

MAN AND WOMAN RELATIONSHIP IN MANJU KAPUR'S A MARRIED WOMAN

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M.ABINAYA

M.Phil., English, Sakthi College of Arts and Science for Women
Oddanchatram, Tamil Nadu, India

Abstract

A Married Woman by Manju Kapur, in this novel the protagonist as the daughters has an educated middle -class Delhi woman and could ask for a loving and affluent surrounding and yet consumed with a sense of dissatisfaction. She begins an extra marital affair. She describes men and women relationship consists of multiple identity quest of heroine, the protagonist Astha, who initially feels sense of separation from her married life and family. But finally resigns herself to accepting reality, by reviews her relationship with her husband as a mark of conclusion that is reviving man and woman relationship which is vital one for all human being in this common world.

Manju Kapur is widely praised as the finest of her generation of Indian writers in English. She is known for the difficult task of moulding the English language and idiom to her purpose without a self-conscious attempt of sounding Indian. Her works like any other important work of art, have been created not in a state of vacuum, but are endowed with the efforts of the author who is acutely conscious of her social milieu and responds to its various aspects in an artistic manner. Her works offer an increasing sobering commentary on the human conditions while focusing the overwhelming and seemingly incomprehensive power of family and society. In the well-knit Indian social system, the individual as a part of the family exists in relationship with others as father or mother, as a son or daughter, as a husband or life.

As most of the characters of Manju Kapur are not ready to mingle themselves with the outer world by shedding of their individuality they are not able to make harmonious relationship with others. Thus most of the familial relationships depicted in her novels are hollow and meaningless. Here it would be appropriate to quote Dr. N. Raj Gopal who has said that "The inner most psyches of her protagonists are revealed to us through their interaction with those who are emotionally related to them on the basis of Kinship. For the purposes of fiction, no human relationship is more fertile and potential than that in the family and especially among the kins". He goes on to comment that "the emotional crises among kins are born of the realization that the kins fall short of the ideal in such relationship".

Manju Kapur is relevant to all times because she writes about the predicament of modern man and woman. She digs into man's inner psyche and goes beyond the skin and the flesh. Literature for her is not a means of escaping reality but an exploration and an inquiry. She prefers the private to the public world and avoids the traditional groves of external reality and physical world. In fact, her real concern is the thorough investigation of human psyche, inner climate, and she unravels the mystery of the inner life of her characters. She writes neither for placing entertainment nor for dissemination and propagation of social ideas. Her main engagement is to study human existence and human predicament, her exploration being a quest for self. "She is the novelist of psycho-emotional situations and her theme is the individual against himself and against the milieu" (Manmohan K. Bhatnagar: 110). This particular reality leads to the most common theme in her novels that is the complexity of human relationships, particularly the man-woman relationship.

Manju Kapur explores the Indian's (especially women's) use of make -shifts to escape attachment and their attempt to find love and life in disillusion that are the end product of their separation, obsession, transgression and diffusion of self in double consciousness, i.e., of a woman and then an Indian. The uniqueness of Manju Kapur's novel, however, lies in her treatment of feminine sensibility. In India where women have resigned roles, which do not allow any room for individualism, identity and assertion, Manju Kapur advocates for a woman who questions the age-old traditions and want to seek individual growth. They try to reassess the known in a new context and find a meaning in life.

Manju Kapur is a renowned India English writer. She is a fine writer with a great sense of character, a vivid knowledge of Indian culture and an eye for telling detail. Among various Indian writers, Manju Kapur is easily accepted as an efficient practitioner of the gem of fiction. Today there are three kinds of women in the Indian society. A large group of Indian women, both uneducated and educated are very traditional they are totally dependent on their husbands and are fully devoted to the family. Secondly, the women who are educate and economically independent but want both economic as well as family life. They are unable to break the framework of the family. Such women are in transitory state. There is a third group of a handful of women who are educate, economically independent and empowered.

Manju Kapur takes up outstanding contemporary issues as the subject matter of her fiction while remaining rooted in the tradition at the same time. She explores the anguish of individuals living in modern society. She deals with the complexity of human relationships as one of her major themes, which is a universal issue, as it attracts worldwide readers to her novels. She strives to show this problem without any interference. On the other hand, she allows to her readers to pass judgment over her characters and their actions in an objective and impartial way. Kapur suggests that a balance between the conventional pre-set role of woman and the contemporary

issues has to be struck. Her female protagonists try to discover and re discover meaningfulness in life through the known and the established. These characters are not the usual, average, normal women, but different from others. They do not find a proper channel of communication and thus become separated and start worrying about their lives. All their wandering and reflections finally bring them into new vistas of understanding, which they had formerly ignored or rejected.

Manju Kapur writes about miserable plight of women sufferings under their insensitive and inconsiderate husbands. So man-woman relationship brings characters into alienation, withdrawal, bisexual affair, loneliness and lack of communication that frequently occurs in her novels. Kapur's *A Married Woman* describes the tension between a sensitive wife Astha and the rational husband Hemant. It emphasizes the triumph of life over chaos and of art over life.

The protagonist Astha's main problem is maladjustment with her husband, Hemant who ignores her desire and misunderstanding between them. She is fed up her husband, his business, surrounding. Hemant's lack of love and feeling brings her to the verge of insanity. As a result of her escapism, the husband-wife relationship is dragged into difficulties. It comes in the form of identity crisis; both Hemant and Astha stand for binary oppositions. The novel is two journeys, Astha is the undertaken to escape from immediate surroundings and another pipeelika is to move towards something of the future.

In this journey, Astha reveals the agonies the journey as transparently as the jelly fish does its self. At last, she discovers herself. Astha's search for self ends in wholeness of life. For Atma Ram the novel seeks to unravel the inner mystery of life, to discover the energy that nourishes the spirit, and discards pettiness, horror and hypocrisy of bisexual life" (Halpirin 133).. Obviously, Astha re-establishes the story of the boredom and loneliness experiences of a sensitive, educated middle aged married protagonist, Astha who is alienated from her husband and children. She realizes the life in spite of its nastiness, brutishness, madness, tedium and boredom should be lived. In short, the novel is an exploration of the vital source of life and consciousness, reviving her relationship with husband.

In '*A Married Woman*', the second of her three novels, Manju Kapur frankly depicts the love affair between two women, but less attention has been paid to the historical and political context in which relationship develops. It is an attempt to inject an element of artistic and emotional coherence. Actually a relationship with a woman does not threaten a marriage as much as the relationship with a man. The novel exposes the domestic relationship. Kapur has remained very truthful in presenting the women and the challenges they face in their personal. Professional, religious, social and political levels

The realities of women's lives seem to be gaining greater significance day by day. Women writers have explored the stance of male chauvinism and atrocities committed

against women. Victimized women assert themselves in different ways according to their perception of right and wrong which itself undergoes a change, resulting in changed attitude towards morality and modalities of life which come to be called modern. Victims are those against whom atrocities have been committed in the name of culture, tradition, religion, social acceptance, hypocrisy and man's inhumanity towards fellow human beings. The importance of men and their superiority has been a part of Indian social mores for generations.

Women have always been less important individuals. When a woman lives in a male dominated society obviously she undergoes many hardships. Manju Kapur has joined the growing number of women writers from India on whom the image of suffering but stoic women eventually breaking the traditional boundaries has had a significant impact. Her female protagonists are mostly educated, aspiring individuals caged within the confines of a conservative society. Their education leads them to independent thinking for which their family and society become intolerant of them.

Manju Kapur brings forth those hard facts that will go a long way in demystifying marriage. The novel discussed the tragic tale of the middle class working women with Astha as the main heroine and Pipeelika as the titular one. Astha's mentality is totally changed, due to the fact is, she is spellbound by Pipee. She easily swallows her accordingly Pipee makes her feel that away from her home she can lead a fuller life because she has already potentials so she can never do desperate and uncertain as the fate of the mosque, a building that has stood for centuries as a symbol of uneasy co-existence between Hindu and Muslim but is now, more than ever, under threat. Her whole family disturbs and each member of the family hates her entirely for seeing her attitude as a neglectful woman.

Astha has a different view. If a woman marries, her marriage should result in satisfaction. Without these expectations, there is no use together as husband and wife and such a life is nothing but wretchedness. She embraces fighting for communal riots to lead a life of freedom. Hemant is at once conscious of a difference in the attitude of Astha which is a thing as his being a husband that is to have sex. He tries to make towards her, but he fails. Her attitude clearly shows him that she is fed up and is compelled to respond towards his desire.

The marital relationship between Astha and Hemant fails because the conceptions of marriage and the role of man and woman are different. One of the real causes for the failure of their marriage is that the love between them is a sexual attraction. On the contrary, the love between two women Astha and Pipeelika is not mere sexual, it is bisexual. Both women may be seen as de facto a fluid rather than a fixed model of sexual and emotive relations that the categorization into rigid sexuality based compartments. Astha feels her relationship is a challenge for her husband and family. They both live and a deep emotional attachment develops between them.

Astha and Hemant are conscious of their differences, of something has gone wrong. Soon difference comes to surface, when Pipeelika also with Astha in her freedom. Astha comes in close contact with Pipeelika. In the evenings after the communal riots they pass together. She is passionate love with her. She tries to forget her children, husband and keep on longing in Pipeelika's infatuation and fighting for the outer world.

Thus Astha and Hemant get separated because of Astha's neglect family and not for husband and children. He tries to adjust with her bears all her changeable attitudes. He thinks life is mixed with happy and He finds no place in his life. His condition is worse that of rubber stamp whether her permits, or not if she decides to go, she goes irrespective husband, children or mother-in-law's bothering about her. He makes her understand several times that she is married now and has lot of responsibilities over her family.

Astha is in the verge of losing her conventional marriage. Pipee leaves India to study abroad and Astha returns back to her family. The two women find their own ways, knowing they cannot have a future together. Astha has never achievement anything only the hatred of the family. Her husband advices her lot but she fails to understanding because of her negative attitude. At last she complete hates outer world and returns back to her family. Since human love involves the physical, only after coming it, can one achieve real love.

If love is to be considered a mere abstract questions mere mystification of feeling Astha's attitude will be a negative difficult to reconcile with the argument of successful self realization of a self-possessed identity. Miss matched marriages will bring misfortune to both, may even husband and wife. If they do not die, they will be worse dead. It leads a like life. However, the marriage between Astha and Hemant is not born out of the love between them. There is no sense of fulfillment in the love between Astha and Hemant. Manju Kapur has created a supreme value for love while it lasted and this stands above all the negations and failure.

Manju Kapur's 'A married Woman' raises the questions about the role of women in contemporary postcolonial India. India suffers from a system to sex-role stereotyping and oppressing of woman that exist under patriarchal social organization. Patriarchy, in its different form has tried in many ways to repress, debase and humiliate women especially through the images represented in cultural and traditional forms. The novel 'A Married Woman' deals with such issues by asking fundamental questions that only shakes the ideological ground of man's patriarchal role in a traditional society, but also imply the existence of an alternative reality. The novel questions whether the role of Indian women living under oppressive patriarchal systems should be restricted only to their roles as husband and wife. Such a world, women's role is limited to reproduction regardless of her won desire and needs.

Manju Kapur shares the experience of her male characters with the readers. She places her protagonist in cross-cultural sceneries. She explores the immigrant sensibility, duality and flexible identity. Her characters come from all the parts of the world with divergent social, religious and cultural pre occupations. She explores the multiplicity of themes with centre round her characters 'struggle to outgrow traditionally inherited cultural values. Her women characters are docile creatures who believe in wresting with their own problems rather than trying to dominate their male counterparts.

Thus, characters in their novels are generally neurotic females, highly sensitive and engaged with their dreams and imagination, and from their detached environments. They often differ in their opinions from others and embark on long voyages of contemplation, in order to find the meaning of their existence. That is why they suffer from their relationship more than others do. In other words, Kapur novels, the love encounters explode into marital disputes as the result of devastating post-marriage relationship between husband and wife.

Kapur shows that in Indian patriarchal society where tradition is so strong a woman fails to get out of such bondage and curve a separate identity of her own. Thus, the two women Astha and Pipeelika ultimately compromise and find their own ways, knowing that they cannot have a future together. Astha, in her quest for self identity and full independence in life comes across various stages through various relationships and even enters the socially forbidden relationship i.e. the lesbian relation. But, she fails and turns back to her own conventional married life after realizing that a woman's real position lies within the family.

The novelist carefully portrays the shades of pain love, anger and frustration in the novel. It is a novel about contemporary Indian society, about the awareness of the conflicts between one's aspirations, visions in life, the threads of intolerance, anger, circumstances. Manju Kapur is perhaps the only Indian woman novelist who has made a bold attempt to give voice to the frustration and development of women in a patriarchal world. It is a novel which provokes the readers thought and moves them deeply and quietly to apt for the Man-Woman relationship which is essential one in each every human being's life.

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