

Book Review

Shafique, K. A. (2016). *Waheed Murad: His Life and Our Times*. Karachi, Pakistan: Libredux Publishing. ISBN-13: 978-0957141674

Reviewed by Muhammad Tayyab¹

“Waheed Murad: His Life and Our Times” is the first biography of any film star of Pakistan. The writer started writing this book soon after the death of Waheed Murad in 1983. Collecting all parts of the story and research consumed more than thirty years. The book was awaited by Waheed Murad’s family, friends and huge lot of fans who knew that a book is being written by a scholar on the celebrated film actor. This book describes the whole personality of the superstar, his lifestyle, struggle, patriotism and of course his astonishing skills as a writer, director, actor and producer. The book tells the tale of a passionate and hardworking person who became a superstar and spent almost 20 years of his life in the film industry.

The author of the book Khurram Ali Shafique is an internationally renowned scholar of Iqbal Studies. He has a vast experience as a screenwriter, educationist and historian. He has been awarded with the Presidential Iqbal Award. The author’s work includes more than 200 articles and papers, and more than thirty books on various genres like history, textbooks, screenplays, Iqbal Studies, literature and many other. He is the founder of Marghdeen

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Learning Centre and is the pioneer of online courses on Iqbal Studies, which he has been conducting since May 2011. When a person with literary taste came to know about the death of Waheed Murad and witnessed the sorrow of almost the entire society, a question came to his mind that, "*Could Waheed have lived longer if we, the society, had behaved differently?*" which led him to write this book. (Shafique, 2016)

The book delivers invaluable perceptions about Waheed Murad showing his vision for the society which is also reflected in his films. It provides each and every detail about Waheed Murad as a legend, covering his life, character, professional and personal life. The author has depicted all diverse aspects of his charming personality as a writer, producer, director and actor as well. The 180-pager book starts with "Prologue: A Question" and contains four chapters explaining the man behind the legend, the filmmaker, the writer and the chocolate-cream hero. The book ends with "Epilogue: The Answer" and provides his complete filmography, list of awards and references to useful sources.

Prologue: A Question the author asks that "*Can the people of Pakistan find through their recent heritage the much-needed confidence in their existence as a people?*" (Shafique, 2016). This part further draws a comparison of cinema development between England and Pakistan. "The Man behind the Legend" is the longest chapter which provides the background of Waheed Murad's family, his personal and professional life. This chapter also traces his struggle, ambitions and goals which portray his real personality to the readers. This chapter also covers his films and dealing with his friends and

colleagues which also shows his administrative skills and concern for humanity. This chapters ends with his tragic untimely death and aftermath.

In the second chapter the film maker gives an in-depth study of the films produced by Waheed Murad under his own banner, "Film Arts". The third chapter evaluates his scholarly contributions to literature through three films he wrote. And the last chapter gives an overview on the rise of Waheed Murad as a superstar, an iconic hero known as Chocolate-Cream hero. It also provides a detail of his film roles, why he took them and what do they tell us about our society. "In the epilogue: the answer" writer answers the question which he raised in the prologue in the light of what unfolded in the four chapters.

The book is easy, detailed, interesting and well-written. The book attracts a wide range of people belonging to different sects of life including students of Mass Communication, Film, TV and Literature, Teachers, Film industry and fans of Pakistan and Waheed Murad's Films. Citations at the end of each page satisfies the curiosity of those who want to read more about the topic. Illustrations and pictures are appropriate and rare which also encourage the reader to think about our culture, history and our film industry. While reading the film stories and the ideas entrenched with our culture develops ones interest to watch old movies. This book reveals that Waheed Murad was not only an actor but producer, writer, director and businessman, a visionary and a scholar, in short, an all-rounder. Waheed Murad was just a

charming actor for me until I read the insights of Khurram Ali Shafique.

This book is as much related to our culture as it is with Waheed Murad. This quality of the book makes it interesting for foreigners who want to know about our culture. The writer has captured the 'spirit of times' in a very professional manner. He pulls out the best stories about Waheed Murad and describes them in the best possible way, shaping the scenario in which these stories and incidents took place. He covers all major cultural and political events that took place during the life of Waheed Murad and also describes their relevancy, effects and importance on his life and films. This book also explains what type of cultural, social, economic and political events inspired Waheed to make films on specific topics at different times. This book reminds us of the golden era of our film industry and thereafter its fall.

Waheed Murad was not the sole artist who made films, he was backed by a good strong team. The book also describes all other important characters who helped Waheed Murad to become a legend, his parents, spouse, friends and team members.

The writer has portrayed Waheed Murad in a positive light and tried his best not to mention the negative aspects of his personality which shows the biasness of the writer. He did not reveal the mistakes Waheed made in his career and personal life. Waheed was an innovative person and always tried new things, which means sometimes things can go messy. There is nothing wrong with it. Edison was not ashamed of mentioning how many times he failed before perfecting a light bulb. The writer did not

mention the negative aspects of Waheed Murad's personality and also the name of his flop films and the reasons for their failure. Names and reasons could help the reader learn. The book also does not mention the reasons for the downfall of our film industry, this may not fascinate the audience but at least it would have made them aware of what mistakes not to make in the future.

Rumors exist about Waheed's personality, and there are even doubts about his death. The writer has left these issues unanswered, which raise several questions that could these rumors be true. The only thing that is clear in the book is that Waheed Murad was not an arrogant person and was shy and sober.

Several other biographies including *Jinnah: India, Partition, Independence*, *Shahab Nama*, *In the Line of Fire: A Memoir and My Brother* are master pieces in their own self but this book has its own flavor and value. I rank this book 4.5 out of 5 and place it in the first row of my book shelf.

Waheed has become a wonder for me after reading the book and yes, I must say that the writer has successfully achieved the goals he set for this biography. The ultimate thing I learned from this book is Waheed Murad was not like those artists who picked at others just for the sake of criticism rather I have found him as a reformer. This and above mentioned traits ensured that he became a legend. Waheed had and has millions of fans and the number has increased after his death. The number will further rise after people read this book. Unfortunately, like many other legends Waheed was not appreciated as much as he deserved during his lifetime.

I want to end my review with his song as he himself said, "Sometimes I think that if I suddenly disappear or am no more for any reason, I would like to be remembered by the song '*Bhooli hui hoon dastaan, guzra hua khayal hoon-Jisko na tum samajh sakay mien aisa aik sawal hoon*'." (I'm a tale forgotten, a thought bygone. I'm the question which you couldn't understand) which was also pictured on him in 1967 and sung by his friend Ahmed Rushdi. (Shafique, 2016)

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