

# 'Family' gets new meaning

## Prof. says it isn't just Mom, Pop and kids

By Joan Herman  
Of the Emerald



Barrie Thorne

The traditional view of "The Family" as a rigid, unchanging institution with a primary function of procreation not only limits living alternatives, but also has serious economic consequences for women, said a Michigan State University sociology professor Tuesday night.

Two words — The Family — imply a singular entity, with housewife Mom, breadwinner Pop, Dick, Jane, Puff and Spot.

Yet only 16 percent of all families fit this traditional conception, said Barrie Thorne, who left her Michigan post to become a visiting sociology and feminism professor at Stanford University this year.

Thorne's lecture is sponsored by the Center for the Study of Women in Society. She speaks today on a similar topic, "Girls and Boys Together But Mostly Apart: Gender Arrangements in Elementary Schools," at 3:30 p.m. in Room 204 Condon.

The family crises differ, depending on who's talking. President Reagan often says he works in "defense of the family," Thorne said. "But what does that mean?"

For the Phyllis Schafleys, it means protecting the family "against feminism, lesbian and gay rights, woman's employment and daycare."

Their notion of family crisis developed from a "yearning for qualities they're afraid will be gone forever if we continue like we are," she said.

Yet the actual family crises, such as work overload for employed mothers and impoverishment for families headed by single women, are ignored by the New Right, Thorne said.

In fact, the New Right contributes to these crises by supporting the illegalization of abortion and the denial of contraception to

teenagers.

"Built into the economy's organization is the belief most women have husbands who support them," Thorne said. "This belief justified paying women less, often by giving them lower-paying service work."

The consequences of this economic inequality are more impoverished women than men.

Today more than two-thirds of families headed by single women are considered impoverished. If these trends continue, women will comprise virtually all the impoverished by the year 2000, Thorne said.

The feminist movement's efforts to redefine the family may eventually alleviate some of the problems nourished by traditional thinking, she said.

"Feminists don't presume there is only one type of family," Thorne told the predominantly female audience. "They offer a pluralistic vision of looking at the family."

Like all other institutions in society, the family evolves. This variation is not new, Thorne said.

"I'm not wedded to the idea we should all live in only one way."

## Headline mistake misleads readers

Due to a copy editor's error, a headline that appeared in Tuesday's Emerald was misleading.

The headline "University quality 'poor'" did not reflect the content of the article, nor did it express the views of anyone quoted in the article.

The article's emphasis was that while University funding has been "poor," the University has been able to maintain a very high-quality level, with top national rankings in molecular biology, psychology and biochemistry.

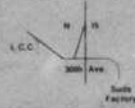
University Pres. Paul Olum, to whom the headline was attributed, has consistently praised the quality of the University's academic programs.

The Emerald regrets any confusion or misrepresentation the headline may have caused.

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