

I AM AN IMPURE THINKER

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INTRODUCTION BY

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## CHAPTER 10

### TRIBALISM<sup>1</sup>



WE ARE ENTERING NOW A thousand year period in which the rudiments of tribalism will serve us as a refresher course, for the family is destroyed today and speech is destroyed today; and speech and the family are the creations of the tribes. We will stand again at their fountainhead, where they were most intense, because it is there where they were first created. Yet, at this moment, no one understands exactly wherein does lie the claim of tribalism to be regenerated.

The tribe can be defined as an institution to create marriages. Everything about it can be summed up in the one function that it is a family-making institution. The tribe is the *couche*, or the source, of families. The families themselves are transient; the tribe is eternal, the lasting form. One of the greatest errors in most people's thinking today is the illusion that the family into which they have been born was meant to be eternal.

All families must dissolve despite the bad conscience we feel when we cut the apron strings. It can only make havoc and lead to Fascism and racism when it is believed that the family is an aim and purpose in itself. For it is not. When a man comes of age, the family must be second-rate, when we have children, we must give our parents the privilege of being grandparents to them, and that is how they reconquer their family status. Instead, we have the unhappy situation of two parties, one of rugged individualism destroying the family and escaping to the

<sup>1</sup> Part of "Eternal Horizons of Mankind," a lecture course held at Dartmouth College.

West Coast, and the other, the mother party, traveling to army camps and arguing with the corporal about their son's diet. Mothers interfere where they don't belong because few of us know where they do belong. They belong with our children. If parents are not given this chance to become the revered authorities who can redeem our idiotic family life by bringing some spirit of longer history into it an unpurified family life results, with the wife jealous of her mother-in-law and the husband jealous of his father-in-law.

Let me repeat. It is a heresy to say that a family is for eternity. The church may be eternal, but not the family. We need, therefore, permanent institutions to create families, just as we need a spring to supply water and not simply a pond.

We must once again remember that the tribe is the first historical achievement of historical man, and then it will be understood that it isn't the breeding, the animal procreation, which has to be revived today but those thousands of years during which people learned to marry—that is, learned the act of marriage, so that one man and one woman can belong so close together that their children can treat them as one. That act is the historical creation of the first thousand years of humankind, not the breeding which we find in the whole animal kingdom, and which, as animals, we can accept or reject. Tribalism, therefore, is not biological, and belief that it is leads inevitably to mother-worship and ancestor-worship in the most primitive sense. There is nothing wrong with ancestor-worship except that it must be made subservient to the great mission of men to be one throughout all time. Ancestor-worship and marriage are only a first step into the same life we all have to lead, which cannot worship any such flesh, any such purely transient group like the relation between parents and children. I thus have the difficult task of showing you the greatness of the tribes which produced the family, while at the same time, warning you against the superstition that this product of tribalism is in itself something to be worshipped.

The problem of the tribes was to enlighten the act of mating with the word. When husband and wife meet, and when the

husband stays with his wife through her hour of birth, as Joseph did with Mary, he thereby acquires the right of spiritual authority. When you see that marriage means to go from the blind act of the moment, through the whole life cycle to its most opposite point the childbirth, then you see that the problem of marriage was to alter the course of nature. In nature, animals mate and their young forget who their parents were. They cannot go beyond their individual life cycle, for they do not know what happened before their birth, and they do not know what is going to happen after their death. That we do know this is the essence of history.

To marry means to create *a body of time*. That very wonderful Shakespearian expression is one which we must appropriate for the social sciences. The creation of a body of time is based on being named in the name of the ancestors. Marriages were concluded on the dancing green of the tribe, because they had to be *public*. They were to be entered upon not clandestinely, between you and me, as free lovers think, but under the invocation of the whole group. Marriage was public business, because it meant to force the rest of the tribe to recognize the existence of this newly created special body of time.

All history depends upon the problem that others should know who we are and we should know who others are. We tend to think today that if we do right we haven't to ask anyone else for their permission. That belief is absolutely wrong. Your parents have forced the community to call your mother Mrs. Smith for if they had called her enduringly Miss Brown you would have been born out of wedlock. That people when they marry love each other is not interesting to anybody. But it is very interesting that they have forced the community to say that these people are married. This necessity is hardly realized today, for in the last fifty years we have weakened the rules of the game so completely that it is believed that if two people are in agreement, and they go to a sheriff, somewhere, it is perfectly all right. The result is children's marriages, that are not marriages, because they cannot force upon the community the esteem, the dignity, and the distinction which two people need to have a house of their own, to bring up their children as their

own, to bestow upon their children their own name, and to have the authority, for example, to make the religion of their children their own decision.

We still hold to the fiction that parents actually do decide upon the religious upbringing of their children. Of course, in this country, that means the Roman Catholics allow the Church to take over the education of the young, and that the others send their children to Sunday school; or, in other words, parents ask their children to believe in something they themselves do not believe in. We thus have a wonderful arrangement which all comes under the heading: parents have the right to determine the religion of their children.

When marriage was created, that right was understood in a very different sense. The first authority that comes with parenthood is the right to influence, educate and direct one's children, under the one condition that the parents impart their own beliefs to the children. But in ninety per cent of the cases today, parents do not impart their own beliefs. Instead, other institutions, like the churches, or the ethical culture schools, provide beliefs and religion which the parents themselves do not have. Parents have lost the power to demand from the community the authority to bring up the next generation because they have gradually relinquished this authority to the nursery schools, the psychologists, the psychoanalysts or the American Legion. Everyday parents are abdicating their sacred duty to love their children in favor of people who frankly declare that love is damaging.

Marriage is priestly, and cannot be understood without our understanding the meaning of "universal priesthood," the old wacry of the Protestants against the Romans (and which the Romans, by the way, have never denied), that all men are meant to be priests. That belief is one element of the Christian creed that comes directly from the tribes. The first priests instituted in the tribes were mothers and fathers. They were put in authority to represent to the newborn the whole past world of the tribe, by teaching them the sacred names of the tribe, by making these children in their youth form their lips to the invocation of the ancestral spirit, and by establishing that when-

ever these names were formed the children had to stand in awe and reverence. The priesthood was the greatest authority under which a human being could be placed—that is, to be allowed to teach others the sacred names of invocation, of prayer and of law.

Parents are there to consecrate their children, and I mean that very literally. For, if we can't consecrate our children, we can't christen them. The two words, "consecrate" and "christen" are the same. To consecrate means to give direction to. Once we teach our children English, we have already separated them from the stem of the human race and made them into Americans, which is very dangerous, because it is a limitation. It is one way among many, and that is why the whole role of Christianity in the matter has been to warn the parents that along with making their children speak Egyptian, Latin, French or English, they have to instill into this limitation, by the Christian first name, the broader message of telling the child: "Yes, you may speak English, but that is not the whole story; you remain a part creature of the whole creation, despite the fact that we allow you now to march along this narrow road of Americanism."

The Christianity of our era simply purifies the old tribal system. The first tribal men, when they allowed parents to consecrate their children, only saw the benefits of giving the children some consecration. When Christianity came into the world, the division between the races, and between the tribes, had reached such a point, that it now seemed important to direct the parents back again—to ask that, although of course, they would teach their children English or Latin or French, would they please inject a warning as well, by giving them biblical names, so that the children would know they do not have to be nationalists. When the biblical names disappeared in Europe around 1900, the World War was the immediate result.

The tribesman wanted to do exactly what people want to do today when they christen their child. He only missed out because he did not know better than to identify his special family group, that is the clan, with the perpetual problem of the

child's direction. Whereas Christianity has injected into his family bond the crucial corrective, so that the child knows the limitations of this one tribal connection. No, the first step in history, that parents must bring up their children in the knowledge of what has gone before, this consecration of the child, is the oldest problem of mankind. It is always with us; so much so, that we come to a very practical problem of our day.

Marriage means that father and mother must cooperate spiritually before their child can enter history. In some tribes, that feeling goes so far that the husband actually gets into bed with his wife during the childbirth to share her suffering symbolically. To me, that is one of the sublime rituals of the human race. It is an attempt to convey to the world outside the fact that the father feels as much responsible for the birth of the child as the mother. The full impact of such parental responsibility can best be shown in contrast to the modern system. In ancient times, there was no question that the child was a carrier of the spirit—one to be consecrated, to receive a name, to be understood and to be recognized as a potent member of the group. Therefore, when a malformed or idiotic child was born, it wasn't done as today, when the doctor or nurse must take the responsibility of deciding whether or not to let the newborn baby die. Most of us, fortunately, do not know what is going on in our hospitals. But somebody has to have the responsibility, and today it is the doctor or nurse, with the parents never knowing anything because they are treated like children. It is all over when they come. The wife is in a coma and the husband is having whiskey.

The story of the tribe is that the father must look at the child and take it in his arms and say, "This is my child," as God did when Jesus was baptized in the river Jordan, "He is my child in whom I take pleasure." This formula is very ancient because in the spiritual ancestry of man, a child was to be received into the spiritual world, just as it is received from the womb into the physical world. All of these rituals have been forgotten by those who believe in living simply by Nature, or by Motherhood, or by J. J. Rousseau or Benjamin Franklin,

those half-baked people who think that life is natural. Nothing in our lives is natural; everything is spiritual. By speaking we enter into the great lifestream of humanity from beginning to end, and somebody has had to impart this lifestream to us. Just as a mother imparts life to the body, so a father imparts life by receiving and naming his child, and that is spiritual.

That the father would again have the responsibility of saying yes or no to the child would be the first rediscovery of tribalism in our age. This system may seem very cruel, because most people think that every child born should live. Of course, it should; but we mistake the situation if we ignore the fact that somebody has to say, "This is a full-fledged human being." For, when a child is born with three heads and four legs a decision has to be made: "Should he live?" He who decides this, is the father; he becomes the father in the act. That people are made to live so, without anybody deciding this, is a scandal, and nothing but brutality. Yet, it is thought that such have to be, because we have completely cowed to what we call Nature. Our whole picture of humanity has been falsified because everyone thinks we should be one with nature. It would be much better if we would be one with the human race, which is a living creature in its process of revelation! Humanity has the great task of staying one through all times. The human animal is that animal which is ubiquitous and always and which can acquire the consciousness of everywhere and all-the-timeness. No elephant knows what went on before him and what will come after him and no animal knows what happens next door around the corner. We can, aye, we must! Man is extending all the time his space and his time and creating supersensual periods and supersensual spaces. Marriage allows him to do this because it makes it possible for children to know of ancestors.

Father and mother represent to the child, in the absence of the tribal meeting for the first twenty years of his life, the existence of this big entity, the tribe. The child is not taken to the assemblies of the grown-ups, but is informed in the same way that education told us of the United Nations, and America, and private property and the law, though we lived in our homes

innocently. The father and mother are the local priests who testify to the child of the existence of a wider world and of a wider reality. How is this done? In the family group, there are always several youngsters growing up under the care of the parents and receiving from them, as the first thing, the knowledge that they share their mother tongue, or, as in the tribe, the father tongue—in the law of the jungle, the male speaks, and a child must learn his father's tongue. The father, and in the father's absence, the mother, represents the tribe to the children. All the families, therefore, must have direct access to the source of their existence, the center of the tribe, and this is achieved through the meeting ground. At the tribal meeting, such decisions are made as those for the funeral of a warrior, for the warpath against the enemy, and for the expiation of deviations from tribal behavior. In the case of marriages, the meeting and decision-making we call an orgy, because it had to be danced. These wild dances in public of the marriageable people sealed them, so to speak, as future fathers and mothers in the tribe. In the tremendous upheaval of the wedding, the parents became the carriers of the tribal law. They are endowed with the spirit which has led to the use of the word *Ehe* to mean in German both law and marriage. Marriage was thus the carrier of the law, the priesthood by which the parents represent the law of the tribe. In the ancient languages, law and marriage are very often the same word, for it meant the same thing to get married and to become the legislator or the representative of the law.

In any marriage, the whole tribal law became documented, for it was written on the skin of the married people in the form of the tattoo. Tattoo is the first writing of the tribe. The constitution of the tribe, that authority of the tribe which can be invoked, is painted and depicted in the tattoo. We must come to understand that the tattoo is not a superstition or something funny, but that in the tattoo of the modern sailor, we have the last remnant of the first layer of script. It is simply not true that writing was invented by the Egyptians, or that the Greeks inherited script from the Phoenicians, and so on. It is much more complicated. The tribe writes, too, but it writes on living

bodies. It hasn't anything more permanent, because the tribe moves; so the best they could do was to write the law of the tribe on the skin of the people who are ready to marry. They then bring the tribal law everywhere with them. Each married member of the tribe is a single document, one edition of the constitution. In these orgies, therefore, there were very painful operations. In order to get married, these people had to undergo, perhaps, circumcision and incisions; their noses were made to stand out, and so on, and in some tribes, there was trepanation, the perforation of the skullbone, something we do now to get rid of blood clots in the brain. The tribal man had all kinds of ways of making pain the great memorizer. As is well known, tattoos are not easy. They are usually burned into the skin; but, whatever the methods by which the tattoos were inflicted on these poor people, it is only one form. We can still see today in some African tribes, people with distorted ear lobes or lips, evidences of the extreme hardships connected with the moment of making the child of nature into the bearer of the law of history.

In the orgies of the meeting ground, people of accidental origin are made into members of one group. They are all identified by the same tattoo, and are then recognized by the same constitution. An order is imposed on their living, because by the tattoo it is said whom you can marry and whom you can't marry. Thus, the tattoo is also a taboo. One's tattoo shows that he cannot marry those who have exactly the same tattoo, and in that way, inbreeding is excluded. The great thing about the tribe is that it created orderly marriage, and for this purpose, it had to invent "incest." What is incest?

Incest is the destruction of a sacred space inside of which the passions of sex shall not rage. All modern people show the weakening of the traditions of the tribe by the writing of poetry or drama on incest. They especially now seem to harp on the love between brother and sister and on the Oedipus complex. These writings show us that it is high time to study the tribe again, because the tribe is the institution that has outlawed incest. In nature, there is no such law. Animals do inbreed if you leave them to themselves. Chastity has nothing to do with mo-

rality in the sense of evil thinking. Chastity is the creation of a spare room inside of which man is *unafraid of the other sex*. What we call a home today is first of all a relationship between the members of the family such that they cannot intermarry nor have to fear being raped. Parents and children to each other form one body of time, and the consecration of the children makes it necessary that the father and mother remain to these children, father and mother. It is no small matter, and quite unnatural, that for the last 8000 years parents have not slept with their children. A father would love to sleep with his daughter because she is very young and beautiful. But it is not done because he loves her too much and his love outweighs his desire. For all the sneering at history which goes on today, and for all the ridiculing of religion, most of us continue to believe that one's daughter is sacred to the father; and to believe that, is to be part of the greatest historical tradition. We recognize in our daughter someone who must reach the future in freedom.

Chastity is then the creation or the division of the world of men into two spaces: one for sex, and the other for non-sex. That is, the orgies in the meeting ground, and the brotherhood or the sisterhood of the home are correlated. We can say that the tribe increases the frenzy while they meet in orgy and allows all sorts of sexual libertinage, and licentiousness, in order to better sanctify and consecrate the private groups, the small groups inside of which what happens at the orgy must be completely excluded, to be not even thought of. A brother does not think of his sister as a sexual being, and a sister should not think of a brother as a sexual being. Mothers should not think of their sons as being good to sleep with and fathers should not of their daughters. We have to learn this lesson again because it is the root of all human purity.

We all have to know that men have in themselves this tremendous starting point of orientation, that there has to be with human beings two worlds, one in which the consecration, the sanctuary of the spirit of speech, of naming each other, is so strong that the physical has no rights; and the other where the spirit is not there, where the physical pleasure in another human's body prevails. If a young man does not make this dis-

tion, the girl to whom he is going to propose will find out. If he only runs after her for her fair looks or for her impertinence or for her sensuousness, and if she is any good, she will recognize that he has not the other power in himself to create, at random, the second step, into the sanctuary. A man has to have a sister and a bride in his heart before he can get married. If he is only expelling the sister or the mother by this woman, he can get a strumpet, but not a wife. And names have nothing to do with it, for one can get married and still have a strumpet for a wife. It is up to a young man to let his sweetheart know that he knows the other world of non-sex. If he does not know both worlds he cannot get married. That is the difference between puberty and the power to get married. Our physical potency is one thing; and our potency to consecrate is another; the tribe has introduced this balance of power within us, so that we can recreate the sanctuary inside of which there is chastity; the tribe is this balance!

As I have said, chastity has nothing to do with our physical being, but it is our power of the spirit in favor of the whole human race to abdicate for the time being from our physical urge. I have heard people say that they cannot vow chastity as a monk and heard many people declaim that the celibacy of priesthood is unnatural and that there should be no celibacy. But as long as men live as they do, there have to be monks and nuns to remind us that we too have the power of celibacy at random. All of these special institutions today of the monk and the nun, that is of the eternal virgin, are only reminders to the normal being that he has this power of priesthood inside of him. What is a priest? A man who can throw the switch between his physical wave length, which goes from twenty to sixty, in which we want to procreate, and his historical role in which he stands for the direction of the whole human race through hundreds and thousands of years. There is nothing abstract in what I am calling the spirit here. When we say to somebody "sister," we place her in the timestream of thousands of years. When we say to someone "sweetheart," we want to have her and kiss her right now. And therefore, in our sister we face eternity, and in our sweetheart we face the moment.

Everyone knows these great secrets and I am trying only to add consciousness and some respect for them. For it is unimportant today whether people go to church or not, because everyone misunderstands the church anyway, but it is terribly important that people should rediscover their divinity in this power to be alternately a lover and a brother. It is the sovereignty of man, that by the simple word "sister," he can suddenly see in his sweetheart a human being who is not dependent on his lust. The great story of the birth of Jesus is that the whole question of marriage as it was handled in the tribe, is in the story of the Virgin Birth put on just the opposite pole, where there is no lust and no relation of sensuousness. When the child was born, Joseph acted out the role of the midwife, because Mary had become his sister. And that is the most interesting part of the Virgin Birth, that Joseph and Mary were brother and sister. This principle runs through all humanity. But today, with the aid of the psychoanalyst, it is nearly lost, because people are told that even the mother is an object of lust. It is perfectly true that in the animal kingdom mothers and fathers after a short while do not exist. When an animal is in heat, consciousness is concentrated so totally on copulation that nothing else matters. There is no horizon.

Perhaps we may use the word "horizon" with some lasting effect. The tribe established horizons of time and space over its members. The horizon places even the greatest passion, the passion of sex, in the realm of permanency. When the sun rises on our passion, it is very hard to set the sunset on the opposite horizon, namely the mother giving birth to the child, for by then our passion has completely died down, and we want to look in the other direction. It is not agreeable to see a birth. It is travail and it is work and no one wants to see it. Now the horizon of the tribe establishes the identity between the sunrise and the sunset of our passion, and it teaches us that after the sunset there is a sunrise again. This first calendar of human life tried to identify passion and non-passion, ecstasy and indifference. Most everybody today is trying to be cold only, or objective. Our pre-ancestors in this country tried in their revivals to be ecstatic. But the problem is to be the same person in both

ecstasy and indifference, each being a side of life. Nobody can be either simply objective or passionate. Historical life only begins when we can remind ourselves in the moment of passion that there will be a sunset to the passion, and then we can remember in our moment of indifference that there has been a consecration of the past which now enables us to stick, despite our indifference, to the wife of our choosing.

Long ago, St. Augustine, the bishop of Hippo, and a Father of the Church, was asked the question: "Why not incest? Isn't it very handy?" And he said that it was forbidden for a simple reason. Whenever a name of love has been given already to a sister or mother, or in those days even an aunt or cousin, we cannot approach this person with a new name. Love needs a name given to this sweetheart or bride for the first time. Incest is every situation in which somebody has first been called by a dispassionate name like sister and is then approached with the new name of passionate love. Love must give a person a name as though we saw them for the first time; and since between mothers and sisters, brothers and fathers, there exists already one name of love, the second name would be impaired. Whenever we have already given a name of no-passion, like sister, we can never approach the situation in the way it should be approached. Therefore, in the orgies that we spoke of earlier, the meeting between man and woman was enveloped in ecstasy as though they had really never seen each other before. In addition, the tribes were very carefully split into marriage groups. The tribe had sub-divisions, usually signified by their particular totem; one had the fish on the totem, one the eagle, a third the raven or the wolf, and so on. These totemic divisions have the profound reason that it prevented marriageable people from meeting without ecstasy.

Today the incest problem is not, as we all know, a physical problem inside the family. No one really thinks of marrying his sister, but by marrying the girl with whom we went to school from our eighth to thirteenth year, we may already be making a mistake, because we have first called her as a fellow child, and as a classmate and a playmate, and such a prior relationship is not the true origin of marriage. I feel that the problem of in-

breeding is very much one of the schools and not so much of the family. In marriage, the sequence is: first you see the girl as somebody whom you desire, and then you add the horizon of her becoming a sister, and the mother of your children and the daughter of your parents. If we pervert this sequence, we stand things on their head, because passion is the founding element, and objectivity or realism, as we like to call it, or factualism, is always that which comes later. So, I think that St. Augustine's answer is very beautiful. He said that whenever a name of love has been borrowed by the younger generation from the parents,—we call someone sister or mother because we were taught by our parents to use these terms—we are lukewarm because our feeling is hereditary. Inherited love, therefore, is the reason for the incest rule, because if we have already lived with these people in affection, but without passion, they cannot become the object of passion. St. Augustine's statement solves many riddles, and it is the only explanation I have found in the literature on this subject which holds water, which is really completely correct. Physically, we can never really decide these matters but we can very well ask our tongue. When our tongue has already applied a name within the family relation, we shall hardly be able to use the name for the beloved as though this was for the first time. The subdivisions of the tribe try to pay attention to this problem of keeping the women whom the tribesmen encounter on the meeting ground as yet unnamed. If you have never spoken to the girl before, and you speak to her for the first time, there is the great experience of giving someone for the first time her name so totally that there is nothing you have to obliterate; it is really new to you. Later, she can become old and familiar to you, but at that great hour, she is somebody entering your horizon for the first time. This is called "introduction" and is a mighty event.

Now, about the tribal totems, let me say something that may illustrate how they are really a spiritual or inspiring part of human living. Once, when I was hiking in British Columbia, I was struck with a realization that I have never found in any books. We were traveling in unexplored country, without maps, and it was necessary there to walk through the underbrush on

the paths made by the great animals, like the elk or the moose. We didn't know where we were going, and when we found these paths made by the animals, we were extremely grateful. Now the meeting grounds of the weak, frail primitive men were the paths created by the animals. And the animal totem is, I am quite convinced, not only the superstition that man is descended from the eagle or from the bear, as most textbooks tell us, but it is the simple acknowledgment of spiritual gratitude to the animals for the organization they provided. The incredibly weak man of that time, who had no iron axe or steel weapon, and who would have had to fell trees to find a place of union inside the jungle, was helped considerably by these animals. So man, in not only giving a name to his ancestors, but also in naming himself after the animals, recognized his dependency on the universe, on the existing cosmic order. We have for thousands of years, and even modern man is included, followed the paths of the created world. The first five days of creation are much more with modern man than he cares to admit when he lives in urbanized cities. Few of us see the extent to which we still follow today the water courses, and the animal courses and even the bird's directness. All of the animals which we find used in the totems of the tribes have in some way or another actually directed the paths of men on this earth.

The word "path" we should make the foundation of our political understanding of tribalism. The tribes tried to find paths in the jungle, paths in time, paths in the thicket, and that is why going upstream following the watercourses, or following the paths of the wild animals, was the first political power that enabled these groups to become a little larger than the small group of husband, wife and children. The relation of the tribesman to the animals is one of spiritual gratitude for their directing powers, for the work done for them, because the elephant, the lion and the fox, etc., were superior to men. This understanding will also explain all the strange ideas in the Old Testament and in antiquity about dragons and sphinxes and cherubs. People felt that man should base his existence on the bringing together of all the achievements of the animal kingdom and putting them to use. Thus, man's relation to the ani-

mals has nothing to do with his pedigree in the physical sense, but it has a great deal to do with his devotion to what existed already, to the organization of the world which he was free to inherit. I think that most people today are unaware of, and the textbooks don't even mention, this confrontation of primitive man with the achievements of the animals. They think that man evolved out of the animals. I think that is of no interest to anyone. Whether or not we came from the apes is a very minor matter compared to the great question of how much use primitive man made out of what the animals already did. We are then examining a much different relation—one of working together, and one of primitive man owing the animals something. This will explain the sacredness in which the animal world was held.

We can see now that not only does the tribe produce marriage, but our whole understanding of tribalism—tattoo, totem, incest rules and taboo, all of these, all of these strange and wonderful practices—all go back to the one simple, central problem: How do two people so fall in love, that their marriage means more than the satisfaction of their momentary lust?