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## Blue Dust as a Conflict Narrative

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**Abstract:** *When society is divided, based on social class, conflicts arise within society. People have person vs. person conflict, and they cannot have a proper relationship with other members of their society. Due to issues with other members, they cannot move forward and become alienated through the self-imaginative world. Such self-centeredness gives rise to person vs. self-conflict. People suffer mentally, physically, and psychologically. They always question their existence and are confused about life. They try to find an escape in different illusions. The solution lies in humanity. People must be treated on a human basis, then, people will live a happy life.*

**Key Words:** Class Consciousness, Society, Conflicts

### Introduction

*Blue Dust* is about class-consciousness, domestic conflicts, personal relations, family ties, love, hate, revolt, independence, cultural norms, compromise, jealousy, disgrace, care, dreams, sexual relations, drugs intake, and the role of money, luxury, power relations, and discrimination based on social class, creed, and religion. It is about the miseries of women of three generations, the pains of minorities, a loss of love, sacrifices for family, the hypocrisy of society, ignorance of feelings and emotions, escape from problems in wicked things, and questions of social class, creed, and religion. Women characters have many dimensions while male characters have two layers such as Asad is religious at first and then appears as an atheist (Sarwari, 2012).

In *Blue Dust*, almost every character's life is full of grief, darkness, and sadness (Ali, 2012). They are not satisfied with their life and want to have peace in life. When they do not get such peace, they go into different mental, psychological, emotional, and social conflicts. Then they find an escape from miseries in false consciousness, drug addiction, sex, illusions,

and revolt, but such escapes cause different frictions and problems in their lives.

Events in the novel sometimes look unreal, but in the real world, we can see many circumstances, the same as the circumstances presented in the story. Mainly, the events are based on taunts and abuses faced by the characters due to class consciousness. The novel is about child abuse, discrimination, and sexual repression. It blurs reality with fantasy in a unique way. It is a narrative of human conditions (Zehra, 2012). The story is in the sequences of dreams, and the world of *Blue Dust* is not quite a real world of magical realism; it exists in the mind of writers and characters (Fiction, 2012). It is a journey from an imaginary world to the real world in childhood, while, in adulthood, it is a journey from sanity to insanity (Ray, 2012). It shows individuals in diverse ways and shows how certain events can shape human characters and how they affect different personalities leading to uncontrollable happenings. In short, it is a map of life, having many moods, colors, and uncertainties.

## Background of the Study

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Social class, class consciousness, class differences, ideological differences, and group conflicts form the contextual background of the study.

## Social Class

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The position of a person in society is known as his social class. The class determines the standard of a person in his community. Distribution in society forms the social class, which depends on faith, property, ethnicity, occupation, and color (Frable, 1997). Every social class has specific customs and laws of existence and heritage. People are aware of their social status, and this consciousness is known as class consciousness.

## Class Consciousness

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The awareness of people about their social class is known as class consciousness. It refers to what people think and believe about their social class. It is subjective within a society, and every class has its awareness. It is the perception of members about their place and interests in the social system (Snow, 2013). People understand their position and are concerned about the requirements of status. There are many motives behind believing in class consciousness. The main reason is economic status. Literature deals with this notion with creativity, and its purpose is to show and solve this problem (James, 1974). Another motive is class stratification. Communities consist of different castes having specific qualities. Mainly, the owner class realizes the inequality in society (Sandhu, 2016). A class-conscious person believes in the difference in social groups. Most people have false consciousness in class-conscious societies. A person cannot perceive the truth about his social class due to his false consciousness. He lies about his original social class. False consciousness is subjective.

## Class Differences

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The actual differences found between social classes are known as class differences. Class differences are objective. Every social class has different requirements. In society, social classes differ. Mainly there are upper, middle, and lower classes. Every

group has its priorities and standards (Horvat et al., 2014). They do not allow members of other groups to merge in their community and do not enter into another group, because they think that their group is different from other groups, and the members of the other group cannot merge in their group. They have different preferences and styles of life. Their lifestyle, requirements, and aims differ from each other. If they do not get their demands according to their wishes, they get into difficulties and problems. Different social classes deal with their children in different styles. In the first stage of life, the middle class puts their children to do hard work while the lower class puts their children in a natural environment. At the later stage of life, the middle class enjoys the fruit of its struggle, while the lower class experiences problems in their survival (Horvat et al., 2014). The owner class always enjoys a higher financial position. Different social groups bring up their children according to their own rules and preferences. As a result, these children make different social groups. When there are different groups, they have different priorities and needs. To fulfill their priorities and attain their needs, they come in clash with each other. Due to these clashes, certain types of conflicts arise.

## Group Conflicts

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The scraps are known as conflicts, and the tussles and issues that arise in group relations are known as group conflicts. Group conflicts are clashes between different groups. These clashes arise due to a difference in class, personality, religion, status, mental ability, and ways of thinking, priorities, requirements, nature, and environment. Group conflicts are of two types: Intergroup conflicts and intra-group conflicts. Intergroup conflicts are the conflicts between members of distinct groups and intra-group conflicts are conflicts among members of the same group. Group conflicts arise due to confusion in relationships. The difference in personalities is the main reason behind these conflicts. If such type of conflict is not solved quickly, it will create other conflicts. These conflicts cause anxiety and tension in groups. This rise because the individuals of a specific class feel discomfort in the prevailing environment. The conflicts which occur in relationships are neither good nor bad. It is the manner through which it deals i.e., constructive or

destructive. All types of frictions are due to ideological differences, and these ideological differences result in loose family ties. Class-consciousness is negatively related to interpersonal conflict, and it moderates the relationship between extraversion and interpersonal conflict. In this modern world, the differences and conflicts are the results of inequality and distinctions in society ([Mastud, 2017](#)). *Blue Dust* (2012) narrates the world of competition where characters believe in class differences, as a result, they suffer from domestic conflicts and chaos in society. Such things make them dissatisfied and hollow ([Arif, 2015](#)).

### **Theoretical Perspective of the Study**

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Historical materialism, functional theory of class stratification, attachment theory, uncertainty-identity theory, the social-identity approach, Bourdieu's sociology considered as macro-sociological theory, Family system theory, and conflict theory of social stratification by Dahrendorf form the theoretical perspective of the study. Historical materialism states the separation of social classes into the owner and working class on economic positions. Class stratification divides society into class, status, and party. The functional theory of class stratification states the division of society on the basis of occupational roles performed by individuals ([Goyder, 1972](#)). Attachment theory states that some relational events affect the emotions and personality of a person (Simpson and Beckes, 2010). Uncertainty-identity theory deals with the feelings of self-uncertainty in members of a social group. The social-identity approach states the formation of society on the basis of status and power ([Hogg & Abrams, 2004](#)). Bourdieu's sociology, considered as macro-sociological theory, states the concepts of capital, habitus, fields, and symbolic power. Family system theory claims that the family is best understood as a complex, dynamic, and changing collection of parts, subsystems, and family members ([Hammond & Cheney, 2010](#)). A conflict theory of social stratification by Dahrendorf (1959) states that the class having power is known as haves and it gets the necessities of life while the working class is known as have nots and it suffers for survival (Mills, n.d).

### **Methodology**

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The methods which provide the principles for organizing, planning, designing, and conducting research are known as research methodology. It gives a design, paradigm, and method to a researcher for conducting research. ([Lgwenagu, 2016](#)). The design of this study is qualitative in nature. Qualitative data analysis is the analysis and study of data to make inferable and clear meaning from it. It has several purposes: description, identification, and development of a theory for the research ([Flick, 2013](#)). The paradigm of the study defines the philosophy of the researcher and tells how to create meaning from the collected data (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). The paradigm of this study is based on subjective interpretive techniques. The subjective interpretations are neither truth nor personal opinion, but they are suggestions and inferences made based on the understanding of data ([Pillai, 2015](#)).

### **Data of the Study**

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Generally, data is collected and analyzed by a researcher ([Ajayi, 2017](#)). Data of the following study is collected by using different reading strategies like skimming, scanning, and critical reading.

### **Skimming**

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To skim a text means to see it quick. In reading a large amount of data, skimming is helpful. One can read comprehensive data in a short time. Stephen, quoted in ([Oumelkhir & Wafa, 2017](#)) explains skimming as a quick study to know the main idea or gist of the text.

### **Scanning**

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In their research ([Aritonang et al. 2019](#)) quote Maxwell(1970) in Diaz, S &Laguado, J (2013:138) that scanning is looking for specific information and locating specific facts and details quickly.

### **Critical Reading**

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Walz (2001) as quoted by ([Larking, 2017](#)), states that critical reading is a critique of arguments and an investigation of data.

## Blue Dust as a Conflict Narrative

In the narration "*Zaib often..... to wear*" (Salman, 2012: p.16), the researcher finds the mother vs. daughter (person vs. person conflict) as Zaib wonders and questions about her mother's likeness for high social standards, not for Zaib's emotions. The mother is having the person vs. society conflict as she forces Zaib to have branded things for keeping high social standards.

In the narration "*Oh Zaib.....of their class*" (Salman, 2012: p.17), the researcher finds the person vs. self-conflict as we see a kind of pride Zaib's aunt has about her children. She is in superiority complex with herself. Zaib is in-person vs. society conflict as the social consciousness of her family and society had made her frustrated, and she was unable to live in peace. She got weak day by day. Zainab's mother's conflict vs. society can be seen here as she loved high standards, but her daughter was interested in such standards. This was embarrassing for her in social circles.

In the narration, "*Zaib knew .....for him*". (Salman, 2012: p.19), the researcher finds person vs. society conflict by obtaining 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 opposition within their society.

The narration *Zaib grew up.....them* (Salman, 2012: p.22) depicts person vs. society conflict as Zaib faced personal attacks because of her dual ethnic parenthood. Her personality was divided between two halves. Salman narrates *the clean half and the dirty half* to describe Zaib's situation. She was considered dirty or clean, depending on the context. Whenever she went to a Christian community, she was blamed as dirty because of her Muslim father. When she went to a Muslim community, she was named dirty because of her Christian mother. In none of the societies, she was welcomed, respected, and accepted. She was confused about what her place in any society is. This led her to go into person vs. self-conflict as she was confused that either she is clean or dirty. If she is clean then why the society calls her dirty and if she is dirty then how she can make herself clean. The narration *It matters.....untouchables*" (Salman, 2012: pp. 22-23) shows the person vs. society conflict as

mother did revolt for the sake of love and had no concerns for social norms. The person vs. faith conflict can also be seen here, as the mother was conscious of herself and pretended no care for society. She only thought about her love but when she was asked to change faith for love, she got conscious about her faith. If love was everything for her then why did she went against her society? And if society was not important then why she refused to change her faith?

The narration *But .....elite*. (Salman, 2012: p. 25) depicts the person vs. society conflict as Shafi lost his high rank; he and his wife were no more welcomed in their elite class. All of Shafi's dreams and hard work went in vain and he was left with nothing but an everlasting depression.

In the narration "*I never quarter*" (Salman, 2012: p. 30), the researcher finds the person vs. society conflict, as it depicts that mother alienated her child from the servant class because she thought a mix-up with a servant class is against her social standards.

The narration *At time . of her* (Salman; 2012: pp. 58-59) depicts person vs. self-conflict that Zaib restricted herself to own world of self illusions. It was person vs. society conflict that made her alienated from society.

The narration "*Ammi ..... her*" (Salman; 2012: pp.63-64) shows the person vs. society conflict that when anyone from the class-conscious family fills 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 mothers and society's sake. It was the consciousness of society that made the mother go against the will of a son, it was the intensity of emotions that made Haider ask and convince for his love, and it was the power of societal pressure that made the son leave his love.

The narration "*As time ..... breakdowns*" (Salman, 2012: p. 120) depicts person vs. society conflict as when Hassan's family was increased, their social needs increased. It was difficult for Hassan to fulfill the needs of the family according to the standards in his normal work. So, he started to do more hard work. He did overtime and spent more

time in his office. He was unable to give time to Zaib as he gave to her when they had no children. Zaib thought that Hassan is ignoring her so she went into person vs. person conflict. Fights between husband and wife were daily held and as a consequence, family life was disturbed.

The narration *That night ..... job again*"(Salman, 2012: p. 134) depicts person vs. society conflict that for the man of poor and lower class there is no job of higher rank and if someone gets any job, they are easily deprived of that job.

The narration *Zaib .....languages*"(Salman; 2012: pp. 154-155) narrates the person vs. self-conflict in form of the questions raised in Zaib's mind about religion, class, and creed. She always asked that why she is facing discrimination based on religion, class, and creed? Why she is emotionally and physically hurt? Why people hurt her? How she can get rid of all the suffering and abuses? Is it a rule to judge a person based on his actions? If yes then how an action can be judged? If actions can be judged through the thought process behind them then how those thought processes can be understood? But Zaib faced a society in which she was judged based on her actions and the name of religion was used. Here the actions might refer to the social identities and it gives birth to questions like that if people are given titles as good or bad based on social status, then what is the basis for this status? What is the philosophy behind their identity? The motive behind any action is raised from the collective thinking process of persons society. The belief and mentality of a person are set by their society. And a person cannot think freely from the force of his society. *The narration Asad .....only to eat*"(Salman; 2012: pp. 158-159) depicts the person vs. society conflict, as Asad and Bilal were unable to compete with their rich friends in the race of class conscious life. Their friends had extra money to spend while they do not have an extraordinary amount of money as their friends had. This difference made them confused and they went into false consciousness. It also depicts person vs. self-conflict as Asad was frustrated by the hypocrisies of his society. He kept himself to his room. He was found all the time busy making different types of different things of the world from different colors of plastic. For him, the world and its things were made of plastic, which is why he made

his world of plastic. It is identified that in a class-conscious world, man is made of plastic. As plastic can be melted easily and can be changed into different shapes, similarly, the class-consciousness of society melts a person. A person is left with nothing but frustration and depression. They change themselves according to the demands of society or change their society due to its demands.

## Conclusion

Difference in ethnicity, ideology and psychology give birth to different conflicts in *Blue Dust*. Basically ethnicity deals with kinship, overt behavior, attitudes, values, and thoughts (Isjiaw, 1992). People with different ethnicities have different ideologies. Ideology and psychology of a person are interrelated. If the person has firm ideological relations, then, his psyche will be strong (Chaug, 2005). Similarly, ideologies systematically make cognition, transmission and actualization of beliefs (Selva et al., 2017). When ideologies differ, they cause conflicts in relationships. (Pahl & Spencer, 2010). Such conflicts result in class-conscious societies and people are judged on the basis of social class. Almost in every society, which is based on the difference between religion and social class, people suffer from the same conflicts of differentiation. Conflicts of every society are the same in nature but different in shape. One society, for example, may face problems in jobs and another may face problems in marriages but the intensities of both are the same. Human intellect cannot give the solution to such problems. As a result, a common human being is left with the burden of question about their existence. They are unable to know the real reasons behind such problems and are failed to find the answers to their questions. To follow the rule of any religion or society is not shame, but shame is that when a person is unable to handle an unwanted situation. The real shame for people is at a time when they do not have their own beliefs and follow others. The key to survival is to hold your own belief strongly and not to follow others. Try to solve your problems by yourself based on rules of human dignity and do not see for the help of others. Some things are out of the reach of the human mind. It cannot reach its reality. If it tries it will face problems.

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