

THE EVIL SIDE OF DIVORCE IN MANJU KAPUR'S *CUSTODY*

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ABSTRACT

Today various conflicts, squabbling's and misunderstanding between men and women in marital life has pruned them to end up with divorce as a solution to their problems. But it is a hard time not only for them, but for their children and family and also for the society too. The new freedom of women have made them to torn the families apart and complicated their life badly. In this way, the scholars have taken enormous pain to explore the consequence of divorce in a family, with particular reference to Manju Kapur's *Custody*.

KEYWORDS: Modernity, Freedom, Marital Life, Squabbling's and Divorce

INTRODUCTION

BACK GROUND OF THE PAPER

In the current scenario there is lot of crisis in the Indian marital life as there is new transformation in the role of both men and women. Traditionally divorce was not an easy step for women as they considered family as one among the most primary social group in the society. Thus in spite of various sufferings there was stability in the marital life. But today the stability is slowly shattering into pieces as the divorce rate has been drastically increased. Today's education has given them a new freedom and individuality that has ultimately increased the number of single men and women. Thus the increase of divorce is very clearly making one to understand the changes or sad twist that is happening in the marital life of Indian men and women.

This day, divorce of men and women without children lead a happy life. But divorce of parents is a great trauma not only for them, but for their children too. The divorce create a great impact on the children and they struggle daily without their parents. The children long for love, concern, security and feel separated from their parents like even as if they are also divorced. They are also let into loneliness which naturally lead them into a sense of fear, sad, an anger and lack of confidence. Finally they suffer because of their parents, individually, emotionally, academically, physically, psychologically and in short socially. In this way, literally Manju Kapur's novel *Custody*, very clearly pictures the evil side of divorce and brings out the failed marital life of modern men and women. It also further encapsulates how the children are socially affected by the divorce.

THE FOCUS OF THIS PAPER

The present paper projects the complicated life of married men and women who finally takes divorce as their end.

It also further focuses the sufferings of the divorced children.

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION ABOUT AUTHOR AND HER WORKS

Manju Kapur who is also widely summoned as Jane Austen was born on 1948 in Amritsar. She graduated her B.A from the Miranda House University College for Women, obtained M.A. from Dalhousie University in Halifax, Canada and M.Phil. At Delhi University She teaches in a Delhi University under a name Manju Kapur Dalmia. She opted teaching as her career and chose writing as her passion. As a result to her credit, she has written five novels such as *Difficult Daughters* (1998), *A Married Woman* (2002), *Home* (2006), *The Immigrant* (2008) and *Custody* (2011). As all her novels have acquired a great acclaim, her books had been translated in many languages, both in India and abroad.

To her achievement, Manju Kapur was honored the prestigious Common Wealth award for her first novel *Difficult Daughters*. Her second and the third novel, *A Married Woman* and *Home* was short listed for the Hutch Crossword prize for fiction and *The Immigrant* was also short listed for the DSC prize. Her fifth novel *Custody* though was not honored of any award or prize; it was telecasted as a daily serial on star plus under the title *Ye Hai Mohabbatein* produced by Balaji Telefilms. Even Asia net by Shree Saran Production, produced a daily soap opera under the title *Pranayam*.

DISCUSSIONS OF THE PAPER

Like other contemporary women writers Manju Kapur also has depicted the issues of modern women and thereby in her own style has reflected how today women are educated that gives them bold, independent, freedom, self-decision, free from patriarchal pressure etc. who really challenges to the age old tradition and culture. Kapur's women also break up their family and marital life for sake of their freedom and independent as they think that marital life was problem to them that give them frustration and incompatible relationships within the couples which leads them to struggle for their survival. In this way Kapur's *Custody* is a very clear example that mirrors the real life of modern marriage and thereby brings out the evil side of divorce that gives a great effect upon the wife, husband, children, in-laws and in short society.

Custody is the story of two protagonists Shagun and Ishita. Raman, who got married to beautiful woman Shagun, is a hard working personality as a Marketing executive in a drinks company. He led his family with great responsibility and behaved as a good gentleman. He often took his wife Shagun to the office party and unfortunately the party shackled his entire family into pieces. Shagun who met Raman's Boss, Ashok Kanna in the party fell in love with him and had illicit relationship with him. As a result, she decides to seek divorce from Raman but when Raman denied to give her divorce, she kidnaps her own two children Arjun and Roohi and finally wins by getting the divorce. The other protagonist Ishita is a married woman. Due to her infertility she could not produce children, so her husband and in-laws send her out legally. Fortunately and finally remarried Raman and rests her life by caring Raman and his two children Arjun and Roohi.

After the divorce of Raman and Shagun, their children were left into great trauma as the parents ruined the innocent mind and lives of the children. Arjun and Roohi for no faults were punished. "Roohi's crying fits, Arjun's traumas and sleep overs at friend's houses, Raman coming home, late, late, late this was the norm" (105). Due to Shagun's selfish, she considered her children as toy and never bothered of their emotions and future. Finally Ishita who remarries Raman takes care of the two children. Though she hates and hesitates, the Indian law, forces her to be the guardian of the children and thus there was a new enlighten in the lives of the children. Here Kapur has clearly exposed the ugliness of the modern marriage, in this materialistic world. To state in the words of Kapur, "Between two wrecked families' children

become mere objects in their hands. We can see calamitous effect of the pungent struggle for their custody. The brutal and familial disagreements had bad impression on the innocent mind of the children". (404)

Kapur has depicted through her two protagonists as how marital bonds are crumbled. Shagun as she wanted to enjoy her freedom for no reason breaks up, even without bothering of her children. Whereas Ishita is been forced to break up by her in-laws as she was not able to produce children. Here it is a great fun that, Kapur has artistically weaved the plots and sub plots and thereby showed the role of children in a family.

Thus, through Shagun and Ishita, Kapur has projected the pain of the divorce in the family. To put in MithuBanerji's words, "Kapur's book reveals the unimagined uncertainties of matrimony. The wife's sense of suffocation, the husband's fear of loneliness and the constant shifting of the children like commodities, from one home to the other, are evoked with painstaking sincerity".

CONCLUSIONS

To wind up, Kapur through this novel has made the readers to think a lot and warns the couples to divorce without any effect upon others and also suggests the protagonists to understand the real freedom in a lovable family and thereby to uphold the values of the marital life and family.

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