

## The Meaning of The Family: A Metaphysical and Metabiological Analysis

### Ailenin Anlamı: Metafizik ve Metabiyolojik Bir Analiz

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**Abstract**

This study approaches the family not merely as a biological or sociological institution but as an ontological space grounded in the metaphysical and metabiological foundations of human existence. The family constitutes the first place where the human being encounters the world, constructs meaning, develops moral intuitions, and forms an embodied and narrative sense of identity. Heidegger's conception of space situates the family as the primary horizon of being-in-the-world, while Hegel's theory of ethical life portrays it as the first communal unity grounded in love, trust, and reciprocity. Rawls's model of moral development emphasizes that the sense of justice emerges initially within the family through stages of authority, cooperation, and principled reasoning.

Feminist critiques—especially those by Susan Moller Okin—illuminate how family structures may reproduce gender inequalities and shape distorted moral intuitions if they lack egalitarian foundations. Modern sociological perspectives further show that transformations in intimacy, the rise of individualization, and the fragility of contemporary relationships undermine the family's role as a source of ontological security.

Drawn from Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of the body, Buber's relational ontology, Ricoeur's theory of narrative identity, and the attachment research of Bowlby and Fonagy, this study conceptualizes the family not only as a metaphysical domain but also as a neurobiological and affective matrix that shapes the foundations of trust, perception, and emotional understanding.

Ultimately, this work argues that the family must be understood beyond functionalist or reductionist biological approaches. It is presented as the originating space of human meaning, identity, moral reasoning, and existential grounding. The metaphysics and metabiology of the family reveal it as a constitutive environment for becoming human, transmitting values across generations, and cultivating the ontological security necessary for moral and social life.

**Keywords:** Philosophy of Family, Metaphysics, Metabiology, Gender, Justice, Ethics

**Öz**

Bu çalışma, aileyi salt biyolojik veya sosyolojik bir kurum olarak değil, insan varoluşunun metafizik ve metabiyolojik temeline yerleşmiş bir ontolojik alan olarak ele almaktadır. Aile, insanın dünyaya açıldığı, anlamlandırmayı, kimlik inşasını ve etik yönelimlerini geliştirdiği ilk mekân olarak konumlanır. Heidegger'in mekân ve varlık anlayışı aileyi varoluşun zemini olarak gösterirken, Hegel'in törellik sistemi aileyi sevgi, güven ve fedakârlık temelinde örgütlenen ilk etik bütünlük olarak niteler. Rawls'ın ahlaki gelişim modeli ise adalet duygusunun aile içindeki otorite, ortaklık ve ilkeler üzerinden geliştiğini vurgular.

Çalışmada feminist eleştiriler, özellikle Susan Moller Okin'in Rawls'a yönelttiği toplumsal cinsiyet odaklı değerlendirmeler, aile içi rollerin adalet açısından yeniden düşünülmesi gerektiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Ailelerin eşitlikçi yapıya sahip olmaması durumunda, çocukların adalet algısının da çarpık biçimde biçimlendiği gösterilmektedir. Bununla birlikte, modern sosyolojinin aile çözümlemeleri aile bağlarının modernleşme ile zayıfladığını, bireylerin ontolojik güvencelerinin aşındığını ve "akışkan ilişkiler" in aileyi dönüşüme zorladığını ortaya koyar.

Merleau-Ponty'nin beden fenomenolojisi, Buber'in ilişkisellik anlayışı, Ricoeur'ün anlatı kimliği ve Bowlby-Fonagy'nin bağlanma teorileri kullanılarak aile, yalnızca metafizik değil aynı zamanda nörobiyolojik bir varlık alanı olarak ele alınır. Bu bütünsel perspektif, aileyi insanın etik, epistemolojik, bedensel ve duygusal gelişiminin kurucu koşulu olarak konumlandırır.

Son olarak çalışma, aileyi indirgemeci biyolojik açıklamaların veya araçsal sosyolojik modellerin ötesine yerleştirerek, onun hem ontolojik statüsünü hem de metabiyolojik temellerini görür kılmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu yaklaşım, aileyi sadece işlevsel bir toplumsal kurum değil, insanlaşma sürecinin kök mekânı ve varoluşsal dayanağı olarak yeniden düşünmeye davet eder.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Aile Felsefesi, Metafizik, Metabioloji, Toplumsal Cinsiyet, Adalet, Etik

## 1. Introduction: Defining the Metaphysics and Metabiology of the Family

In the classical sense, inquiring into the “metaphysics of a thing” entails transcending its manifest, material, and functional aspects to investigate its constitutive structure, its conditions of possibility, and the principles that determine its essence. Metaphysics does not merely probe the causes behind phenomena; rather, it interrogates the ontological ground that renders those causes possible. Consequently, a metaphysical inquiry reflects upon *how* something can exist prior to *why* it exists. In this context, the metaphysics of an institution, a relationship, or a concept aims to render visible its continuity, its sustaining structure, and its existential significance.

Metabiology, on the other hand, is the investigation of the deep structures, normative orders, and organizational principles underlying biological processes. Where classical biology remains confined to genetic or evolutionary explanations, metabiology examines the relationality, holism, attachment, and developmental potentials inherent in biological functioning. It posits that biological phenomena are not merely physical; they possess inherently meaningful, relational, and normative dimensions.

When these two approaches converge, the metaphysics and metabiology of a subject offer a holistic framework that elucidates both its conditions of being and its developmental-functional foundations. For instance, the “metaphysics of the family” conceptualizes the family not merely as a sociological construct, but as an ontological domain—the site of the individual’s primordial encounter with the world and the bedrock of their ethical and epistemological development. Simultaneously, the “metabiology of the family” reveals that processes which appear purely biological—such as maternal-infant attachment, emotional regulation, and epistemic trust—are, in fact, structured by relational and normative meanings.

Metabiology provides metaphysics with biological depth, while metaphysics confers normative and existential meaning upon metabiology. While a metaphysical explanation emphasizes the multi-layered integrity of relationships, values, or identity, a metabiological explanation demonstrates their embodied, neurobiological, and developmental basis. Thus, a new nexus is established between Being and Life: Being ceases to be a mere abstract category and settles into an embodied existence; Life is no longer understood solely as a genetic process, but as a relational and meaningful becoming (*becoming*).

Therefore, investigating the “metaphysics and metabiology of a thing” involves searching for both what it is and how it is possible; it renders visible both

its ontological foundation and its vital dynamics. It represents an approach that seeks to understand the world not on a purely material or purely meaning-centered plane, but precisely at the intersection where these two dimensions converge.

## **2. Meta-Family**

The family possesses an ontological foundation as the existential locus of the human being. Martin Heidegger defines metaphysics as "comprehending the being as being and inquiring beyond it" (Heidegger, 1991, p. 38). Within this framework, the family emerges as a space that shapes not only the individual's biological existence but also their epistemological and ethical development. As the cornerstone of the human existential process, the family is the primary environment that molds an individual's identity, values, and worldview. Consequently, far beyond being a mere sociological institution, the family is an integral component of the human existential journey.

As a micro-scale reflection of the cosmic order, the family represents the process of co-existence through the relationship between man, woman, and child. The prolonged biological maturation of the human being necessitates that their epistemological and ethical development takes place within the familial unit. According to Heidegger, the human being exists within "space," and this primary space is the family. An individual deprived of a family is consigned to a more arduous and painful path in the process of discovering truth (Heidegger, 1991). In this sense, the family serves as a mediatory bridge in the individual's endeavor to understand and interpret the world. Within the family, the child encounters fundamental concepts such as love, trust, and justice. John Rawls posits that the sense of justice develops during childhood within the family, progressing through stages such as the morality of authority, the morality of association, and the morality of principles (Rawls, 2018).

The familial bond is not merely a physical togetherness but a spiritual and ethical context. The origin of the family is not a historical "invention"—as suggested by Marxist and Darwinist theories—but an inseparable part of human nature. From a theological perspective, it is argued that humanity came into being within a familial structure, beginning with Adam and Eve. According to this view, the family helps the individual understand their place in the world by preserving their biological and spiritual integrity. Hegel defines the family as the primary social structure in which the individual acquires their personality and moral values (Hegel, 2011). Thus, the family is a "space of becoming" that nurtures not only the biological but also the ethical, intellectual, and emotional development of the individual.

The constituents of the family—"man," "woman," and "child"—are not merely biological entities; each possesses an ontological and epistemological significance. Manhood and womanhood are shaped by social roles and ethical responsibilities alongside biological sex. The child, meanwhile, represents the stage in which the human being encounters reality in its purest and most nascent form.

John Rawls argues that the concept of justice first germinates within the family. The "morality of authority" begins with the child's acceptance of parental authority. Subsequently, the "morality of association" takes effect, where the child learns the concepts of justice and equality through relationships with siblings and parents (Rawls, 2018). Finally, the "morality of principles" signifies the individual's commitment to social contracts and ethical values. This moral development within the family determines the individual's process of social integration.

Heidegger's conception of Being and Space serves as a vital guide in understanding the metaphysical foundations of the family structure. The human process of "becoming" occurs within a specific space, and this space is the familial environment where the individual's first social and moral experiences are lived. The family is where the human quest for truth begins and takes shape. Rawls's theory of justice supports this process; the sense of justice acquired within the family enables the individual to cope with the challenges encountered in social life.

In this context, the family is not merely an environment of biological existence but an ontological and epistemological site. It shapes the individual's identity, values, and mode of perceiving the world. An individual raised without a family experiences greater difficulties in their journey toward truth and must exert more effort to compensate for these foundational deficiencies.

The metaphysics of the family structure is a fundamental concept that shapes the existential, epistemological, and ethical development of the human being. As the site where the individual first encounters and internalizes truth, the family plays an indispensable role in the process of social integration. Therefore, perceiving the family not merely as a biological or sociological construct, but as an ontological domain of being, allows us to grasp its true value and significance.

To deepen the metaphysical structure of the family, it is necessary to emphasize that the individual's primary relationship with the world is not only cognitive but also an embodied experience. According to Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception, the human being experiences the world not through abstract reasoning but through body schemas; most of these schemas are

formed through intra-familial interactions during early childhood (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 120). The child's opening to the world through physical contact, tone of voice, facial expressions, and rhythmic reciprocity renders the family the first ontological domain in which the world is rendered meaningful.

Buber's relational ontology further supports this structure. According to Buber, the human being learns to become an "I" only through an encounter with a "Thou", and this primary "Thou" is always the caregiver within the family (Buber, 1970, p. 24). Consequently, the family is the first constitutive relationship of the human ethical and existential structure: the self is formed through these primordial encounters.

Paul Ricoeur's theory of narrative identity is also crucial in explaining the ontological function of the family. According to Ricoeur, identity is a process woven over time by memories, narratives, and relationships (Ricoeur, 1992, p. 114). Since the family is the site where the individual's first narrative is constructed, it constitutes the ontological foundation of identity.

Finally, Bowlby's attachment theory and Fonagy's research on epistemic trust support this metaphysical approach with biological findings. According to Fonagy, a child can only understand the intentions of others and learn to trust information through a reciprocal relationship established with a reliable caregiver (Fonagy et al., 2017, p. 12). This "epistemic trust" is the biopsychosocial foundation of human existence within social life. Therefore, the family is not only a metaphysical space but also a field of possibility that enables the human being to relate to the world at a neurobiological level.

## **2. Family and Ontological Status: The Philosophy of Co-existence**

The family must be addressed not merely as a social institution but as a foundational structure that determines the ontological status of individuals. Woman, man, and child are not merely biological entities; they are beings who derive meaning within their own ontological integrity. According to Hegel, the family operates through a "spirit of we" and acts as "one person," where members transcend their individual selves to form a whole grounded in love, trust, and solidarity (Hegel, 2011, pp. 125-127). This perspective demonstrates that the family is not composed of the transient effects of social roles, but rather persists as a natural and spiritual structure.

This ontological status of the family becomes even clearer through Rawls's concepts of the "morality of authority," "morality of association," and "morality of principles" (Rawls, 2018, p. 493). According to Rawls, children first encounter authority within the family, subsequently develop a consciousness of association, and ultimately reach an understanding of life



based on their own moral principles. This process encompasses not only biological development but also epistemological and ethical maturation.

#### The Metaphysical and Ontological Dimension of the Family

From a metaphysical standpoint, the family can be regarded as a microcosm of the cosmic order. Heidegger's definition of metaphysics as "comprehending the being as being" (Heidegger, 1991, p. 38) reveals that the family is not just a physical union but the center of the individual's existential journey. The family is an environment that enables not only biological growth but also epistemological and moral maturation.

Hegel argues that the family is an ethical "whole" where individuals unite on the basis of love and trust, setting aside their personal interests. For him, family members find their own selves within the consciousness of one another. This allows family members to develop as moral and spiritual beings. In this sense, the family is the primordial space where the individual completes their ontological integrity.

#### Rawls's Moral Theory and the Family

In *A Theory of Justice*, Rawls examines moral development in three stages: the morality of authority, the morality of association, and the morality of principles. These stages offer significant insights into how the family shapes the individual's moral consciousness.

1. The Morality of Authority: The child first encounters the concept of authority within the family. While parents teach the child the distinction between right and wrong, they simultaneously cultivate a sense of responsibility. According to Rawls, the family is the primary site of authority where children acquire a sense of justice (Rawls, 2018, p. 493).
2. The Morality of Association: Through relationships with siblings and parents, the child learns the concepts of cooperation, solidarity, and empathy. Rawls terms this the "morality of association" and argues that this stage develops the individual's ability to live in harmony with society (Rawls, 2018, p. 498).
3. The Morality of Principles: By anchoring the values acquired within the family to universal principles, the individual develops their own ethical standards. According to Rawls, this stage enables the individual to act in accordance with their own moral principles (Rawls, 2018, p. 508).

#### Ontological Foundations and Individual Identity

Woman, man, and child cannot be defined by biological roles alone. The metaphysics of the family posits a union based on the ontological integrity of these three elements. As Hegel expressed, family members exist within

a common reason and spirit by sacrificing their individual selves (Hegel, 2011, pp. 125-127). Within the family, the individual learns how to be, constructs their identity, and attains ontological wholeness.

#### Philosophical Critiques and the Transformation of the Family Structure

Feminist critiques have challenged the family conceptions of Rawls and Hegel for being rooted in traditional gender roles. Susan Moller Okin argues that Rawls's theory of justice reinforces masculine authority within the family (Okin, 1989, p. 92). However, this critique stems from viewing the family solely as a social institution. The family is not merely a site where social roles are reproduced; it is also a domain of moral and existential union.

Nevertheless, the functional roles attributed to the family have transformed in the modern era, bringing the nuclear family model to the fore. The ontological unity and moral development emphasized by Hegel and Rawls are not limited to the traditional nuclear family. The family remains the center for the intergenerational transmission of knowledge, values, and tradition. This transmission is facilitated not only by biological ties but also by spiritual and ethical relationships.

To understand the family's ontological status, Arendt's concept of "natality" is instructive. According to Arendt, birth is not just the arrival of a body into the world, but the entry of a new beginning and a new capacity for action (Arendt, 1958, p. 177). This perspective allows us to define the family as the constitutive space for one's entry into the world in both a political and ethical sense. This "new beginning" initiated by birth takes root within the family.

MacIntyre's virtue ethics approach demonstrates that the family is a "community of practices." According to MacIntyre, virtues are not learned as abstract rules but within social practices (MacIntyre, 1984, p. 187). The family is the primary site where these practices occur: virtues such as patience, compassion, sacrifice, trust, and loyalty are acquired through action within the family. Thus, the family functions as an ontological school that shapes the individual's character.

Charles Taylor's theory of recognition also conceptualizes the family as an ontological domain. According to Taylor, identity is formed within relationships of recognition; an individual's sense of worth is shaped by being recognized by their caregivers (Taylor, 1994, p. 26). Therefore, the family is the space of recognition where the individual's "self-worth" first takes root.

Finally, Simone Weil states that one of the fundamental needs of the human being is "rootedness." According to Weil, uprootedness is one of the deepest afflictions of modern man, and rootedness is only possible through concrete relationships and bonds of belonging (Weil, 1952, p. 43). Weil's view is of critical



value in understanding the existential insecurity resulting from the weakening of the family institution in modern societies.

In conclusion, the family cannot be defined solely by biological and social functions. As Hegel and Rawls emphasized, the family is an existential locus that determines the ontological status of individuals. Woman, man, and child derive meaning within the family not merely as biological entities, but as individuals possessing ethical and spiritual integrity. The ontological foundations of the family encompass the individual's psychological and epistemological development. The family is the first and most vital space where the human being completes the process of becoming, acquires values, and finds ontological wholeness. Therefore, it is necessary to treat the family not only as a social institution but as an ontological value in itself.

### **3. The Metaphysics of Intra-familial Relations**

While John Rawls positions the family as the foundational ground for the development of the sense of justice, it is at this stage that the child learns to comply with the rules established by their parents. This process of compliance constitutes the bedrock of the child's burgeoning conception of justice.

However, feminist critics such as Susan Moller Okin argue that this structure fosters gender inequality (Okin, 1989, p. 92). Okin asserts that the family imparts not only a sense of justice but also specific social roles. In traditional familial structures, while men represent authority, women are predominantly associated with care and emotional labor. This dynamic leads children to mature within the confines of rigid gender roles. According to Okin, for justice to genuinely flourish within the family, the construction of an egalitarian family structure is an absolute necessity.

From a Rawlsian perspective, the family is an environment where the child accepts authority without interrogation. Children perceive the rules set by parents as inherently right and just. Yet, during this stage, the child may not yet develop critical thinking skills. Rawls regards this as a natural facet of moral development. He posits that as the child grows and their social interactions expand, this "morality of authority" is superseded by the morality of association. In this subsequent stage, children learn to establish equal relationships and respect the rights of others.

Nonetheless, a non-egalitarian family structure can adversely affect this trajectory. For instance, in a patriarchal family, children internalize male authority and accept it as a natural order. While this shapes the child's under-

standing of justice, it simultaneously reproduces gender inequality. Okin's critique emphasizes that an egalitarian family structure plays a pivotal role in the healthy development of the sense of justice.

According to Rawls's theory, an individual who reaches the morality of principles stage learns to establish just relationships and acts within the framework of universal moral principles. However, the functional integrity of this process depends on the family possessing an egalitarian and just structure. Okin argues that unless equality is established within the family, children's sense of justice develops in a distorted manner.

From the perspective of family metaphysics, the family is an educational domain where moral values are transmitted (Hegel, 2011, pp. 125-127). According to Hegel, the family is an environment of *Sittlichkeit* (ethical life) where individuals learn values such as sacrifice, responsibility, and love. In this process, the child learns not only to obey rules but also to formulate moral judgments.

It is imperative, however, that this process operates in an egalitarian and inclusive fashion. If gender-based discrimination exists within the family, children accept this as a "norm." This leads to the intergenerational transmission of social inequalities. Rawls's theory of justice proposes resolving this through the principle of equality. For Rawls, ensuring that every individual within the family holds equal rights and responsibilities paves the way toward a just society.

The parent-child relationship should be an environment that fosters not only obedience to authority but also the development of critical thinking and moral reasoning. In this context, a democratic family structure enables children to cultivate the ability to form just relationships—a process Rawls deems critical for the evolution of the sense of justice.

In summary, the parent-child relationship is the cornerstone of the morality of justice. Yet, the healthy and egalitarian functioning of this process depends on the family's inclusive nature. The perspectives of Rawls and Okin highlight the role of the family in moral development while underscoring the vital importance of an egalitarian structure.

Emmanuel Levinas's ethical conception of the face-to-face relationship is instrumental in explaining the ontological depth of intra-familial relations. For Levinas, ethics is not an abstract set of norms but arises from the encounter with the vulnerability of the Other (Levinas, 1969, p. 79). The emergence of responsibility the moment we first behold the child's face strengthens the metaphysical foundation of the family. In this regard, the family is the site where the first ethical relationship is established and where responsibility takes root.

Carol Gilligan's ethics of care further demonstrates the significance of the family, particularly within gender discourses. Gilligan argues that morality develops not solely through principles of justice but through care, concern, and relational responsiveness (Gilligan, 1982, p. 22). This approach places the family at the heart of ethical development and serves as a crucial complement to Rawls's justice model.

Martha Nussbaum's approach to the ethics of emotions also deepens the metaphysics of intra-familial relations. According to Nussbaum, emotions are not irrational impulses but value-laden judgments; emotions such as love, anger, fear, and hope determine the moral dimension of an individual's relationship with the world (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 34). The family is the space where these emotions are first learned and transformed into values.

Finally, modern sociological analyses support this philosophical framework. Zygmunt Bauman suggests that with the "liquefaction" of relationships in modern society, the individual's ontological security is compromised (Bauman, 2003, p. 56). Anthony Giddens notes through the concept of the "pure relationship" that familial bonds have become more negotiated yet more fragile (Giddens, 1992, p. 58). Therefore, the institution of the family and the identities of its members must be constructed not merely upon "pure relationship" but upon a metaphysical foundation.

## **Conclusion: Family as a Metaphysical and Ontological Value**

This study has demonstrated that the concept of the family is not merely a biological and sociological institution but also carries profound metaphysical and ontological value. When examining the approaches of thinkers such as Heidegger, Hegel, Rawls, and Okin, it becomes evident that the family plays a central role in the individual's ethical, epistemological, and ontological development. The family is not just a social structure; it is the fundamental locus in which the human being constructs their existential meaning and identity.

Heidegger argues that the human process of "becoming" occurs within specific spaces and contexts. In this framework, the family emerges as a site where the individual not only sustains biological existence but also molds their identity, values, and worldview. From birth, the human being is defined not as an independent entity but as a being that develops within relationality with others. Rawls's theory of justice is also predicated on this relationality. According to him, children learn the morality of authority, association, and principles within the family. The morality of authority begins with the child learning to

comply with rules under parental guidance. The morality of association develops through mutual aid and solidarity within the family. Finally, the morality of principles emerges when the individual internalizes abstract concepts of justice and regulates their own behavior according to these principles.

However, the weakening of the family institution in modern societies produces adverse effects on identity construction, the perception of justice, and social solidarity. While Okin's feminist critiques argue that power dynamics within the family can lead to injustice, these critiques often stem from the shortcomings of modern approaches that instrumentalize the family. According to Okin, although Rawls views the family as the foundation of justice, he overlooks intra-familial inequalities. Yet, such critiques arise from the narrow perspective of treating the family solely as a social tool. As Hegel emphasized, the family is the primary ethical community (*Sittlichkeit*) in which the individual realizes themselves. Hegel defines the family as a union based on love and trust, asserting that this unity is fundamental to the individual's development as a social and ethical being.

In modern societies, the family institution has been weakened by radical individualism and shifting economic structures, leading to the destabilization of individuals' ontological security. While Rawls's theory of justice prioritizes individual rights and liberties to fill this void, feminists like Okin contend that these rights may be incompatible with intra-familial power dynamics. However, Hegel and Heidegger emphasize that the family possesses a meaning deeper than mere individual liberties and plays an indispensable role in the individual's process of "being."

The proposed approach advocates for treating the family not as an instrumental institution but as an ontological and ethical value, emphasizing the system of tradition and custom (*mores*) for the intergenerational transmission of this value. The family is not merely a unit of biological reproduction; it is a space where values, identity, and meaning are transmitted across generations. According to Heidegger's concept of "space" (*Raum*), a human being does not merely exist physically in a location; their identity is shaped by the relationships established within that space. In this context, the family is the individual's first and most fundamental space.

Hegel defines the family as an ethical totality shaped by bonds of love and trust. For him, the individual relinquishes their isolated selfhood within the family to exist within a sense of "we." This is congruent with Rawls's concept of the morality of association. Rawls views the child's ability to transcend individual self-interest and learn altruism within the family as the bedrock of social justice.

Nevertheless, Okin argues that gender roles within the family can lead to injustice during this process. Indeed, if the balance of power within the family is not egalitarian, the conception of justice transmitted to children will be distorted. At this juncture, it is necessary to redefine the family and position it within an ethical system of values. The erosion of the family structure in modern societies creates serious problems regarding identity construction and the sense of social belonging. While Rawls seeks the foundation of justice in individual rights and liberties, Hegel argues that these rights only gain meaning within an ethical community. Okin, meanwhile, asserts that power dynamics within the family must be restructured on the basis of equality.

Ultimately, the proposed approach maintains that the family should be regarded not merely as a functional institution but as an ontological value, emphasizing the role of tradition and custom in its intergenerational preservation. The family is an institution that supports the human process of "becoming" and shapes the individual's identity, values, and perspective on the world.

In this context, the philosophy of the family must be redefined as one of the fundamental building blocks of human existence. The family is not just an institution where individuals come together biologically; it is an existential spaceshaped within an ethical, epistemological, and ontological value system. It is the site where the individual develops a sense of identity, justice, and solidarity, attains ontological security, and learns to relate to truth. Therefore, the family must be addressed not as a functional tool, but as an ontological value situated at the very heart of human existence.

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