

Citation: Jan, A. (2021). Love as a Victim of Class Consciousness: A Study of Ayesha Salman's *Blue Dust*^{*}. *Global Language Review*, VI(1), 99-105. [https://doi.org/10.31703/glr.2021\(VI-I\).11](https://doi.org/10.31703/glr.2021(VI-I).11)



Love as a Victim of Class Consciousness: A Study of Ayesha Salman's *Blue Dust*^{*}

Ayesha Jan^{*}

Abstract

When differences are experienced in religions, love life is disturbed. Blue Dust (2012) narrates religious differences and various conflicts that arise as to their consequence. There is a story of shattered personalities, dual ethnic backgrounds, and intensity of emotions. Such problems and conflicts make people spiritually unsatisfied and psychologically hollow. This study concluded that a man, who has no time for family and love, has become alienated, depressed, and has lost his peace of soul. It is a dilemma and a threat to humanity. It is losing its values day by day. People are fed up with conflicts and want to get rid of such things. This paper suggests that the real happiness of life lies in spreading love, ignoring negativity, having positivity, showing confidence, and believing in respect and care of humanity; this is the message of the study.

Key Words: Conflicts, Consciousness, Love, Problems

Introduction

The society comprises of different religions and social classes. The individuals are given social status according to their religion and economy. Mostly, marriages are held within the same religion. In such cases, feelings and emotions are ignored. Love, one of the significant aspects of human life, has a special part in human life. Human love is a true reality in terms of its welcoming and divine nature. There must be no confusion of love that it can be replaced with anything else. The main essence of humanity is the emotion of love. Love marriages in interreligious ethnicities are rare. Certain societies do not allow their members to get love from another ethnic group.

Objective of the Paper

The Objective of the following paper is

- To find the relation between love and Class Consciousness in *Blue Dust* by Ayesha Salman.

Literature Review

The important feature of human identity is ethnicity. It reveals human life uniquely in various communities. When there is no harmony in ethnicities of society, then this difference leads towards an uncertain situation

in which one group feels unsafe versus the power of others. The feelings of hostility eventually make ethnic groups work for their groups (Hashmi, 2015).

Group conflicts commonly arise in class-conscious communities. Novels narrate various types of group conflicts. Some of them are men Vs men, Man Vs Nature, and man Vs society. These conflicts are the main essence of the story and lead the story towards its end and please the readers by creating interest in the story. The 'individual Vs Society' conflict is mostly present in class-conscious society. The conflict between the older and younger generation always exists; there is a community. Generations differ in understanding and thinking about the same thing at the same time. Many

^{*} Student, Department of English Language and Literature, Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan. KP, Pakistan.
Email: pakistanjan167@gmail.com

novelists present this conflict in their novels. In the novel *A Matter of Time* by Chaise Deshpande, we find this conflict. Sumi, the protagonist, is left alone by Gopal. She thinks it is embarrassing. She returns to her parent's house and manages her daily affairs. She becomes a self-dependent woman and shows Gopal that she can question him and can live without him. Her parents lived with complete silence for 35 years. Her mother is unable to decide on her own ([Ravipati, 2015](#)). The daughter decides on her own while the mother is unable to make the decision. Their portrayal shows the conflict of understanding and reacting to the same circumstances in two generations. The mother remains quiet while the daughter speaks for her rights and survives the situation.

In class-conscious communities, characters with transitional identities face many problems in love life. Kamila Shamsie represents transitional identities in such a way that her novels seem like the real portrayal of characters having transitional identities. In *Salt and Saffron*, she depicts the injustice done to the poor in Pakistani families. Maryam ran away with a family cook. Their story became a memory. Alya and Khalil loved each other. They belonged to different identities, but their love settled in marriage. Still, the issue of class conflict remains unresolved ([Kiran, 2017](#)). Similarly, in such societies, people arrange marriages for social purposes. Money is important, and emotions have no value. In the novel *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen, characters favor money and neglect love in the bond of marriage. A person does not get respect unless and until he gets a proper economic status in a class-conscious society. For getting recognition, sometimes, a person gets involved in some illegal deeds. He desires to get a higher social status either through a good or bad approach. In the novel *The Great Gatsby* by Fitzgerald, Gatsby has nothing at first, but later on, he is wealthy. He gets his wealth during a corrupt time. He got the wealth by some unfair means (Falth, 2013).

Social inequalities reduce every kind of relationship. The wealth, which is the symbol of higher social status, is preferred, and beautiful feelings like love are suppressed for the sake of money, as Catherin chooses Edger (a man of wealth) instead of Heathcliff (her poor lover). In class-

conscious societies, when people of two different identities marry each other, the family of a specific social group does not allow their marriage, or they accept it with fear, and the partner, who belongs to the lower ethnicity, always suffers. In the novel *Love Story*, the heroine is a poor Italian American girl. She is not considered a suitable bride to the hero. The heroine Wasp's ethnicity is opposite to the heroine's Catholicism. She marries the hero, notwithstanding his family's refusal to accept the union. She changes her ethnic identity while the hero continues his studies. Oliver completes his graduation while Jennifer loses her position in the American community. She dies of her illness and finally is out of sight altogether. She is no longer a warning to the hero's family, and his family no longer needs to worry that the relationship will give mixed-race children. The reason for Barrett's family disparity is gone ([Makinen, 2013](#)).

The following paper studies the relationship between class consciousness and love. Salman narrates the story through different points of view and has shown several issues associated with religious and cultural diversity, sexual compulsions, fantasies, goals, and worries. Zaib passes from different relationships and forms her views about the love she sees as a child. Taboos of class-consciousness in the Pakistani family system and issues of mental illness are narrated by the writer (Mubashir, 2012). We see that in class-conscious communities, people's lives are complicated; they face conflicts and problems for their survival. Most of the victims of class consciousness are brokenhearted. In *Blue Dust*, the writer makes her character's life difficult. Grief, darkness, and sadness lie with each character even when they are at peace ([Ali, 2012](#)).

Methodology

The primary data source of this study is the novel *Blue Dust* by Ayesha Salman. Specific paragraphs from the actual text are selected. The researcher uses James Paul [Gee's \(2014\)](#) model of Discourse Analysis as a tool kit for data analysis.

Love and Class Consciousness in *Blue Dust*

In *Blue Dust* by Ayesha Salman Shafi, a Muslim faced opposition from his society when he decided to marry a beloved from Christianity. In the novel,

Salman discusses that how different shades of love are interrelated. The lines "*Zaib knew..... for him*". (Salman, 2012: p.19) narrates that when Shafi decided to get married to a Christian woman, the couple faced many problems. Such lines are asked by Zaib from her father about marriage. In the text, "*Zaib knew that her father had to face great opposition when he decided to get divorced and remarry; something that was UN heard of in those days.*" The Fill-In Tool is identified. The researcher gets the view that to marry a person of opposite ethnicity is not allowed in the custom of inter-religious societies. It guesses that Zaib faced opposition due to the product of dual ethnicities that is why; she could feel her father's problems. But Shafi did it because he loved a Christian woman. He went against the customs and norms of his society; he was not conscious of his society but was conscious of his love. Society turned against him. He faced a social boycott. The attitude of society made his life worse for him. Zaib had heard about the stories; she wanted to confirm that what the problems were. We get the meaning that in ethnic-conscious societies, people cannot bear another ethnicity to merge with. If anyone has a relation with another ethnicity, they face problems within their society. From the text "*Zaib had heard relatives talk about daddy's first marriage*", we know about Zaib father's marriages. From the text "*and about mummy being a Christian*", we know that the real reason behind Zaib father's problems was the Christianity of Zaib's mother.

The text "*Daddy where the people of that time horrible to you because no one was supposed to marry again in those days. That had made it even worse for him*" shows the worse condition of Shafi. Salman increases the interest of readers in her text by telling that people of Shafi's society opposed him to a horrible extent. The Doing and Not Just Saying Tool is identified here. Salman first talks about the problems Zaib's parents had faced at the time of marriage and then tells us about the questions, Zaib asked from her father. The word "*worse*" shows the intensity of the problems. Zaib acted consoling her father and wanted to share her father's problems. Zaib asked those questions because she was facing problems in her society. Her society did not accept her as a respectful human being because of being the

daughter of dual ethnic parents. There is no change in parents' problems and daughter's problems. Both faced problems because of the mixing of different ethnicities. Salman performs the role of a person who consoles the people suffering from ethnic problems. We think that this consciousness about ethnicities is a universal phenomenon in ethnic-conscious societies and exists in every age. The product of dual ethnicities is not welcomed in any society. The Fill-In Tool is also used by the writer. We guess that basically, Zaib was trying to tell her father that she is facing problems and wish her father to solve those problems. She needed the attention of her father and believed that as he has passed through the problems, he will know how much it teases a person and will solve her problems. Indirectly she asked for the help of a father. The Situated Meaning Tool is also identified here. We get the situated meaning that children do trust on their parents that they can solve their problems. "*Horrible*" is the place Deixis. It specifies the behavior of society with Shafi and Zaib. It is used for the reaction Shafi faced at the time of marriage and for Zaib's situation in her ethnic-conscious society. To live with a dual ethnic background is horrible for its holders. Their life is made horrible by their society. The interreligious conflicts prevail from generation to generation in ethnic-conscious societies.

The Context is Reflexive Tool, The Situated Meaning Tool, and The Why This Way and Not That Way Tool are identified in the whole paragraph. The context is the conflict creating a class-conscious society. The meaning situated in the paragraph is that whatever the age is, the behavior of ethnic-conscious societies never changes. She gives such characteristics through the main theme of the paragraph that ethnic consciousness can affect love, marriages and create problems in the lives of people who mix with another ethnicity and are the products of dual ethnicities.

Similarly, Devi, another daughter of Shafi, was unsuccessful in her love because her beloved was from a Muslim background, and she was the product of mixed race. Haider and Devika (Devi) were in love. They wanted to get married. Devika (Devi) asked Haider to send a proposal through his parents. Haider discussed the matter with his mother, but she strictly refused. The text "*Ammi, I want to marry a*

girl of my choice, times have changed, and anyway, I don't even know Munira. I was only ten when we were engaged, Munira was his first cousin" and *"what you mean we never marry out of the family, you know that"*, (Salman, 2012:p.1) tell us that Haider was in love with Devi; he asked his mother that he wants to get married. His mother got excited and told him that she would go to Munira straight away. Haider told her that he loves another girl and does not want to get marry to Munira. His mother got shocked. She told Haider that this is not the custom of the society to marry outside it. Haider tried to convince her but could not. The mother did not believe that her son can ask for a marriage like this. That is why she asked Haider what did he mean? Haider repeated that he loves a bright and beautiful girl and wants to marry her, but the mother refused with anger and fury. The mother was not convinced, and as a result, Haider left his love for family. The Fill-in Tool is identified, and the meaning is that in most of the ethnic conscious societies, if a person tries to have a relationship outside society, he first faces the opposition of the family and then of society. He has to sacrifice his wishes; otherwise, he is not allowed in society. The text *"she said this with true disbelief"* shows the mother's shock and fury. In ethnic conscious societies, when someone revolts or do not follow the norms of their society, they face fury from society, and in some cases, the society gets shocked and cannot believe that anyone of its member can break its rules and customs. The meaning situated is that once you revolt the society, you will face the fury and disbelief of society. There is always the pressure of society on a person. The text *"pleases Ammi, times have changed. I have met a bright and beautiful girl, and I love her,"* has the main theme of the lines, which is that Haider wanted his beloved from his mother, but his mother rejected him. The Fill-in Tool is in the form of the meaning that when anyone from the class-conscious family gets in love with a person from another social class and wants to marry and get their love, they have to show courage for their love; they have to revolt for their love; sometimes, they have to leave their society, family, and everything. Haider sacrificed his love for his mother's and society's sake. It was the consciousness of society that made the mother go against the will of the son, it was the intensity of

emotions that made Haider ask and convince for his love, and it was the power of the mother which made the son leave his love.

Products of mixed ethnicities have divided and dispersed personalities and ideologies. In *Blue Dust*, Zaib has a dispersed personality and is always confused about religious and social norms. Zaib faced many problems of discrimination due to the class-consciousness of her society. Those problems created conflicts in her mind and many questions about religion, class, and creed.

Salman narrates the questions raised in Zaib's mind through *"Zaib it."* (Salman; 2012: pp. 154-155). The text: *"Zaib had always been troubled by questions about religion, class, and creed. She wanted answers, answers that were just not there* forms the setting of Stanza Tool. The setting is the questions about religion, class, and creed. We know the questions; Zaib had always been troubled by due to the difference in religion, social class, and creed. Her parents were from two different religions. She was abused by dual parenthood, and she suffered from different internal and external conflicts. This made Zaib lonely. She asked questions like why religion, class, and creed are creating problems for her. Why is she emotionally and physically hurt? Why people hurt her? How can she get rid of all the suffering and abuses? She did not find the answer.

The text *"Were all religions as Marx said just an opiate of the masses? Can they be written off that easily? Or was life just a series of tests? Were we being judged according to our actions? Then how could actions be judged?"* asks that whether religion is important or money? She asks that is religion the only thing for the masses to give satisfaction, or is it used to manipulate the lower class or the oppressed? She asks that why people use religion to disgrace others. The Fill-in Tool gives the meaning that when a person suffers due to religion, they go into conflicts. Religion is the way of life, and when people are confused about the way of life, then it is difficult for them to move in life.

Zaib represents the writer; through her, Salman asks is religion only important for the lower class and not for the upper class? Can society be discriminated against based on religion? Is the remedy for any problem lies in religion? Is religion a good medicine

for the diseases caused by discrimination? Can a person manipulate religion for personal interests? Do the religions allow damaging their teachings for worldly things? If answers to these questions are yes, then why the believers of any religion who strongly follow their faith face conflicts and problems? If answers are no, then why religion is given very much importance in every society? Salman wants clarification about the role of religion in human life and shows that religion has an important role in human life. If the solution lies in such things, then why people cannot find the solution? If there is no solution to the problems, then why such things exist? , If they are important for human life, then why humanity is disturbed today? It is difficult to find a satisfactory answer. Every answer gives birth to another question. The same happened to Zaib; she searched for answers to such questions but did not find any. The difference between our society and the society of Zaib is that she was the product of dual ethnicities, and most of us are mono-ethnic, but the consciousness about religion, class, and creed is the same in both. Zaib got into a conflict and suffered from it.

The researcher thinks that belief in humanity and forgetfulness about the human consciousness of religion, class, and creed leads to satisfaction in life. The role of religion in its real and pure sense is immense, and it does not create problems for the followers. It solves the conflicts and problems of its followers. These are people who make religion problematic for others. They do wrong presentation and interpretation for their own sake. When religions are wrongly interpreted and understood, then there are problems in every field of life. In the case of Zaib, religion was wrongly understood by her and her society. They were confused about their religions and did not know the real teachings of Islam and Christianity; that are why they suffered and asked questions.

Islam and Christianity both religions discourage discrimination. Both sbelieves in the equality of human beings. Zaib's society did not follow the religions, and that is why there were problems created based on the difference in religion, class, and creed. Every religion has answers for the questions of its followers but only those who get an answer, which searches for answers and do not question the religion

because when religion is questioned, conflicts are bound to create. And when conflicts are created, then a person becomes conscious, and when a person is conscious of his social class, then his whole life disturbs.

The text: *"What makes that action right or wrong was the view of the collective public. So human beings adhered to a public law, which determines right or wrong, moral or immoral. Where did religion fit in then? Wasn't religion the point where the argument started? Then how did she drift so far away from it?"* compares actions of society with religious practices and sees them through the eye of religion. The text *"What makes those actions right or wrong was the view of the collective public. So human beings adhered to a public law, which determines right or wrong, moral or immoral. Where did religion fit in then? Wasn't religion the point where the argument started? Then how did she drift so far away from it?"* Zaib had questions that if it is a social group that gives identity to people and certifies them as good/bad, right/wrong, clean/dirty, superior/inferior, then where is the role of the religion? Is religion a starting point for this consciousness? If religion is the starting point of such discrimination, then why people are far from or near to their religions? Why are people treated indifferently?

Love as a Victim of Class Consciousness

Shafi faced a boycott of society when he got married to Zaib's mother. His elder daughter, Devika, was left by her beloved due to her dual ethnic parenthood. His younger daughter Zaib always searched for love; she got her love for some years and then lost it. His grandson Asad had a treacherous girlfriend. His granddaughters suffered in their love life. All the characters in the novel searched for love, but no one got any because of their class consciousness. This is true of every class-conscious society that love is its victim. Sometimes a person has to sacrifice his love for society or sometimes society for love. The consciousness of society has badly affected the love of humans towards humans.

Conclusion

The main reason behind the confusion and conflicts

prevailing in life is class consciousness. Everyone is conscious of a social group and social status. They are busy in their own lives and want to get more luxury so that they could be known as rich people and the relatives or friends of wealthy people. They do not give importance to each other's feelings and emotions, and as a result, they become lonely and hollow internally. In the same way, in this modern society, the matter of concern is money.

Unfortunately, it is like honey, and everyone likes it. For having more materialistic benefits, man has made himself a machine and is neglecting his family, society, and ethics. As a consequence, he loses control over his life and suffers in every field of life. Also, the most important thing for a happy and peaceful life is love. It has many forms and types. If anyone ignores it or does not give importance to it, the whole system of human life is disturbed. People ignore love and are conscious about their class and status; that is why people are suffering from different conflicts. Furthermore, the behaviors, attitudes, mentality, and customs of the people in class-conscious societies victimize the love of humanity. In such societies, people do not care for personal respect and internal satisfaction, but they give importance to material and social benefits. This is a dilemma and a threat to humanity. Everywhere in the world, most people are suffering due to the class-consciousness of their society. Willingly or unwillingly, they follow the norms of their society due to societal pressure and face different problems in life. The researcher thinks that a person, who is suffering from the frictions of class-consciousness and needs to come out from these, their family, and society must give importance to their internal personality development. If, for some reason, they do not get much attention, they must have continuous patience.

The researcher has inferred that importance should be given to the choice of human beings, and people must go for comfort, not for luxury. We should care for our emotions and feelings. In the same way, we must give importance to the personality building of a human and should not have any concern for money. People must go for love and not for status or class in relationships. We should respect the rights of the minority and should not snatch their rights. We should not oppose people to the extent that they revolt. People should be confident about their own identities. Negativity should be ignored, and positivity must be explored. We must have relations with people, not with their social status. People must respect the person irrespective of any class consciousness. The owner and worker class are equal. No class should be considered inferior. Members of society must be helped in their bad times. We must find an escape from the miseries of life in humanity. People should not disgrace others for being minor to them. We should not hide and lie about our social class and standards. We must respect our elders and give importance to our children. For avoiding conflicts, the irritating behavior of a society should be ignored. We should not think too much. Love should be preferred to everything. Some time for your mental peace from the busy schedule of life should be spared. Excessive material benefits must be avoided. The most important one that the question of class, creed, and religion should not haunt the mind. The solution to every problem of a man lies in the respect and care of humanity. People must live their lives in a real sense. They should spread love and must get love. The real sense of life lies in humanity and spreading; humanity is one of the messages of this study.

References

- Ali, A. (2012). Book review of *Blue dust*, by Ayesha Salman. *News Line*. July 12, 2019, <https://newlinemagazine.com/magazine/book-review-blue-dust/>
- Fälth, S. (2013). Social class and status in Fitzgerald's *The great Gatsby*. (C-essay submitted to Halmstad University, Sweden). July 23, 2019, <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:667768/fulltext01>
- Gee, J. P. (2005). An introduction to critical discourse analysis. *Theory and method* (2nd ed.). London and New York: Routledge.
- Hashmi, R. S., & Majeed, G. (2015). Politics of ethnicity: A theoretical perspective. *South Asian Studies*, 30(1), 319. July 23, 2019 http://pu.edu.pk/images/journal/csas/PDF/21%20Dr%20Rehana_30_1.pdf
- Kiran, S. (2017). Politics of identity in Kamila Shamsie's novels. *International Multidisciplinary Research e-Journal* 3(6), 220-229. July 23, 2019) <https://www.indianscholars.co.in>
- Makinen, L. (2013). *A true romance: Reading Erich Segal's love story*. (Master thesis submitted to the Department of English, University of Eastern Finland). July 23, 2019, <https://epublications.uef.fi/pub/um-n-bn-fi-uef.../um-nbn-fi-uef-20130865.pdf>
- Ravipati, K. (2015). Conflict between tradition and modernity in Shashi Desphande's Novels: That long silence, the dark holds no terrors, Roots and shadows, and A matter of time. *Journal of English Language and Literature (JOELL)*. 2, 112-116. July 23, 2019, [https:// Joell.in/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/ conflict-Between-Traditio.pdf](https://Joell.in/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/conflict-Between-Traditio.pdf)
- Salman, A. (2012). *Blue dust*. New Delhi: India Ink.