



CONTEXTUALIZING SEXUALITY IN INDIAN CINEMA

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Abstract

The paper attempts to understand the social sphere of family where interactive constructs are drawn depicting the relationships which may not be ethically placed and legitimized thus creating situations which are considered to be abnormal in given situations yet normal when trying to configure how conjugal relationships are exemplified in an household.

Key words : Conjugal Relationship, Matrimony, Inter subjectivity, Life word, Stigma

Introduction

The Film as a text helps us in deciphering the social realities and provides narration to the thought process. It is pertinent to underline the subject matter along with sociological underpinnings in figuring out language nature of communication images gestures to that matter original sound track to create roles as required by story.

The work fire has been a text that created intense debate in political and philosophical circles questioning the portrayal of women within the Indian household. The movie **Fire (1996)** has been directed by Deepa Mehta. The frame of reference has been relationship, which is revoked between two female characters where they intimately fall for each other to counter the cultural paradigm of blissful life post marriage in an Indian household In the paper names of female characters have been hyphenated to ensure cultural integrity.

The question assumes importance as it challenges the undercurrents of sexual orientation which is consider to be inappropriate liaison between women who have been deprived of



sacred love of their better half's whether it is Ashok or Jatin both trying to figure their preferences based on their constructed choices of celibacy and adultery.

The text visualizes the condition of bareness in the life of elder daughter in law as she playfully try to seek friendship with new entrant in the house Choti bahu. The gaze of bridal finery depicts the women with her body language which gets exemplified through white dreamy lights in the bed room contextualization the wedding night and emotiveness and emptiness in the mind of the lady who eagerly waits for her husband. However this ecstasy get broken as Jatin in a hasteful manner leaves the house to be at side of her girlfriend "L".

"T" in order to escape from given reality she ponders over wardrobe of Jatin and try to be more malely in nature by trying to wear oversized Pants of Jatin over her saree, to feel his presence around. In fact Jatin has been with her through the episode of honeymoon in the background of Taj Mahal where he categorically mentions we are married and it has been three days try to wield distance between them metaphorically using as reference point that this relation cannot be perceived as forever as specified in Indian society. Phenomenologically the life world is being constructed by rehearsing her subjectivity by Jatin's wife based on her experience as daughter in law in Kapoor household. The conjugal couple receives a warm welcome by elder daughter in law. Rituals games are played to have confirmation of designated roles and make them at ease with one another, the male folk have their own constructs with respect to institution of marriage as a social construct both of them consciously make decisions how to participate as co actors with in married life.

Ashok perception of the world moves around pleasure-seeking living confines to domains of chastity and celibacy attainment of other world or searching for unknown going beyond material world whereas Jatin world view maneuvers around romanticized liaisons outside marriage to showcase masculinity lustfulness and treacherous behavior marked by sense of betrayal towards her newly wedded wife. The ever day world passes through various form and shapes corresponding to perceptions as man places his desires and drives by placing them through their senses defining and redefining given situations based on their circumstances. Jatin is living in multiple worlds having his allegiance to them in an impartial manner. This indifferent attitude of Jatin towards "T" alienates her from given surroundings



and she try to pacify her behaviour by engaging with herself in altogether different manner. She adopts role taking mechanism of as male persona when she playfully lights a cigarette to create illusion around herself, opens her hair, she is emotionally surcharged conveying multiple layers of feelings such as pleasure corresponding to simulative tendencies. By enacting in such a manner she tries to break the monotony of her life to overcome solitude.

“T” as performer revives the narrative in the movie by projecting her eyes in suitable way to compose her inner feelings, her gazing and joyous behavior is overshadowed by knock on her bedroom door, she emerges as a game player and highly manipulative in nature. Her sense of alienation makes her start looking for alternative relationship with in Kapoor household. Roles and obligations are important to understand the importance of social encounters in every day environment. The protagonists in fire follow a trajectory of being unauthentic and in bad faith trying to legitimize relationship to overcome oppressive tentacles of marriage hood. They were creating their self through deviant behavior. By initiating this pattern they try to personify their freedom. All relationships have particular landscape involving inter-subjectivity which can have multiple effects and far reaching results.

The frame analysis of the movie provide us with bipolar opposites such as trust-mistrust, attraction- repulsion, confidence- fear, joyfulness- boredom etc. The feminine construction of self can be also ascertained with respect to “L” character whose ego has be tormented by Jatin desires for being lovers in a narrative context and false hopes and despair mark their relationship in which Julie portrays her resentment and suppression. She is participating in pseudo relationship which provides psychic gratification to Jatin.

Some scenes do portray how under the influence of Swamiji Ashok abstains from husbands role and try lying around with “U” to control his sexual urges and thereby controlling once libido. This act makes “U” a victim of conjugal love pushing her to seek love in same sex relationship within household in role of “T”.

The women are not to be seen as mere participants they have voices and can speak for themselves. In matrimonial relationship women is not mere a sign or has value for procreation they form duet with man to express effectiveness, mysteries of life, richness of



relationship etc. Denial of consummating marriage between either of cohabiting couples creates unruly situation, which transcends into family crisis as men run away from conjugal responsibilities, of nurturing, caring, loving, their partners and denial of reproduction rights to women. Thus, contradictions emerge within nuptial setup engrossing all actors thus paving for multiple sites of conflict.

The second media text the based on movie **My brother Nikhil 2005** year production a fictional account portraying how a young male life world undergoes drastic change once he is identified as zero patient and was found to be HIV positive.

The cinematic expressions are played through memoir of Nikhil whose diary reveals the process of being tormented, facing hatred, labelled and suffering stigmatization at hands of society which was quite ahead of its time. However, conveying regressive tendencies once things are articulated in public domain. Erving Goffman approach can be adopted here to understand the process of stigmatization which the protagonist had to face. Public stigma can be visualized in the text in a brief encounter where Dr Baneerjee call up Nikhil does he had any unsafe sexual practices in the past, some infection has been found in blood which makes him skip the championship, other instance propels other swimmers to leave the pool when Nikhil jumps into the pool. Even encounter with his sports coach conveying him to give chance to others to represent State in swimming competition. When he questions why he is shunted out no answer is given to his queries. Thus in all these frames the protagonist faces relative devaluation and negative community reaction from sports fraternity. Most of the stigma underlined the interpersonal sphere where the actor moral is put down and his morality and family upbringing is questioned by significant others. Multiple frames have been used highlighting a middle class neighborhood Nikhil sports afficionado got scholarship from ministry of sports to pursue his dream. Siblings love and support mechanism are highlighted between Anu and Nikhil sharing most of the escapades while become mature adults.

Nikhil apparent and deviance behaviour was highlighted in the text as one who is openly coming out Gay in relationship with one of his male friend with whom he stayed during his course of illness. His support system were three pillars sister, friend and advocate who



were through thick and thin times with him. Parents succumb to societal pressure move to other city, Nikhil faces anticipated and enacted stigma from others at same he was also suffering from internalized stigma. He was feeling sense of guiltiness as how he became HIV positive as he wants to reveals to his partner from where he got infection but Nigel avoids this concern. Moreover under pressure from community forced Nigel to gets his test done and he is declared negative. Thus it also points out that awareness should be carried out that source may not be same sex relationships.

Social distance was observed from Nikhil people who were working as house help left. The shop run by Anu was closed as employees refused to come. Their house was attacked by unknown miscreants, hence homophobic reactions emerged. Nikhil had episodes of lower self-esteem particularly during his quarantined time in TB sanatorium for three months, he constantly kept in gaze by doctors, police officers questioning his sexual preferences.

After his release from there he pursued his love for arts painting and music started teaching to children around thus managing his stigma was important for Nihil, once parents got convinced that it does not spread by touching handshake or by kissing. The text do picture tense moments between stigmatized individual and normal persons. During her sister engagement function with Sam. Parents feel the pain but cannot share with Nikhil. The dyadic interaction created more stress for Nikhil; he started preferring his own routinisation. He is called perverted ,spoiled astray etc. there is constant conflict the way society defines Nikhil and the way he see himself at times he talk his father as little boy of the family by stating that dad this should be bad dream please say when it will get over. The time period of six years is shown through various ups and down social boycott to times when people became aware about the disease profile through campaigns by friends and sister along with sports federation. The boy passed away after watching the rising sun. Issues of mistrust deviance disorder and denial all stages are vividly represented which the actor faces during these six years .Individual being labeled and socially uprooted from his very surroundings vengeance and criminalized outpourings by various societal institutions is articulated at various levels.



Conclusion

From Fire we can draw conclusion that women are not meant just for human transactions they are vividly present as partners when they are denied their rightful place justice doesn't prevail which can have multiple implications.

Similarly My brother Nikhil provide us ethnographic account of onset of disease and as zero patient being HIV positive the struggles and stigma being gay are openly articulated due to significant others.

By mutual acceptance of their worldly roles the both protagonist in different texts creates their inner subjective world based on their interpersonal relationships by interweaving meaning which is constantly constructed, revised, exchanged, twisted, or hidden depending upon actors potential. Thus subjects in the movie moves around vessel of desire metamorphic ally conveying passions which shape their inner world in relation to outer externalities.

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