

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333292750>

Shagun as a Modern Woman in Manju Kapur's Custody

Article · August 2018

CITATIONS
0

READS
1,589

2 authors, including:



[Ganesan M.P.](#)

Sourashtra College, Madurai, Tamil Nadu India.

33 PUBLICATIONS 4 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE

SHAGUN AS A MODERN WOMAN IN MANJU KAPUR'S CUSTODY

Ms.Subbaraju.Nagarani

M.Phil Scholar, Department of English
Sourashtra College, Madurai

Dr.M.P.Ganesan

Assistant Professor of English
Sourashtra College, Madurai



Abstract

In India, the post modern women novelists have inherited a new aspect to the Indian English literature. These literature emulates the reality rather than fantasy. Many post modern women novelists have project a light on the place and position of women in Indian patriarchal society. The extremity of women, her problems, her aspirations, her struggle, achievements, frustration, alienation, psychological turmoil etc are main elements of their writing. The Indian women novelists like Anita Desai, Bharati Mukharji, Shashi Deshpande, Sobha De and many more novelists have characterized the realistic portrayal of post modern women. These novelists have launched the women's journey from bondage to liberation and tried to show that when a woman provokes she desperately fights for her own desires without bothering the social norms and ethics. This paper aims to explore the distress of the woman in her search of self Identity.

Keywords: *self identity distressed, alienation, frustration.*

Introduction

Manju Kapur a familiar name in modern Anglo-Indian Literature is broadly known as the Jane Austen of India. Manju Kapur has a very sharpened pen in portraying the psychological and social world of modern woman. The retired professor of English at Miranda House in Delhi University, Manju Kapur belongs to such tradition of women novelist whose prime overlay of writing is women issues. She has appropriately sketched the real woman of the post modern era, in all her published novels and became the amazing figure in the literary world. The inward and outward world of a woman and conflict in the process of being and becoming can be declared as the main string of her writing. Manju Kapur's protagonist struggles, fights not only against socially differences but also face the psychological dilemma. Almost in all her published novels, Manju Kapur has sketched the different faces of woman on the shade of traditional patriarchal Indian society. She has detailed the struggle and suffering of women in the process of self fulfillment. Still there are many modern women novelist who have centralized struggle of woman but Manju Kapur has taken a step along from them.

In Manju Kapur novels self fulfillment of the character succeed than social ethics and morals. She has tried to break the image of Indian women as passive or 'the other' in male dominated society. Her women protagonists opposes being mere key dolls and tries to become independent, active, self-centered and wants to create own identity and place in the male dominated Society. Still she gets suffered in the action she never drops. Manju Kapur focuses on the man-woman relationships, female aspirations, longing, gender discrimination, conflict between psychological and social satisfaction, and so on.

Custody is the moderate attempt to have a look on struggle, frustration, and alienation of the modern women in the search of self fulfillment .It emulates the contemporary Indian female scenario through the protagonist. Set in the environment of globalization and financial liberalization the novel reflects the view, how materialistic world affects the psychological world. She also involvement about the issues like infidelity and infertility and its effects on the life. This paper will try to explain that how the language of silence converted into language of revolt. It will assess the protagonist Shagun's distressed psychological state in the process of self fulfillment.

Custody depicts the world of four major characters Raman, Shagun, Ashok Khanna and Ishita. Raman, a marketing executive at a global drinks company and his wife Shagun, a beautiful lady with sparkling greenish eyes and their two children Arjun and Roohi. They are all enjoyed an extreme happiness in their life till Ashok Khanna, Raman's young and dashing, handsome boss entered in their life. Ashok also fascinated by Shagun's feminine charm and decides to have her at any cost. Here Manju Kapur has satirized the typical mentality of men towards women, who considers women as mere sex object. In this regards V.Geetha's comment about the social attitude of men towards women is important to be consider. She comments:

Women's bodies were often routinely viewed as object of male desire and lust, a fact that was particularly evident in media images of women. Women's groups pointed to the range of sexual crimes that were directed at women-child abuse, incest, marital rape- to argue that their social existence was invariable sexualized and therefore not seen as worthy of equality or justice. The family and larger kin group, they noted actively aided this sexualization of women's bodies by valorizing against women, they insisted, which secured the patriarchs powers, both at level of family and society (Geetha, 191).

The protagonist Shagun was leading a perfect and happy married life with her lovable husband Raman and two lovely children Arjun and Roohi until Ashok Khanna, Raman's young dynamic boss entered in her life. She gets attracted towards him and fined herself unable to confront with her family duties and her new love. She feels suffocated with her married life and asks her husband to divorce.

Here Manju Kapur has explored the hollowness or uncertainty of marital institution. After twelve years of happy marriage their relation become get worse. They become enemies of each other. They both even forget about their own children. John Stuart Mill in his *The Subjection of Women* refers to an ideal relationship in marriage:

What marriage may be in the case of two persons of cultivated? faculties, identical in opinion and purposes, between whom exists the best kind of equality, similarity of powers and capacities with reciprocal superiority over them- so that each can enjoy the luxury of looking up to the other and can have alternately the pleasure of leading and of being led in the path of development...I maintain with the proudest conviction that this, and this only, is the ideal of marriage (Mill, 235).

In Indian culture the marriage is considered as the pious and sacred bond which totally based on the tower of adjustments and sacrifices which mostly expected by the women. But Shagun wants to fly against the wind to gain her aspirations and self- identity. Shagun wants to lead luxurious and for that she becomes ready to leave her husband and children too. It was her dream since her childhood. Manju Kapur portrayed Shagun as new woman, yet confused about the concept of satisfaction. Though she was with her new lover Ashok Khanna, she feels a kind of frustration due to absence of her children. The situation of their children was not different; they were torn between struggle of father and mother. When Raman meets Ishita, a childless divorcee, the situation became more difficult for them. Though

Ishita loves a lot to the children, the children were torn between two mothers, two homes and two countries.

Shagun wants to get triumph over her ex-husband in all way. When Shagun learns about Ishita and Raman's relation she becomes fractured emotionally. Though she was living with her lover Ashok Khanna, yet she was unable to take happiness of Raman in her absence. Manju Kapur here comments the mentality of modern woman through character Shagun. She wants everything; luxurious life, happiness, her children. She wants free life on her own norms and for that she was ready to pay whatever cost. First she lost her husband and in battle of custody she lost her daughter Roohi. Shagun is portrayed as an over ambitious woman while Ishita is portrayed as a lovely and down to earth woman. But both the ladies are struggling with the uncertainties of their Life. They become frustrated. Shagun's jealous and ambitious nature make her unhappy and Ishita's constant feeling of losing Roohi as she is not her won child, makes her depressed. The tension and uncertainties have major role in both of character's life.

The novel Custody throws a light on the growth of individual tendency in modern world. Everyone wants own happiness without bothering the social norms and ethics. The extramarital love seems common in modern life. The novel focuses on the hollowness of modern marriage institution, sufferings due to impotency and infertility, and importance of individualism rather than socialism. Though Shagun has extramarital affair she never bother about it, instead of feeling guilty she boastfully asks for divorce and fights a legal battle for custody of the children. She is portrayed as bold, zest for self satisfaction and freedom seeker. Manju Kapur has aptly described her nature.

She sank down next to him; she knew she would have a happiness she never had before. If she were to die tomorrow, it would be as a fulfilled woman (Kapur, 113).

The custom of Shagun is reflected in the above sentence. Manju Kapur has portrayed brilliantly the protagonist Shagun's self centered nature, over ambitiousness, her tension and frustration doing legal battle on the canvas of traditional society in modern age. Almost every character faces suffering at his owns way. Raman though has everything suffers from his wife's infidelity, Shagun possess everything but suffers because of her over ambitious nature and Ishita suffers because of her infertility. All the characters are young, educated but fails to lead peaceful life. The happy life seems to be mere an allusion to the characters.

To conclude, the novel Custody is the modest struggle to put forth the modern women in the contemporary society. Manju Kapur has explored desires and changed custom of the world of modern woman

References

1. Kapur, Manju. Custody. New Delhi: Random House, India, 2011.
2. Geetha V, Patriarchy, Theorizing Feminism, Calcutta: Street Publishers, 2007.
3. Mill, Jhon Stuart, The Subjection of Women (1869 first Ed.). London: Longmans, Green, Reader & Dyer. Retrieved in December 2012.