

# A STUDY OF MARITAL RELATIONSHIP IN THE NOVEL OF MANJU KAPUR: A MARRIED WOMAN

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## Abstract

*In her second novel, A Married Woman, Manju Kapur has depicted a captivating image of a woman who embodies the ecstasy and anguish of marriage. The protagonist of Manju Kapur's novel, A Married Woman, is the daughter of an educated middle-class woman in Delhi. Despite the possibility of a loving and prosperous environment, the protagonist is inspired by a sense of disenchantment. She initiates an extramarital affair. She characterises the relationship between men and women as a multifaceted identity quest for the heroine, the protagonist Astha, who initially experiences a sense of separation from her family and married life. However, she ultimately surrenders to the truth by evaluating her relationship with her spouse as a sign of conclusion that is refreshing and a relationship that is vital for all human beings in this common world.*

## Paper Identification



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## Introduction

Women yearn for financial independence in order to establish a position for themselves, to achieve respect and prestige in a society that attempts to restrict their movement, despite the excitement of women's empowerment. Every working woman experiences a degree of remorse, as she

believes that her career is causing her to neglect her family. A woman is expected to make compromises with her career in order to address the needs of her family, including her children's academic pursuits, her in-laws' health, and her husband's professional obligations, as the career of a male is considered more significant than that of a woman. Women are never to be granted freedom, and males are elected to be the master. The debate between anthropologists and sociologists has led to the conclusion that the subservient character of the female gender is either the result of biological necessity or the culturally determined power relationship construct of society. 10 (Adhikari, "Angle") Balakrishna asserts that "women have been influenced by the ethics of self-negation and take pride in being the guardians of this norm for generation after generation." Consequently, they are compelled to adopt a perspective that they are unwilling to abandon. (439). To a certain extent, Indian women embrace the inmates of their husband's family without hesitation and adapt to the circumstances that arise in their lives. In *A Married Woman*, the protagonist, Astha, is a contentedly married woman who initially relishes the marital joy. However, as the years pass and the monotony of matrimony sets in, she comes to the realisation that loneliness has infiltrated her life. She believes that her spouse, Hemant, disregards her psychological and emotional requirements and anticipates that she will manage the family, despite the overwhelming odds. He is unaware of her preferences, both as a wife and as an individual. Ultimately, Astha develops a full-fledged romantic relationship with Peepilika. She perceives that Hemant is incapable of comprehending her emotions and desires and possesses a primitive comprehension. In reality, she is unable to resolve the issues with Hemant on her own. She has been exhibiting this behaviour of sulking since infancy.

Astha is captivated by the enchantment of their erotic life during the initial years of her marriage. She anticipates a physical union with her spouse with great enthusiasm and derives immense pleasure from it, believing that it is the pinnacle of her marital life. It is accurately identified in the novel as: The days have passed. Astha had never considered that sex could be such a powerful force. She concealed her desire to dissolve herself in him, to become the sips of water he drank and the morsels of food he consumed, as she was slightly ashamed. She concentrated solely on the moment of their union during his absence. Astha contemplated, "I have not truly lived; I was unaware of the essence of life until now." She perceived herself as a woman of the world, a world that was enveloped in the film of her desire and the fluids of their intercourse (MW 46).

Astha has developed the impression that Hemant will support her writing following her marriage to him. She is of the opinion that she has the potential to become both a painter and a poet. Hemant's confidence has been strengthened by her admiration for her sonnet and the sketch she

creates. She perceives that her life is unfolding in a series of gilded vistas. Astha has consistently demonstrated an affinity for writing. In the past, she maintained a diary in which she recorded all of her experiences and emotions. "She writes about gardens and flowers, the silent, dark faces of gardeners who tend plants without receiving credit, much like she feels when Hemant neglects her." The topics of her writing include love, rejection, desire, and longing (MW 79). At the behest of her mother and her mother-in-law, Astha accepts employment at a school following her marriage. In both her academic and college years, Astha has maintained an average level of performance. However, upon accepting employment at the school, she observes the distinction and begins to relish the financial independence and security that accompany the recognition and appreciation for her contributions. It enhances her uniqueness. When Astha was blessed with a daughter, her existence was transformed into one of joy. Hemant becomes entirely cooperative and adaptable. He is a devoted husband who assists Astha in all of her requirements. However, upon the conception of her second child, Hemant undergoes a significant transformation from an all-American father to a typical Indian husband who is biased in his decisions.. This is alarming to Astha. Even her mother shares Hemant's perspective: She endeavoured to maintain composure for the baby's sake, resorted to meditation, and focused on tranquil thoughts. However, she was not permitted to disregard the fact that the majority of individuals, including her colleagues, in-laws, the spouses of her husband's friends, her mother, the cook, the gardener, and the part-time help, held an opinion regarding the gender of her child. The consensus was that it would be a son and heir (MW 68). If "a woman's financial needs are met, she becomes more cognizant of her emotional needs" (129), according to Grey. The principal acknowledges her contributions to the school as a result of her artistic talent.

She had developed into the principal's right-hand woman at school, and she was valued and appreciated for one-tenth the amount of work she did at home. Additionally, she was compensated for her services. She did not have to request reimbursement from Hemant for each rupee she spent due to her remuneration. She was aware that Hemant would prefer her to cover her minor expenditures herself, given the uncertainty of the business, the rising prices, the travel involved in a new venture, the family obligations, entertainment and holiday costs, and the two children. He ensured that she always appeared well-groomed by spending an adequate amount of money on her clothing and jewellery (MW 72).

Astha frequently experiences the sensation of being a secondary figure in the family. Hemant's concern for their children leaves Astha perplexed: "He never appears or sounds like that when I have a headache," Astha reflected, before dismissing the notion. The rocky terrain of a conjugal

relationship could not be likened to the father-daughter bond (MW 170). Savitri makes the following spiteful, cynical statement about *A Married Woman*, whom she considers in no way above a prostitute, as her very existence is contingent upon her economic dependence on her spouse: "...What is the distinction between *A Married Woman* and a prostitute?" Despite the fact that the prostitute changes her men, *A Married Woman* does not; however, they both earn their sustenance and shelter in the same way. (MW 89-90) 'A woman must 'know dread' in any society, and this is particularly true in an Indian society, according to Uniyal. She must acknowledge her vulnerability. She must be apprehensive about departing unaccompanied. "She must not emphasise her 'femininity', as doing so would also expose her to danger" (87). Astha's mother regards her daughter's marriage as her most significant obligation: "It is frequently stated in the novel that her mother declared, 'Our responsibilities will cease when you marry.'" Are you aware that the shastras state that if parents perish without marrying their daughter, they will be reborn indefinitely? (MW 1). Trikha asserts that "each female is instructed that sacrifice and devotion are the cornerstones of a more fulfilling marital life, but this is limited to females." The wife's "ability to endure" (171) is supposed to be a determining factor in the success and accomplishment of conjugal life. Astha remains cognizant of the stability and security that her marriage offers, despite her intimate relationship with Pipee. She frequently observed her family, including her spouse, daughter, and son. All of them were in her possession. She was content. (MW 69). Hemant experiences chest discomfort as a result of his irregular lifestyle and excessive workload. Hypertension is the diagnosis of the physicians. It has been determined that he, his wife, and children will embark on a holiday to the United States to spend a leisurely time with Hemant's sister, Seema, as soon as the school closes for the summer. Astha's mother is overjoyed to learn about their journey to the United States. "My dear child and your family, may God bless you," she writes from her ashram. Poor Hemant requires a respite from his numerous challenges. You do not devote sufficient attention to him. It is important to remember that males are obligated to bear the responsibilities of the external world; home is their refuge (MW 270). Astha, who is apprehensive about Hemant's health, contemplates, "A trip abroad would be pleasant, regardless of the loved one one has left behind" (MW 271). Hemant's chest pain resurfaces as he endeavours to resume his previous work tempo. According to physicians, his collapse is imminent if he persists in smoking, imbibing, neglecting physical activity, and consuming red meat and heavy foods. Astha is responsible for assuming control of the situation. It is noted in the novel that "She ensured that they went for a walk every morning." After years of exercising and harbouring resentment towards her parents, she was now engaging in the same behaviour with her spouse, but her

emotions were considerably more intricate due to the passage of time (MW 283). In spite of her grudges and grouses with Hemant, Astha endeavours to gain a better comprehension of his perspective. She finds herself fulfilling the role of a traditional wife in order to provide for her spouse. A woman's genuine confession regarding her personality cult is depicted in the novel as a personal allegory of a failed marriage. Upon entering a conventional Indian arranged marriage, Astha initially experiences affection and companionship. However, she soon realises that she has forfeited her own identity in order to fulfil the traditional responsibilities and family values. This realisation also occurs after the birth of her two children. The novelist meticulously depicts the various shades of love, anger, frustration, and anguish. It is a novel that explores the contemporary Indian society, specifically the conflicts between one's aspirations, life visions, and the strands of intolerance, anger, and circumstance. Manju Kapur is perhaps the sole Indian woman novelist who has made a bold effort to express the frustration and development of women in a patriarchal world. It is a novel that stirs the reader's mind and evokes a profound and silent emotion, making it a fitting representation of the Man-Woman relationship that is intrinsic to the lives of all humans.

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