

Marriage, Love and Sex in Akhtar Mohiudins Fiction

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Abstract

This paper endeavors to examine the portrayals of love marriage and sex in the fiction of Akhtar Mohiudins fiction. Akhtar being Kashmiri writes in Kashmiri. He is a prolific writer and has set a new trend in his writings. His writings include three novels and three collections of short stories. The paper is an attempt to analyze various characters against the background of love marriage and sex. Jahn muk Panun Naar(Hell of our Deeds) exposes the institution of marriage which is in conflict with love. In Zaat Butraat (Caste and Creed) characters go to the extent of sacrificing themselves in love. Whereas love is totally absent in another Dod te Dag(Pain and Pathos), women is only a sex object.

KEYWORDS: Marriage, Love, Women, Culture, Sex, Patriarchy, Conflict, Fiction

Introduction:

Kashmir is a narrative: a narrative of serene beauty, clean waters, high mountains, greenish plains, heavenly calmness and life yielding freshness. This 'construct' prompted many a people to visit and own the heaven and enjoy all that was, 'available' to be seen, touched and experimented with. The feminist narrative attracted the 'men' to invade and capture the succulent beauty drawing 'pleasing' pleasure. (Javid Ahmad Dar, 9)

The beauty of the place called Kashmir is in total contradiction with the actual life of the people who live here. The poets, the philosophers even the travelers and invaders were only lost in praising the mesmerizing beauty of this piece of land. The reality of humans of this paradise, their dignity, their aspirations were simply forgotten. The actual life finds no writer, no poet, no philosopher to write and give vent to the miseries and realities of the people of this land. Akhtar Mohiudin the son of the soil in twentieth century started writing, first in Urdu and then in Kashmiri. Akhtar was highly impressed by progressive movement. He raises the voice of different communities of Kashmir very faithfully and realistically. He was up against every social evil prevailing in the society. He wrote first Kashmiri short story in 1955 Dandwazun (The Brawl) considered as the masterpiece about the socially marginalized and downtrodden. He started a new trend in his stories and portrayed characters and situations from the real life. His first short story which he wrote in Urdu was Unani Hakim (Greek Physician) in Hindustan Times, that day he was named as Akhtar Mohiudin instead of Ghulam Mohiudin. This story was likened everywhere and got published in the magazine Azaad and this gave impetus to Akhtar to go on writing. He let his stories free of pressituation and suffocating clutches of conservatives.

Akhtar's stories are simply the foundation stones in the Kashmiri short fiction but all the evolutionary phases of our short fiction can be seen at work in his writings... Akhtar's stories have the intensity of feeling and depth of experience. (Saqi 2014:30)

Akhtar very faithfully and realistically raises the voice of the various communities in his land he writes about the aspirations, harsh climate, geographical position, political situation and social conditions of the place. He takes up the issues of asserting with more patience the writers obligation to expose the falsity of ideals.

In Madanwaar and Padmaan, Akhtar criticizes the institution of marriage which compels people to live together even if they do not love each other. Marriage should have provided an opportunity to grow together and serve each other selflessly. It has only become a union rather than having a spiritual and emotional bond in Madanwaar and Padmaan. After getting married both Madanwaar and Padmaan live quiet happily for a while. Before marriage both did not like the ideas and ideologies of their respective parents. They criticized and wanted to shun and leave them at any cost only to be with each other. But after their marriage they start owning what they had promised to abjure. Now they start to live a life of compromise, although the marriage took place only when they were madly in love with each other

Madanwaar and Padmaan were reading together. The books then contained true stories written by outstanding men. Those stories had been made into films shown in the cinemas after changing their names. Madanwaar's heart felt gladdened at reading the stories and so would look each other with amazement and wordlessly convey it to each other—did you understand this? I understand all there is to it. (Looking into the Heart of Life, 85)

Akhtar shows the shattered relationship after marriage and how a couple is leading a life wherein there is inner bitterness which had made their respective lives altogether bitter. The flame of love ultimately vanishes, both now were trying to pull their children towards their own respective beliefs and, therefore, their inherited ideologies proved stronger than their love, eventually leading to the disconsolate death of Madanwaar. Padmaan felt relieved now.

The confrontation put on layer after layer and nobody knew which vein to follow. Meanwhile Madanwaar passed away and Padmaan got released. She had a mind, she would bring her children close to her with love and sift the fact from fiction so that ice was broken and dark clouds of confrontation were dispelled. (Looking into the Heart of Life, 89)

Lovers after getting married try not to safeguard their love and subsequently get choked in a socially recognized relationship.

In his novel Jahanamuk panun panun naar (Ones Own Hell), Akhtar treats marriage as a contract between two people to achieve their materialistic ends. There he leaves no place for love and shows that materialism has disintegrated the human relations. Story revolves round the couple and through them we come to know realistic facts behind so called rich and luxurious life. Mr. and Mrs. X are living happily, they eat, drink, sleep and enjoy their life like a normal couple, but the fact is they don't share the marital bliss of togetherness rather are virtually two business partners. Mrs. X lastly regrets her being a tool in the hands of influential's, suffers from trauma and at the end kills herself. She could not continue to live a loveless life. Their relationship is acceptable to the society; they have a better understanding as for as their actual relationship is concerned, but at the same time their bond lacks love, which is a prerequisite of every healthy marital relation.

In one of his wonderful poignant stories, Red Silken Trousers, he writes about couple married many decades ago. Even in their old age they have the strong passion for each other. 'Quest' a Mumbai based magazine wrote about this story 'this is a poem of love eternal and deserves to be included in the world anthology of short stories'. They already had ten children. Most of them were on the threshold of old age. The old man, Nabir Shaala, darns the clothes and in case needs scissors, while searching for the same his wife drops a red silken trouser from the bundle of clothes. She had worn this trouser on her wedding night. Her husband persuades her to put them on now. She shyly tells him, 'don't be silly old man'. As she puts on the trousers, her husband embraces her with the passion of decades ago and in exchange of bawdiness they forgot the

whole world around them. He pulled her at hem of the pheran and up at the shoulders only to see her stand up.

As Khotan Dyad stealthily and softly moved to avoid Nabir Shaala's gaze till she would sit without being aware of it, she tripped up her great toe of her in the cord of the mat and fell down flat, face forwards. Nabir Shaala gave a start. He saw her lying prostrate like a wild bird. Feeling apprehensive, she gave a shriek, but soon she lifted her profile up, cast winsome smile on Nabir Shaala and he, holdin her arms around her while trying to lift her up, —Yuguy may kyenh. (Looking into the Heart of Life, 79)

Akhtar shows that sex and its thought can make you happy. Nabir Shaala, inspite of poverty, old age and deprivations, lives contentedly and enjoys his whole life with his wife. Oblivious to the miseries, he is giving mouth to the songs and loves life and its environs that provide stuff to his soul. He enjoys all this in his wooden shack overlooking the Jhelum. His wife too, inspite of the death of all her male children in their childhood and the distressing memories, therefore, is unbroken and alive in as far as she relives her past intimacy in donning the only remaining red silken trousers of her bridal outfit to regale her husband.

But soon there was a knock at the door and it was their son-in-law who had watched all this in the corridor. Khotan Dyad felt absolutely mortified. The son-in-law left the room without wishing them back. Khotan Dyad felt ashamed as if she had been caught red handed. She cast a guilty look at her husband, who pounced upon her saying: we are not convicted of any felony! Everybody is a king unto himself in his domain. (Looking into the Heart of Life, 80)

The influence of scandalized son-in-law only provokes to assert the inviolability of his private life.

The two people when in love think that all the things around are meaningless, it is only they, who exist, but the very same couple enters into a very different world after marriage. In fact, a beginning of new chapter in their life, adjustments, duties, responsibilities, compromise, ego all these things now come in between the two and that love changes into displeasure, irritation and then hatred. Love and sex are vitalities of a married life. Without sex, a life of a married couple cannot be happy. Akhtar also thinks that marriage without love is not a solution to confusion and anxiety. Love, marriage and sex are correlated to each other and then only remove the chaos and tension with which human world is surrounded.

Akhtar's novel *Dod-Dag* is a story of two orphaned sisters, Faata and Raaja, who live with their maternal uncle. He is very poor, helpless and is also obedient to his wife. Their uncle wants to get rid of his two nieces and eventually leads to the marriage of elder one Faata. After her elder sister's marriage, Raaja, the younger one also lives with her sister. Raaja, who is in love with Abdul Ghani, the accountant of her brother-in-law, is lured by him only to satisfy his lust, and does not marry her. He leaves her to get hold of his another prey. T. N. Raina while commenting about Raaja says:

Raaja the younger one being loving, generous, lively, vivacious, positive, impressive, quick to repent and despite her moral lapse (surrendering her body to Abdul Ghani) most suitable as the heroine of the novel, first because of her qualities are related to the compact plot, second because it is she who brings misery on herself and her sister. (208)

Raaja surrenders to Abdul Ghani, time and again, even after when her sister is divorced by Shama Sahab, her brother-in-law. Eventually, Faata gets married to Abdul Ghani when she is in total desperation. He, being a lecher, becomes messiah for Faata, as she has none to take care of her in the patriarchal society, where one needs the shelter of a man necessarily in order to live by the conditions laid by the social set up, again marriage being a social recognition of sex between man and woman. Akhtar through this tries to reveal the human psychology because Raaja, although being a good wife and caring sister could not resist her passion for Abdul Ghani. Akhtar not only depicts the sexual thirst of Abdul Ghani but also shows the suffering of the two sisters in a particular Kashmiri society. Avtar Krishen Rehbar comments on the novel:

The novel depicts certain hard realities of life in the Kashmiri conservative society. Many writers and critics raised voice that Akhtar had used free treatment of sex, lust and pornography in his novel *Dod-Dag*. But the fact is that sex has been basic of every visual and performing art and literature. (319)

Agreeing to the above statement, the treatment of sex and obscenities were not approved by the society. Akhtar as a novelist not only portrays the treatment of free sex in the novel but also takes into consideration that sex without love and social recognition is an abominable act and brings distress and suffering. He not only talks about sexual human desires but also poverty and miseries which make humans selfish, greedy and materialistic, it is poverty which leads to different undesirable acts.

Thus Akhtar through his fiction tries to tell that marriage, love and sex and understanding are interdependent, for husband and wife to live a harmonious life.

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