
**Seduction and Subjugation: The Dynamics of Desire and Dependency in
*"Love's Not, Time's Fool"***

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Abstract:

“All the world’s a stage,

All the men and women are merely players:

They have their exits and their entrances;

Moreover, one man in his time plays many parts.” -William Shakespeare

As You Like It, Act II, Scene VII

This paper examines the complex relationships between love, lust, desire dependency, and dominance in contemporary Indian English writer Vikas Sharma's book *Love is Not, Time's Fool*. The novel deftly tells the story of complicated relationships, with a primary focus on the novel's protagonist and her interpersonal relationships with various characters. The glaring power disparity between the heroine of the novel, Richa, a wealthy and intelligent woman, and Abhilash, a young, destitute student, is brought to light when she gets involved in a romantic connection with him despite being married to a wealthy husband.

This study explores the conflict between the main character's emotional vulnerability and reliance on others for love and approval and her power in the social and financial spheres. The examination explores the protagonist's fear of rejection and social disapproval, as well as how her need for love and approval pushes her to uphold a power dynamic that guarantees Abhilash's dependence. On the other hand, Abhilash's acquiescence to Richa's approaches and the ensuing extravagances indicates his realistic adjustment to his financial situation, prompting inquiries concerning the moral aspects of their partnership. The study also looks at how the balance of power changes when Abhilash starts to take charge and carefully manage

his place inside his Dependency. In order to present the protagonist as a complex character, the book also contrasts her emotional and sexual cravings with her academic interests. Her interactions with other women, her husband Malya, and her ex-lover Lee highlight the various facets of control and reliance while also further complicating the power dynamics within the story.

Overall, this study seeks to reveal the complex representation of power and reliance in "Love's Not, Time's Fool" by a thorough character analysis and thematic investigation, advancing our knowledge of the socio-psychological foundations of human interactions in modern literature.

Keywords: Power dynamics, Dependency, "Love's Not, Time's Fool," Economic disparity, Emotional need, Sexual autonomy, Intellectual enlightenment, Character analysis, Contemporary literature.

Introduction

The novel "Love's Not, Time's Fool" by Vikas Sharma explores the finer points of interpersonal relationships by examining power dynamics and reliance. The protagonists of the story are Abhilash, a young, underprivileged student, and Richa Pandit, a wealthy and well-read woman. These characters' exchanges show how the power dynamics in their relationship are influenced by economic, emotional, and sexual factors. This study delves deeply into these issues, examining how the author depicts the tension between control and dependence and what this says about the socio-psychological foundations of interpersonal relationships in modern literature.

The complications and subtleties of human connections in current society are reflected in the way interpersonal interactions are portrayed in modern literature. With depth and realism, themes including romance, friendships, family dynamics, and professional contacts are examined, emphasizing the effects of social, cultural, and technical advancements. Contemporary literature emphasizes diversity and inclusivity in its portrayal of love relationships, as exemplified by André Aciman's "Call Me by Your Name," which delves into a same-sex romance. In addition, modern art explores the difficulties and realism of love, tackling topics such as long-distance relationships and the influence of technology, as demonstrated by Sally Rooney's "Normal People." Modern literature about family dynamics frequently addresses

issues of generational conflict and cultural identity. One example of this is Jhumpa Lahiri's "The Namesake," which explores the challenges faced by an Indian-American family. As seen by Celeste Ng's "Little Fires Everywhere," which examines parenting, adoption, and racial tensions, themes of pain and recovery are also pervasive. In Elena Ferrante's "Neapolitan Novels" and Jennifer Egan's "A Visit from the Goon Squad," friendships are presented with an emphasis on enduring relationships and betrayals, as well as changing dynamics in the digital age. As seen in Herman Koch's "The Dinner" and Adelle Waldman's "The Love Affairs of Nathaniel P." professional relationships are shown through the prism of power, ambition, and the battle for work-life balance. "The Circle" by Dave Eggers examines how relationships and personal privacy are affected by our hyper-connected culture. Another important component is cultural and social criticism, with modern writers addressing shifts in sexual orientation, gender roles, and societal expectations. "Americanah" by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie explores racial, identity, and immigration themes and shows how they affect interpersonal relationships. Modern literature is not complete without psychological nuance and character analysis, which provide light on the desires and motivations of characters—as demonstrated in Ottessa Moshfegh's "My Year of Rest and Relaxation."

On the other hand, literature from earlier generations frequently depicted interpersonal relationships inside an idealized or strict framework, conforming to conventional gender roles and societal conventions. Romantic love, responsibility, and family honor were often the main themes of classic literature, with less attention paid to the various and inclusive viewpoints that are prevalent in modern works. For instance, F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby" exposed the moral decay and shallow relationships of the Roaring Twenties, while Jane Austen's works frequently examined the social pressures and financial concerns of marriage in the 19th century.

As writers develop, they reflect the changing dynamics and difficulties of the modern world by focusing more and more on the connections of the current generation. In order to reflect the complexity of real-life relationships, contemporary writers, including Vikas Sharma place a strong emphasis on authenticity, diversity, and the psychological subtleties of their characters. This change is indicative of a larger societal trend towards inclusivity and a greater appreciation for personal relationships in a world that is changing quickly.

Literature Review

Literature studies, sociology, psychology, and other fields have all done substantial research on the idea of power dynamics in relationships. Understanding how power functions in interpersonal relationships is made easier by studying Michel Foucault's views on power relations. According to Foucault (1980), power shapes relationships and identities while simultaneously being repressive. Power dynamics are frequently examined in literary contexts through character interactions and narrative frameworks. For example, Sandra Gilbert analyzes the power dynamics between Jane and Mr. Rochester in her examination of Charlotte Brontë's "Jane Eyre," emphasizing how social and economic position affect their relationship (Gilbert, 1979). Beyond "Jane Eyre," feminist literary criticism has looked closely at power relationships from a number of angles. In "Gender Trouble" (1990), Judith Butler questions conventional ideas of gender identity and power, contending that gender is performative and socially created. In order to shed light on the complexities of Richa and Abhilash's relationship, Butler's theories encourage investigation of the ways in which gender roles and performances interact with power relations in literature.

The sociological notion of cultural capital proposed by Pierre Bourdieu enhances the examination of power in literature. According to Bourdieu (1986), social rank and power are bestowed by cultural capital, which includes knowledge, preferences, and manners. By analyzing "Love's Not, Time's Fool" through the lens of Bourdieu's theory, it may become clearer how Richa's interests in study and culture influence her relationships with Abhilash in ways that go beyond simple economics. The groundbreaking book "The Second Sex" by Simone de Beauvoir, published in 1949, offers a philosophical analysis of women's subordination under patriarchal cultures. Richa's decisions and behaviors throughout the novel are influenced by societal systems, especially in her relationships with men and women. This is something that can be considered in light of De Beauvoir's existentialist stance on gender and power. The 2000 book "All About Love: New Visions" by Bell Hooks critiques the idea of love in patriarchal cultures and makes a case for transformative love that upends power structures and fosters equality and respect for all. Applying Hooks' theories, we may study how Richa and Abhilash navigate power and reliance in their relationship while delving into topics of emotional fulfillment, agency, and autonomy.

Furthermore, psychoanalysis based on Freud, especially Sigmund Freud's "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" (1920), offers a psychological perspective on underlying drives and wants. Freud's id, ego, and superego theories can be used to explain the motivations of the characters in "Love's Not, Time's Fool," exposing power and dependence dynamics that are concealed beneath the surface of conscious behavior.

The anthropological essay "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex" by Gayle Rubin (1975) examines how social and economic factors influence power dynamics and sexual interactions while also criticizing conventional gender norms. Richa and Abhilash's relationship may be better understood in light of Rubin's feminist analysis, which sheds light on the ways in which power, sexuality, and economy intertwine.

The 1985 book "This Sex Which Is Not One" by Luce Irigaray questions phallogocentric conceptions of sexuality and identity by putting forth a feminine language of desire that upends conventional power structures. Irigaray's ideas encourage investigation into Richa and Abhilash's negotiating of their sexual identities and desires within social norms and expectations. The psychoanalytic work "The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender" by Nancy Chodorow (1978) explores the ways in which early mother-child relationships shape gender identity and interpersonal dynamics. Richa's maternal instincts and emotional dependence can be examined using Chodorow's insights, which will help to clarify her intentions and actions toward Abhilash.

Similar to these, Sharma's novel offers a wealth of opportunities to analyze how emotional need and economic inequality affect the main character's power and dependency dynamics. With their varied frameworks for examining power connections and reliance in literature, these critical viewpoints give readers the theoretical means to delve into the complexity of the relationships shown in Vikas Sharma's "Love's Not, Time's Fool." Through the synthesis of these ideas, this study seeks to shed light on the ways in which societal norms, emotional needs, and economic inequality influence the power dynamics between Richa and Abhilash, thereby advancing the understanding of their relationship in the context of modern literature.

Analysis

Economic Disparity and Power Dynamics

Modern relationships are significantly impacted by power dynamics and economic inequality, a topic that is well discussed in the literature. Financial inequality in modern settings can lead to imbalances that impact interpersonal dynamics and frequently result in Dependency, resentment, or conflict. In "The Great Gatsby," by F. Scott Fitzgerald, for instance, relationships and social mobility are determined by one's financial standing. Even though Gatsby recently became wealthy, his fortune is insufficient to close the distance between him and Daisy, who is well-off, showing how deeply ingrained economic differences can obstruct sincere relationships. Similar to this, in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's "Americanah," Ifemelu and Obinze's relationship is shaped by power and economic differences, especially as they negotiate the disparate social and cultural contexts of Nigeria and the United States. These and other works show how the power dynamics in relationships are shaped not just by who enters them but also by financial inequality, which frequently reflects larger societal institutions and feeds cycles of inequality.

The protagonist Richa's riches give her the upper hand in their relationship with Abhilash. Her first deed of kindness, purchasing books for Abhilash, right after finding out that he cannot buy expensive books for himself, soon develops into an offer of employment and a house invitation. Richa can dominate Abhilash by using her economic clout to make him reliant on her for stability in his finances. Being from a low-income background, Abhilash accepts these offers, which changes their relationship from being based only on charity to one that is heavily dependent on money. The difference between Richa's lavish lifestyle and Abhilash's lowly origins emphasizes the economic divide even more. An imbalance develops in their relationships as a result of Richa's capacity to give Abhilash monetary comforts and luxuries that he could never purchase on his own. Abhilash's reliance on Richa is guaranteed by her economic might, which also serves to uphold Richa's supremacy in the partnership.

Emotional Need and Dependency

Understanding the dynamics of partnerships where there is a considerable age and income discrepancy requires an understanding of emotional needs and Dependency. In these partnerships, older, more secure individuals usually assist their younger, generally less wealthy partners financially and live opulent lifestyles. This

arrangement has profound psychological and emotional roots, making it more than just a transactional arrangement. Research has shown that people in these kinds of relationships frequently yearn for more than just physical company; they long for affection, emotional approval, and a feeling of control over their personal lives. Psychoanalytic and feminist ideas suggest that these people are drawn to younger partners who can satisfy their unfulfilled emotional needs since they may have been neglected or unhappy in past relationships. In these kinds of partnerships, there is a double dependency: the older partner needs the younger partner for emotional fulfillment and a sense of renewal, while the younger partner needs the older partner for financial security and access to a higher social standing. This dynamic illustrates how intricately financial and emotional dependencies may shape the outlines of human relationships. It can be interpreted through the prism of power and reliance, wherein economic support is traded for emotional and physical intimacy.

Richa's emotional demands are crucial to preserving the balance of power in her partnership with Abhilash. Richa is a socially conscious and intelligent woman, but she is also emotionally open and needs love and approval. Malya, her spouse, is emotionally distant and frequently absent, which makes Richa feel lonely and unsatisfied. She turns to Abhilash for comfort because of this emotional void, and he ends up being both a lover and a source of emotional support. Just because Richa needs Abhilash to be emotionally fulfilled, there is a paradox where the subordinate is dependent on the dominant figure. Her continual dependence on Abhilash's love and comfort draws attention to her fragility and makes her reliant on his approval. Richa's influence over Abhilash is complicated by her emotional dependence on him, as her need for him is entwined with her control over him.

Sexual Autonomy and Control

Important components of interpersonal relationships are sexual autonomy and control, especially when there are notable power disparities resulting from age, socioeconomic background, or other variables. The ability of a person to make autonomous decisions regarding their sexual relationships and behaviors without being coerced or manipulated is known as sexual autonomy. This idea, which enables people to express their sexuality in ways that are satisfying and consensual, is essential to personal freedom and empowerment.

However, the mechanics of sexual autonomy can become complex in situations where one partner has significant social or financial dominance over the

other. The more dominant spouse may use influence to affect the other's sexual decisions, either covertly or publicly. This control can take many different forms, such as coercing the weaker partner into unwelcome sexual activity or using financial assistance to set the parameters of the partnership.

Psychoanalytic and feminist perspectives shed important light on these relationships. Theorists of gender equality contend that gender norms and historical positioning of men as the dominant gender and women as the subservient gender frequently sustain power disparities in sexual relationships. Women may feel under pressure to give in to their partner's sexual wants as a result of this traditional power dynamic, which might compromise their autonomy. On the other hand, those who are in partnerships that are more equal—in which both partners have equal standing—are more likely to feel like they have actual sexual autonomy. Mutual respect and honest communication are essential in these kinds of partnerships because they let both parties communicate their needs and boundaries without worrying about the consequences. This harmony allows both partners to freely and consensually explore their libido, resulting in a healthier and more satisfying sexual relationship. In the end, how sexual autonomy and control interact in partnerships emphasizes how crucial equality and respect are for each other. For partnerships to stay happy, respectful, and healthy, it is essential that each partner be allowed to make their own sexual decisions. Achieving this goal requires an understanding of and attention to the elements—such as societal expectations and economic Dependency—that compromise sexual autonomy.

The power and Dependency in Richa and Abhilash's relationship are further complicated in the novel by sexual interactions. Richa's connections with men and women demonstrate her sexual autonomy. Her relationship with Abhilash is a way for her to exercise control over her body as well as a way to express her physical needs. Richa asserts her power over Abhilash by starting and sustaining a sexual connection, which guarantees his enduring reliance on her. But Abhilash's sexual interactions with Richa also represent a dramatic change in who he is as a person. Abhilash is a young, naive man who comes across as subservient at first, but as he grows used to Richa's comforts and indulgences, he starts to make an effort to exert his power. His sexual relationship with Richa turns into a weapon for power struggles, giving him the opportunity to use his status to get both financial and psychological advantages. Later on in the novel, the representation of Richa's bisexuality gives the

power dynamics another level of complexity. Her relationships with other women, such as her sensuous massage-giving maid Tara, serve as an example of her sexual liberation and autonomy. However, because Richa has influence over her partners in these relationships, they also serve to uphold her domination. By questioning established gender norms and hierarchies of power, sexual autonomy offers a fine-grained and comprehensive understanding of Dependency and control.

Intellectual Enlightenment and Personal Relationships

Intellectual Intimacy, intellectual illumination, and intellectual compatibility are essential elements in the construction, upkeep, and depth of bonds between partners. They are fundamental elements in the fabric of human relationships. These components are especially important in relationships outside of marriage since intellectual compatibility is frequently the deciding factor that brings people together and provides a sense of understanding and connection that may be absent in their primary partnerships. Intellectual closeness is a profound bond between people that goes beyond emotional support and physical attractiveness. It is distinguished by the sharing of ideas, the appreciation of one another's intelligence, and the intellectual stimulation that results from common interests. This type of closeness, which promotes deeper communication and understanding, can lay the groundwork for a more meaningful and rewarding relationship. Studies have indicated that relationships between people who are intellectually compatible tend to be more robust and enduring (Brehm, 1992). Conversely, intellectual enlightenment is the continuous process of learning and developing new perspectives through conversations with a partner. It can be understood as the ongoing evolution and maturation that partners go through in a relationship, as it is also portrayed in Love's Not Time's Fool. As partners encourage and push one another intellectually, this shared path of learning and discovery can deepen their relationship. Research in the fields of cognitive and social psychology indicates that stable and long-lasting relationships are enhanced by intellectual development in a partnership (Aron et al., 2000).

Maintaining mutual respect and consistent involvement in a relationship requires intellectual compatibility or the alignment of intellectual interests and capacities. Intellectual compatibility allows a couple to explore common intellectual interests, have meaningful discussions, and push each other's ideas forward. Both partners' intellectual and personal development can be fostered by this compatibility, which can produce a dynamic and exciting environment. Intellectual compatibility

can be especially attractive in relationships outside of marriage since it can offer a sense of understanding and connection that is lacking in an exclusive partnership. Furthermore, all of these ideas are deftly interwoven throughout "Love's Not, Time's Fool," a book by Vikas Sharma. The beautiful and bold protagonist, Richa, is a highly intelligent and passionate woman about books. She finds an intellectual friend in Abhilash, a young student who shares her passion for literature. Their relationship is characterized by intellectual Intimacy and compatibility. Their relationship is built on this connection, which gives Richa a sense of fulfillment that goes beyond the material and emotional realms. The main character's relationships are greatly influenced by her interests in literature and other intellectual hobbies. Her intellectual awakening distinguishes her from other characters and establishes her as a powerful figure. She frequently engages in intellectually stimulating dialogue with Abhilash, demonstrating her superior knowledge and cultural capital. But her emotional weaknesses are also covered up by this intellectual domination. It is possible to interpret Richa's need for affection and approval from Abhilash as an attempt to find both intellectual and emotional company. The fact that she finds Abhilash intelligent despite his social and economic disadvantages emphasizes how crucial intellectual compatibility is to their relationship. Because of his academic goals and his initial financial hardship, Abhilash is dependent on Richa in both an intellectual and an economic sense. He becomes even more dependent on Richa as a result of her support in helping him to continue his education. Because it affects both the economic and emotional aspects of their relationship, this intellectual Dependency muddies the waters in terms of power dynamics. References to literature attest to the importance of intellectual compatibility in partnerships. Through the characters of Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy in "Pride and Prejudice," Jane Austen examines the significance of intellectual compatibility. Mutual respect and intellectual equality are the foundations of their partnership, which started off with misconceptions and prejudices. In "Anna Karenina," Leo Tolstoy explores the significance of intellectual compatibility in relationships outside of marriage. In addition to their physical attraction, Anna and Vronsky have a shared intellectual and emotional understanding that she does not have in her marriage to Karenin. This understanding is the basis of their affair.

Relationship psychology research emphasizes the importance of intellectual compatibility. In their study on self-expansion in intimate relationships, Aron et al.

(2000) discovered that partners who participate in mentally challenging activities together report greater levels of personal development and relationship satisfaction. According to this self-expansion concept, having a deeper sense of fulfillment and connection with a partner is facilitated by intellectual engagement. Additionally, intellectual compatibility can be used as a means of defiance against expectations and conventions in society. In "Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center," Bell Hooks (2000) makes the case that a relationship's intellectual exchange can subvert established power structures and promote equality and respect for one another. This intellectual connection can create a more equal and satisfying partnership in extramarital encounters by rebelling against the expectations of traditional marital roles. To sum up, compatibility, enlightenment, and intellectual closeness are essential components of any relationship that lay the groundwork for genuine, long-lasting bonds. These elements can be especially important in the context of extramarital relationships, providing a sense of fulfillment and understanding that may be absent in primary relationships.

These concepts are best illustrated by the story of "Love's Not, Time's Fool," which shows how intellectual compatibility may establish a strong and lasting tie between partners. Literary allusions and psychological studies substantiate the idea that intellectual engagement is crucial to the development and maintenance of relationships, providing a route to more meaningful personal fulfillment and connection.

Social norms and expectations have a significant influence on how people behave and make decisions in relationships; they frequently prescribe conduct, impose restrictions, and frame the dynamics of communication. There are intricate interactions between societal expectations and personal aspirations as a result of these societal constructions influencing characters' perceptions of their identities, roles, and duties in relationships.

Social conventions have a big impact on the choices and deeds of the characters in Vikas Sharma's book "Love's Not, Time's Fool," especially Richa Pandit. She is restricted by traditional norms surrounding marriage, parenthood, and female sexuality despite being an affluent and intelligent lady. She is independent and very intelligent, but she is also very conscious of the expectations from society to keep up the appearance of a decent marriage and to play the parts that are required of

her. Social standards that place a premium on social standing and financial stability have an impact on Richa's marriage to wealthy businessman Mallya. Despite her personal discontent, her choice to marry Malya is indicative of the expectation placed on women by society to give social respectability and financial security a top priority when making marriage-related decisions. Her relationship with Lee, her ex-lover, who abandoned her when she was pregnant, adds to the strain from society. Richa's decision to give her son Amitabh to a foster mother in the United States because she was unable to maintain her child because of social stigma demonstrates how cultural standards surrounding illegitimacy and motherhood drive her to make difficult compromises. The conflict between one's own wishes and societal norms is further highlighted by Richa and Abhilash's adulterous relationship. Richa defies social conventions by choosing to pursue a relationship with Abhilash while being married, which is a reflection of her attraction to him. She still has to exercise prudence and concealment, though, because extramarital affairs are still frowned upon in society. Richa's choice to give Abhilash a job and a place to live in her house in spite of the possibility of social disgrace demonstrates her attempt to strike a balance between her own needs and the norms of decency and respectability. Similarly, gender, class, and economic dependency standards in society influence Abhilash's behavior. His acceptance of Richa's financial assistance and sexual advances as a young, underprivileged student from a low-income family reflects the social norm that encourages men to take advantage of opportunities for financial success, even if doing so means surrendering moral principles. Although his connection with Richa gives him social mobility and financial stability—two things that are highly coveted in society—it also puts him in a vulnerable position where he might be exploited. Furthermore, conversations between Richa and Malya reveal cultural assumptions about gender roles and power dynamics. Malya's affair with his coworker Indumati and his subsequent emotional distancing from Richa underscores the assumption that women should tolerate and handle marital problems in silence, as well as the social acceptability of male infidelity. The way Richa responded to her husband's adultery by looking for emotional and sexual fulfillment elsewhere while upholding the appearance of a respectable marriage highlights the pressure from society for women to adopt traditional marital roles and the few opportunities that exist for them to exercise their individuality. Further influencing the decisions and behaviors of the characters are gender and sexual conventions in society. The heteronormative assumptions of female sexuality are challenged by Richa's study of her sexuality,

including her connections with other women. She feels pressured to adhere to acceptable sexual conduct and the taboo against non-heterosexual relationships, which is reflected in her urge to keep these interactions private.

Literary studies also reflect how cultural norms and expectations shape the decisions and actions of the characters. In "The Madwoman in the Attic," Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar (1979) talk about how patriarchal ideals force women into roles that limit their autonomy and ability to express themselves creatively. Similar to this, Simone de Beauvoir's 1949 book "The Second Sex" examines how cultural notions of femininity restrict women's options and uphold gender inequality. In conclusion, as seen in "Love's Not, Time's Fool," cultural norms and expectations have a big impact on the choices and behaviors of characters in relationships. The protagonists must balance their personal needs with their need for respectability and social approval as they negotiate a complex web of cultural forces. These social norms influence how they behave, limit the options available to them, and ultimately determine the nature of their relationships. We can better understand how societal expectations and individual agency interact to shape human interactions by looking at these effects.

Conclusion

"Love's Not, Time's Fool" by Vikas Sharma offers a sophisticated examination of power dynamics and reliance in interpersonal relationships. Richa and Abhilash have a complicated web of control and reliance that is shaped by the interaction of economic inequality, emotional need, and sexual autonomy. The book presents a complex picture of control and dependence while questioning established gender norms and power structures. This paper contributes to a fuller understanding of the socio-psychological foundations of human interactions in contemporary literature by highlighting how the author of the book presents the dynamics of power and reliance through a thorough analysis of the characters and themes that highly resonate with the contemporary world. Power, reliance, and personal needs are intricately intertwined, and the novel's rich storyline and varied characters provide unique insights into this complex relationship.

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