

A Critical Appreciation of Selected Fictions of Manju Kapur

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Abstract:

Manju Kapur is a well-known female author in Indian literature. She is often recognised as the brightest star in the Indian English-language literature scene. Matrimony is the cornerstone of a family, which comprises of a couple and their offspring. Social institutions such as marriage have been around for a long time and have proven to be the most strong in linking people together in various ways, such as husband and wife, mother and daughter, sister and brother, and so on. Weddings have been used to unite kingdoms in the past. When a woman is considered to be at home, it shows how closely tied domestic life is to one's identity as a "woman." The topic of marriage and the consequences of marital discord are brilliantly represented in the works under discussion. A Married Woman, Difficult Daughters, and Custody are just a few of Kapur's works that explore the complexities and ramifications of marital strife. I'm writing this paper to attract attention to the theme of marital discord and its effects in Manju Kapur's A Married Woman, Difficult Daughters, and Child Custody.

Keywords: Consequences, Domestic life, Intricacies, Self-identity, Marital discord, etc.

Introduction:

Topical treatment reveals a striking resemblance between Manju Kapur's fiction and that of her male counterparts. Because she was a woman writer, she focused on some of the issues that women, particularly Indian women, face on a daily basis. Themes of marriage, family relationships, mother-daughter relationships, spouse-wife interactions, separation, and extramarital relationships are common in their work.

Manju Kapur's writings frequently deal with marriage as a major plot point. In today's marriage, several shades of collaboration are expected, appraised, and experienced. Some characters get married for social reasons, while others get married because they feel

imprisoned in a marriage and want to get out, while yet others find a way to make their marriages work no matter what the circumstances. More than just two people, a marriage in India is a union of two families, family members, and the whole public. One can assume that marriage in India is heavenly based on the rituals performed at the wedding. Indian weddings, like 'Swayamvara,' have a historical basis. The bringing together of two worlds was once again the responsibility of marriage. Both positive and bad features can be found in the idea of marriage as a family event

I. A MARRIED WOMAN

All human civilizations have a unique manner of organising a marriage. Human relationships are some of the most profound and complex in existence. In a relationship, a spouse should be your closest friend, your best accomplice, your most caring friend, and your most reliable source. Indian weddings, like 'Swayamvara,' have a historical basis. In the past, marriages were also responsible for bringing two worlds together. In his essay *The Subjection of Woman*, John Stuart Mill makes an allusion to the ideal marital partnership, writing:

What marriage might be on account of two people of developed resources, indistinguishable in conclusion and purposes, between whom exists the best sort of balance, likeness of forces and limits with complementary predominance over them-so each can appreciate the advantage of admiring the other and can have then again the joy of driving and of being driven in the way of improvement. . . I keep up with the proudest conviction that this and this is the perfect marriage (4).

Orchestrated marriages are generally accepted in our society and are viewed as a lucky predetermination of an individual's life after or following the age "marriages are planned in paradise" in our culture. Feminist advocate Simmon de Beauvoir states, "Marriage is a fate often offered to women by society. (1). Publicly, the connection between a man and woman is defined by their master-planned marriage. There are two people, each with their own set of circumstances, customs, and dispositions, who are forced to coexist.

In Manju Kapur's anecdotal universe, where different shades of partnership are predicted, judged, and experienced, marriage is one of the most important issues. To expose the cruel and corrosive reality that lies under the pretty window decorations of married life, Kapur is

known for peering into the lives of married women. Almost all of Kapur's works are about marriage or the experiences of a married lady. Marital discord and its results can be handled by Manju Kapur, who is physically capable of doing so. Kapur's second novel, titled *A Married Woman*, focuses on Astha, who is married. As a marriage drama, it explores marital discord and its consequences in a notoriously unstable milieu. The first point of reference in the novel indicates when young females should be married. Astha's mother depicts her daughter's growth with photographs of natural products. Astha's parents had the following conversation: It was the mother's opinion that there was a time for everything. The blossoming of the young lady has now reached its pinnacle. When the natural product is ready, it must be harvested. If she joins the wrong group, we'll be wringing our hands afterwards. If she gets married at this age, she won't have a hard time altering her mind later on down the road (5).

When they make the adjustment, they have the opportunity to soar into a life of hardship and disappointment in their marriage. Also, Astha's mother has taken the decision to move to Ashram so that she will not be a burden on her daughter, and Astha is shocked. She feels guilty for her mother's behaviour because she is the only kid. Relationships are meaningless to Astha, who is dissatisfied with her marriage. On the other hand, Hemant is a decent housemate, but he frequently criticises and defies Astha's wishes. As a result of her husband's infidelity, Astha in *A Married Woman* seeks out same-sex love. Many aspects of Astha's relationship with her husband are represented in the strength of their relationship rather than their affection (8). "She had a decent childhood, but everything was acceptable because nothing was addressed," she says. "She gets it. It was" impossible to shake this pontoon. A painting of this should be made and hung on the divider so she can see it every day and night..." The only hands capable of shaking the pontoons were those that had a firm grip on money and felt it pass through their fingers. Hers was "different" (9).

II. CUSTODY

It is the narrative of a marriage that is shattered by a totally and socially improper affair in Kapur's fifth novel, *Custody*. They discuss marriage in its worst form followed by the joyous conclusion of a divorce. The conflict between the parents' authority and that of their children arises when a marriage fails and the two get separated. Reflects the current marriage's all-

encompassing turmoil. The writer's ability to capture the emotions of love, loss, and betrayal is unmatched in literary history. On New Year's Eve, Ashok and Shagun are partying in the backstreets of South Delhi, where the narrative begins. The scene between a husband and his wife isn't exactly an affection-inducing one, however between a wife and her significant other, it's as follows:

January first, 1998, the couple lay among recolored sheets and crunched quilts, eyes shut, legs curved together like the tied parts of a low developing tree. . . In the long run, they hauled each other off the bed and into the restroom. They abhorred this, they . . . they washed and dressed, essentially detested it. Be that as it may, they had stayed faithful to their commitment; they had proclaimed the New Year by having intercourse (11).

Kapur introduces adultery as extramarital affairs on the opening page of the novel to draw out the result of marital dissatisfaction. This marriage was made in a regular way: he was the one with great prospects, and she was the magnificence, as it is stated by its author at the opening of the narrative. Awe-inspiring was the combination of intelligence and quality. It's hard not to see Raman as an archetype of the tenacious man. A father and a husband who goes out into the world to battle and earn money for his family is what we picture him as in the beginning of this tale. He seemed to have filtered his personal life through billows of vulnerability throughout the course of his professional life. Nothing seemed to be going right for Shagun at the time. When Shagun approaches her thirties, she gets pregnant again. Because of her inherent freedom, she will never again require shackling. In a few months, I'll turn thirty. I don't want to start from the beginning again with Arjun's liberation. In order to raise a child, is it necessary to always be in close contact with them?

In the novel *Custody*, Raman's marriage does not end in divorce. Ishita has suffered a setback as a result of the split of her marriage and the new consequences that have ensued. Due to her inability to have children, her marriage was terminated. She's been to:

III. DIFFICULT DAUGHTERS

In this epic, the three stages of womanhood represented by Kasthuri, Virmani, and Ida are just a few examples. This novel's protagonist, Ida, recalls her mother's upbringing to her uncle, according to her uncle. Kapur gives her female characters a strong sense of tradition

while also incorporating current events into their personas. While Sakunthala is used to refer to the protagonist of this story, Virmani, in the prior classification, Sakunthala is used to refer to her cousin. These two female characters undergo major changes in Kapur's work. Her health deteriorates since she has eleven children, and Virmati's mother, Kasthuri. Regardless of the circumstances, her significant other appears to have little interest in her. She does not use her equal rights to their full potential. Because of this, she is compelled to become the mother of a whopping kid. Equal rights haven't been a topic of conversation between them. Harish marries Virmani, his second wife, and they have a child. However, he fails in his attempts to persuade her to terminate the pregnancy. There is an instant transformation in her appearance. Despite the fact that she loses her identity and position in the public light, she works hard to carve out a space for herself on her own. In spite of this, she is highly confident and her rebellious spirit encourages her to stop the teacher from sexually abusing her.

When it comes to her mother, Virmati has a soft spot for her because of the way she raises her daughter Ida. Despite her best intentions, she fails to be an empathetic parent to Ida. As a result, Ida is able to feel the negative consequences of her newfound independence. Ida, who is the daughter of Virmati and a member of the third era, is fighting for her identity, dignity, and self-assurance. She is the one who defies the rules of the formerly male-dominated society. Virmati's "Difficult Daughter," Ida, becomes a regular little girl as a result. Virmati life is around getting everything done for the family.

In Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters*, Virmati acquires a prominent role in dealing with her family. When it comes to her family, Virmati takes on the role of a second mother. She fulfills all of the duties and responsibilities typically associated with a male beneficiary. Helping her ill mother with household duties and studying for her exams take up most of her time. She aspires to lead a fulfilled life and become an independent woman in her own right. Her pursuers see her as a formidable lady because of this.

Virmati's cousin Shakunthala lives in Lahore on her own. For the sake of her own happiness and well-being, Virmati has decided to live her life on her own terms. Visits the houseplant collection of Virmati, where the germ of independence is found. It is Sakunthala's lifestyle that she must copy. As an example, she absorbs so much from Sakunthala that she tempts her against her own boundaries. Anti-conventional and anti-progressive Virmati is at war with

her. Virmati's father, Sakunthala, encourages her to become independent and self-sufficient. Wearing traditional clothing and performing traditional rites are not the norm for these two women.

CONCLUSION

Kapur has done an excellent job of capturing marital discord and its ramifications in these two pieces. In Jane Austen's books, marriage is a common motif. In her approach to marriage and marital strife, she reached an apex. Both novels feature a group of white-collar Indian women caught in marriage who secure different kinds of homes for themselves and their families through an agent gathering. Every possible reason for her to get married is laid out in her idols, as well.

For the sake of a man-centric Indian culture or norm, Kapur paints women as victims of assault. Accurately portraying the hardships faced by females in the womb, Kapur also depicts the plight of Indian women. Manju Kapur's paintings show the dominance of the mother more than the father. Kasthuri puts Virmati in charge of the household. When her father awoke her, he gave her the tools she needed to focus even more. When Astha's mother compelled her to marry, she has more faith in Hemant now than she did when Astha was single. Due to Sona's adversity, she doesn't give a second thought to Nisha. Motherless Nina is raised by her mother on a shoestring. As a result, Nina finds herself alone at this point. Shagun, on the other hand, rejects any interference from her mother over her marriage. Ishita and her mother attend the wedding. However, Suryakanta dismisses her desire to live with her after ridiculing her for her inability to produce. When it comes to their marriage, it becomes evident that their mother is in charge. In the face of adversity, they maintain a strong sense of self-identity and a desire to exhibit their individuality.

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