if marriage is binding between two groups to which the spouses belong there can be without contradiction a replacement of one spouse by his brothers or by her sisters. When the husband dies, the levirate provides that his unmarried brothers have a preferential claim on his widow (or, as it is sometimes differently put, share in their deceased brother's duty to support his wife and children), while the sororate permits a man to marry preferentially in polygamous marriage his wife's sisters, or—when marriage is monogamous—to get a sister to replace the wife in case the latter remains childless, has to be divorced on account of bad conduct, or dies. But whatever the way in which the collectivity expresses its interest in the marriage of its members, whether through the authority vested in strong consanguineous groups, or more directly, through the intervention of the State, it remains true that marriage is not, is never, and cannot be a private business.

FORMS OF FAMILY

We have to look for cases as extreme as the Nayar, already described, to find societies where there is not, at least, a temporary *de facto* union of the husband, wife, and their children. But we should be careful to note that, while such a group among us constitutes the family and is given legal recognition, this is by no means the case in a large number of human societies. Indeed, there is a maternal instinct which compels

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the mother to care for her children and makes her find a deep satisfaction in exercising those activities, and there are also psychological drives which explain that a man may feel warmly toward the offspring of a woman with whom he is living, and the development of which he is witnessing step by step, even if he does not believe (as is the case among the tribes who are said to disclaim physiological paternity) that he had any actual part in their procreation. Some societies strive to reinforce these convergent feelings: the famous *couteau*, the custom according to which a man is made to share in the disabilities (either natural or socially imposed) of the woman in confinement, has been explained by some as an attempt to build up a welded unit out of these otherwise not too homogeneous materials.

The great majority of societies, however, do not show a very active interest in a kind of grouping which, to some of them at least (including our own), appears so important. Here too, it is the groups which are important, not the temporary aggregate of the individual representatives of the group. For instance, many societies are interested in clearly establishing the relations of the offspring with the father's group on the one hand, and with the mother's group on the other, but they do it by differentiating strongly the two kinds of relationships. Territorial rights may be inherited through one line, and religious privileges and obligations through the other. Or else, status from one side, magical techniques from the other. Innumerable examples could be given from Africa, Australia, America, et cetera. To limit oneself to just one, it is striking to compare the minute care with which the Hopi Indians of Arizona traced different types of legal and religious rights to the father's and to the mother's lines, while the frequency of divorce made the family so unstable that many fathers did not actually share the same house as their children, since houses were women's properties and, from the legal point of view, children followed the mother's line.

This brittleness of the conjugal family, which is so common among the so-called primitive peoples, does not prevent them from giving some value to conjugal faithfulness and parental attachment. However, these are moral norms and they should be contrasted strongly with the legal rules which in many cases only acknowledge formally the relationship of the children with either the father's or the mother's lines or, when both lines are formally recognized, do so for wholly different types of rights and/or obligations. Extreme cases have been recorded such as the Emerillon, a small tribe of French Guiana now reduced to about 50 per-

sons. Here, according to recent informants, marriage is so unstable that, during a lifetime, everybody has a good chance to get married to everybody of the opposite sex and the tribe is said to use special names for children, showing from which one of at least 8 consecutive marriages they may be the offspring. This is probably a recent development which should be explained on the one hand by the smallness of the tribe and, on the other, by the unstable conditions under which it has lived for the past century. However, it shows that conditions may exist where the conjugal family is hardly recognizable.

Instability accounts for the above examples; but some others may stem from quite opposite considerations. In most of contemporary India and in many parts of western and eastern Europe, sometimes as late as the nineteenth century, the basic social unit was constituted by a type of family which should be described as *domestic* rather than *conjugal*: ownership of the land and of the homestead, parental authority and economic leadership were vested in the eldest living ascendant, or in the community of brothers issued from the same ascendant. In the Russian *bratsvo*, the south-Slavic *zadruga*, the French *maison*, the family actually consisted of the elder or the surviving brothers, together with their wives, married sons with their wives and unmarried daughters, and so on down to the great grandchildren. Such large groups, which could sometimes include several dozen persons living and working under a common authority, have been designated as *joint families* or *extended families*. Both terms are useful but misleading since they imply that these large units are made up of small conjugal families. As we have already seen, while it is true that the conjugal family limited to mother and children is practically universal since it is based on the physiological and psychological dependency which exists between them at least for a certain time, and that the conjugal family consisting of husband, wife, and children is almost as frequent for psychological and economical reasons which should be added to those previously mentioned, the historical process which has led among ourselves to the legal recognition of the conjugal family is a very complex one: it has been brought about only in part through an increasing awareness of a natural situation. But there is little doubt that, to a very large extent, it has resulted from the narrowing down to a group, as small as can be, the legal standing of which, in the past of our institutions, was vested for centuries on very large groups. In the last instance, one would not be wrong in disallowing the terms joint

family and extended family. Indeed, it is rather the conjugal family which deserves the name of: *restricted family*.

We have just seen that, when the family is given a small functional value, it tends to disappear even below the level of the conjugal type. On the contrary, when the family has a great functional value, it becomes actualized much above that level. Our would-be universal conjugal family, then, corresponds more to an unstable equilibrium between extremes than to a permanent and everlasting need coming from the deepest requirements of human nature.

To complete the picture, we have finally to consider cases where the conjugal family differs from our own, not so much on account of a different amount of functional value, but rather because its functional value is conceived in a way qualitatively different from our own conceptions.

As will be seen later on, there are many peoples for whom the kind of spouse one should marry is much more important than the kind of match they will make together. These people are ready to accept unions which to us would seem not only unbelievable, but in direct contradiction with the aims and purposes of setting up a family. For instance, the Siberian Chukchee were not in the least abhorrent to the marriage of a mature girl of let us say about twenty, with a baby-husband two or three years old. Then, the young woman, herself a mother by an authorized lover, would nurse together her own child and her little husband. Like the North American Mohave, who had the opposite custom of a man marrying a baby girl and caring for her until she became old enough to fulfill her conjugal duties, such marriages were thought of as very strong ones, since the natural feelings between husband and wife would be reinforced by the recollection of the parental care bestowed by one of the spouses on the other. These are by no means exceptional cases to be explained by extraordinary mental abnormalities. Examples could be brought together from other parts of the world: South America, both highland and tropical, New Guinea, et cetera.

As a matter of fact, the examples just given still respect, to some extent, the duality of sexes which we feel is a requirement of marriage and raising a family. But in several parts of Africa, women of high rank were allowed to marry other women and have them bear children through the services of unacknowledged male lovers, the noble woman being then entitled to become the 'father' of her children and to transmit to them, according to the prevalent father's right, her own name, status,

and wealth. Finally, there are the cases, certainly less striking, where the conjugal family was considered necessary to procreate the children but not to raise them, since each family did endeavor to retain somebody else's children (if possible of a higher status) to raise them while their own children were similarly retained (sometimes before they were born) by another family. This happened in some parts of Polynesia, while 'fosterage,' i.e. the custom whereby a son was sent to be raised by his mother's brother, was a common practice on the Northwest Coast of America as well as in European feudal society.

THE FAMILY BONDS

During the course of centuries we have become accustomed to Christian morality which considers marriage and setting up a family as the only way to prevent sexual gratification from being sinful. That connection has been shown to exist elsewhere in a few scattered instances; but it is by no means frequent. Among most people, marriage has very little to do with the satisfaction of the sexual urge, since the social set-up provides for many opportunities which can be not only external to marriage, but even contradictory to it. For instance, among the Muria of Bastar, in central India, when puberty comes, boys and girls are sent to live together in communal huts where they enjoy a great deal of sexual freedom, but after a few years of such leeway they get married according to the rule that no former adolescent lovers should be permitted to unite. Then, in a rather small village, each man is married to a wife whom he has known during his younger years as his present neighbor's (or neighbors') lover.

On the other hand, and if sexual considerations are not paramount for marriage purposes, economic necessities are found everywhere in the first place. We have already shown that what makes marriage a fundamental need in tribal societies is the division of labor between the sexes.

Like the form of the family, the division of labor stems more from social and cultural considerations than from natural ones. Truly, in every human group, women give birth to children and take care of them, and men rather have as their specialty hunting and warlike activities. Even there, though, we have ambiguous cases: of course men never give birth to babies, but in many societies, as we have seen with the courvade, they are made to act as if they did. And there is a great deal of difference between the Nambikwara father nursing his baby and cleaning it when it soils itself, and the European nobleman of not long ago to whom his

THE FAMILY

children were formally presented from time to time, being otherwise confined to the women's quarters until the boys were old enough to be taught riding and fencing. Conversely, the young concubines of the Nambikwara chieftain disdain domestic activities and prefer to share in their husband's adventurous expeditions. It is by no means unlikely that a similar custom, prevailing among other South American tribes, where a special class of women, half wantons and half helpers, did not marry, but accompanied the men on the warpath, is at the origin of the famous legend of the Amazons.

When we turn to activities less basic than child-rearing and war-making, it becomes still more difficult to discern rules governing the division of labor between the sexes. The Bororo women till the soil while among the Zairi this is a man's work; according to tribe, hut building, pot making, weaving, may be incumbent upon either sex. Therefore, we should be careful to distinguish the *fact* of the division of labor between the sexes which is practically universal, from the *way* according to which different tasks are attributed to one or the other sex, where we should recognize the same paramount influence of cultural factors, let us say the same *artificiality* which presides over the organization of the family itself.

Here, again, we are confronted with the same question we have already met with: if the natural reasons which could explain the division of labor between the sexes do not seem to play a decisive part, as soon as we leave the solid ground of women's biological specialization in the production of children, why does it exist at all? The very fact that it varies endlessly according to the society selected for consideration shows that, as for the family itself, it is the mere fact of its existence which is mysteriously required, the form under which it comes to exist being utterly irrelevant, at least from the point of view of any natural necessity. However, after having considered the different aspects of the problem, we are now in a position to perceive some common features which may bring us nearer to an answer than we were at the beginning of this chapter. Since family appears to us as a positive social reality, perhaps the only positive social reality, we are prone to define it exclusively by its positive characteristics. Now it should be pointed out that whenever we have tried to show what the family is, at the same time we were implying what it is not, and the negative aspects may be as important as the others. To return to the division of labor we were just discussing, when it is stated that one sex must perform certain tasks, this also means

that the other sex is forbidden to do them. In that light, the sexual division of labor is nothing else than a device to institute a reciprocal state of dependency between the sexes.

The same thing may be said of the sexual side of the family life. Even if it is not true, as we have shown, that the family can be explained on sexual grounds, since for many tribes, sexual life and the family are by no means as closely connected as our moral norms would make them, there is a negative aspect which is much more important: the structure of the family, always and everywhere, makes certain types of sexual connections impossible, or at least wrong.

Indeed, the limitations may vary to a great extent according to the culture under consideration. In ancient Russia, there was a custom known as *svokachestvo* whereby a father was entitled to a sexual privilege over his son's young wife; a symmetrical custom has been mentioned in some part of southeastern Asia where the persons implied are the sister's son and his mother's brother's wife. We ourselves do not object to a man marrying his wife's sister, a practice which English law still considered incestuous in the mid-nineteenth century. What remains true is that every known society, past or present, proclaims that if the husband-wife relationship, to which, as just seen, some others may eventually be added, implies sexual rights, there are other relationships equally derived from the familial structure, which make sexual connections inconceivable, sinful, or legally punishable. The universal prohibition of incest specifies, as a general rule, that people considered as parents and children, or brother and sister, even if only by name, cannot have sexual relations and even less marry each other. In some recorded instances—such as ancient Egypt, pre-Columbian Peru, also some African, southeast Asian, and Polynesian kingdoms—incest was defined far less strictly than elsewhere. Even there, however, the rule existed since incest was limited to a minority group, the ruling class (with the exception of perhaps, ancient Egypt where it may have been more common); on the other hand, not every kind of close relatives were permitted as spouse: for instance it was the half-sister, the full-one being excluded; or, if the full-sister was allowed, then it should be the elder sister, the younger one remaining incestuous.

The space at our disposal is too short to demonstrate that, in this case as previously, there is no natural ground for the custom. Geneticists have shown that while consanguineous marriages are likely to bring ill effects in a society which has consistently avoided them in the past, the danger

would be much smaller if the prohibition had never existed, since this would have given ample opportunity for the harmful hereditary characters to become apparent and be automatically eliminated through selection: as a matter of fact this is the way breeders improve the quality of their subjects. Therefore, the dangers of consanguineous marriages are the outcome of the incest prohibition rather than actually explaining it. Furthermore, since very many primitive peoples do not share our belief in biological harm resulting from consanguineous marriages, but have entirely different theories, the reason should be sought elsewhere, in a way more consistent with the opinions generally held by mankind as a whole.

The true explanation should be looked for in a completely opposite direction, and what has been said concerning the sexual division of labor may help us to grasp it. This has been explained as a device to make the sexes mutually dependent on social and economic grounds, thus establishing clearly that marriage is better than celibacy. Now, exactly in the same way that the principle of sexual division of labor establishes a mutual dependency between the sexes, compelling them thereby to perpetuate themselves and to found a family, the prohibition of incest establishes a mutual dependency between families, compelling them, in order to perpetuate themselves, to give rise to new families. It is through a strange oversight that the similarity of the two processes is generally overlooked on account of the use of terms as dissimilar as *division*, on the one hand, and *prohibition* on the other. We could easily have emphasized only the negative aspect of the division of labor by calling it a prohibition of tasks; and conversely, outlined the positive aspect of incest-prohibition by calling it the principle of division of marriageable rights between families. For incest-prohibition simply states that families (however they should be defined) can only marry between each other and that they cannot marry inside themselves.

We now understand why it is so wrong to try to explain the family on the purely natural grounds of procreation, motherly instinct, and psychological feelings between man and woman and between father and children. None of these would be sufficient to give rise to a family, and for a reason simple enough: for the whole of mankind, the absolute requirement for the creation of a family is the previous existence of two other families, one ready to provide a man, the other one a woman, who will through their marriage start a third one, and so on indefinitely. To put it in other words: what makes man really different from the animal

is that, in mankind, a family could not exist if there were no society: i.e. a plurality of families ready to acknowledge that there are other links than consanguineous ones, and that the natural process of filiation can only be carried on through the social process of affinity.

How this interdependency of families has become recognized is another problem which we are in no position to solve because there is no reason to believe that man, since he emerged from his animal state, has not enjoyed a basic form of social organization, which, as regards the fundamental principles, could not be essentially different from our own. Indeed, it will never be sufficiently emphasized that, if social organization had a beginning, this could only have consisted in the incest prohibition since, as we have just shown, the incest prohibition is, in fact, a kind of remodeling of the biological conditions of mating and procreation (which know no rule, as can be seen from observing animal life) compelling them to become perpetuated only in an artificial framework of taboos and obligations. It is there, and only there, that we find a passage from nature to culture, from animal to human life, and that we are in a position to understand the very essence of their articulation.

As Tylor has shown almost a century ago, the ultimate explanation is probably that mankind has understood very early that, in order to free itself from a wild struggle for existence, it was confronted with the very simple choice of 'either marrying-out or being killed-out'. The alternative was between biological families living in juxtaposition and endeavoring to remain closed, self-perpetuating units, over-riden by their fears, hatreds, and ignorances, and the systematic establishment, through the incest prohibition, of links of intermarriage between them, thus succeeding to build, out of the artificial bonds of affinity, a true human society, despite, and even in contradiction with, the isolating influence of consanguinity. Therefore we may better understand how it came to be that, while we still do not know exactly what the family is, we are well aware of the prerequisites and the practical rules which define its conditions of perpetuation.

The so-called primitive peoples have, for that purpose, very simple and clever rules which the tremendous increase in size and fluidity of modern society makes it sometimes difficult for us to understand.

In order to insure that families will not become closed and that they will not constitute progressively as many self-sufficient units, we satisfy ourselves with forbidding marriage between near relatives. The amount of social contacts which any given individual is likely to maintain out-

side his or her own restricted family is great enough to afford a good probability that, on the average, the hundreds of thousands of families constituting at any given moment a modern society will not be permitted to 'freeze' if one may say so. On the contrary, the greatest possible freedom for the choice of a mate (submitted to the only condition that the choice has to be made outside the restricted family) insures that these families will be kept in a continuous flow and that a satisfactory process of continuous 'mix-up' through intermarriage will prevail among them, thus making for a homogeneous and well-blended social fabric.

Conditions are quite different in the so-called primitive societies: there, the global figure of the population is a small one, although it may vary from a few dozen up to several thousands. Besides, social fluidity is low and it is not likely that many people will have a chance to get acquainted with others, during their lifetime, except within the limits of the village, hunting territory, et cetera, though it is true that many tribes have tried to organize occasions for wider contacts, for instance during feasts, tribal ceremonies, et cetera. Even in such cases, however, the chances are limited to the tribal group since most primitive peoples consider that the tribe is a kind of wide family, and that the frontiers of mankind stop together with the tribal bonds themselves.

Given such conditions, it is still possible to insure the blending of families into a well-united society by using procedures similar to our own, i.e. a mere prohibition of marriage between relatives without any kind of positive prescriptions as to where and whom one should correctly marry. Experience shows, however, that this is only possible in small societies under the condition that the diminutive size of the group and the lack of social mobility be compensated by widening to a considerable extent the range of prohibited degrees. It is not only one's own sister or daughter that, under such circumstances, one should not marry, but any women with whom blood relationship may be traced, even in the remotest possible way. Very small groups with a low cultural level and a loose political and social organization, such as some desert tribes of North and South America, provide us with examples of that solution.

However, the great majority of primitive peoples have devised another method to solve the problem. Instead of confining themselves to a statistical process, relying on the probability that certain interdictions being set up, a satisfactory equilibrium of exchanges between the biological families will spontaneously result, they have preferred to invent rules which every individual and family should follow carefully, and from

which a given form of blending, experimentally conceived of as satisfactory, is bound to arise.

Whenever this takes place, the entire field of kinship becomes a kind of complicated game, the kinship terminology being used to distribute all the members of the group into different categories, the rule being that the category of the parents defines either directly or indirectly the category of the children, and that, according to the categories in which they are placed, the members of the group may or may not get married. The study of these rules of kinship and marriage has provided modern anthropology with one of its more difficult and complicated chapters. Apparently ignorant and savage peoples have been able to devise fantastically clever codes which sometimes request, in order to understand their workings and effects, some of the best logical and even mathematical minds available in modern civilization. Therefore, we will limit ourselves to explaining the crudest principles which are the more frequently met with.

One of these is, undoubtedly, the so-called rule of cross-cousin marriage, which has been taken up by innumerable tribes all over the world. This is a complex system according to which collateral relatives are divided into two basic categories: 'parallel' collaterals, when the relationship can be traced through two siblings of the same sex, and 'cross' collaterals, when the relationship is traced through two siblings of opposite sex. For instance, my paternal uncle is a parallel relative and so is my maternal aunt; while the maternal uncle on the one hand, the paternal aunt on the other, are cross-relatives. In the same way, cousins who trace their relationship through two brothers or two sisters, are parallel-cousins; and those who are connected through a brother and a sister are cross-cousins. In the generation of the nephews, if I am a man, my brother's children will be my parallel-nephews while my sister's children are my cross-nephews.

Now, the startling fact about this distinction is that practically all the tribes which make it claim that parallel relatives are the same thing as the closest ones on the same generation level: my father's brother is a 'father'; my mother's sister a 'mother'; my parallel-cousins are like brothers and sisters to me; and my parallel-nephews like children. Marriage with any of these would be incestuous and is consequently forbidden. On the other hand, cross-relatives are designated by special terms of their own, and it is among them that one should preferably find a mate. This is true to the extent that quite frequently, there is only one

word to mean both 'cross-cousin' and 'spouse.' What can be the reason for this claim, exactly similar among hundreds of different tribes in Africa, America, Asia, Oceania, that one should not marry, under any pretence, a father's brother's daughter, since that would amount to marrying one's sister, while the best conceivable spouse consists of a mother's brother's daughter, namely a relative, who on purely biological grounds, is exactly as close as the former?

There are even tribes which go a step further in these refinements. Some think that it is not cross-cousins who should marry, but only cross-cousins once removed (i.e. children of cross-cousins); others, and this is by far the most frequent case, are not satisfied with the simple distinction between cross- and parallel-cousins; they subdivide the cross-cousins themselves into marriageable and non-marriageable ones. For instance, although a mother's brother's daughter is, according to the above definitions, a cross-cousin in the same sense as a father's sister's daughter, there are in India, living side by side, tribes which believe that one of them, only different according to case, make a suitable spouse, death being preferable to the sin of marrying the other.

All these distinctions (to which others could be added) are fantastic at first sight because they cannot be explained on biological or psychological grounds. But, if we keep in mind what has been explained in the preceding section, i.e. that all the marriage prohibitions have as their only purpose to establish a mutual dependency between the biological families, or, to put it in stronger terms, that marriage rules express the refusal, on the part of society, to admit the exclusive existence of the biological family, then everything becomes clear. For all these complicated sets of rules and distinctions are nothing but the outcome of the processes according to which, in a given society, families are set up against each other for the purpose of playing the game of matrimony.

Let us consider briefly the rules of the game. Since societies try to maintain their identity in the course of time, there should be first a rule fixing the status of the children in respect to that of their parents. The simplest possible rule to that end, and by far the most frequently adopted, is the generally called rule of *unilineal descent*, namely that children get the same status of either their father (patrilineal descent) or their mother (matrilineal descent). It can also be decided that the status of both the father and the mother are taken into consideration, and that they should be combined to define a third category in which the children will be put. For instance, a child of a father belonging to

the status A and of a mother belonging to the status B, would himself belong to a status C; and the status will be D if it is the father who is B and the mother who is A. Then, C and D will marry together and procreate children either A or B according to the sex orientation, and so on indefinitely. Everybody with some leisure time may devise rules of this kind, and it will be surprising indeed if some tribe, at least, cannot be found where each rule is actually being applied.

The rule of descent being defined, the second question is to know in how many exogamous groups the society in consideration is being divided. An exogamous group is one inside of which intermarriage is forbidden and which, consequently, requires at least another exogamous group with whom it may exchange its sons and/or daughters for marriage purposes. Among ourselves, there are as many exogamous groups as restricted families, that is an extremely high number, and it is this high number which allows us to rely on probability. In primitive societies, however, the figure is usually much smaller, on the one hand because the group itself is a small one, and on the other hand because the familial ties go much further than it is the case among us.

Our first hypothesis will be the simpler one: that of unilineal descent and of two exogamous groups, A and B. Then, the only solution will be that men of A marry women of B, and men of B marry women of A. A typical case will be that of two men, respectively A and B, exchanging their sisters so that each one may get a wife. The reader has just to take a pencil and a sheet of paper to build up the theoretical genealogy which will be the outcome of such a set-up. Whatever the rule of descent, siblings and parallel-cousins will always fall in the same category, while cross-cousins of whatever kind will fall in opposite categories. Therefore, only cross-cousins (if we are playing the game with 2 to 4 groups) or children of cross-cousins (if we are playing with 8 groups, for 6 provide an intermediary case) will meet the initial rule that spouses should belong to opposite groups.

So far, we have considered groups tied up in pairs: 2, 4, 6, 8. They can only come in even numbers. What, now, if the society is made up of an odd number of exchanging groups? With the preceding rule, there will be a group which will remain alone by itself, without a partner with whom to set up an exchange relationship. Hence, the need for additional rules which can be of use whatever the number of elements, either even or odd.

There are two ways to meet the difficulty. Exchange can either remain

simultaneous and become indirect, or remain direct at the expense of becoming consecutive. The first type will be when group A gives its daughters as wives to group B, B to C, C to D, D to $n \dots$ and finally n to A. When the cycle is completed, every group has given a woman and has received one, though it has not given to the same group as that from which it has received. In that case, pencil and paper will show that parallel-cousins always fall in one's own group, same as brothers and sisters, and cannot consequently be married according to rule. As to cross-cousins, a new distinction will appear: the female cross-cousin on the mother's side (i.e. the mother's brother's daughter) will always fall in the marriageable group (A to B, B to C, et cetera) while that on the father's side (father's sister's daughter) will fall in the opposite group (that is, the one to which my group gives wives, but from which it does not receive any: B to A, C to B, etc.).

The alternative would be to keep the exchange direct, though in consecutive generations: for instance, A receives a wife from B, and returns to A the daughter born from that marriage to become the spouse of a man A of the following generation. If we keep our groups arranged in a series: A, B, C, D, $n \dots$, the general set-up will be, then, that any group, let us say C, at one generation gives to D and receives from B; at the following generation, C repays B and gets its own return from D, and so on indefinitely. Here again the patient reader will find out that cross-cousins are being distinguished in two categories, but this time in a reverse way: for a man, the correct mate will always be the father's sister's daughter, the mother's brother's daughter being always in the 'wrong' category.

These are the simplest cases. All over the world there are still kinship systems and marriage rules for which no satisfactory interpretation has as yet been brought forward; such are the Ambrym system in the New Hebrides, the Munngin of northwestern Australia, and the whole North American complex known as the Crow-Omaha kinship system. It is fairly certain that to explain these and other sets of rules, however, one will have to proceed as we have shown here, namely to interpret kinship systems and marriage rules as embodying the rule of that very special kind of game which consists, for consanguineous groups of men, in exchanging women among themselves, that is building up new families with the pieces of earlier ones, which should be shattered for that purpose.

The female reader, who may be shocked to see womankind treated as a commodity submitted to transactions between male operators, can easily find comfort in the assurance that the rules of the game would remain unchanged should it be decided to consider the men as being exchanged by women's groups. As a matter of fact, some very few societies, of a highly developed matrilineal type, have to a limited extent attempted to express things that way. And both sexes can be comforted from a still different (but in that case slightly more complicated) formulation of the game, whereby it would be said that consanguineous groups consisting of both men and women are engaged in exchanging together bonds of relationships.

The important conclusion to be kept in mind is that the restricted family can neither be said to be the element of the social group, nor can it be claimed to result from it. Rather, the social group can only become established in contradistinction, and to some extent in compliance, with the family, since in order to maintain the society through time, women should procreate children, benefit from male protection while they are engaged in confinement and nursing, and, since precise sets of rules are needed, to perpetuate throughout the generations the basic pattern of the social fabric. However, the primary social concern regarding the family is not to protect or enhance it: it is rather an attitude of diffidence, a denial of its right to exist either in isolation or permanently; restricted families are only permitted to live for a limited period of time, either long or short according to case, but under the strict condition that their component parts be ceaselessly displaced, loaned, borrowed, given away, or returned, so that new restricted families may be endlessly created or made to vanish. Thus, the relation between the social group as a whole and the restricted families which seem to constitute it is not a static one, like that of a wall to the bricks it is built with. It is rather a dynamic process of tension and opposition with an equilibrium point extremely difficult to find, its exact position being submitted to endless variations from time to time and from society to society. But the word of the Scriptures: "You will leave your father and mother" provides the iron rule for the establishment and functioning of any society.

Society belongs to the realm of culture while the family is the emanation, on the social level, of those natural requirements without which there could be no society, and indeed no mankind. As a philosopher of the sixteenth century has said, man can only overcome nature by complying with its laws. Therefore, society has to give the family some

amount of recognition. And it is not so surprising that, as geographers have also noticed with respect to the use of natural land resources, the greatest amount of compliance with the natural laws is likely to be found at both extremes of the cultural scale: among the simpler peoples as well as among the more highly civilized. Indeed, the first ones are not in a position to afford paying the price of too great a departure, while the second have already suffered from enough mistakes to understand that compliance is the best policy. This explains why, as we have already noticed, the small, relatively stable, monogamic restricted family seems to be given greater recognition, both among the more primitive peoples and in modern societies, than in what may be called (for the sake of the argument), the intermediate levels. However, this is nothing more than a slight shift of the equilibrium point between nature and culture, and does not affect the general picture given in this chapter. When one travels slowly and with great effort, halts should be long and frequent. And when one is given the possibility to travel often and fast, he or she should also, though for different reasons, expect to stop and rest frequently. The more roads there are, the more crossings there are likely to be. Social life imposes on the consanguineous stocks of mankind an incessant traveling back and forth, and family life is little else than the expression of the need to slacken the pace at the crossroads and to take a chance to rest. But the orders are to keep on marching. And society can no more be said to consist of families than a journey is made up of the stopovers which break it down into discontinuous stages. They are at the same time its condition and its negation.