

Analytical Study of Manju Kapur's Works

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Abstract

Analytical Study of Manju Kapur's Works is a collection of scholarly articles and research papers, presenting an analysis of Kapur's novels in order to assess and evaluate her place in the contemporary Indian English Fiction. Manju Kapur shot into fame with her debut novel Difficult Daughters(1998) . The novel won for her the prestigious Commonwealth Eurasia Region Award for the best debut novel of 1999. Manju Kapur is a post colonial writer who perceives the position of women in a patriarchal society and deals with the problems of women. She makes the woman a figure that fights against taboos, social and joint family restrictions and constraints laid by patriarchy in the tradition. Her writings reflect man–woman relationship, rebellion, body, human desire, longing, gender discrimination, marginalization and protest. The novels manifest women's struggle for emancipation from economic, political and social bondages, voicing well the sentiments of women and their self-introspections. The female main character of her novels protest against male domination and are not silent rebels but are outspoken, bold, determined and action oriented. The papers in this anthology will provide new perspectives and insight on the writings of Manju Kapur. This work will be of great help to the researches and teachers of English Literature.

Manju Kapur born in 1948 at Amritsar she educate at M.A.Dalhousie University in 1972 She teaches English at Delhi University under the name Manju Kapur dalmia She is married to Gun Nidhi Dalmia have three children and three grand children and live in New Delhi.1999 commonwealth writer's prize, best first book, Europe and south Asia Difficult Daughters. 2011 DSC prize for South Asian Literature, short list The Immigrant.her works Difficult Daughters (1998) A married woman (2003)Home (2006)The Immigrant (2008) Custody(2011)Shaping the world : Women writer on themselves (2014)Brother(2016).

The search for control over one's destiny, surely the key theme of Difficult Daughters, refers to the Independence aspired to and obtained by a nation, but also to the independence yearned after by a woman and member of that same nation Virmati, the heroine seeks human relations that will allow her life which, as an educated woman, she knows she deserves. Born in Amritsar in the Punjab in 1940, the daughter of a father of progressive ideas and a traditionalist mother, she aspires to a freer life than that offered her by those around her. This aspiration is condemned to failure, thanks to the incomprehension she marries but also thanks to her own mistakes, for no one obliged her to marry who became her husband, and she was free not to make the choice she did. Virmati, like so many other women, is asked to accept a typical arranged marriage. She rebels against that destiny, to the lasting shame of her family, above all of her mother. Demand on her right to be educated, she manages to leave home to study in Lahore. All the same she fall in love with an Amritsar teacher known as the professor, a married man who first look in her life as her parents renter. After a number of fluctuation variation, including a period as a school principal in a small Himalayan State, she finally marries the man she loves and returns to Amritsar to live with him. However, he ignore to leave his first wife, and the issue

for Virmati are harsh indeed. She ends up being cornered by her own family and despised by her husband's. Virmati's tale is told, from a present day perspective, by Ida, her only daughter, who seeks to reconstruct her late mother's life story, against the background of the Independence movement of the 1940s and the ensuing trauma of partition. Virmati's case may be seen as a delegate up to a point, but not correct so. It is well known that women participated forcefully in the social movements that led up to freedom. Dora Sales Salves Salvador, in her note to the Spanish translation of the novel, appositely stresses.

“Kaopur enfatiza labour que en aquellos nometos ejercieron muchas mujeres que, al tiempo que reclamaban la igualdad de oprotunidades, el acceso partario a la education y / as posibilidades de una vida mas alla de as convencions, fueron una fuerza visible en la Resistencia no violenta ante los pritanicos” (4)

The pages of *Difficult Daughters* speak not only of Virmati, but of other “difficult daughter” who succeed better than she did in their parallel struggles for freedom in their lives. At the centre of the narrative, scholars are confronted with a woman who fights but falls by the wayside, but at its edges, as no doubtless representative but still symbolic figures, scholars encounter as well be seen below other women, whose relative success points the way to futures.

The second novel of Manju Kapur's *A Married Woman*, is set in Delhi against the milieu of communal turbulences centered on the controversial Ram Janma Bhoomi-Babri Masjid. The novel traces the story of Astha from her childhood to her forties from side to side various hopes and miseries, complements and refusals, and recognitions and aggravations. As Robert clearly mentions in his article, *The novel A Married Women* is heavily plotted. It traces the life of Astha

from her young adulthood through her early middle years. In the process she dates with a couple of young men of her own choice like her western counter parts, marries a man of her parents' choice and discovers the joys of intimacy with her husband, begets children, yet grows distant from him, and struggles to become a painter. Much against her husband and her other family members she becomes a social activist, and falls in love with a woman, and finds herself –sort of, more (Rationale 102).

She reflects the middle class values and seems to enjoy her mental bliss for a long time but gradually experiences that there is something certainly lacking in her life. She suffers from a sense of incompleteness, suppression and agony which is further provoked by her involvement into the outer world of upheaval and protest. But the substitute she seeks temporarily is also hollow from within and fails eventually compelling her heaving a sigh of relief. A Married Woman can be read at the feministic level. In this novel Astha is the heroine who brings the fight of Virmati further to new battlegrounds. Thus the novel can be read as a feministic study. Manju Kapur is one of her interviews opens her mind:

I am a feminist. And what is a feminist? I mean I believe in the rights of women to express themselves in the rights of women to work. I believe in equality, you know domestic equality, legal equality. I believe in all that. And the thing is that women don't really have that-you know even educated women, working women. There is a trapping of equality but you scratch the surface and it is not really equal (U.M. 04).

The female protagonist of the novel Astha who is the daughter of a cultured father and an orthodox mother, has an earnest desire for passive co-existence in the family. But she is

dominated against and discriminated at her-in-law's house. There, she is made-up to have a willing body at night, a willing pair of hands and feet in the day and a submissive mouth. Her marriage with Hemant, the son of a government official in Delhi, does not show to be based on mutual co-operation and appreciative. It can be understood from these lines, In the domestic space, Hemant behaves like a typical hypermasculine. In other words, he is a proud member of a patriarchal society dominated by machismo and heterosexuality. The postcolonial notion of hypermasculinity is brought to the surface in colonial texts like *The Home and The World* authored by Rabindranath Tagore (Rationale 104-105). She is duty-bound to be a stable wife and sacrificing mother, like a sacred cow in the position of married woman. It traps to her bodily exploitation and emotional hunger. Being depressed of her emotional discharge, she recklessly seeks for it and drives to a "substitute-husband" (Rationale 110), lesbianism. Manju Kapur in her novel *A Married Woman* through the protagonist Astha, has stamped out a self governing life of the woman for self fulfillment and advocated for inter-religious marriage and female female relationship divergent to the patriarchal norms of traditional society.

Manju Kapur's *The Immigrant* (2008) is her fourth novel. In theme and locale the focus is shifted from India to Canada but at the core of it, the novel deals with man-woman relationship. Manju Kapur gave her splendid contribution in field of Indian Writing. She portrays new face of Indian woman. It is believed that Feminism is the movement which support woman to protest against man oriented world. It's fight for equality of rights in fields like social, political and economical. She woven feministic approach in her novel in that way that woman identify herself in social, economical and political bondage of society. *The Immigrant* is the story of encounter with as alien culture and tradition. It's individual effort to recognize his/her self with

new setting. Migration is one type of reincarnation of self. It builds new world of hope around self. The Immigrant is the fourth novel of Manju Kapur. It deals with shifting from traditional culture to alien culture. But Manju Kapur draw new woman, who is not hopeless, helpless and dependent. She brought woman, who can fight for self identity and for her independency. Manju Kapur has left her own mark on English novels. She involves it with opposition of the mantle of tradition, culture, patriarchy and social customs. Manju Kapur's protagonist in the present novel lives within the sphere of reality and successfully finds herself in foreign land. The novel presents Manju Kapur's understanding of human characters and her maturity as a novelist. Manju Kapur's novel reveals the life of women, their struggle for basic rights, quest for identity and survival. With education they become aware of their self reliance which is proved in concern with new women. Manju Kapur not only in The Immigrant but in her other novels also deals with some narrow and some universal issues, relating to the middle-class Indian society. She in particular takes up the cause of the females who are victimized on account of conservative and traditional mind-set of the Indian masses.

Such novels emerging in the 21st century furnish examples of a whole range of attitudes towards the imposition of tradition and offer an analysis of the joint family system, with its particular gendered spaces and hierarchies of power, exploring how these dictates the interaction of its member. These issues faced by the women writers today no longer feminist, they are everyday issues faced by everyday people. Many times the daily chores of the household, the instant family, the relationships and the joys and the sorrows become the setting of their works.

Portrayal of Nina Manju Kapur as naval way of writing adds Indian tradition with western touch. These stories in of Nina, protagonist, who struggle for happiness, adjust herself in

every stage of life, compromise for aesthetic pleasure, struggle to find herself in new world. Manju Kapur depicts a picture of educated modern Indian woman, who fight for her rights and get success. She discuss about man woman relationship and sexual worth. Novel brings lots of twist and turns in life of Nina. Her journey from India to Canada takes her in the voyage of independence. She came out from marginalized area. Manju Kapur describe Indian tendency of mother who is worried about her daughter's marriage. Her way of explanation goes so smoothly that while reading we feel the ease of side. Manju Kapur adds her flavour in her work. She uses richness of language and new face of woman. It defines her class. As she is contemporary writer, she draw perfect picture of today's woman. There is use of intellectual conversation in the novel itself example of her standard. There are many words we can find in her work which shows the picture of male dominated society. Manju Kapur stats that, Marriage is a question of Adjustment' (74). The theme of adaptation came into the picture first. Nina has to adopt new tradition, culture, environment, people and also person who is going to be her life partner. Now she started to feel her reborn will be soon. She has to think about others more than herself. There is a reborn of Nina as aunt, wife and sister in law. So woman has multi-personality in her one life. She plays many roles. There is use of smooth-tongued language and narrative method is so effective that we started to flow in the world of Nina. This chapter discusses about the female tendency due to this male oriented world. She thinks one can't move two steps ahead without her husband's help. Manju Kapur draw real picture of today's woman. If we compare this novel with real life situations we can connect with lots of issues. Around us there are many stories are happening. Nina is the same as, our mother, sister, aunty and other woman around us. Her way of narration is very lucid and simple. If we focus on feministic view we came across many female characters

like Nina's mother, who is widow and living with her only daughter. She has suffered lot of thing. Still she want that Nina get married soon. She is calm and very sweet in nature. She gets worried as mother worries for her daughter. She is very much supportive for Nina. Another character is Alka, sister in law of Nina. She is very good as sister and also as sister in law. But some of her words make us to think about her. She is ready to send Ishan to abroad for further study but she is not ready for her daughter because she has to get married. The Indian tendency is rooted in women of The Immigrant. There is another character, Nina's friend Zenobia, who is living alone in flat with parental money and abandoned by marriage after six years. Another one is Sue, who is wife of Gary and living at Canada. She has two children and she is living life as typical mother. So expect Nina other women are also good examples of Indian Woman. In short the marriage is the turning point of woman life. Woman has to born thrice in her life, Once when she born as daughter, second as wife and last as mother. Manju Kapur perfectly draw woman of Indian middle class married woman. It is the situation of today's female. She is educated, independent, self centred, ambitious and tough competitor. Still there are many doubts raises like, really a picture of woman get changed compare to earlier? Woman gets real independence from male dominated society? Is this modernism give impact on traditional conventions? Is there is same situation as women are in Golden cage? She describes with fine accuracy of detail how the happenings becomes the everyday, as when an Indian woman first begins to wear western clothing or tastes meat. Even the body that wore a sari with accustomed grace begins to change, to lose its softness, to look better in sweatpants and T-shirt. Is this reassuring, or unnerving? The author who so realistically drew out the world of Karol Bagh housewives in Home fails to go beyond the cardboard clichés of the immigrant experience in North America. While her

characters try shedding off their immigrant's identity having steak, having sex with white people, Kapur's own immigration to this genre fails. Unlike, say, Ms Jhumpa Lahiri, her NRIs are less flavoured, less friendly, less complex, less convincing. May be Canada is too far for her. May be she should return to middle-class. A book with these themes is bound to raise comparisons. Brick Lane, it isn't. Nina comes to a Canada that doesn't have the ready-made ex-pat community that Nazeen finds in London. Also, she is educated, speaks perfectly good English, having taught it for years. She loves books. She wants to work in an academic field. Their daily lives are set out for us in all their commonplace fulfilments and frustrations. Once Ananda is married, we see him only as he relates to Nina and as he tries to solve his sexual anxieties: a mild reversal of the perception, frequent among male writers, of women as existing only as sexual beings and in relation to men. scholar don't hear much about dentistry, but scholar learn a lot about Andy's problem with premature ejaculation. The story of his worries, his secret Berkeley cure, his alarm clocks, his triumphs, is related straightforwardly and it is a serious matter, and Kapur does not jeer or sneer, but all the same poor Andy, in his earnest and exclusive concern for the behavior of his penis, is very funny. Kapur's comic sense is hard to describe. It does not come out in witty wording or an overtly comical scene. It is a kind of gently pervasive and delicious flavor, like that of ginger or coriander used with a light hand. The story starts from here and explores the emotional and physical aspects of a married relationship. Ananda goes all the way to make Nina feel comfortable. But, Nina seems to live in her own world and doesn't make much effort to make the marriage work. Soon, both find themselves having an affair instead of making their relationship work better. The author has well explored how people change to adjust to a new

culture, their turmoil at such circumstances etc. If readers like reading intimate portrayal of married life, go for

Manju Kapur's *The Immigrant*. She has indeed gone to the depth, with finest details. However, it may not be what every Indian would like to read. Personally, scholar don't enjoy such storylines, especially when they go in-depth to portray the intimate details of a married couple. Among some uneventful incidents, both Nina and Ananda divert from their loyalty and indulge themselves in extramarital affairs. After much mishmash, the novel ends with Nina's decision to get separate from Ananda, out of her strong desire for freedom and hope of finding a new horizon. The novel is set in the 1970s, so Nina's liberation from frustration and solitude begins with a consciousness raising group of women - bra-burners, according to Andy - who are the first people she is able to talk to in Halifax. No children seem to be coming to her marriage. Certainly her beloved and loving mother in India wants her to have children, but does she? She isn't sure. Her teaching degree is useless in Canada. She gets a part-time job at the local library, which leads to studying for a degree at library school, which leads to an affair with one of the students, which leads to a date rape, later on. All this is told in an even, quiet tone. Kapur's writing about sex is not erotic, nor is it detached and analytic. It is simply descriptive. There is clarity to it which is rare, and a peaceable steadiness, which I found both admirable and enjoyable. Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande and many others women writers as an individual rebel against the traditional role, breaking the silence of suffering trying to move out of the caged existence and asserting the individual self. This new spirit encourage woman to come out of the traditional shell and face the new world. This woman is trying to be herself and yet does not wish to break up the family ties. Since many social

reformer helped the women to cross the threshold of family life and move out into the outer world of freedom struggle and social reform, the woman is presented with varied opportunities not only today but also yesterday during freedom movement. Yet writing in 1998, Manju Kapur, in her novels presents women who try to establish their own identity. The women of India have indeed achieved their success in half a century of Independence, but if there is to be a true female, independence, much remains to be done. The fight for autonomy remains an unfinished combat. In her quest of identify, Virmati the central character of the novel *Difficult Daughters*, rebels against tradition. 80 So there are lots of questions came across while reading literature related to feministic approach. But Manju Kapur came with new woman, who is salient rebel, outspoken and self reliable.

Her female characters are real fighter against the out dated tradition and conventions. There is also another dimension in it. The novel indicates that it is largely set in the thriving, upper middleclass colonies of Delhi in the mid-90s, against the backdrop of the initial surge of foreign investment in India. Manju Kapur is a storyteller' in the old-fashioned sense, in that her novels are strongly narrative and descriptive, but also in the sense that the stories are compelling and told with conviction. Kapur explores the dilemmas this throws up for women who can't obey the norm; she does this without ever becoming strident or making an argument for one set of values versus another. Although she clearly believes in emancipation, she writes lucidly about how this sought-after liberty destroys society's traditions. The effects of women hankering for a life outside the home and sometimes achieving it are not always pleasant for the old order.

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