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**The masculinity of power**

History, in a patriarchal society, is all about romantic indulgence with the past which is full of demons, fairies and witches to be overpowered by brave men ultimately.

Bravery is exalted as a masculine attribute with a magical display of power, passion and benevolence. The heroics of brave men are actually created by their progeny through attribution of some supernatural qualities to them. The progeny employs this posthumous exaltation of ancestors as a means to reassert its own political standing and social recognition through resurrection of patriarchal settings.

There are tales of encounters of brave men with bloodthirsty witches in the darkness of the night, and the ordeals of demons at the hands of supernatural men from our ancestry. This nostalgic affiliation with lost glory sits well with the progeny of aristocratic families whose magnanimity and superiority has gone with the breaking down of traditional institutions of power and authority. They strive to reassert this lost glory through cultural events and by lifting their patriarchal spirit through the dances of men and by boasting with each other in public.

The power of imagination in the human brain is such that it reincarnates fables of the past as the reality of the present, and it keeps us groping around in the darkness of a fictitious world. Human beings are not purely scientific creatures because life is a complex mix of reason and instinct of fear and dominance.

This instinct plays a pivotal role in shaping the social and political imagination of our past, present and future. This may sound like biological determinism or Freudian reductionism which reduces the human transformational potential to an instinctual impulse, but this explanation certainly has an element of relevance to the power analysis. To invoke instinctual impulse all you need is a good storyteller, an effective proselytizer, a spin doctor and a literate but semi-educated gullible society. These are the key instruments of establishing what I call the impulsive truth.

The human brain still has the amygdala as an integral functioning faculty which ignites the impulses of fear and aggression against perceived external threats much like other animals. The amygdala functions counter to rational and scientific thinking and it forms the basis of human propensity to pursue impulsive truth. This is because rational thinking is only a top layer of the brain known as the neocortex which has evolved through centuries to distinguish humans as creative beings from animals as repetitive impulsive beings. The top layer or neo-cortex of the human brain has evolved into a powerful source of rational thinking, but it cannot function independently as a source of pure reason or scientific thinking to overcome external triggers of fear and aggression.

The upper layer of the rational brain is not the cause of scientific and technological progress either because it does not respond to fear of the unknown – for which science or technology was advanced. It rather tries to find a reason or a pattern out of the events of the real world, and in doing so it creates some sensible knowledge to be shaken soon by a series of frightening situations unleashed by impulsive wars. The stimulus that triggers fear and aggression is the most vulnerable part of human psychology which can easily be exploited by the powerful to push for impulsive truth.

Impulsive truth turns rational humans into war mercenaries of power. Those who are coerced to wage a war are those who have a strong tendency to follow impulsive truth more than reason. But those whose interests are served by waging war have more reasons and profit propositions than an instinctual impulse for destruction.

A rational political human society will not go for producing weapons of mass extinction like a nuclear bomb. That would be for a society which suffers from the pathology of impulsive truth to support weaponization as a reaction to a perceived threat. Fear of the unknown, and the human tendency to dominate, continues to define our world which is ravaged by wars and destruction. One of the most advanced contemporary human societies is one which strives to dominate the world through wars and destruction not through reason.

The ancient world of demons, witches and fairies has not gone away from the amygdala or the deepest brain of human beings. The witch hunt continues against anyone or everyone by the keepers of impulsive truth and their mercenaries to defend the liberties of the so-called ‘civilized world’ against the enemies chosen by the powerful. The brave men of our modern world are condemned to overpower witches of their own making, and in doing so they become no less pernicious than the ancient savages pursuing wars to hold their impulses superior to reason.

Trump’s rise to power was not a rational political decision of American society; rather, it was a collective reaction of a sizable majority against fear of the unknown, which could be overpowered by a man of irrational credentials like Trump. The rise of Modi in India was triggered by the cumulative fear of majority against the unknown, or collective hysteria stirred for an impulsive war against a perceived external enemy. This perceived enemy could not be overpowered more convincingly than Modi could do as a man of strong irrational credentials.

The rise of Hitler in Germany was not a simple magic of a man of strong nerves with ruthless killing capacity. It was more about the collective fear inflicted upon Western society by the First World War, and the vanquished Germans needed a man of strong irrational credentials to salvage them from the irrational fear of the unknown.

Recognized as a man of strong impulses with demonstrated ability to defeat reason, our own Imran Khan has won the hearts and minds of our progeny of great warriors. With all his political U-turns, impulsive behaviour and his fame to speak from the heart, Khan is a perfect candidate to stir the national impulse to fight the perceived enemy within and beyond. Khan may know that one can end up paying a huge price for being rational in a society governed by impulsive truth.

Not only did tribal and patriarchal societies prefer impulses over reason for dominance, our most advanced capitalist societies also continue to do the same. Capitalism, once a progressive system to defeat feudalism, has now turned into a reactionary global order to kill reason. The perennial mode of political control conceived to be patriarchal in ancient societies is still at work, but we have masculinity of power to fight against.

By advocating reason and sensibility to build a humane society, only change-makers can rise above the nonsensical impulsive wars, waged in the name of patriotism. Power promotes cultural patriarchy, religious evangelism and social nihilism to permeate fear as an instrument of control and dominance.

Those who rise above biological and Freudian determinism need to understand that the real fight for the supremacy of reason lies in understanding power as masculine rather than reducing it to patriarchy. In our contemporary politics, fighting patriarchy cannot be isolated from the fight against masculinity of power as a whole.

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