

SEXUAL REVOLUTION IN *THE PREGNANT WIDOW* AND *MONEY* BY MARTIN AMIS

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to assess the consequence of sexual revolution in postmodern era within the selected novels of Martin Amis "Money" (1984) and "The pregnant Widow" (2010). This article is going to investigate why sexual evolution is happened in Western furthermore, how much sexual freedom has been affected in the manner and behaviour of Western people, according to Amis's novels. I want also to investigate why Martin Amis, the postmodern writer, has created such emancipated, voluptuous and absurd characters as John Self and Keith Nearing. This article seeks to scrutinize through some examples, where is the situation of 'self' especially in women characters in the result of sexual revolution and how the author depicts today life of human being, which encompassed by sexual deviations. It will be investigated whether immoralities and sexual promiscuity in Amis' novels are in the result of sexual emancipation or not. With this I reach to the conclusion that perhaps Martin Amis uses these characters and absurd lives in order to reveal the sexual and social dilemma in individual's life in postmodern condition. Perhaps this result open the way in the reader's mind for understanding about the social reality in our term.

KEYWORDS: Martin Amis, Sexual Revolution, Characters, Pornography, Postmodernism

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps the most important reason of sexual revolution was the rise of sexual immoralities and directing the sexual activity among people. According to Edward Shorter, the concept of sexual revolution was to betoken a transform in both the quantity and quality of sexual activity. He indicates: "Quality refers to how often people have intercourse and with whom premarital, extramarital and marital. But quality I mean to locate the style of activity. . . "(Shorter 238).

A look at the history of Sexual revolution, It has been established by European Intellectual for giving freedom the sexual activity to people and to prevent the sexual suppression in individuals. According to their idea, Sex as a natural pleasure and need must be out of convention and rule. Since then, the society and families confront many immoralities in their sexual activities. Parents censure their daughters because of having sexual relationship in hidden and having child without marriage license. The crisis of illegitimate birth was accelerated by young unmarried women, along with the rise of the birth of more bastards. The enlightenment conceived that sexual freedom in the period of maturity prevent the social crime, such as masturbation which they called it sexual suppression. Wilhelm Reich in his book claims: "Sexual suppression produced a subordinate individual who simultaneously exhibits slavish obedience and rebellion. We want man to be free" (Reich 23).

The sexual equality between men and women were another substantial goal of creating sexual revolution. This thought was the way in which trivialized the traditional thoughts about sexual relationship outside marriage. Accordingly, in Western societies this revolution opened the ways for women to take their own natural pleasure.

As mentioned above, one of the most significant reasons of revolution, which took place in eroticism, was to control and direct the libertine sexual manner. The question is that although there have been so many activities to prevent the sexual deviation, how much it is being affected? Today despite all activities in directing and controlling the illegal activities, we observe the increase in sexual deviation and promiscuity in western societies. The most obvious example which distinguished the promiscuity in sexual manner is in the novels of Martin Louis Amis contemporary British writer. Whereas, Amis in his works especially his recent novel *The pregnant Widow* makes an effort to depict the reality of the sexual behaviour in recent western society. Or in his famous novel *Money*, Amis reveals the intersection of pornography and the aftermath of the subject of sexual assault or rape.

The Pregnant Widow is one of the acclaimed novels by Amis which has been under complexities and argumentation. The crisis of sexual relationship and pornography as the themes were manipulated by Amis in this novel like his previous novel *Money*. Some critic claims that the writer fictionalized his own experience in his adulthood period in a form of comic satire. Subjects such as pornography and sex are the mental disturbance, which Amis never omitted them in his writing. The insistence of the writer to depict the sexual fantasy which is influenced by pornography in the life of two protagonists, John Self in *Money* and the Keith Nearing in *The pregnant Widow*, represented the sexual deviation in our term. Neill Denny in his article considers: ". . . The sexual revolution is what this novel (*The Pregnant Widow*) is all about" (Denny NP).

Amis distinguished his male characters in grotesque ways. John Self in *Money*, as a glutton and salacious character, along with Keith Nearing in *The pregnant Widow*, both characterized by the author as a moral and sexual ailments. Perhaps Amis manipulates such characters to show that how the people looked into the girls and boys manner in sexual rivalry especially, in *The Pregnant Widow*. Amis also in creation of the same characters in his previous novel like Charles Highway in *The Rachel Paper*, attempted to display the ambiguity in the sexual manner in our term. The adolescent who Richard Brown calls him: ". . . A new adolescent hero of sexual and intellectual initiation..." (Brown NP).

Similarly, the sexual thoughts preoccupied in the mind of Keith, who pursues the attractive Scheherazade when his relationship with Lily is getting steady. Likewise, John's relationship with Selina is getting closer and cordial with his imagination of rape. Sometimes the author traces the promiscuity in behaviour of his characters in comic ways. In *The Pregnant Widow*, which is exclusively about sex, Amis through his protagonist Keith expresses how slow the classics are to get to the sex.

Amis' representation of pornography in his novels is considered as a kind of exploitation of human desire and expanded as a business practice. It is quite clear why Amis has written his controversial novel *The Pregnant Widow*. What is dominated by the title of novel which the Aravind Adiga declares: "The title of this novel intended to be a metaphor for an incomplete sexual revolution_ the old is dead but the new is not born yet..." (Adiga NP).

The draw of erotic world in the imagination of characters with consternation and distraction can lead to immoralities. Creating of the characters such as Keith Nearing with desire for Scheherazade; Gloria Beautyman with her body; Rita the concupiscent character, who is called "the Dog" and finally Ashraf, the veiled Muslim girl all implies the disappointed and scabrous landscape of their sexual and moral life. Indeed, *The pregnant Widow*, in the seriousness of anxieties and ambiguities, characterized female body and male awfulness in sexual manner. This is what, Jenny Turner in her article called it: "This is the story of a sexual trauma" (Turner NP).

Despite Keith's love relationship with Lily, he has attention to Scheherazade's body (Lily's best friend), especially her breast and also to arse of Gloria. Such behavior from Keith made quarrelling between him and Lily. Confusion in distinguishing the difference between sex and love affairs in characters such as Amen represents the darkness of comprehension in that. Keith's friend Whittaker says about his friend: "He can understand sex with a stranger in the afternoon. But he cannot understand the love affair" (119). The sexual revolution is revealed more when the author creates the naughty character like Kenrik, who is Lily's ex-boyfriend. When Keith talks to him about his treat with girls and his sexual relationship with them he confesses that he already fucked the dog. Despite, he attempts to justify his nonsense deed, incredibly he did it. He says to Keith: "All right, I fucked the Dog. So what. I don't want to talk about it, okay?" (212). The girls in the story are represented as an instrument for men's sexual impulse, especially when Amis focuses on the details of their bodies.

The pinnacle of women's humiliation in the novel is where the readers are cleared that dog is the nickname of Rita, the young and libidinous beautiful girl who is fucked because she remained Kenrik a dog. The world of sexual intercourse which drawn in the mind of characters by Amis blemished their sense of love as Keith claims: "I don't want love. I just want a fuck" (257). Despite Keith makes love with Lily and attempt for being very considerate to her, he allows himself to make love with Scheherazade in his dreams. It is not deniable that Keith has his own policy and plan in his life. He is plunged in the world of carnality that directing him into transgression and frivolity without any limitation.

What is Amis manifested in his writing is the aftermath of the sexual liberty and sexual emancipation. Amis obviously distinguished the crisis of sexual liberty which had existed particularly by sexual revolution. But because of the inferior position of women in his novels he has been under critical attacks. *The Pregnant Widow* perceived the title of being misogynist novel. The promotion of the factors that Amis reveals in his novel *Money*, such as dark dancing in a pub and porn emporium bristling, implies the shadow of moral destruction. John Self is the protagonist of the *Money* confesses: "I'm really interested in pornography" (4). The notion of sexual failure in the result of sexual emancipation has made so much anxieties for female characters due to male superfluity in their sexual manner. John's girlfriend, Selina Street's life encompasses by the fear and distraction that can imply how much sexual revolution jeopardized her life. As he mentioned: ". . . Selina lives her life in hardened fear of assault, molestation and rape" (6).

As mentioned earlier one of significant reason of establishment of sexual revolution according to Edvard Shorter was increasing prostitution, masturbating among young people and the intricacy of rape. Over the next few decades, Martin Amis in his book distinguished the issues of date-raped among the female characters in our term. Date-raped criticized by Amis for not only as being representation of social dilemma and self-assertion among the people, but also as being notorious and practical aspect of lust features. Amis satirically describes the thoughts of men in modern cities in which life is affected by legalized sexual desires (the legalized had happened by European intellectualist long back). He expresses: "what can a grown male do alone in Manhattan, except go in search of trouble or pornography?" (9).

Dealing with the matters of women body over the characters in the novels refer to the fragile situation of humanity and culture in the society after sexual revolution. Creating helpless character such as Scheherazade or voluptuous character like Rita in *The pregnant Widow*, whose situation is as worse as Selina in *Money*, are the bitter reality of women's suffering from the sexual revolution. Selina is one of the women who became prostitute for her survival, as John the protagonist of the *Money* says: "She (Selina) has fucked for money" (31). Furthermore, Selina complains because of lack of security and she murmurs people who attempt to cheat on her. The height of disrespect is when she suffers from his

boyfriend who calls him cunt. These are all awful instances in Amis novels to reveal his suspicion about women situation. The women who are spending most of their time in carousing along with the smug and drunk men whose amusement is to talk about women belly, tit and ass. The sexual emancipation which has specified for the new society beside to deal sexual manner today becomes a kind of fun. Amis in *Money* expresses from his male characters' tongue: "It must be the booze, it must be the junk, it must be all the pornography" (71).

Amis, in his overlong explanation about the self-indulgence in sexual behaviour and sexiness, attempts to convey the importance of aggravating of sexual crisis. The social crisis mirror in the novels mostly because women act like men and vice versa. Amis complains the spoiling of love and declining of lovely plantation in our crazy era, where all relations and love affairs are occupied by salacious thoughts. Anxious assumption of women about the real meaning of love, and marriage and their insistence on divorce and abortion, represents in the novel when Keith at the end of the novel asks Gloria for marriage and she answers: ". . . marriage is old-fashioned" (441).

Despite Gloria's dissatisfaction of marriage to Keith, she finally marries her. Amis satirizes the vanity of love by giving too much sexual appetite to Keith. He confesses that: "I don't want love. No, I do. But I want hysterical sex" (389). Perhaps Keith divorced Lily because he was conscious about her pure love to him, and his marriage to Gloria was only because of sex. That is why Keith clearly claims, when he goes for his third marriage: "Divorcing Gloria was very difficult, boring, painful, and expensive. Divorcing Lily was easy" (451). All indicated instability of love that was made by sexual revolution. The melancholy view of Amis in depicting voluptuous women is sort of grotesque of destruction of the idea of sexual revolution and veering toward annihilation. Ron Charles in his article states: "The point he (Amis) most wants us to concede is that the sexual revolution was a tragedy, an ordeal of narcissistic trauma" (Charles NP).

As I mentioned earlier one of substantial causes of formation of sexual revolution was controlling the promotion of producing bastard children. But what is formulated today leads to representation of the identity crisis. When Keith is trying to clear up his own identification, he says: "We've got a bastard" (444). What is Amis attempts to insert at the end of the novel is the confusion between love and sex in the mind of characters. Finally, all the characters became aged and they have experienced so many things about interaction with others. At the end of the book, Amis ridiculously shows the destiny of the characters, when Violet claims proudly that she was seventeen years old and had ninety-two boyfriends. By the same token, marked the love failure of Lily, Nicholas, Keith after his third marriage and the vague marriage of Jonquil after sixth marriages. These are all advertently characterized by Amis to indicate the smell of promiscuity and sexual narcissism in the result of sexual revolution which dispersed their lives.

CONCLUSIONS

Sexual revolution took place when the society encompassed by sexual immoralities and unfinished promiscuous, likewise, the families and people were under sexual chaotic. It is also formulated to give harmony between sexual norms and sexual behaviour. Despite, all activities to solve the problem, the result of sexual revolution has become incomplete project. Novels of Martin Amis are good examples of the crisis after sexual revolution. By looking at his novels, readers and critics might distinguish the depth of the crisis. The focus of absurdity in sexual self-interests along with the endless greed of sexual narcissistic and confusion in Amis's novels take into account as the crisis of the aftermath of the sexual revolution. What is today brings more anxious is the sexual and moral ailment in the society and families that will threat our next generation. Perhaps taking some traditional notion will be efficacious and will amend the sexual actions. What is known today is that the existence of sexual revolution by modern thinkers has not the predetermined result in consensus of

human being.

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