

From abandoned homes to adjustable homes | by Dr. Richa Shukla | From Adjustable homes to abandoned homes

 medium.com/from-adjustable-homes-to-abandoned-homes/from-abandoned-homes-to-adjustable-homes-26bfa1a4409c

April 16, 2020



Dr. Richa Shukla

Apr 16, 2020

.

6 min read

.



From abandoned homes to adjustable homes

Swapping right and left, meeting them, unfriending them, blocking them and taking a break from them. Welcome to the new façade of 'Non-biological bonds who keeps on stumbling on the grounds of precariousness, replaceability and forgetfulness. The present

paper aims to understand this bad marriage (which is also essential in a way) between non-biological bonds and human beings.

The idea and importance of a biological family stands still, like a rock solid mountain. Something which can never be penetrated, something which makes us re think on the blurred yet strong concepts of forgiveness, accountability, honesty, irreplaceability etcetera. For instance, how easily we forgive and move on when we have differences with our family (or perhaps learn to live with it). All of us have encountered/ witnessed these instances in real as well as in reel life. So, it's not a new trend which has developed out of nowhere. It has become a norm now.

We can see two individuals parting their way not because of their inherent differences but because of differences/ dissent/ indifference/ objections which they face from their immediate biological family. Whether that objection comes when two people are from different gender, caste, religion, ethnicity or class. 'Difference' which is so vital and essential to human bonds could be seen as a curse in non-biological bonds. Differences which we all have they should bind us and not separate us[1]. If differences are all that exists, they should be the one which matters most not to exclude but to include. The present paper tries to understand this precarity which differences cause in non-biological bonds.

From the right swipe, left swipe on our tinder to blocking and unfollowing, or even ghosting for that matter, reporting a person these acts, re- establishes the idea of autonomy (which we found missing in Indian families). We tend to believe and therefore act that the existence of Non- biological bonds in our life has to culminate in giving us happiness, pleasure and good memories alone. As if it's the responsibility of our friends, partners to heal our fragile self. Therefore, one mistake in these non- biological bonds puts us on the verge of being completely precarious and replaceable.

The autonomy of our self gets addressed in bonds like these, but still they remain unnamed, they are prone to act like a fickle. They can left and picked at any point of time in our life. As if a part of our self-acts as a prolific script writer who can train and make this bond do whatever they want. All of a sudden every act, mistake gets noticed and we keep a record of every mark, scar which we get from them. Surprisingly, the same self who has been bearing the burden of scars, fragile memories, distorted aspects, misleading institutions finds respite in these bonds. Or perhaps we start pouring every ounce of bitterness on them just because we know that there are no legal, social and political obligations.

A family stays together because we have been taught since beginning that family 'sticks together', no matter whatever happens. We need to take into consideration that largely institutions are constructed in nature. Why it happens that when our family do not take into consideration our immediate, created happiness should we worry about what concerns them and what does not?

So, what is it exactly in these bonds which make them fall to pray that easily? We all have encountered dialogues like ‘family comes first’, ‘everything for family’. ‘You aren’t before my family’. What do these testimonies say? They not only preach that a family stays together but family (as a unit) tolerates each other even in the adverse situations. It encompasses everything which a human being can take and even beyond for that matter. Our boundaries of forgiveness, tolerance, acceptance and forgetfulness leave all realms untouched and still it exceeds it. For example, how largely women are illegally detained by their family when they come to know that they chose a partner outside their caste/ religion. After a point of time, it all fades.

While writing this article, I am still pondering on the *flexible precarity* [1](perhaps an adjustable precarity) of non- biological bonds. It makes me ponder that does non – biological bonds only exist because (if they ever do?) there is an absence/ clash/ conflict with the idea of home? It would be interesting to think through that despite of the vulnerable aspects which stays in non- biological bonds still how beautifully they stand still. Are non- biological bonds an escape for us to leave our fractured reality? Can these bonds act as a home which gives us a sense of confinement? And most of the times, they do. If that’s the truth then why do we not give them the due credit which they deserve.

Or is it actually the extension of one’s self/ boundaries, happiness. Can we say that non- biological bond stands for an alternative to our idea of home? There is a ‘shifting morality’ which very conveniently finds a place for itself in these bonds. Non –biological bonds stand for a space which we create for ourselves, between two selves where we confide, push our boundaries (voluntarily) according to our will. In this age of ‘networking’, ‘friendship’, ‘relationships’ which are maintained and constructed for the sake of it. One can see how easily and comfortably we get rid of people in non- biological bonds in the mundane existence. Whether it’s asking them for space, making them understand what cannot be understood and making them accept what’s unacceptable.

The right and left swipe on Tinder and other dating apps determine and tells us about how easily can we choose and can we deny the authority, personhood or selfhood to anyone whom we don’t like. You choose either to stick (or stuck with your family) and this association/ partnership keeps on flourishing, extending, getting a life (no matter what the quality of life is but durability and quantity is all that matters) I wonder if we can ever think how we extend ourselves, our tolerance, our boundaries for this institution called family. But interestingly, we see a contrary face, reactionary way of life, and way of living when it comes to understanding and treating non- biological bonds. There is no contract which gets violated if we harass them, hurt them or mislead them or make them vulnerable. Since years, the social constraints and accountability which we have been critiquing we didn’t realize when did it made a space in our fragile self, as if it’s the ultimate ‘gate keeper’ of sanctions.

We should try to create and culminate these non –biological bonds as Kant said ‘as an end in themselves’ not as a means to achieve an end. So, next time when you are about to create, rather choose a non – biological bond look at it from the lens of curiosity, fascination, forgetfulness, innocence and love. Rather than seeing them as a locus which

carriers your fragile self which plays the game of autonomy and free will. Treat them as an extension to yourself, not as primary or secondary to your life and values. In fact these are those 'adjustable homes' which were by us when we had nothing.

Home is home but if that home gave you shelter when it was raining hard and it gave you warmth during cold nights. It has established itself as a family. It has established its loyalty. And we as human beings need to give them all the credit, warmth and affection which these 'adjustable homes' have given to us.