



Class, Marriage and Conflict in Alice Munro's "The Beggar Maid": A Marxist Approach

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Abstract

'Class' and 'conflict' are two inevitable and inseparable components of a society. Marx (1848) theorized and postulated that in society conflict is inevitable because of the existence of various classes. Different classes of society clash over the possession of power and limited resources. If a family, especially a married couple where two spouses are deemed as two different social classes, is considered a microcosm of society, conflict is an expected and inevitable phenomenon within a marital context. Now, it can be conceptualized that conflict occurs in a marriage since the family is a micro-unit of society, and this conflict leads to the divorce of the couple. However, now the question remains, does conflict occur in a marriage for the possession of power and resources as it happens in the case of a society, or whether there are other factors contributing to the conflict, and whether conflict is the only or chief reason for divorce of couples. This study, through the lens of Marx's conflict theory, has tried to investigate whether the struggle over the possession of resources and power is the reason for the conflict between the two major characters of Alice Munro's short story "The Beggar Maid" or whether other factors are contributing to their conflict, and also whether the conflict is the sole or main reason for the divorce between the two chief characters, Patrick and Rose. Arguably, the singular cause of the divorce of the two characters, Rose and Patrick, of Alice Munro's short story "The Beggar Maid" is a conflict that stemmed from the incompatibility, disagreements, disparity in priorities, and lack of commitment arising from class division and the polarized state of the characters.

Keywords: Class, conflict, divorce, marriage

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Introduction

Sociologists characterize marriage as a socially sanctioned partnership between two or more people in what is considered a steady, long-lasting relationship, usually predicated on at least partially on a sexual connection of some form. Ideally in a marriage a man and a woman are involved but it could be between two persons of the same sex as we see in today's world or more than two persons in a heterogeneous relationship which is either polygamy or polyandry.

Marriage is bonded and guided by some rules and obligations of some competent body of a society, religion, and or state. "Marriage, a legally and socially sanctioned union, usually between a man and a woman, that is regulated by laws, rules, customs, beliefs, and attitudes that prescribe the rights and duties of the partners and accords status to their offspring (if any)." (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2024, Marriage). Again, in the Encarta, marriage is the "legal relationship between spouses: a legal recognized relationship, especially by a civil or religious ceremony, between two people who intend to live together as sexual and domestic partners" (Skolnick, 2009). Rahman (2019) states Becker's (1973) theory of marriage from the perspective of economics. Rahman (2019) describes Becker's (1973) theory of marriage in the following manner:

He draws out a theory of marriage that says that each person will tend to pair with someone with whom the chances of maximizing their household production of goods and services are the highest. The set of household goods and services include tangible goods the market provides as well as non-market goods such

as shared pastimes, or the joys of raising children. The couple's level of satisfaction is determined both by market and non-market earnings. (Becker, 1973, as cited in Rahman, 2019, p. 66)

Thus, other than the driving and cementing factor of sex, marriage takes place in the hope of increasing and maximizing household production of goods and services. Other than tangible goods, non-tangible goods like happiness, joy, pleasure, company, and having children are considered. So, persons in a marriage who fail to achieve or receive the aforesaid service and production are likely to experience divorce. In this regard, Rahman (2019) also tries to define marriage in his work in the following way:

It would not be overstated, saying that the marriage process is mostly driven by religious norms, values and practices where marriage law guides it to be officially completed in a society where they reside. Since cultural and religious variations in societies differ from one to other, the marriage process varies. Thus, marriage has different forms, meanings, and structures in different cultures, religions or laws of society in which they reside. (p. 67)

Therefore, from Rahman's observation, this can be concluded that marriage is more of a cultural and religious matter. In a marriage, therefore, if one party deviates from or crosses the religious and cultural boundaries then there remains a risk of divorce.

When two persons in a married relationship cannot stay together for various reasons such as incompatibility,

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differences of values and priorities, etc., and therefore, consequently become separated by tearing off the bond of marriage per the law of the society, religion or of the state they live in or some other competent body of the state and or religion, then the legal separation is termed as 'divorce'. Ukpong (2014) went on to define marriage in the following way, "a legal dissolution of the marriage relation; any formal separation of a man and his wife according to established custom; a complete separation of any kind". (p. 185). The *UN-iLibrary* quotes the definition of divorce from the *United Nations Demographic Yearbook* in the following manner, "Divorce is defined as a final legal dissolution of a marriage, that is, the separation of husband and wife which confers on the parties the right to remarriage under civil, religious and/or other provisions, according to the laws of each country." ("Divorce," 2023).

It can be presumed that divorce occurs mostly for conflict, and this conflict arises when a clash of ego, interest and priorities is felt inevitable. In the given context, the two major characters, Rose and Patrick, of the story, "The Beggar Maid," are in conflict over their ego, interest, and priorities. In the course of this study, it will be revealed that conflict arises not only for the control of resources and power in the context of a married relationship; it happens in the context of a society that comprises different social classes with different socio-economic backgrounds. Rather conflict occurs in the context of marriage when two individuals have different social classes, which means they each have unique characteristics and defend and prioritize their own beliefs, interests, and goals.

Other factors, such as unmet sexual desires, as may have occurred in the case of Patrick and Rose's marriage, can also be detrimental to a married relationship. Moreover, it will be exhibited that Rose and Patrick's married relationship was harmed by incompatibility, lack of commitment towards marital relationship, disparity in priorities and interest, disregard for marital responsibilities, mistrust, infidelity, mental and physical abuse, and contempt. This study aims to demonstrate that, despite the family serving as a microcosm of society, there may exist distinct reasons for conflict within a family as opposed to a society.

Through the lens of Marx's theory of conflict, it will be examined whether conflict is the cause of divorce. To support the study, a few other pertinent sociological theories, such as the feminist perspective on divorce, the queer theory and the functionalist theory, will also be covered. The moral positions, values, thoughts, mindsets, behaviors, activities, priorities, objectives, and goals of the two main characters, Rose and Patrick will thoroughly be studied to identify any likely points of contention and reasons for divorce.

As discussed above, the problem of this study is to find out and determine whether the cause of the divorce between Rose and Patrick is solely conflict. This study also seeks to ascertain the underlying reasons for conflict in the context of a marriage. The objective of this work is to examine and analyze the status, backgrounds, characters, and actions of Patrick and Rose in the given situation to find out and determine the cause/s of divorce.

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Methodology

In essence, this is an interdisciplinary study wherein 'marriage' and 'divorce' are seen from their sociological perspective and some theories of Sociology have been discussed. Marx's theory of conflict has been considered to understand the matter of 'conflict' and 'divorce' and to examine the interrelation. Additionally, some other theories of sociology like functionalist theory, queer theory, and the feminist view of divorce will be discussed to complicate the research problem. This is a qualitative data analysis-based work wherein the content analysis of the primary text is done. Besides, a substantial amount of primary quantitative and qualitative data of several other researchers are presented to aid the study.

Conflict Theory: A Theoretical Perspective

Marx's (1848) conflict theory holds that tension arises from rivalry for power and resources within a social framework. This idea goes on to say that discrimination against women, people of color, and the impoverished is what causes stratification. Marx contends that conflict is unavoidable as long as the class structure persists. Even though Marx does not support social division, he believes conflict is necessary for both equitable power and resource distribution and positive social transformation in society. In this case, Schaefer (2013) argues, "The conflict perspective assumes that social behavior is best understood in terms of tension between groups over power or the allocation of resources, including housing, money, access to services, and political representation". (p. 14). The key catalysts of conflict are tension, inequality, and

the drive for revolutionary change in society. Inequality is the reason society is the way it is, therefore it is important to aggressively combat this inequality. According to this viewpoint, society is a place where differences exist that lead to conflict and change. People view change as a good thing for society. The reasons why some people have so many resources while others have so few, as well as how this is either maintained or altered, are of interest to conflict theorists. When considering divorce from a conflict viewpoint, married couples need to be considered as a miniature of society. Conflict theorists define divorce as the rivalry between the married parties for dominance and resources when they are unable to reach a mutual understanding. Tension caused by the battle for resources leads to a change in marital status. Stated differently, the conflict theory posits that the unequal allocation of power, status, and resources among married couples is the root cause of conflict. Husband and wife, the two parties involved in a marriage, fight with one another and want to dominate the other in terms of resources, position, and power.

Davis and Moore's (1945) theory of functionalism justifies social division. According to this theory of functionalism, social stratification or class system is essential for a society for its proper functioning. People of different classes occupy different positions in society according to their merit, skill, and capacity, and as they work accordingly they help functioning society in a practical and meaningful way.

When we perceive society as a living organism, each part of the organism contributes to its survival. This view is the functionalist perspective which

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emphasizes how the parts of a society are structured to maintain its stability (Schaefer, 2013). According to the functionalist perspective, human morality is determined by a well-established system of social relations within a framework of common values and preferences in society. Therefore, when the framework is compromised, society cannot function normally, which leads to situations like divorce. In the view of the functionalist perspective, divorce is caused by a lack of commitment, denial of responsibility, and mutual disrespect, disagreements, clash of personal ego and interest, and financial needs. The characters of Rose and Patrick are evidently not guided by the established framework of common values and preferences.

In accordance with the functionalist viewpoint, divorce can be prevented by restoring social balance. It is interesting to note that this equilibrium implies that various social classes should have distinct expectations and desires from a society based on their standing or class within society and that the society in question should satisfy these expectations or desires. This equilibrium does not imply that the expectations and desires of every class should be the same.

Now, the Queer theory may be considered to understand the issue of divorce. This theory was initially introduced by Foucault (1978) who questioned society's approach to treating sexuality as an essential truth rather than a social construction and later Sedgwick (1990) who examined how society labels sexuality in terms of gender. The queer theory suggests that in a changing social context, the set values and morals of society are questioned and ignored by

the people living in society. For instance, the role and authority of husband and wife are challenged and reversed when influenced by the Queer theory. We see in the case of Rose and Patrick that either they disregard their gender role or challenge the authority or role of their spouse.

Looking at divorce from the Feminist view can be seen as a conflict between a woman who is addressing the inequality stemming from her gender role and a man who does not want to relinquish power or resources to her. For instance, a woman may want her own money to be spent at her own will with private access to her funds while her husband may see this as an unacceptable amount of power for her to have. The tension created by the struggle over the possession of resources causes a radical change in their social structure. Here, divorce is seen in this light as a positive force because it is changing inequality.

Up to this stage, it has been discussed and seen how different theories of sociology relate and interpret the issue of social stratification and how social division impacts marriage as well.

Munro's "The Beggar Maid": Critical Analysis

At the outset of this section, the following quantitative and qualitative research findings of some researchers are presented and discussed to examine the causes and understand the issue of divorce.

Conflict is one of the major causes of divorce. The study says 57.7% of individuals and 72.2% of couples wherein at least one partner reports that too much conflict and arguing are responsible for

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divorce. Conflict essentially disrupts communication. In this same study, 40% of partners state that domestic violence is a major factor contributing to divorce (Scott et al., 2013).

Some researchers repeatedly classified conflict behaviours as destructive, constructive, and withdrawal. (Crohan, 1996, Kurdek, 1995, Oggins, Veroff, Leber, 1993, Pasch & Bradbury, 1998, as cited in Birditt et al., 2010). Again, Birditt et al. (2010) described the destructive behaviour in the following way:

Destructive behaviours include overtly negative reactions to marital problems such as yelling, insults, criticism, belligerence and contempt. Constructive behaviours include overtly positive reactions like saying nice things, calmly discussing problems and actively listening to partners. Withdrawal behaviours entail disengaging from the conflict or partner and may involve leaving the place and situation or keeping quiet. (p.1189)

As now it is examined what some other researchers record on the behavioural theories of marriage, it is found that "destructive behaviors result in negative evaluations of marriage and declines in marital satisfaction and stability, whereas constructive behaviors lead to improvements in evaluations of marriage and increases in marital satisfaction and stability." (Karney & Bradbury, 1995; Kelly et al., 2003, as cited in Birditt et al., 2010, p.1189).

Findings of another study indicate that the most common major contributing factor to divorce reported by participants in a survey is lack of commitment, 75% of individuals and at least one partner in

94.4% of couples say that commitment is the single major reason for divorce. This same study also reports that overall 68.6% of participants in the survey and at least one partner of the participating couples believe that infidelity is the most important factor for divorce. (Scott et al., 2013).

In one other study, it is seen that incompatibility is a major reason for divorce. Lawmakers term it as 'irreconcilable differences' that couples carry. The concept of incompatibility could include and overlap with other reasons for divorce, such as lack of shared values, sexual difficulties, etc. This same study includes financial incompatibility and is responsible for the divorce. 40% of people say that money or disagreement over wealth and resources is a big reason for divorce. (Gjelten, 2023).

Voydanoff's study indicates that education and income facilitate marital success. However, White shows that socioeconomic status (SES) is inversely associated with the risk of divorce. Like White, Kitson also says that high SES couples are more likely to complain about marriage and get divorced. (Voydanoff, 1991, White, 1991, Kitson, 1992, as cited in Faysal, 2022). Researchers like Roberts (2000) have found that low income in a family increases the chances of divorce. Low income of the family triggers physical, psychological, and emotional abuse from the other partner in a marriage causing divorce. Though Rose came from a poor family, at the time of their marriage she was not too poor as she was receiving a scholarship. So when Patrick and Rose married, individually or together they could not be termed poor. However, their opposite socio-economic origins had

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made them think and act differently.

Sexual incompatibility besides the disparity of intellectual demeanor fuels the process of divorce. Boredom is another reason for divorce. Cultural traits are also responsible for divorce; partners of two opposite cultures often cannot bridge the gap between them and hence divorce happens. Differences in expectations and priorities of spouses also work to end a marital relationship. "In his work, Becker hypothesized that lack of complementary attributes such as attractiveness, education etc. could well explain a significant chunk of unhappiness in family or separations or divorces". (Hossain & Ghose, 2018, as cited in Rahman, 2019, p. 63).

Physical, mental, and psychological abuse gives rise to divorce. Sexual incompatibility and boredom also work for divorce. Additionally, Socio-cultural differences and differences in expectations and priorities are also responsible for divorce (Faysal, 2022).

Here, it will be worth recording some factors that Rahman (2019) mentioned as the factors that can save a marriage from ruin or divorce. He described those factors as expectation factors. Some of the expectation factors are the expectation of companionship and lifelong bond, the expectation of loving behaviours, the expectation of having children, the expectation of attractiveness, the expectation of respect, the expectation of trust and truthfulness, and the expectation of the fulfillment of sex desire etc. Conversely, we should also consider some factors that Rahman (2019) mentioned as causal factors that can destroy a marriage and lead to divorce. Here are some causal factors described by Rahman (2019) in his work:

criticism, domestic violence, gender role conflict, mistrust and infidelity, sexual dissatisfaction, substance abuse, and lack of empathy and companionship.

While Marx (1848) discussed societal stratification, he focused mostly on the bourgeois and proletarian groups. Furthermore, he contended that social division results from the unequal distribution of income and power. Now for the possession of scarce resources and the control of authority or power, conflict arises. As it is expressed in *The Communist Manifesto*, "Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other—Bourgeoisie and Proletariat". (Marx & Engels, p.1). Nonetheless, it is seen that social stratification has several other factors that cause people to belong to different social levels in society. Some of these classification factors—like birth—are uncontrollable for the individuals residing in a society. Major factors influencing a society's structure include wealth, power, birth, education, gender, race, religion, and color. These factors also contribute to social division and discrimination. These factors are so interconnected with one another that one or more factors influence and control other factors, and often they overlap. Men and women's mental development and shaping are heavily influenced by the social class to which they belong. These components of social stratification mold, regulate and guide people either consciously or unconsciously.

The conflict theory is primarily associated with the conflict within a society for the reason of the social division of classes and more so for the uneven distribution of wealth and power. Different social

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classes struggle over the control of power and limited resources giving birth to a never-ending conflict. Now, here the point of debate of this study is that while in the context of a society, conflict arises for the control of power and possession of wealth, does conflict arise for the same reason in a marriage? Again, this study also seeks to ascertain whether conflict is the main reason of divorce.

One of the primary causes of divorce is conflict, which is linked to and/or overlaps with other primary and secondary causes of divorce, such as infidelity, lack of compatibility (shared values, sexual difficulty, social status, education, resource, etc.), domestic violence, and physical, mental, and psychological abuse.

From this stage onward, the primary text in consideration will be analyzed and discussed. The conflict between Patrick and Rose appears to be more evident because these two characters show two different types of personalities and their unique attributes owing to their belonging to two different social classes rather than the conflict for power and resources. In the case of the couple of Patrick and Rose, the conflict between these two characters does not merely occur for power, status, and resources, rather it appears that the gulf of mental and cultural distance between them is more responsible. However, the mental opposing traits of the two major characters of the story seem to have stemmed from their belonging to two opposite social layers of power, status, and resources. In the words of Rose, "We come from two different worlds." (Munro, 1997, p.133). Given that Munro's narrative was selected for the study, the two spouses can be viewed as the bourgeois

and proletariat social classes, in addition to the married pair being viewed as a little social unit. In actuality, Rose and Patrick come from the working class and the capitalist social classes.

The following explanation provides a clear understanding of the compelling factors that contributed to Rose and Patrick's attraction and subsequent relationship. Rose gave in to Patrick's yearning for his wealth, rank, and fortune while Patrick fell hopelessly in love with Rose because of her beauty and charm. Patrick was an affluent, well-educated history graduate with aspirations of becoming a professor. Patrick was a member of the white-collar social strata, by extension. Rather than being genuinely in love with Rose, it appears that Patrick was more preoccupied with her allure and beauty and with the idea that he was in love with her. This presumption is validated when we observe that Patrick eventually stopped loving Rose after the marriage.

However, Rose was also a highly attractive and intelligent lady from a very low-income blue-collar background who, unlike Patrick, had no set goals in life. She did not really know what she wanted to achieve, but deep down she knew she should use every opportunity to move up the social scale. Rose did not think at all like Patrick when he fell helplessly in love with her. She was more focused on her talent, her current state and status, her glamour and charm, and her future. She was also preoccupied with the idea of becoming financially solvent. Rose appeared to be mentally far more mature than Patrick, both personally and in making a wise choice regarding any relationship involving a man and a woman. She was drawn to Patrick

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because of his wealth and status, but she had no desire to work as a beggar maid for him like the fictional Penelophon. She really did not have to be. Nevertheless, despite her mature mental state, she was a somewhat temperamental lady who would swing between different moods. She felt rather adrift when it came to her connection with Patrick. She was undoubtedly unprepared for a romantic connection of the kind that Patrick so desperately desired. However, she lacked the rigor necessary to reject Patrick's offer. Arguably, she maintained her friendship with the extraordinarily affluent Patrick in the hopes that, with his help, her precarious financial situation would become more stable in the future.

Therefore, eventually, readers perceive that both Rose and Patrick lacked the commitment towards the relationship of marriage and the absence of true commitment to such a relationship was a crucial cause of their divorce. It is possible to argue that neither of the characters had the genuine love, affection, or attraction that are necessary for a committed partnership like marriage.

The plot of "The Beggar Maid" makes clear that Rose and Patrick, the two main characters, have very different expectations and objectives, which is a significant contributing cause to divorce, according to the research referenced in the quantitative data section. As Rose hailed from a blue-collar social layer, she aspired to attain a higher social position. Although Rose was a brilliant student who was doing her undergraduate with a scholarship, she loved to be in the world of glamour and popularity as an artiste. Munro puts this matter in the story, "There were no actresses among them, no brassy magazine journalists;

none of them had latched on to the sort of life Rose wanted for herself." (Munro, pp. 127-128). Munro (1997) further remarked on Rose's ambition and expectation, "She wanted to be known and envied, slim and clever. She told Dr. Henshawe that if she had been a man she would have wanted to be a foreign correspondent." (p.128). Although, Rose knew the rich, powerful, and influential position of Patrick in society, she wanted to lead a life completely free from the grip of Patrick which inversely annoyed and enraged Patrick. Patrick was a kind of snob who used to boast about his knowledge, family status, and wealth. Patrick rebuked Rose for her friendship with Nancy who had poor knowledge of language and pronunciation. As Munro mentioned Patrick's remark, 'He said to her later, "How can you be friends with people like that?"' (Munro, p.124). Patrick also chastised Rose for her cheap taste and lifestyle. Arguably, Rose also took pride in her own way for the reason that she was exceptionally beautiful and that she was meritorious too. From the story, it is revealed that she was clever enough to know the way of the world pretty well. Patrick was a snobbish and possessive person who wanted to control Rose's life completely. Rose would love to be loved and adorned by Patrick and any other person around her whereas Patrick would love to be respected and to see himself always as a commanding person who could control and subdue people around him. Actually, the goals and objectives of the two characters were different. Rose lacked a clear goal, yet she was ambitious. Rose used to have a domineering attitude and had an impact on others around her. She was impoverished despite her beauty. Patrick, on the other hand, was will driven and

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had a clear goal of becoming a professor. Patrick possessed strong financial stability and possessed a commanding presence. It is explicit that Patrick was a haughty and domineering man as he was continually trying to control Rose and make her look the way he wanted her to. Consequently, the conflict and struggle that originated in the conjugal life of Rose and Patrick, for the fact that both of the characters were dominating and ambitious. Both of the characters lacked commitment towards the relationship and a compromising attitude which is essential for married life. Moreover, in the background, the uneven economic and family status also fueled the conflict. Therefore, it is realized that the conflict arises from the variables of power, wealth, and other elements like attitude, commitment, ambition, etc.

It seemed that Patrick lacked the physical strength of all the men of his age who were physically fit. Rose appeared to be mentally stronger and had no apparent physical weakness, while Patrick was physically weaker than Rose. In addition, he lacked the mental toughness necessary to communicate and carry himself in front of Rose in a manly way—a quality that is essential for wooing any attractive lady. As Munro puts it, "There was something edgy, jumpy, disconcerting about him. His voice would break under stress—with her, it seemed he was always under stress—he knocked dishes and cups off tables, spilled drinks and bawls of peanuts, like a comedian." (Munro, pp. 124-125). The opposite physical and mental states of the characters gave birth to incompatibility. Arguably, Rose was not satisfied in terms of sexual relations with Patrick. As seen in the story, Patrick lacked virility and libido which is at the centre of any married relationship.

Other than the causes of disagreement discussed above, there are some more elements that caused incompatibility between each other and which consequently contributed to the conflict and crack in the relationship. The uneven social layers were the reason for the characters' mutual dissatisfaction. Patrick and Rose were dissatisfied when they observed each other's family from close proximity. Patrick was frustrated to see the down-to-earth and miserable state of Rose's family located in a very cheap place in a suburb town named Hanratty which was inhabited by the working-class people. The language and lifestyle of the people of Hanratty irritated Patrick. Conversely, when Rose visited Patrick's highly expensive villa located on Vancouver Island in Canada, she also became demoralized to see the flamboyant, unhappy, and emotionless state of Patrick's family and the loose relationships among the family members. She found all members of Patrick's family psychologically imbalanced as they expressed themselves to be irritating and obtrusive.

Now as it is examined further the marital life of Patrick and Rose, it has been unearthed and determined that their relationship was devastated by violence of domestic mental and physical abuse which are powerful reasons behind their falling apart. The two characters lacked compatibility which is at the centre of any such relationship. It may be argued that Patrick's infatuation with Rose prevented him from appreciating her beauty and talent. Besides, he lacked the energy and desire to physically please her. It was clear to the readers at the start of the story how weak Patrick's masculinity was while he was wooing Rose. Rose laments that he'd have to be 'sharp and

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swarthy, clever and barbaric'. "It didn't seem to her a sexual touch; it was more like a joke, though not at all a friendly one." (Munro, p.131). Rose wanted somebody as her fiancé who would be confident, manly, sexually deserving, dashing, clever, and possessive but not apologizing like Patrick. Referring to the painting of the king, Cophetua, Rose expressed her choice in the following way:

She would need that king, sharp and swarthy as he looked, even in his trance of passion, clever and barbaric. He could make a puddle of her, with his fierce desire. There would be no apologizing with him, none of that flinching, that lack of faith, that seemed to be revealed in all transactions with Patrick. (Munro, p. 134)

On the contrary, Patrick's refined demeanor, taste, and mentality were all beyond Rose's comprehension and appreciation. The two characters' tastes, likes, and dislikes never matched because of their stark and significant contrasts in economic rank and wealth. Therefore, it was impossible for the two characters to ever physically and mentally merge. It is important to remember that a healthy physical and mental amalgamation is necessary for every long-lasting marriage.

After a decade of difficult marriage, they finally filed for divorce, ending their relationship forever. Patrick and Rose frequently broke up during their marriage because they would argue and confront each other about a variety of topics. They would, however, later reconcile numerous times in the hopes of leading a happy life, but it would only be in vain.

Conclusion

Marx's conflict theory contends that as society is made up of various classes, conflict is natural and unavoidable. The theory goes on to affirm the belief that the battle for resources and power among the classes is the cause of the conflict. A married couple, or a family, can be thought of as the micro-unit or microcosm of society. As a result, disagreements are a common occurrence in families, especially among married couples. However, the reasons for conflict as mentioned by Marx are not the same and do not suffice against all the causes of conflict that are seen in the relationship of a married couple. Nonetheless, conflict in a family may arise owing to the struggle for power and resources. But, in a marriage, the conflict for the possession of power and wealth occurs to a much lesser degree and in a circumlocutory way. In "The Beggar Maid," the desire to accumulate wealth and the volatile aim of becoming rich is found in Rose. Rose's desire to become rich influenced her strongly in pairing a marriage bond with Patrick. The struggle for power within this couple can be seen in the form of subjugating and controlling each other and directing each other at their own will.

As it is observed, in the case of Rose and Patrick, lack of commitment, differences in priorities, differences in tastes and lifestyle, sexual and physical incompatibility, intellectual disparity, and physical and mental abuses are some crucial factors for this couple as the causes of conflict which led to their divorce. The conflicts seen between the two characters are either in psychological, emotional or physical forms. Moreover, through the analysis of the text of "The

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Beggar Maid," it is now exposed that the unequal distribution and possession of power and resources among and by the classes of a society give birth to different social classes and thereby produce people of different abilities, mental and physical bearing, tastes, and cultures.

Now it can also be inferred that conflict is actually at the centre of all reasons for the collapse of any married relationship.

Perhaps we can use 'conflict' as an umbrella word that contains all the reasons and elements of disagreements that are responsible for a divorce, or all reasons behind a divorce are accumulated as conflict. Rose and Patrick virtually become the universal representative of all couples who encounter divorce in their married life because of a single comprehensive reason, conflict.

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