
**Richa Pandit's Acts of Transgression in Professor Vikas Sharma's
*Love's not Time's Fool***

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Abstract:

The term *transgression* means doing something against an established rule or law or committing some moral lapse. It also refers to the non-fulfillment of duty by a person in society. Acts of transgression in English novels often serve as pivotal to the plot, characters, and exploration of themes. These acts can take various forms, including moral, legal, social, or personal violations. A few notable examples from different periods include Victor Frankenstein's acts of transgression in Mary Shelly's novel, *Frankenstein*, Heath Cliff's vengeful actions in *The Wuthering Heights*, Count Dracula's vampirism against human life and morality; Briony Tallis's false accusation of Robbie Turner in Ian Mc Ewan's novel *Atonement*. These examples illustrate how acts of transgression in English literature have been used to prove deeper questions about human nature, society, and morality. Through such themes, the novelist tries to challenge and critique the prevailing norms and values inherent in society.

Key Words: Contributed, fidelity, transgression, perturbing, disloyal, renunciation, Wedlock.

Introduction:

In Vikas Sharma's novel, *Love Is Not Time's Fool*, Richa Pandit's acts of transgression are central to the plot, characterization, and themes, particularly in the context of relationships and social norms in Indian society. Through the present paper, I have tried to study the different norms of transgression in the novel, such as:

Extramarital affairs.....

Power dynamics and Dependency.....

Critical and Moral Identity.....

These norms in the novel have been highlighted to critique societal norms regarding the complexities and conflicts inherent in human relationships. The novel presents a nuanced exploration of love, desire, and societal constraints. In his novel *Love's, not Time's Fool*, Vikas Sharma focuses on the transgression of moral virtues and faithfulness on the part of a husband for his wife and of the wife for her husband, who indulges in extramarital affairs. Both, in the pursuit of success in business or love, involve themselves in illicit relationships with other persons. However, the novelist does not hold only women responsible for this moral transgression; he also lays the onus of infidelity on the shoulders of the husband for being disloyal to his wife.

In his novels, Vikas Sharma presents educated women who are not ready to accept any violence or brutal injustice to them. They are smart and free from the prohibitions of the orthodox society. Vikas Sharma emphasizes the fact that inconsiderate behavior of men for women's respect is rampant in our society. The novelist says that the time has come when women should be given due respect as far as their rights for development are concerned. In Indian society, generally, the character of a woman is decided by men who expect that woman should follow their decisions without any ifs and buts. And if a woman does not do that, she is forced to lead a tortured life. In contemporary times, apparently, it seems that women are given decision-making power, but the reality is that it is the man whose decisions are final in a family or in a society. It has become a controversial issue because people are not ready to give up this habit of domination, while today's women are not ready to tolerate this discrimination.

When a woman is not respected in her family due to gender discrimination, or she is cheated on by her partner in her conjugal life, she takes disastrous steps in retaliation to this maltreatment. Either she adopts a life of alienation or renunciation, as it has been the practice in ancient times, or she embarks on a journey of breaking the rules of society and indulging in illicit relationships so that her natural and repressed desires may be fulfilled. In his novel *Love's not Time's Fool*, Vikas Sharma presents a woman protagonist, Richa Pandit, who is dynamic though she has already been deceived by one Robert Lee and gives birth to a child even before her marriage. But she does not lose courage and makes the decision to rear her born-out-of-wedlock child even after her marriage with Malya. Thus, the very act of transgression is committed by Richa Pandit when she establishes a physical relationship with Robert Lee, her earlier lover.

She marries Malya, a rich businessman, to enter a relationship of convenience. However, we see that both Richa and Malya are disappointed at the decision of their marriage and carry on their relationship due to social and moral restrictions. Vikas Sharma holds the opinion that if orthodox social and moral codes of conduct turn the life of a woman into a disaster, this society does not accept her

and does not pay the respect that should have been given to her after her marriage as per the social norms. Richa Pandit carries on her duties faithfully and efficiently, but due to the incompatibility between husband and wife, she does not get satisfaction in her life, neither in her relationship with her husband nor in her desire to enjoy sex as a married woman. Shashi Kant Tripathi remarks about Richa Pandit's dynamic life:

She makes all the decisions related to business deals, charity projects, purchasing land, and expanding financial resources independently. She is quite competent to lead the entire empire of her business. In the eyes of her employees, she sets a prestigious image. In this novel, the initiatives in sex are taken by her as her partner, Abhi, is an inexperienced guy who later becomes her employee... Her invitation to Abhi to visit her home shows that she is a pursuer, and the latter is pursued. Moreover, her tact to lure him for love-making imparts beauty to her vitality. This casual meeting brings a golden hope and proves to become a turning point in her life. Abhi has entered her home and life. He gets to enjoy new accommodation, a part-time job, and a physical relationship with Richa. She caters to his physical, emotional, and financial needs. (Portrayal of Women in *Love's Not Time's Fool* by Prof. Vikas Sharma 148-49)

Richa commits transgression by entering an illicit relationship with Abhi even before marrying him. Her earlier liaison with Lee was out of love for him, but this time, she was involved with Abhi, perhaps to satiate her desire for love and sex. In Indian society, having a pre-marital sexual relationship with a man is one of the greatest transgressions that are taken as taboos that are not acceptable to society on any count. Thus, Richa Pandit's involvement with Abhi is an act of transgression by having an illicit relationship with Abhi. Let us know what an illicit liaison means. In this regard, Professor M. Rizwan Khan rightly observes:

Illicit liaisons are relationships or affairs that occur outside the boundaries of societal norms and established partnerships. They are characterized by secrecy, deception, and a violation of social expectations. These liaisons often provide a distorted perception of relationships, emphasizing instant gratification, thrill, and passion while disregarding the deeper emotional connections that underpin meaningful partnerships... Illicit liaisons, defined as relationships or affairs that transgress societal norms and established commitments, reveal a complex interplay of motivations and dynamics that contribute to the superficiality of modern partnerships. These liaisons are characterized by secrecy, deception, and the violation of social expectations, making them alluring and enticing to those seeking an escape from the perceived monotony or limitations of their existing relationships. (*Sana: The Portrayal of Illicit Liaisons Accentuates the Superficiality of Partnerships Ubiquitous in Modern Culture* 10-11)

The factors responsible for the encouragement of illicit transgressions in our society must also be taken into consideration. The foremost source of motivation for

these illicit relationships is generally the yearning for eagerness and newness. People are attracted to the excitement that is created in clandestine relationships because an individual wishes to do something new, different from the sexual pleasure that he gets legitimately. Such pleasures derived secretly appear to be fascinating though dangerous because of their prohibited condition. This craving for new pleasure gives them relief from the monotonous routine of pleasure. Professor M. Rizwan Khan writes:

Emotional fulfillment is another motivation that drives individuals to pursue illicit liaisons. In some cases, individuals may feel emotionally unfulfilled in their existing relationships and seek solace or connection elsewhere. The illicit nature of these liaisons may create a false sense of intensity and emotional depth, providing individuals with the illusion of a more fulfilling connection. However, these relationships often lack genuine emotional intimacy and long-term commitments that are essential for sustaining a deep and meaningful partnership. (11)

In the light of the above-mentioned statement, we see that Richa Pandit violates the social demand of morality and challenges the belief of ancient old times that a woman has no power in a family and that she has no choice but to serve man. Professor Vikas Sharma reverses this principle and presents Richa as a dynamic woman who can manage everything on her own. Being an educated woman, she shows the capability of running her business even in the absence of her husband, Malya. Nidhi Gupta remarks:

Richa is a competent, educated, attractive middle-aged woman who single-handedly runs a shoe-making factory in the absence of her husband, Malya. Her husband's emotional neglect of her forces distance between them as it leads her into an affair with her employee Abhilash... The novel is about Richa's realization that she cannot live with the mind alone but also must be alive physically. This realization stems from an elevated passion that she has felt with Abhilash, which only suggests that love and morality are always in conflict with one another as Richa is a married woman. (Love's not Time's Fool: Between Love and Morality 255)

Richa Pandit is ready to bear every responsibility in the absence of her husband, Malya, who has gone to America on a business tour. However, she involves herself in love with her own employee, Abhi, and begins to have a physical relationship with him. Thus, she breaks the moral code of conduct, stating that a wife has no choice but to be loyal to her husband. But Vikas Sharma, through the retaliatory steps of Richa Pandit, wants to say that man should also show loyalty to his wife; there should be no two rules of morality, one for a man who is free to fulfill his ambitions and desires without any qualms and the other for women who is supposed to follow all the codes of moral conduct. Thus, it becomes a controversial issue where a woman has no choice. Nidhi Gupta goes on to write:

The conflict between love and morality also leads to the problem of choice.

Throughout the novel, the individual is pitted against the social and economic forces, especially with reference to Richa, so to make the decision to assert her individuality would be, in many ways, the more difficult path, as the novel shows us that freedom of individuality comes with the responsibility to make choices and for Richa, at least such decisions are never easy. If Richa were to subjugate her will to society, choices become meaningless- she just has to do what everyone does- follow tradition, so the only choices she would have to make are minor and insignificant because they are within the set boundaries of the society. (255-56)

Thus, Professor Vikas Sharma expresses his view on this act of transgression done by Richa Pandit, who, in the name of modernity and dynamism, retaliates against those societal norms that do not allow her to be happy or give respect a woman should be given. Love becomes the source of transgression for Richa Pandit, Who is thirsty for love that is not given to her by her husband, Malya. In the absence of Malya, Richa gets her feelings quenched by Abhi; she begins to realize that Abhi can provide her love and security. She says to Abhi:

Life is nothing but a tale of sorrow without love, as this is something that we both can share with each other. (Love's not Time's Fool 103)

When Richa is married to Malya, he listens to her suggestions in matters of business and incorporates those suggestions into his decisions. However, he does not show courage in divulging his weakness of being impotent and leaves for America in the name of a business tour. According to Dr. Runoo Ravi:

One must give credit to Malya for listening to her suggestions, making improvisations, and not putting any obstacles or palpable objections to Richa's business decisions. He may have had his reasons for going on long business tours by himself without taking Richa with him, but he does have implicit trust in his wife's intelligence and hard work... (Vikas Sharma, Exploring Feminism in the Character of Richa Pandit in *Love's not Time's Fool* with Regard to Morality and Identity 79)

Richa misses Malya as she feels lonely without his company. She emotionally feels connected with him during the two months when Malya is on a business tour. As she eagerly wishes to be in Malya's arms, she begins to feel a sort of anger in her mind. On the phone, she expresses her frustration at his staying longer in America. She says:

I had missed the company for more than two weeks and needed him emotionally. In the beginning, I told him – 'Perhaps you have forgotten me and business? Anyway, you have postponed the date of coming back every week. I am worried about you and your well-being. How do you manage your food there? Don't you feel lonely in the hotel rooms?' (Love's not Time's Fool 59)

The above-mentioned words spoken by Richa show that she is in deep and genuine love with Malya and has no intention of committing any transgression till this point. But it is her loneliness and deep desire to be in the company of her husband

that she loses her control over herself and begins to have an affair with Abhi. Dr. Runoo Ravi observes:

Richa is not pretending. She needs her husband. And here, the fulfilling companionship that she needed is deprived of her. Perhaps it was the very natural need for a human company that drew her towards Abhilash. As days progressed, the continuous absence of her spouse, the delay in his arrival, and the gossip about his clandestine affair were all added as factors that changed her relationship with Abhi from platonic to consummate. Richa's morality has its own definitive standards. She is answerable only to herself. (Vikas Sharma, Exploring Feminism in the Character of Richa Pandit in *Love's not Time's Fool* with Regard to Morality and Identity 79)

Richa now begins to think that Malya does not love her and that he is fulfilling his desires there in America by having clandestine affairs with other women. Obviously, this situation makes Richa sad. According to Dr. Rakhi Chauhan who writes:

Malya does not love Richa and has extramarital affairs with his own secretary, Indumati. He never cares about Richa's feelings and emotions, and instead of being treated as a wife, he treats her like an object or a commodity. He is not emotionally connected with her, and that's why Richa always feels a lack of emotional love. She always craves those happy moments which make the life of a husband and wife happy. (Lust: A Beguiling Apparatus of Love: A Study of *Love's not Time's Fool* 67)

In fact, Richa has a deep love for Malya, but when she comes to know of his physical relationship with Indumati, she decides to transgress and fulfill her wish of being loved by someone. Though she knows the reality of Malya's love affair, she still wants to enlighten her conscience by making her own assessment. She says:

Our days of prosperity often encourage us towards evils called worldly comforts and this how the story ends with a lot of sins on all our sides?

My adversity is worldly, and I am happy with self-illumination as I have enough time for self-analysis and auto-suggestions." (*Love's not Time's Fool* 100)

Here, through the words, Richa, Professor Vikas Sharma brings home the point that if there is any betrayal on the part of Richa, it is due to Malya's inconsiderate behavior and keeping himself away from his wife, rather than keeping her in the dark about the reality of his impotence. When Indumati clarifies the things that Malya could not have any sexual relationship with her in America because of the impotence that had occurred due to the hitting of the ball on his vital sex organ, Richa becomes sad at this revelation. Dr. Runoo Ravi writes about Richa's state of mind:

She understands that she has been cheated. She was saddled with an impotent man who refused to come to terms with his deficiency. And that the real cause of his demise was not the 'reported' lung infection but an operation on his vital organ, which went wrong. Richa is now free of the burden of this wifehood. For a passionate and

arduous woman like her, life with an impotent man was actually a living hell. Her sexual satisfaction is thus not considered immoral by the reader. It is her right, and she is brave enough to satiate her sexual appetite on her own terms. Malya was not able to satisfy Richa's sexual urges. Her passion remained unsatiated. (Vikas Sharma, Exploring Feminism in the Character of Richa Pandit in *Love's not Time's Fool* with Regard to Morality and Identity 81)

In fact, she was absolutely ignorant of all this development and that Malya was unable to have a physical relationship with her due to his impotence, even after three months of their marriage. According to Dr. Rakhi Chauhan who writes:

Emotional love is the foundation of the happy life of husband and wife, and it strengthens the relationship. By portraying the character of Malya, Professor Vikas Sharma is trying to show the real picture of society. Society is suffering from some evils, and out of all these evils, the most common is to have extramarital affairs that are making society hollow by licking it like a termite. Due to this evil, the life of marriage is decreasing day by day, and the result is coming in the form of divorce, deceit, revenge, suicide, illicit relationships, etc. The happy married life has turned into a sad one. (Lust: A Beguiling Apparatus of Love: A Study of *Love's not Time's Fool* 65)

As a result of this absence of love and loyalty on the part of Malaya, Richa commits the act of transgression and indulges herself in the controversial issue of an extramarital relationship with Abhi. However, this extra-marital relationship with Abhi soon converts into love, devotion, and consideration for each other. She begins to feel Abhi as if he is made for her. This makes Richa realize feelings of true love; she now begins to imagine a bright future as the wife of Abhi. She instantly marries him. Dr. Runoo Ravi observes:

Her marriage to Abhi might have been a defense against social conventions, but for an empowered woman like her, Richa's decision to have a baby and become a mother was purely a definite and purposeful choice. (82)

Here, Professor Vikas Sharma wants to make it clear that the fault is in his lack of disclosure of his impotency. This is also a betrayal of loyalty on the part of the husband, as he shows no courage in disclosing his weakness and tries to fulfill his sensual pleasure with another girl, Indumati. When Richa indulges in a sexual relationship with Abhi, it is because of her intense desire to enjoy sex, but still, she feels guilty conscience. But it is clear from her marriage with Abhi that she is not mad after lusting for sex because she enters into a pious relationship with him. Hence, her involvement with Abhi should not be considered a taboo or controversial issue.

Later on, when Richa visits Agra in the company of her brother-in-law, she is accosted by him to have sex with him. She instantly reacts and admonishes him not to think about her in that way. She does not demean herself by accepting his proposal of sex and warns her sister to take care of her husband and make him happy in bed so

that he may not flirt with other women. In a way, she saves her sister's familial relationships and her home.

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