

## Unit 8 Family and Marriage

### Text A

#### Preparatory Work

(1)

**An extended family** is a family that extends beyond the nuclear family, consisting of parents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, all living nearby or in the same household. In modern Western cultures dominated by immediate family constructs, the term has come to be used generically to refer to grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins, whether they live together within the same household or not. However, it may also refer to a family unit in which several generations live together within a single household. In some cultures, the term is used synonymously with consanguineous family.

**A nuclear family** or elementary family is a family group consisting of a pair of adults and their children. It is in contrast to a single-parent family, to the larger extended family, and to a family with more than two parents. Nuclear families typically centre on a married couple; the nuclear family may have any number of children. There are differences in definition among observers; some definitions allow only biological children that are full-blood siblings, but others allow for a stepparent and any mix of dependent children including stepchildren and adopted children.

**Monogamy** is the custom or condition of having only one mate. The word monogamy comes from the Greek word monos, which means one or alone, and the Greek word gamos, which means marriage or union. It literally means being married to one person. People currently apply the term monogamy to both married and unmarried couples.

**Polygamy** is the custom or condition of having multiple marriage partners. The word polygamy comes from the Greek word poly, which means many, and the Greek word gamos, which means marriage or union.

**A two-earner family** (also known as dual-earner family) is one that breaks from the traditional role – where it is expected that the father works outside of the home whilst the mother stays at home taking care of the children. In dual-earner families, both parents work outside of the home. Dual-earner families (where both partners are formally employed but only one—usually the male—pursues a career) should not be confused with dual-career family, in which both partners pursue occupational careers. Such marriages are still relatively rare, and findings about dual-career families may not generalize to dual-earner families which are now the norm. However, empirical studies suggest that both career women and those with less rewarding jobs appear to work a double shift, combining home and work responsibilities.

**Rorschach blot**(also known as the Rorschach inkblot test, the Rorschach, or simply the inkblot test) is a psychological test in which subjects' perceptions of inkblots are recorded and then analyzed using psychological interpretation, complex algorithms, or both. Some psychologists use this test to examine a person's personality characteristics and emotional functioning. It has been employed to detect underlying thought disorder, especially in cases where patients are reluctant to describe their thinking processes openly. The test is named after its creator, Swiss psychologist Hermann Rorschach.

(2)

The Adventures of **Ozzie and Harriet**: an American sitcom, airing on ABC from October 3, 1952 through March 26, 1966, starring the real life of Nelson family. The show strove for realism and focused mainly on the Nelson family at home, dealing with run-of-the-mill problems. Many of the series storylines were taken from the Nelsons' real life. The series attracted large audiences and became synonymous with the 1950s ideal American family life. But by the mid 1960s, America's social climate was changing, and the Nelsons' all American nuclear family that epitomized the 1950s values and ideals quickly became a thing of the past. Having run for a total of fourteen seasons, The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet remains the longest-running live-action American television sitcom.

**Victorian family pattern:** Victorian Britain is often considered a model of middle-class society. The family was the central institution of middle-class life. Men provided the family income while women focused on household and child care. The use of domestic servants in many middle-class homes, made possible by an abundant supply of cheap labor, reduced the amount of time middle-class women had to spend on household labor. At the same time, by reducing the number of children in the family, mothers could devote more time to child care and domestic leisure. The education of middle-class female in domestic crafts, singing, and piano playing prepared them for the function of providing a proper environment for home recreation. (*Western Civilization: A Brief History*, p.502)

**1920s' Jazz-age era of flappers:** a generation of young Western women in the 1920s who wore short skirts, bobbed their hair, listened to jazz, and flaunted their disdain for what was then considered acceptable behavior. Flappers were seen as brash for wearing excessive makeup, drinking, treating sex in a casual manner, smoking, driving automobiles, and otherwise flouting social and sexual norms. Flappers had their origins in the liberal period of the Roaring Twenties, the social, political turbulence

and increased transatlantic cultural exchange that followed the end of World War I, as well as the export of American jazz culture to Europe.

(3)

**Women's suffrage movement:** The women's suffrage movement was the struggle for the right of women to vote and run for office and is part of the overall women's rights movement. In the mid-19th century, women in several countries—most notably, the U.S. and Britain—formed organizations to fight for suffrage. The legal right of women to vote in the United States, was established over the course of several decades, first in various states and localities, sometimes on a limited basis, and then nationally in 1920.

**Sexual revolution of the 20<sup>th</sup> century:** The sexual revolution, also known as a time of sexual liberation, was a social movement that challenged traditional codes of behavior related to sexuality and interpersonal relationships throughout the Western world from the 1960s to the 1980s. Sexual liberation included increased acceptance of sex outside of traditional heterosexual, monogamous relationships (primarily marriage). The normalization of contraception and the pill, public nudity, pornography, premarital sex, homosexuality and alternative forms of sexuality, and the legalization of abortion all followed.

**American family in the 1940s and 1950s:** The emphasis Americans placed on the family and children in the postwar era is seen in the advice by one popular book, "The family is the center of your living. If it isn't, you've gone far astray." Family demographics between 1940 and 1960 moved notably away from depression and war trends. Marriages were remarkably stable; not until the mid-1960s did the divorce rate begin to rise sharply. The average age at marriage fell during this period, to 21 for men and 20 for women. More important, the drop in the average age at marriage resulted in a baby boom. After a century and half of declining family size, the birth rate shot up and peaked in 1957.

## **Critical Reading**

### **I. Understanding the text**

(1) The key question addressed: How should we understand the current changes in family?

Thesis statement: Family life in the United States is a complex mixture of both continuity and change.

They didn't offer any solution, but said that the solution to

contemporary family problems would not be found in some lost golden age, namely, by restoring the past pattern of family.

(2)The discussion of other transformation, for example, technological advances, organizational innovations, etc. is likely to be full of amazement, enthusiasm and expectation, whereas the talk of family is suffused with nostalgia, confusion, and anxiety. Strangely, they are treated by people with completely different attitudes.

(3)Changes: 1. The two-earner family has replaced the breadwinner/housewife family as the norm. 2. A range of once “deviant” lifestyles-cohabitation, remaining single or childless, having a child while single, gay and lesbian families, have become acceptable.

Reasons for the changes: Transformation in women’s roles; rising divorce rates; lower marriage and birth rate, etc.

Proposed solution: 1. Restore the “traditional” family. 2. Make divorce and single parenthood socially unacceptable once again. 3. Do away with welfare and make divorces more difficult to obtain.

(4)They stand on neither side of the public debate about family. According to the authors, one problem with the popular discourse about family is that the discussion reduces to one extreme position debating the opposite extreme position. It doesn’t reflect the range of views among family scholars and doesn’t fit their research evidence. Another problem is that some family talk exaggerates the extent of change. They believe that family life in the United States is a mixture of both continuity and change.

(5)They cite some examples to support their claim.

Change: Divorce rates have shot up since the 1950s.

Continuity: The trend toward higher divorce rates started in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with more marital breakups in each succeeding generation. In fact, the United States still has the highest marriage rates in the industrial world. About 90 percent of Americans marry at some point of their lives. Further, surveys repeatedly show that family is central to the lives of most Americans.

(6)New scholarship tells us that the “lost” golden age of family happiness and stability never actually existed.

Social earthquake: counter culture (hippies), sexual revolution, New Feminism.

Researchers have found that if we look at statistics for the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century, or back into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, we can find that today’s young

people-with their low marriage, high divorce , and low fertility rates-appear to be behaving quite consistently with long-term historical trends. It was simply the 1940s and 1950s that departed from 20<sup>th</sup> century trends.

(7)

No.	Myth	Reality	Effect
1	The family is the same everywhere.	There is no single pattern of family that would hold across time and place.	People tend to regard family arrangements other than those of the nuclear family as sick or immoral.
2	Family life is harmonious and happy.	Family life is a mixture of strong positive and negative feelings.	The happy-family assumption omits important, if unpleasant, aspects of family life. Family is unduly romanticized.
3	The kind of family a child grows up leaves a profound, lifelong impact.	Early family experience is not the all-powerful, irreversible influence.	Family influence is exaggerated and people tend to blame the family for children's problems.
4	The family was more stable and harmonious in the earlier times and is in decline currently.	A golden age of the family does not exist. The earlier years were also marked by conflicts, deviation and changes in regard to the family life.	There is a misconception that the solution to contemporary problems can be found in some lost golden age.

(8)Infanticide has long been attributed to primitive peoples or assumed to be the desperate act of an unwed mother. It now appears that infanticide provided a major means of population control in all societies lacking reliable contraception, Europe included, and that was practiced by families on legitimate children.

The authors intend to say that the family in the past was not as harmonious, loving, and sweet as we thought. People should not glamorize the past and try to find solution to the current family problems in the lost golden age.

(9)Two earlier periods of family transformation: The first occurred in

the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the growth of industry and commerce moved work out of the home. The dislocations in the functions and meaning of family life unleashed an era of personal stress and cultural confusion. The second began around the 1880s, when another period economic, social and cultural change unsettled Victorian family patterns, especially their gender arrangements. Another cultural crisis ensued, as several generations of so-called new women challenged Victorian notions of femininity by pursuing careers, getting involved in political causes, or even engaging in sexual revolution.

The impetus for the first period is industrialization; for the second, 1880s occurred at the core period of the Second Industrial Revolution. Most Western countries experienced a large economic boom, due to the mass production of railroads and other more convenient methods of travel. The modern city as well as the sky-scraper rose to prominence in this decade as well, contributing to the economic prosperity of the time. The 1880s were also part of the Gilded Age, which lasted from 1874 to 1907.

The family pattern in the 1950s is thought to be traditional, as exemplified by Ozzie and Harriet, with the homemaker mother and breadwinner father.

## **II. Evaluation and exploration**

(1) The authors provide some evidence in the following paragraphs 4 & 5, esp. in para.4: "In the mid-nineties, more than 60 percent of married women with children under six were in the paid labor force." That is the only statistical evidence. The authors should have given more statistics to support their claim. Besides, they should have made comparisons between the United States and some other countries.

(2) Though the authors do not explain the link when they mention the transformation of women's roles in paragraph 3, they actually hint on the link when discussing the history of family changes in paragraphs 32-35.

The change of women's roles is closely connected with the transformation of the family. After industrialization was in full swing, women lost their status as their husband's economic partners and acquired a subordinate status as homemakers. The home was seen as the emotional center of life. But over the last few decades, there have been significant increases in gender equality, female independence through paid employment, and personal freedom for everybody. As a result, a diversity of family types has emerged. 1. Two-career families. More married women

than ever have entered the workforce. Their employment has made it difficult, if not impossible, for them to care for their children while going out to work. 2. Divorce. The high divorce rate has many causes, one of which is due to women's less dependence on men. Women's increasing participation in the labor force has reduced wives' financial dependence on husbands. Therefore, women find it easier to leave unhappy marriage. 3. Single-parent families. Though the majority of unmarried women have been divorced, separated, widowed, or abandoned by their husband, there has been a significant increase in never-married women having children. The most dramatic increase is among women in managerial and professional jobs and college graduates.

- (3) Both examples and counter examples can be found, as studies often draw conflicting conclusions. Many studies indicate divorce lowers the well-being of children in the short-term, affecting school achievement, peer relationships, and behavior. However, more important may be the long-term or lasting effects on their achievement and quality of life as these children become adults. On the other hand, some studies find that children who are well-adjusted to begin with have an easier time with divorce. For instance, Ahrons (2004) found no general long-term negative consequences of parental divorce in her extensive longitudinal study that traced people into their middle years.
- (4) The past, like everything else that is no more, can be easily idealized. It is the feelings of nostalgia that skew these people's view of the past. But believing in a reality that never was can hamper the ability to deal with the reality that currently is. On the other hand, some of these people may be social or religious conservatives who are committed to the traditional family values and dedicated to the protection of traditional marriage and family as the cornerstone of society.
- (5) Family problem is a multi-faceted and complicated problem that cannot be solved with a single solution. One thing for sure is that we will not resolve our problems by looking to the past. We must try to reconcile the individual freedoms most of us have come to value in our personal lives with the need to form stable and lasting relations with other people.
- (6) A family can be defined as a group of persons directly linked by kin connections, the adult members of whom assume responsibility for caring for children. Kinship ties are connections between



individuals, established either through marriage or through the lines of descent that connect blood relatives. Marriage can be defined as a socially acknowledge and approved sexual union between two adult individuals.

If individuals should have the freedom to define their own living arrangements as a family, what if some individuals want to practice polygamy? If they should not, how do you explain that many societies have consented to gay marriage?

Society does have an interest in stipulating the legitimate form of family for the wellbeing of the whole society.

(7)The future will be much the same as it is today: maintaining diversity without destroying the basic family values. The majority of young people still value marriage, parenthood, and family life. They plan to marry, have children, and be successful in marriage. Even if they stay single, it will usually be because they care too much about marriage, not too little. They want to get it right by finding “the perfect soul-mate of their dreams” (Thio, Sociology)

(8)Similarities: 1)The average family size was between 4-6 people before industrialization. 2)Industrialization reduced the family size. 3) In traditional families, women were subordinate to the husband as homemakers.

Differences: The change of family size in the United States took place much earlier than that in China, since industrialization in America occurred much earlier.

Women’s role in the family in China significantly changed during the reforms in the late Qing Dynasty, the Chinese Civil War, and rise of the People's Republic of China, which publicly committed itself to gender equality. As a result, most Chinese families are dual-earner families. It was not until 1979 that such alternative family types as divorce, single-parent families, cohabitation, singlehood, gay and lesbian families began to emerge significantly.

## **Language Enhancement**

### **I. Words and phrases**

#### **1.**

(1)C&E (2) A&B (3) C&F(4) A&E (5) B&C  
(6) B&E (7)D&F (8) A&D (9) D&E (10) C&D

#### **2**

(1) unsettling transformations (2) established order (3) suffused with(4) serving up



(5) on the verge of (6) beset by (7) disconnected from (8) blizzard of  
(9) culminated in (10) caught between

**3**

(1) bolster their case (2) popular discourse (3) at odds with each other  
(4) a torrent of

(5) done a great disservice to (6) in flux (7) doomed the factory to  
closure

(8) live up to (9) lurched (10) deviation from

**4**

(1) depart from (2) to; attribute (3) gave in to (4) on the verge of (5)  
come up with

(6) shot up (7) incorporated; into (8) confined to (9) at odds with (10)  
set; apart from

## **II. Sentences and discourse**

**1.**

(1) Instead, the discussion of family is often full of sweet memories about the past, a feeling of being at a loss for the present, and a real worry for the future. We often wonder what has happened to American nuclear family as depicted in the situation comedy *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet* in the 1950s.

(2) In the past, people could not imagine that gay and lesbian families could be accepted or even tolerated. But although they have experienced continuous social disapproval and threat of violence, they now have largely been accepted.

(3) It's not surprising that public debate about the family often looks like a food fight in which everybody is involved in the debate, and as the debate moves from one hot topic to another, everybody takes sides and engages in verbal attacks against the other.

(4) Being gentle with infants, that is, regarding babies as precious to the family is not simply an inborn or innate feeling. It seems to appear only when economy improves and babies have a good chance to stay alive. And it does not appear until adults obtain enough sense of security so that they would not think that children are competing with them for food.

(5) In short, since work had moved out of home, the older pattern of family life was radically changed, which resulted in a big difference between the way people actually lived and the socially assigned roles for men and women; younger and older generations. (Industrialization and urbanization created a distinct

change in roles; the wife and child became dependent on the husband who “brought home the bread.” The family members became consumers rather than independent and self-supporting coworkers on a farm.)

## **2.**

(1) Everyone feared that the boundary dispute between these two countries would culminate in a war.

(2) The Taliban had vowed to disrupt the election and retaliate against voters.

(3) Leaders of many countries are caught between economic development on the one hand and environmental protection on the other.

(4) A number of courses on public relations have been incorporated into the school curriculum.

(5) Iceland has overtaken Norway as the world's most desirable country to live in, according to an annual U.N. report.

(6) Her parents are so demanding that no matter how hard she has tried, she cannot live up to their expectations

(7) Children are able to cope better with a traumatic event if parents, friends, family, teachers and other adults support and help them with their experiences.

(8) The exhibition was intended to spotlight the damage drugs inflict upon society and family.

(9) That argument was the turning point for their marriage, and the one which doomed it to failure.

(10) The Soviet Union disintegrated into separate states, and the so-called Commonwealth of Independent States existed largely on paper as a desperate attempt to maintain some kind of economic and political cooperation.

## **3.**

关于当前的家庭状况,部分困惑源于家庭是一个出奇难的研究领域,极少有不言而喻的事实,

即便是数据事实也一样。比如,研究人员发现,当家庭生活的数据描述的是整个二十个世纪,

或更早的十九世纪,一个令人惊讶的发现出现了:今天的年轻人,以他们的低结婚率,高离

婚率,低生育率,显然表现得与长期的历史趋势相一致。家庭生活最近的变化,只有将它与

20 世纪 40 年代和 50 年代相比的时候,才显得不正常。而正是战后的一代人,他们年纪

轻轻就结婚、搬到郊区、有三、四个或更多的孩子,是他们背离了 20 世纪的家庭生活常态。

正如一份研究所表明的那样:“若 20 世纪 40 和 50 年代没有发生,今天的年轻人看起来会

很正常”。

**4.**

(1) B (2) C(3) F(4)E