Family – a biological fact, but a problematic concept

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It's Wednesday 17th of May, 2023, and I'm writing, as so often, immediately after an insight precipitated by a conversation over breakfast. I'm writing having considered that what I'm about to write will probably alienate many of my readers, for whom the concept of family is a very central and important thing. Well shoot, I have little expectation that my work will become popular within my remaining years.

My friend was quoting Friedrich Engels on the role of family in society. She was also saying how the Commissioner for Education of Soviet Russia, installed by Lenin in 1917, tried to transfer the work and responsibilities of parents to state institutions. This was a flop and lead to much alcoholism. The attempt was doomed to failure because the society was not ready for it – such a change in paradigm cannot be forced onto people, it can only come *from* them; the policy was reversed by Michael Gorbatschow.

Practical aspects

Looking back into history, the concept of family has many problems and has been misused in many respects: The privilege of nobles and the absolute authority of kings and queens (all hereditary by family), the passing on of wealth to ones descendants, the access of children to food and education depending on the wealth and standing of their parents, the caste system in India, having to pay a dowry or bride price to be allowed to marry, women being subjugated to their husbands (not only in Islam), children being misused by their parents, or brainwashed by them when the parents have strong beliefs… That list could go on much longer.

There's also the topic of children not relating to their parents. I've experienced this myself – my parents had strong religious beliefs which governed their lives, but my life took a very different path and I developed a totally different world view. We could not agree on almost all important topics, and therefore a deep and meaningful conversation was not possible. Since they both died I've never been back to England, as I also have no basis of understanding with my remaining relatives there. And I know that it's the same basic story for many of my friends. My true friends are much closer to me than my parents ever were.

So how do we cope with looking after senior citizens? In earlier times this happened in multi-generational houses – whether you got on well or not, it was the only soluti-

on available. For some lucky people this still works. But now we see a lot of children moving away to work, often enough even to other countries. Looking after ones parents is in such cases limited to occasional visits and doing their online-shopping. The seniors end up sooner rather than later in retirement homes and assisted living facilities – at horrific prices and with a lack of staff, not to mention the fiscal issues involved. A currently viable alternative is to build up small communities of like-minded people, some older, some not so old, where the elders can assist each other to remain independent as much as possible – car-sharing, each doing what they still can, with a little help from the younger members of the community. That's what I myself (born in 1954) am setting up right now. And oh how great it is to live in a large house with people who you really get on well with!

Spiritual aspects and long-term options

Before I go on: I'm saying things my simple way here; the theory 'Spiral Dynamics (integral)', by Don Beck and Ken Wilber, differentiates stages of development in a more general and encompassing way. I highly recommend reading up on it.[i]

During the conversation with my friend it hit me how smallminded and limiting the insistence on genetic family as the basic unit of society is. It is this assumption, this thinking, which cements the incorrect idea of separation into our world views and morphic social field. The problematic aspect is the separation into family and not family, I / us and the others, not I, not us. Family in turn scales up to my relations, my gang, my club, my clan, my nation, people who speak the same language as we do… these ideas are ALL bulwarks of the meme of separation, of identifying with a small fraction of existence rather than with all of it. And look where it has taken us, as we see the third world war taking shape and being driven on by this type of thinking.

I'm not intending to kick away a crutch and leave people without support. The opposite is true: I'm suggesting a switch, over time, to the ultimate paradigm of support: That of noticing that all of existence is interconnected, that we are all, already, in relationship with all beings. Then, the word family in its limiting traditional connotations will wither naturally, as the noticing of universal non-separation takes its place. The identification of individual organisms will no longer be with a particular genetic family, be it matriarchal, patriarchal, monogamous or polygamous; it will be with life, with existence itself.

How might such a society look like in practice? The genetic family may still play an important role, or none at all. I'll illustrate this with examples of two societies already mentioned in book one, in ‚Visions of societies orchestrated via PTST'. One central

task for animal type beings is the nurturing of the newborn and young, which can be performed in different ways. One central facet of how relationships between individuals organise themselves (note formulation) is what, at the deepest level, individuals identify with – is it their partner, clan or race, or is it the totality? In spiritually advanced civilisations it is always the latter, independent of how their society is structured.

The Low-tech example society, whose individuals have a remarkable resemblance to giant crabs, has two sexes, male and female. They enjoy sexual intercourse in a ritual form at certain (fairly frequent) astronomical constellations between their sun, their planet, and the gas giant which it orbits. They do so in groups of seven, which convene randomly, 3 of one sex and 4 of the other. The group of 3 each occupy one stool and stay there, while the group of 4 rotates (after some intensive time) from one partner to the next, so that the 4th individual spends a time alone – i.e. all one. While the 6 are busy melting with each other, the seventh is melting with the whole of existence, this being the most ecstatic position of all. *This* is Tantra!

Their intimacy leads to the females having babies (several at a time) and no-one has any idea who the father was, or even if several fathers were involved in the insemination.[1] The babies are born into the communal crèche, and they all look pretty much the same, being still very small. So within minutes even the mother has no idea – at least not from physical characteristics[2] – which of them were her babies. Thus such a concept of family as currently in use by humans is physically impossible. This turns out to be a huge advantage because it precludes any possibility of identification with small units by the young, simply through its very construction. Of course the required nurturing and inspiration of the young does happen – all adults visit the crèche more or less regularly and spend time with the young. But the adults don't teach in the sense of a school, they have neither spoken nor written language, instead they use a sign language with their pincers and body stance. Topics like science or history don't happen. Their way of communicating is great for being in the moment and expressing feelings, and as they grow up, also for concepts, which hang in their morphic social field like ripe, low-hung apples just waiting for those growing up to pick them. The main and important part of what is taught is in fact the openness to, and use of, PTST.

1 Females are only seldom fertile, which is in harmony with the fact that their planet is dying, dessicating. Their race, which has a very long history, is fine with that fact as they feel themselves complete and that their time on this stage is coming to a natural end. So humans: enjoy them while you can!

2 They could notice via PTST which is their own progeny, but they just don't bother, the question of genetic relationship is of no interest to them.

In the High-tech example society – the space-farers – there are family relationships which from the outside look similar to those currently on earth. But the similarity ends there. When a partner is chosen, it is for life – not because of any promise made, or societal expectation, as their society is one of the non-separate anarchies. Rather it occurs out of a strong love and a deep resonance between the two – partners are not chosen lightly. This bonding deepens with time, as the path together lengthens. But it does not depend on its history, it remains fresh and active for all their shared lives. And when finally the first of the two dies, then there is of course a feeling of loss and some sadness in the remaining partner; but this is eclipsed by thankfulness and the deepest of understandings, and acceptance, that all things must pass. And furthermore, since these beings are strongly anchored in PTST, the deceased partner is bodily no longer there, but available to the other via PTST – all that they shared is still accessible. Truly, this universe loses nothing.

The space-farers have children just as humans do, who are raised mainly by their genetic parents. The individual characters and gifts of the young are watched for and encouraged, quite independently of the skills and interests of their parents. Teaching happens, mainly on the space stations, but it's not a matter of school as we know it. The young are free to dabble with anything which takes their fancy, and to request support for it from adults with skills in that area. Conversely, adults are free to offer children the possibility to work with them, perhaps an interest or latent talent will emerge. If not, no problem, perhaps you'd like to drop by on so-and-so in section 31, they are doing something which might be more to your liking. For the theoretical and practical backgrounds to all aspects of their knowledge, the space-farers have highly advanced computers (but not AIs), and the young are taught how to use them from a young age, and encouraged to do so. But don't worry, it's not all work and no play – can you imagine flying with wings in the transparent dome at one end of the axis of a space station, where there is no gravity and just a small coriolis effect towards its walls? That's fun!

If this sounds like an idealised version of human parent-child relationships, then hm, yes and no. What makes it so different is that their racial morphic field, which governs their understanding of life in general, includes the knowledge and use of PTST. For all their love of their partners and children, their personal *identification* is with all life and existence. Whereas the giant crabs more or less live permanently in a sea of PTST, the space-farers, due to the technical nature of their lives and all that needs to be done, notice PTST most strongly when they take time for meditation. The possibil-

ities of PTST are also used to the full in the partnership, which thus reaches a depth of mutuality not knowable for less fortunate races.

i https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiral_Dynamics
https://spiraldynamicsintegral.nl/en/overview-value-systems/
https://deep-psychology.com/ken-wilber-levels-of-consciousness/