

Gender Consciousness – II
Family And The Diabolical In Literature:
John Donne, Ann Done, Undone

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Abstract

If we look at Hamlet, we often confront the existential question: To be or not to be. Hamlet was the product of a diabolical marriage of the King Hamlet and his wife Gertrude. All Hamlets are not Hamlets. But mis-marriage between the couples is a common streak between difficult children. Marriage, happy or otherwise, casts a lengthening shadow over the psyche of the child. How an unwanted institutionalized marriage with Jocasta had devastated Oedipus? It is difficult to find earth's children in a state of joy. In fact, marriage is the institutionalized form of a commercial contract, which is given a human face by overlaying it with love, duty, faith, etc. Essentially, we are bedding two unknown people who keep on doubting and hating each other. Love is an occasional episode in this saga of distrust and, consequent, demonic adjustment for personal gains defying all ethical considerations. Such adjustments are essentially immoral choices. Everybody suffers the consequences of such marriages, which are rooted in a void of gender unconsciousness. We are trying to look at the sprawling weirdness in which kids like Hamlet are born, with strained wits, This article is in continuation of my previous article on Gender Consciousness in which I have discussed in detail how our social system has played foul with the growing young adolescents who remain distracted during the most creative phase of their lives, resulting in an average level of achievement in 95% cases. This article takes up my explorations to another level: the quality of procreation. The previous article also discussed the uselessness of our marriage system, in which two disparate elements are yoked together with violence, and this heterogeneous combine turns the idea of a home on its head and makes the home a crockery throwing school of love in which "John Donne and Ann Done, are undone". This article sets out to bring into focus the reasons and the vast expanse of loss

that this society has encountered over centuries, for the simple reason that we are all status-quoists, we not only resist change, but are averse to change.

Keywords: Gender Consciousness, marriage, love, sex, procreation, distractions, diabolical

Introduction

Let me take up the matter from the quote: “John Donne, Ann Done, Undone”. The only idea to bring in this quote is that man and woman who marry under the prevailing systems, instead of understanding each other, try to create an atmosphere which is inimical to wellness, peace, and creativity. “The family” according to MacIver and Page “is a group defined by sex relationship sufficiently precise and enduring to provide for the procreation and upbringing of children”.(Sociology Discussion, google]. Family fulfills certain functions that are vital to community life. It meets emotional and sexual needs, it ensures the reproduction of children. For sociologists, it is an economic unit. But ideally and psychologically speaking, a family should be a place where one is at peace. A home is a place which retorens man to his physical, emotional, and spiritual balance. If a night is as disturbed as the day, will night be a welcome abode for the tired limbs of man? In the same way, family and home are those institutions which are intended to bring peace to tired nerves. But, strangely enough, in our families, we have everything else, except peace. The reasons are not far to seek. We never wanted peace. At home, we needed a female, who could bed you at night, and how does it matter if they go on fighting all the life? Our concepts of a family, kids, are stereotyped. We have no faith in logic. We don’t believe in reason. We believe in what happened a thousand years ago. And it continues.

Literature reflects the reality of our lives with projection of possibilities of betterment. The tragedy with humans is that while they are leading this life, they cannot see themselves. Literature is like a CCTV camera, which captures their movements, and when you see yourself in action, after the event, you are in a position to know, where you went wrong, and what would have been the better course of action. Now, let us agree, and we cannot disagree, that literature pours on the pages all the strife-ridden lives we have been living. And, a major portion of this strife is born out of family disloyalties, duplicity of behavior, conjugal maladjustment, and consequent elopements, and rapes, and then, the writers are also obsessed with the idea of nemesis overtaking the perpetrators of evil. What is the root of evil? It is disorientation of human human mind.

We can easily relate to Shakespeare’s tragedy of character when he says that the tragic hero suffers from a tragic flaw. It implies that there were some problems with his upbringing. Macduff who kills Macbeth was not born but ripped unnaturally from the womb of his other. Birname wood walks towards Macbeth’s castle to suggest retribution is inching towards him. Even in Ben Jonson, excess of a humour takes a toll of mental and emotional balance of human beings, and what passes as comedy of humours is actually a serious tragedy of human character. Go to Chaucer, or Milton, and find out if there have been any peaceful patches in human life. Greed, ambition, rashness, and indecision – these human traits dominate the majority of humans.

It is important to look into the reasons why, across the ages, we are confronted with human species are full of distortions in their character. Can't nature frame human beings well balanced in human characteristics so that peace, joy, happiness and goodness reign the world, which is the shared dream of humanity? If we argue that modern life is fragmented, and man has to struggle it out at the psychological level as well, and he finds his life absurd in the absence of any meaning in it, let me take you back to the 15th century when invaders like Babur invaded India. Were those times any better than today? Those times were too the progressive days compared to the earlier periods of existence. And since the dawn of history, man has deteriorated as a species, while he has made commendable improvements in the physical environment conducive to his living styles.

The Issue

The major issue which we are going to rock in today is the idea of marriage, the idea of a family, and its constitution, and what we have done to this institution, and, in turn, what it has done to human society. The society which believed that the female was meant to keep the home, and man, to fight it out and earn bread, had laid down these norms; for woman to stay at home, and wait for her man. All the household chores were finished, and when man arrived, woman was expected to give him mental and physical comfort. Our civilization today has started believing that a man and a woman can have jobs to do other than mere sex and procreation. But it is a basic fact of creation, that man and woman are essentially two genders, which together form a whole. And from this wholeness, other beings are created. In other words, the very idea of creation is rooted in sexuality. The vegetation, the flowers, the trees, the birds, in fact the entire creation ... is the outcome of this instinct of sexuality. Man and woman too, are like flowers and leaves, which take energy and then become sources of energy and saturate the muscles of life. Anything that does not carry on its very body the organs which can procreate, are considered incomplete and lead to a dead end to that race. Every fruit has in it, the seeds, which need a womb. Dogs, buffaloes, pigeons, sparrows, snakes: is there anyone which is born without its sex? If sex is the primary creative urge, why our civilizations does not want to recognize it? Why is love taboo, and sex a crime outside marriage? If you are not married, till the age of 21, you will not have sex. This is what we expect from our youngsters, who are at the threshold of puberty. How innocent of grown up men!

In fact, the only beautiful people on this earth, are the people who love. And when they procreate, we can expect the best breed of human beings. And, those born to other alliances, are inorganic compounds, who vitiate the aroma of this earth. No activity which does not involve an orgasm of senses acquires its ultimate felicity. Why you need sleep? Because, otherwise, it will disturb your concentration. No food, for how long you can survive. You feel like going to washroom for urination. Can you wait? Can you argue with your nature's call for long? These are natural ultimatums and cannot be postponed. So, is the urge for sex. It cannot be postponed, except at a huge price, which our society has been paying in myriad forms.

The Grand Moment

Let us try to recreate in our imagination the moment of ultimate joy. But before we lavish into this situation, here are some givens which govern the moment. The husband and wife in the family were married by the parents. They did not know each other before getting married. Now, as there is no love between them, what binds them together are economic considerations. It is a very brash contract: man will take care of the physical necessities, and woman will provide him joy. From their mating, will be born some kids. Let us close on to the grand moment when man and woman are conjugating. Go a little deeper into the mind of the woman. What is she thinking? Her mind is gripped by several thoughts and she wants some rich jewelry from her husband. There are so many things which are needed. And as soon as man gets ready, she starts her music. To these demands, man, who is a macho character, brushes aside some of her demands. She is reluctant. He is insistent. At that moment, neither of them is possessed by a pure passion. Love is missing from their conjugation. They have sex, not love. Only their bodies were involved in a physical activity. Minds were busy with their bargains. Losses and gains. The woman could be having her time with a friend, and man, could be enjoying a fantasy with a whore. The physical joy has no match in the mental joy. Their bodies are having sex, and an orgasm too, but in their minds, which should have attended this ritual, they were fighting their own battles. A sexual act has an equal spirituality about it. Sex is essentially a mental exercise. Our marriages make it a physical exercise, and our children are byproducts of this physical exercise, shorn of mental joy, and spiritual ecstasy.

Where was this spiritual ecstasy in the case of Othello? Kings often usurp beautiful princesses who never surrender to them in totality. 'Frailty, thy name is woman', is not an empty shout. Kings and Queens, Princes and Princess, - all have been in unnatural unions, from which we have inherited our systems and their guardians, as well as these constitutions, which defend the nasty institutions, like marriage. And, what type of people are born to them? What type of a sex King Hamlet and his wife Gertrude might have had, from which Hamlet was born? Hamlet may be a great character, but as young man, he was an emotional disaster. Can you imagine what type of a son or a daughter could have been born to Lady Macbeth? Did she love Macbeth? If she had loved him, would she force him to murder Duncan, which she herself could not do? Pick up the life of any hero from our mythology, or from our history, or from literature, men who are born of loveless sheets have ruled this world like bastards. And, this is where we are. A world full of bitchery, disloyalty, corruption, double-dealing, and in utter chaos. The Restoration Comedy and its laxity are not localized to that period. Marriage has always been so.

Cuckolding is an established pastime of people of this era, for whom marriage is a ritual. Our world is highly organized physically, but equally chaotic from our inside. The reason: we are sons and daughters of a bastardizing lust. We are born of loveless sheets. Our parents made compromises. They never loved. And we shall too lovelorn die. After all, we are the offspring of Adam and Eve, who 'fell' in love, i.e. they fell from divine grace, because they loved each other so much, that they decided to eat the forbidden fruit together, and share the curse, too. They could 'fall' in love, but we don't find any love lost between the parenting partners, who come together, not for love, but for economic sex.

The Love Pairs

The world is so ranged against the idea of love, in mortal fear of its divine aura, that we have seen great wars waged to undo wherever there was love. Troy was destroyed because Helen had fled with her lover. Every country has in its legendary love pairs who were not allowed to unite in marriage. Punjab has five love pairs, all of whom were wasted by the custom ridden society. Even today, India is a country where a woman is looked down upon, killed in the womb, and if she gets born, the life that she leads is full of uncertainties. Things are improving. But the reigning sentiment is in favour of men. And women are treated as objects of lust, abducted and raped. From where have we inherited this rapacious society? These young men and women, who keep fantasizing about sex, and whenever they tread into forbidden lands, honour comes in their way, or they land up in whorehouses.

The Impossible World

Just think of a society which believes in love. There is a Ministry of Love. Whenever people fall in love, they give a phone call at a No. and get themselves registered. After that, nobody can touch them. Marriage is a convenience. Do it or don't do it. Because, the real adhesive power to keep them united and one, is love. When these people will conjugate, it will be a sublimated union. The bodies, the mind and the soul, on the same page. From this union will emerge kids whole in mind and thought. And, you will see, Crime Patrol serials will be stopped, because the basic reason behind social life going berserk is absence of love in human pairing, and socio-economic planning which is a part of matrimony. Once these old practices are abandoned, and scheming gives way to love, the sea will gradually change. The authors dream of a world which is conceived in love, where family is not threatened with ulterior motives, where kids grow in fulfilled love. So, that, finally 'John Donne, Ann Done, Undone' gets re-written as: John Donne, Ann Done, Well done.

Conclusion

You will call it a tall order. I too believe that it is tall. It is a situation which may never arrive. Still, which scripture forbids us to dream of better times? Is there any provision which stops us from fantasizing about a beautiful future? In this world, we have men who think that women are no more than a possession, a part of their property. This is the beginning of the sordid story. Women too start taking advantage of their superior position, as she reigns over the valley of pleasure. This pleasure opens the gates of spiritual joy, and connects man with the creative forces. Certainly we don't want a society whose face has got pock-marks. And whose mind is always dribbling in 'forbidden' lands. Our rules make everyone a transgressor, and therefore, permanently guilty of a moral crime, which haunts him, and makes him fear imaginary gods. Something on which a whole class of people has survived and thrived.



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