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THE WESTERN FAMILY
A CULTURAL AND POLITICAL ANALYSIS

BY

MICHEL SCHOOPYANS

PROFESSEUR À L'UNIVERSITÉ DE LOUVAIN

Secretariat : ASIAN SECTION - Tamilnadu Family Development Centre
81-A, Nungambakkam High Road, Madras - 600 034

1. Allow me first of all to express the joy it gives me to be here among you. Our presence at this congress proves that the world is held together in an immense living chain made of men and women struggling in order that justice be done for all men without exception.
2. I thank Sister (and Dr.) Catherine Bernard for having invited me to participate in your work despite my poor knowledge of spoken English. I thank her particularly for having thereby offered me the occasion to come into contact for the first time with India, whose role will be essential in defining what the world of the twenty-first century is to be. In fact, I spent ten years of my life in Bresil. These were ten very happy years, because it was there that I became sensitive to the problems that our congress is called to examine on a global scale.
3. The exposé that I offer you will be divided into six parts. We will show first (I) of all that culture means above all a typically human environment where people respect one another, dialogue, and collaborate. Secondly (II), we will point out the central position held by the family in every human society and in every culture. Thirdly (III), we will point out that the psychological menaces, weighing on the family in the West, endanger the typically human cultural environment. In the fourth part (IV), we will show that some recent biomedical discoveries threaten the family both on cultural and political level. Fifthly (V), we will speculate briefly on the possible abuses of such discoveries, and finally (VI), we will ask ourselves what we can do in reaction to the unprecedented problems facing us.

I. CULTURE : A TYPICALLY HUMAN PHENOMENON

4. Culture is first of all the development of Nature. Mankind has to cope with a Nature that is welcoming and hostile, familiar and mysterious, all at the same time. Man learns to discover, understand and master the world in which he is rooted. This is the work of the sciences and technology. "Culture" therefore connotes a typically human relationship between man and nature. Man alone cultivates the "natural" environment he is put into; he alone takes the initiative to transform it, to mark it with an intention, a project. When I cultivate a field, I work it, I fertilize it, I sow it, and I weed it, all in view of harvesting a particular grain at a particular time.

5. As some other words, "culture" has the same root as the latin verb colere which means : to honor, to place in honor, to develop, to cultivate. This latin verb is often used in a religious sense : "cult" connotes honor given to God. The word "culture" evokes not only the development of land or of a heritage, but also of a man. When it's a matter of cultivating something material one specifies : agriculture, horticulture, monoculture, etc. When it's a matter of a human being, one speaks simply of "culture". "My friend Peter is very cultured", for instance. Sometimes one specifies : cultured or learned in music, in literature, in history, etc.
6. Simply conjuring up such examples makes us realise that Peter did not acquire his culture or education all alone. Indeed, culture is not simply a certain quality of relationship between man and nature. It is a relationship between one human being and other human beings. These relations are created by direct contacts between people. They are likewise created by political, social, economic, and other institutions which organise the life of human communities, which structure them in their coming about, in their history. This is where the idea of integration comes from : each person is implied in a complex network of relationships - both long and short - with his or her peers : he brings to them something original; and he thereby receives a "plus être", an increase of being, a greater quality of life. From this comes the idea of the Word, the creative Word, the idea of dialogue, of intention.
7. These remarks suffice to make it clear that culture is a phenomenon particular to man : it is the creation of a specifically human relationship between mankind and nature, between men and women among themselves. It is objectified in concrete expressions : the arts, the sciences, technology, life-style. The specificity of this relationship stems from the human conscience.
8. It is as I, as a being capable of reflection that man situates himself in relation to nature, in relation to others. "As a being capable of reflection" : this means that man is situated, of course, but that he can judge. And judging is an act of freedom. Man refuses fatalist attitudes when faced with inclement weather : he builds dikes, digs canals; he humanises nature and transforms it.

9. Moreover, man considers it abnormal to be exploited by other men: he wants to improve institutions so that relations between men can be fair.
10. Man is not only capable of questioning his relationship with nature and with others; he can also question his relationship with himself : man forms himself, cultivates himself, fashions himself (cfr. "Bildung"). He reflects on his experience; he wonders about it; he judges it. He makes evaluations and projects.
11. In this way, culture is born from man's experience of his situation and of the awareness of his limits. The animal does not wonder, does not make projects. In transforming nature with his work, man becomes conscious of his capabilities; he becomes conscious of his dignity. He humanises nature.
12. Yet this consciousness is much sharper when man comes into contact with another. I may only see in the other a being who reveals to me my limits, a rival threatening my security. But if contemporary research has brought into light the role of aggressivity in the human psyche, it has also shown how much we depend on one another in order to be ourselves. What's more, I can make an act of sovereign freedom by opening myself to another. The other, because he is different than I, will bring to my existence an unexpected density.
13. Culture is a typically human milieu where men are not limited to producing something, nor where they content themselves with being tolerant, but where they freely open themselves to others because they know how much they can build up and edify one another by their exchanges.

II. CULTURE AND THE FAMILY

14. The family appears therefore to be the basic cell of every human society, the place where all culture takes root.
15. Many contemporary studies have shown that the family is the fundamental framework of human society. This confirms moreover the age-old experience of humanity. It is within the family that a man

and a women accept one another in their differences; in the reciprocal gift of their heart and bodies, spouses become themselves together through a love that does not cease to grow.

16. The family, therefore, is the institution in which and by which man appears as the closest collaborator with God in all creation. In the family, the love that the spouses bring to one another prolongs the creative love of God in two inseparable ways. First of all, to love one's partner is to share one's existence in such a way that it responds more and more to one's personal vocation. A man cooperates with God when he continues, in his wife, the creative work that God has undertaken in her. A woman cooperates with God, when she continues, in her husband, the creative work that God has undertaken in him.
17. The spouses are then called to continue the creative work of God by giving life to their children. Ultimately, the parents do not reproduce. They are procreative; they procreate in the name of God. They bring into existence, not just higher animals, but persons, free and responsible, with whom paternal, filial, and fraternal ties will be woven little by little.
18. We see in this way the specificity of human sexuality : its fecundity goes beyond the merely biological. Animal sexuality is determined by instinctive mechanisms, that provide for the survival of the species. Human sexuality has, of course, profound biological roots, but it goes beyond pure instinct. In human sexuality, there is first of all an exchange between persons, exchanges carries out on all levels of human existence. They operate not only on the physical level, but on psychological, intellectual, and religious levels.
19. Human love is above all dialogue between two free persons who decide together to take part in a common project. Even from the point of view of the imparting of life, the parents are not simply given over to the whims of nature or to the fantasies of the instincts. They are capable of undertaking projects, which means, in this case, freely mastering their fertility. This is what it meant by responsible parenthood.

20. In this way, one sees that the family is situated at the meeting point between persons and culture. Culture, we were saying a minute ago, is born of a typically human relation between man and nature, between man and his peers. The prototype of this two-fold relationship is presented to us both in any by the family.
21. It is in the family that the couple experiences in a human way its relation to nature. The transmission of human life does not obey purely instinctive impulses, as does the animal. It is rather the most beautiful blossom of love between two persons. It is in the family that human beings personalise themselves more and more, and this is true of the parents as well as the children. It is in the family that human beings learn to open themselves freely to another and to feel the responsibility that this brings.
22. The family, then, is the condition that renders any culture possible; it is the basic cell of all human society. It is precisely because it teaches men and women to respect one another, to dialogue, to collaborate, in an atmosphere of trust and freedom, that the family has always been fought against by totalitarianism and authoritarian regimes. Plato, in the Republic, already recommended that the City take control of the family, of the relationship between spouses, of the generation of children, of education.

III. THE UNDOING OF THE FAMILY IN THE WEST

23. As an illustration of the state of the family in the West, let us look at some revealing facts.
24. In France : in 1972, there were 415.000 marriages; in 1981, there were 315.000. 40% of couples lived together before marrying. The mean age of first marriages is continually on the rise : it is at 23 years of age for young women, 25 for young men. Divorces were at the rate of 45.000 in 1969; they went up to 90.000 in 1979. Children born outside of wedlock represented 6% of births in the sixties; they were at 11% in 1981.

25. In Germany : disillusionment with marriage is well illustrated in the following facts, dating from 1984 : 10% of the population of marriageable age declare a preference for celibacy; 20% of married couples do not want children; 19% want only one child; 45% of couples want only two children.
26. The reproduction rate remains stable at a very low point, and rises only in a very minor way. By reproduction rate, we mean the ratio between the number of births and the number of women of childbearing age.

	<u>1977</u>	<u>1982</u>
Spain	2.65	1.90
Italy	1.95	1.57
France	1.86	1.94
Great Britain	1.67	1.77
Sweden	1.64	1.62
West Germany	1.40	1.40

27. In addition to this, the population is aging. In Belgium, the ageing coefficient, that is, the number of elderly persons of 65 years and above per one 100 children under fifteen, stands as follows : in 1965, 53 persons; in 1976, 65 persons; for the year 2000, the figure predicted is 81 persons.

28. In France we observe the following :

	<u>1985</u>	<u>2015</u>
Young people under twenty	27.5%	18%
Elderly people over sixty	19.5%	26%

29. As for the ratio between the population of the EEC (European Economic Community) and the World population, we get the following figures :

1984 : 6.7%
2000 : 5.4%

These statistics already indicate in some way the depth of the crisis experienced by the family in the West. But instead of multiplying statistics, let us enter more deeply into our reflection.

30. The difficulties that couples meet are in keeping with an overall atmosphere so well known that it suffices simply to recall the major features : a society of abundance, a tendency toward hedonism, a slackening of morals, an often excessively reserved attitude of parents and educators who give up when faced with their responsibilities.
31. To add to it, the married woman is often divided between her home and her work. Likewise, state fiscal policies are unfair to married couples and families with several children.
32. But above all, western society, which has nonetheless seen flourish a personalism of christian inspiration, seems to be falling back into a selfish individualism that tends to promote the primacy of self-interest, utility, or force in relations with others. This return to individualism even manifests itself in certain feminist movements.
33. One of the major causes of the undoing the family, is to be found in this. Often driven by their surroundings, and sometimes encouraged by their milieu, many young people live together and change partners frequently. The idea of a stable, enduring, or even definitive commitment in the framework of marriage frightens them; the perspective or possibility of having children disturbs them.
34. In practice, therefore, a division in human sexuality, totally new in the history of humanity, is establishing itself. Sexual relations are not only reduced to an individual search for pleasure - and maximalized pleasure at that; these relations take place in such a way that they cannot come to their natural end; the imparting of life.
35. This situation, as one might suspect, brings on many a tragedy : love that turns to hate, irreparable emotional wounds, bitter solitude, motherhood outside of a home, abortions, nervous depressions, and sometimes suicides. After such futile affairs, the partners are once again faced

with themselves, vulnerable as solitary beings are. Life has no longer any meaning, significance, or direction.

36. Eventually, the discredit of which the family is victim, will have disastrous effects on human society. The weakening of the family cell will produce, as a consequence, an ever growing control of public authorities over individuals. The latter, left more and more to themselves, will have to accept an increasing dependance on the state or society. The state, for its part, will take advantage of this, in order to manipulate persons and intermediary groups by intervening more and more in cultural and social life.

IV. FAMILY AND BIOTECHNOLOGY

37. Here we arrive at an important stage of our exposé. To begin with (I), we saw that culture is a specifically human phenomenon; secondly (II), we examined the ties between culture and family; after that (III), we explained that the western family is in a state of crisis on account of the revival of selfish individualism. In the fourth part (IV), which we will now take up, we will show that recent biomedical discoveries threaten the family in such a way that the psychological causes of the crisis we have just analysed are actually given greater potential.
38. We will begin with a concrete case that has nothing hypothetical about it : It is indeed possible, at the present time, to bring into existence a human being who will know neither his father, his mother, nor even his "incubator" or surrogate mother. An ovum taken from a donor X can actually be fertilized in vitro by the sperm of donor Y, and then be implanted in the uterus of a surrogate mother Z. The child born in such a case could very well not know the identity of X, Y, or even Z. He would be, from the very outset, a human being deprived of any human relation. And yet, the most natural and spontaneous way of defining someone's identity is to indicate his filiation. This is, in fact, the origin of many surnames : Janssens, Johnson, and so on. But in the case we have just described, the human being in question would simply be an individual, having no ties with anyone. From the very

beginning of his life, he would be deprived of all interpersonal relationship. Literally thrown into existence in this way, he risks being denied any recognition, and will feel no responsibility for anyone. He will be at the mercy of the technician who brought him into existence, or possibly at the mercy of those who gave the orders to the technician.

39. One can foresee the inextricable problems that these practices will raise. If the state, a party, or an elite (racial, scientific, etc.), or any kind of "nomenklatura" were to take control of the production of human beings, they would exercise their power over subjects who have no idea where they come from.
40. The phasing out of interpersonal relationships, such as fatherhood and motherhood, along with the biological roots they include, alters the relationship of love between a man and a woman as well as the sexual commitment this implies.
41. Pierre Simon's dream is becoming a reality : individuals are left to their solitary pleasure, and "society, with physicians as its mediators", deprives them of all responsibility towards partners or offspring.(2). This is confirmed by Mrs. Simone Veil : "We are noticing a certain tendency towards an increasing privatization of sexuality and reproduction. They are seen more and more as the business of the couple alone, while their consequence (i.e., the child) is being more and more socialized" (3). We are on the verge of seeing the nationalisation of human procreation. Indeed, by disintegrating interpersonal, amorous, paternal, and fraternal ties, the very fabric of the family is deteriorated and destroyed. "The whole concept of family is being shaken up" (4).

- (2) One of the post revealing books on the scientific and free-masonic inspiration behind certain aspects of today's biocracy is De la vie avant toute chose, by Dr. Pierre Simon (gynecologists and Great Master of the "Grand Orient de France"). Editor : Mazarine - Paris 1979. The expression quoted is found on p. 222.
- (3) Simone Veil, former Minister of Health in France, is well known for pushing through pro-abortion law in France in 1975. Cf. her "Exposé" published in Mexico, 1977. International Population Conference Proceedings Paperback edition, p. 678. French version published by "Union Internationale pour l'Étude Scientifique de la Population", Liège. The quotation is taken from p. 598.
- (4) Pierre Simon, op. cit., p. 222.

42. To reach this goal, you need to get at the weakest link in the chain : the child, the unborn child. Can we exclude the possibility that secret confraternities, widely represented in all kinds of organizations might make this the first item of their program ?
43. And so, for the first time in history, biological resources offer totalitarian utopias the technical possibility of carrying out their dream. Plato and Campanella might have dreamed of a "radiant city", that would control the quantity and quality of children. Today however, "the total mastery over reproduction" has become a possibility available to the state or to a private group with adequate means.
44. It is no longer simply a matter, as Malthus considered it, of letting natural selection run its course. In the spirit of Galton (1822-1911), one must establish a eugenics program in proportion with available technologies and according to political projects. The state, some other institution, or private groups, will have to set down norms for the production of human livestock, taking into consideration the qualitative and quantitative demands inherent to the society project that one wants to establish.

V. THE CHILDREN OF THE REPUBLIC

45. There is, of course, no question of stopping when things are so well under way. The state or private groups will have to provide education for the individuals it has admitted into existence. One vast educational system - secular or even atheist - will take care of shaping individuals. The state and the small group that will run it, will thereby become the new Providence. This new Leviathan, this new mortal god, this political idol, after having decided - through the mediation of physicians and biologists - who can live and who must die, who can and must give germinal cells, will make it its first objective to manage this raw material that is life.
46. The fortunate few who are selected will then be totally devoted to the state : all of them children in care of the republic ! Among other things, this is what the Marquis de Sade foresaw when he wrote : "In France, where the population is too large, ... it will be neces-

sary to limit the number of children and mercilessly drown the rest ... The government, thereby master of these children, would then have as many supporters as it would raise".

47. A nearly as ambitious a project of education and eugenics can be found, as we know, in Mein Kampf (5), where we already find advocated the permission, and even the patriotic duty of individuals to procreate, in conformity with ideological and racial norms. We likewise find here, as a negative corollary, the idea of the prohibition and even the material impossibility of reproducing, imposed on individuals considered to be too deviant in relation to the dictated norms. From now on, however, since manipulations have become more refined, and techniques have achieved such high performance rates, the norms can be defined and fixed with greater precision, and applied with the merciless rigor called for by the categorical imperative of efficiency.
48. The remarks we have just made are further developed in various publications we have made available to you.

VI. WHAT CAN WE DO ?

49. The time has come, however, to move on to the sixth and last part of our presentation : what possibilities and perspectives are open to us ?
50. We saw that the western family is exposed to two major deviations : one is due to psychological reasons, the other to new biomedical techniques. As a result, human beings increasingly run the risk of being deprived of all responsibility toward their partners, as well as their offspring.
51. This alienation results from the perversion of human sexuality in which a radical division has been established between the fulfillment

(5) Hitler develops those ideas in passing, but especially on pp. 398-404 of his book "Mein Kampf" - French translation "Mon combat", Nouvelles Editions Latines - Paris, no date.

of the spouses and the imparting of life.

52. The benefits of such an operation go to the State, public authorities, or even to private groups, who, through the intervention of medical doctors will tend to socialize and control the transmission of human life. It is no longer the good of persons or couples, but rather the good of the society or the species that will prevail.

What does one do in the face of such perverse tendencies ? We will try to answer that question in these final paragraphs :

53. We must first of all recall that ever since Plato (the fourth century B.C.) all totalitarian utopias have tried to subordinate the family to the interests of society, and have sometimes dreamed of destroying it. Reciprocally, the family has always been a stronghold against totalitarianism. It is primarily in the family that the important values of culture are handed down : language, history, a certain way of life, a sense of the world, a sense of God. It is thanks to the family that persons enter progressively into a certain cultural environment. It is likewise owing to the family, that cultures benefit from the contribution of persons who offer the new blood of their creativity. Thanks to the family, persons are protected from state pressure, which always tends to depersonalize its members. It is in the family that a young human being learns to resist indoctrination.
54. Cultures do, of course, mark relations between men with concrete characteristics. In this way, cultures give certain features to the family, varying within certain limits.
55. One might emphasize the conjugal family in the strict sense, or a group whose members share ties of consanguinity, lineage or other affinity; one might speak of the nuclear family or of the patriarchal family; in any case, there remain parents and their children.
56. Whatever the case may be, the family invariably represents, for any culture, the prototypical model of relations between men. The family provides the first and most important education; in this way, it opens the door to culture. The family guarantees a quality of interpersonal relations, which alone makes a fully human culture possible.

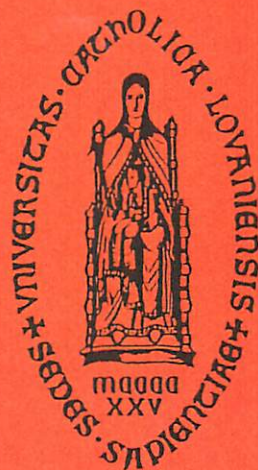
57. In order to protect and preserve persons, as well as culture, it is therefore indispensable to defend the family from anything that could constitute a seed of disintegration for it.
58. We have seen the extent of the profound crisis facing the family of western countries. This crisis takes expression in a very individualistic conception of human sexuality, which is further sharpened by the invasion of biomedical techniques, designed to deprive parents of the qualitative and quantitative control of their offspring.
59. Great vigilance and much discernment will therefore be necessary. Concretely, this means that developing countries must protect the family against the psychological and biomedical causes at the origin of the crisis of the family in the West.
60. Dear friends, sisters, and brothers, I would like to call this to your attention in a very serious way : You must refuse these sophisticated forms of domination or even colonisation, which are exercised by propagating methods that do not conform with your cultures and moral traditions, nor with the teaching of the great religions.
61. In the violence done to women by artificial contraception, to men and women by sterilization, to children and women by abortion, the old class struggle between strong and weak, rich and poor, finds its most ruthless expression.
62. By introducing into the behavior of your families the very practices that are dissolving the western family, you induce and encourage the destruction of natural solidarities; you will pervert the relationship at the heart of the family cell, and you will introduce a seed of corruption into the very fabric of your culture.
63. Natural methods of mastering one's fertility, with which we are especially concerned in this congress, not only offer the advantage of being morally acceptable and economically unburdensome, but attest above

all that man is a "whole", that he is body and soul; that he is grounded in matter but that he emerges from it through his spirit.

64. These methods are perfectly compatible with a specifically human conception of sexuality. They remind the husband and wife of their responsibility towards one another, and together toward their children. These methods have a positive goal : the natural regulation of fecundity. A distinction, both in nature and in spirit, must therefore be made between these and various other methods, whose goal is to prevent conception and birth.
65. These methods demand an ascetic effort, to which one consents only with the help of a loved one, and to which one commits one's self entirely, expecting nothing in return. These methods demand an effort to which one consents with love, and not simply for pleasure.
66. Natural methods, because they are morally more demanding, remind us that human sexuality is not a passing relationship between individuals, but rather an enduring relationship between persons focused on a common project.
67. It follows, then, that since the use of these methods is based on a better quality of interpersonal relations, one can expect that spreading their use will reinforce the cohesion and solidity of the family.
68. On the cultural level, the increasing availability of these methods is likewise very promising. Those who make use of these natural methods affirm, by their behavior, that neither artificial techniques, nor a third party have to intervene in the most intimate relation that exists between two persons. This is an outstanding way of proclaiming the primacy of freely assumed responsibility over the illusory securities offered by biotechnology.
69. In conclusion, the quality of relations that grow within the family depends on, and is a function of, the specifically human character of the couple's sexuality.

70. This quality of relation affects the relationship between parents and children, and likewise reflects back on the very fabric of culture. The family and culture thereby act not only as strongholds against totalitarian threats, but actually bring us the promise of a more human society, and for this very reason, a society better conformed to the designs of God.

Translation by Raymond DIETZ, in collaboration with the author.



ADDRESS OF THE AUTHOR :

Université Catholique de Louvain
Département de Science Politique
Collège Jacques Leclercq
bureau b. 140
1, Place Montesquieu
B. - 1348 - LOUVAIN-LA-NEUVE

T. : 00/32/10/43.41.30
Telex : 59 516/UCL.AC