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WOMEN'S CONFLICT AGAINST VULNERABILITY: WITH REFERENCE TO MANJU KAPUR'S *HOME AND IMMIGRANT*

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Author's Introduction:

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Abstract:

Women authors, writing in India or abroad in English, address from various points of view the dilemmas in the lives of women. Kapur was an excellent painter of her characters. Her basic approach is to freewomen from the patriarchy's oppressive measures. Therefore, the protagonists in her works suffer

physical, emotional and psychological suffering, but are ultimately able to achieve their long established freedom to a great extent. She wishes to live as a human being who is independent and self-reliant, not as a subjugated and oppressed woman. As they are not what they should be, she introduced stuff. Her main concern is female identity, not only in her one work, but almost in all works. She was advocating for the female cause and attempting to get them out of society's conventional norm. Manju

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female authors. She has joined the long number of female characters in general beautifully and who are in India who are oppressed. The role of women in a patriarchal society is profoundly viewed by Kapur and addresses the problems of women. Her novels present women's long struggle to construct an identity. The patriarchal constraints and demands to claim their identity and achieve self-satisfaction and self-fulfilment in her life are crushed and established by her female protagonists. In her works, a feminist tradition is clearly evident. Manju Kapur speaks for the middle-class family, and for her sharp-eyed, eventually turned character portraits that are trapped in tricky circumstances, some similarities with Jane Austen have also been received.

Keywords: dilemmas, liberate, oppressive, patriarchal society, cherished, self-satisfaction, tricky situations etc.

All Manju Kapur's female characters are seen as a conflict between women against all odds. In her prose, the exertions of feminism are clear. This is evident in the fight for identity, liberating mentality, the female psyche and the female biological world of her female protagonists, their weakness and fight for identity. The novel Home beautifully knits intrigues of victory as well as the small rebellions and intense power struggle that constitute the common human experience of contrasting loyalties. Three generations are spreading the book, a tale of Indian family life, whose fate and aspirations are attached to the Banwarilal cloth store. We discover that Manju Kapur has depicted the

to establish her identity and to survive. The novel describes the patriarchal society and with the evolving social equations, one of the daughters breaks the rules.

The book, Home, exposes the narrow-minded approach to the upbringing of a girl in India. Kapur paints an image of the protagonist's traumatic journey, Nisha, in pursuit of self-identity from childhood to adulthood. The study shows the quest for a home by Nisha, i.e. the quest for a place of shelter and protection. Unfortunately, home is not a place of comfort and relaxation for a woman in India and it does not guarantee them any emotional protection, it does not provide them with any physical security at times. The novel sheds light on the tale of an ordinary middle-class family based in Delhi. The physical abuse of children by their own relatives is also addressed by her own cousin, Vicky, through Nisha's sexual abuse. A girl is viewed as an object of sexual assault, so she should be forced to take care of her physical appearance in order to be able to catch the attention of individuals as an ideal marriageable girl. Nisha's mother, Sona, always shows her to

become dark. The displacement that protagonists suffer and the suffocation that they face in the traditional limits of marriage and family is clearly brought out by the novelist.

The novel's primary focus is the home that is deployed in both its physical manifestation and its spiritual aspects. As it becomes the domain of class, caste and generational conflicts as the old and the new generations strive to survive within the common house, the dominant notion of the homogeneous space of home is challenged. Manju Kapur takes us through a brisk and oddly captivating account of three generations in this book. After partition, Banwari Lal arrives in India and starts a sari company in Karol Bagh, Delhi with the help of his wife's ornament. Performance comes slowly and he is forced to marry his daughter, Sunita in the early years to a man of questionable accomplishments. Sunita is abused even as the family gets money, and then she dies in a kitchen fire, leaving behind Vicky's son, to be brought up by Banwari Lal. Vicky becomes alone of discord. His grandfather, Banwari Lal, is

families to make room for Vicky. Sona, Banwari Lal's first childless daughter-in-law, coincides with the death of Sunita, who leaves Vicky behind. One would think Sona would be pleased, but she shows contempt for the boy and finds it difficult to embrace him when the elders are forced upon her.

Nisha, in Home, is sexually abused as a child by her cousin Vicky, a teenager. Nisha is sent to her aunt Rupa after the incidence, where as a good student she inflorescences. This again is a torment by fate. Nisha is also compelled to observe her first Karva chouth fast for her future husband even as a ten year old. Sona's account of Vat Savitri Katha to Nisha and the other women in the family is a good example of the misuse of religion to reduce females. Nisha is in love with Suresh, but under the family's pressure, her dreams are smothered. Nisha's affair with Suresh crushes her image. She is losing one marriage bid on this ground as well. With all these problems behind her, Nisha moves forward with the studies of her choice. Nisha excels at establishing herself as a

attachments. It is in marriage and childbearing that she is compelled to pursue absolute satisfaction and fulfilment as the society refuses to offer her achievement in career, recognition and identity.

Nisha is unmarried, not as beautiful as before, and this is the moment when her spirits appear to be destroyed by the joint family set-up in particular. She feels that a girl should be contending anywhere provided she is allowed to give a path to her aspirations. When her affair generates restlessness in the household because according to Nisha's family since Suresh belongs to a low caste he is in no way eligible to marry her, Nisha defends Suresh and rebels and moved by his nobility—"Who cares about castes these days? What you really want, she sobbed with indignant emotion, is to sell me out on the market. Sell me and be done with it. What are you waiting for?"¹Nisha refuses to follow the traditional marriage of ancient times. She wants no more to be a doll to be sold in the market. The quest for identity and freedom of Nisha as a human being significantly expresses the feminist approach of Manju

governed approach was pointed out here by Manju Kapur. Nisha's skin condition and sitting idle at home are issues for her.

Loneliness forces Nisha to feel like she's going to go crazy sitting inside the house. She wants to work like her brothers in their shop. She pleads her father; this reveals her inner quest for independent existence. It also seeks equality of sex. While she gets an idea to start Salwar suits business, she denies the patriarchal system in a very cool, calm and composed way with a sane and serene approach. She is demanding a year from her father with this idea to prove her ability. Her requests—"Give me a chance to show you what I can do."² A new woman is here; she seems to be confident and self-assured. She dares to proclaim her desire and conviction. Without making a distinction between his son and his daughter, Yashpal trusts her. Both are treated equally.

Nisha is allowed to start her business only because of her dire misfortune. Yashpal agonizes about the thought that, "It was difficult for him to move on. The lady of the house had never

occupy herself with.”³ Being a business woman, Nisha solves any dilemma on her own. Although she takes charge of Nisha's creations with the help of Pooja and Mother, she does not allow them to interfere with her decision. This proves Nisha to be dashing and darer in decision making and self-assured. Meanwhile, there was a marriage proposal. She says to her mother, "If I marry him, I should be able to say what I like."⁴ This demonstrates that she doesn't want to be a mere sexual object anymore. She reveals her freedom in the meeting with Arvind. Nisha doesn't want her whole life to be trapped at home. So she adheres to her groom's condition that she should be free to run her business even after their marriage.

Kaptur's novels demonstrate the struggle of women against a predatory society dominated by men. Most of the time, the themes are very contentious and often close to the level of *The Immigrant* in a recent but not contemporary era, the Emergency of Indira Gandhi's 1970s. Its fictional locale changes between India and Canada, as the title of the novel implies.

migration to North America had just started. Alienation, cross-culture, hybridity and globalisation may be suggested by the title of the novel. Though the novel takes up the seventies as its backdrop, the feelings of loneliness and dislocation that Manju Kapur depicts will certainly strike resonance with the present day Indian immigrants trying to adapt to life in the west.

In her novel *The Immigrant*, as a post-colonial writer, Manju Kapur portrays the quest for identity on two planes for her female protagonist, as a woman and as an immigrant. She presents identity as a continuous journey rather than a set construction. The novel can be read as a female autobiography that introduces the woman as a topic in the process and reflects on the means by which her sub-alterity and identity crisis are resolved by the female protagonist. The storey revolves around Nina, a 30-year-old unmarried English professor, and Ananda or Andy, a dentist from Dehradun, who recently immigrated. The novel is structurally divided into three parts , the first part focuses on the insipid

inadvertent but nonchalant recognition of Canada as her home away from home by Nina.

The novel begins with a description of Nina's life with her widowed mother in a shabby Delhi apartment. Nina finished school- "It took seven years. Seven years in which Nina finished school, migrated to Delhi to do English Honours at Miranda House, followed by a postgraduate degree from the university, to end up with a lectureship at her alma mater. Seven years and six months to find this room in Jangpura Extension, and bring her mother to live with her. In Delhi Nina hoped her mother would lead a fuller life; in Delhi the mother imagined a husband could be found who would give her darling the home she deserved."5 Life from that moment became desolate and a backbreaking struggle for both the daughter and the mother in every way, fighting every moment of their life for their nourishment.

Nina perceives- "Yet, education was a gift and she would not exchange the life of the mind for any humdrum marriage. If she was going to settle, she would have

During her M.A, Nina fell in love with her teacher- "He was fifteen years older than her, a teacher in the English Department at the Arts Faculty. Rahul liked to love serially. Unfortunately for Nina, he reminded her of her father. She offered him her heart and expected his in return- for surely the combined forces of youth and devotion would persuade him into commitment."7 Nina wants to keep this relationship hidden from her mother- "She kept this relationship secret from her mother. She was looking for love on her own terms, untainted by convention and respectability."8

Rahul takes advantage of her condition on the weekend. She waits for him to announce, feeling pain, that she was the one chosen. She knows after four years that she has been misled. But all these items were unknown to her mother. She considered her girl to be holy and virgin- "The mother knew nothing of the anguish, nothing of the joy. In her eyes Nina was a sweet, innocent virgin. Some traditional women would rather not see the things their children go through, those experiences sit so ill with

lives.”⁹ The core characters of this novel are Nina and Ananda. Both are Non-Resident Indians who were attracted to Canada in the 1970s.

When his parents are killed in a rickshaw crash, Ananda leaves Delhi. He is an ambitious young man and determined to qualify, in the footsteps of his uncle, as a Canadian dentist and citizen. Nina is leaving Delhi to marry Ananda, and Ananda's sister and Nina's mother have arranged their marriage. “The Immigrant who comes as a wife has a more difficult time. If work exists for her, it is in the future and after much finding of feet. At present all she is, is a wife, and a wife is alone for many, many hours. There will come a day when even books are powerless to distract. When the house and its conveniences can no longer completely charm or compensate. Then she realizes she is an immigrant for life.”¹⁰ One of the aspects that were popular with the couple was sorrow. Nina's father was a well-travelled diplomat; he died unexpectedly, leaving his daughter and his widow to live in diminished conditions.

already so stressed in professional and reproductive terms, becomes an even more impossible balancing act within a foreign community. When Nina learned on the phone that her mother had died unexpectedly when she was back in New Delhi, she broke down. In *The Immigrant*, Nina, the heroine, discovers that marriage has given her nothing but a meaningless life. According to her- “Marriage is a question of adjustment.”¹¹ She dissolves her marriage and leaves Canada in search of fulfillment as an educated and modern woman who aspires to self-esteem.

In the end the novel gives an inspiring message- “The continent was full of people escaping unhappy pasts. She too was heading towards fresh territories, a different set of circumstances, and a floating resident of the Western world.”¹² The fictional job of Kapur leaves Nina's immigrant self to carve out in the foreign land a recess for her. The closing lines of the novel give us the feeling, "If you were to reinvent yourself, you might be home anywhere." Push your shallow roots up and move about. It was possible once, it would

generation in search of her own definite identity." The gender representation of Kapur is powerful and shows an ability to assimilate and embrace the life of her heroine in the alien land. The embodied personality of Nina is in flux and is inclined towards the land of creation. At the end of the book, Nina moves away from Ananda, unsure of what the future will bring, but never less secure in her choice to leave. There, one can see her identity reinvented entirely.

To conclude, Manju Kapur narrates the immigration experience of Nina as a journey where her body search becomes a place of female embodiment. The migration theme contributes to self-discovery. Her path, from negative to positive and from anger to trust, is a self-realization of self-journey. The experience of immigrants is a composite one composed of parties, numerous journeys, still points, and border crossing. Economic status, communication skills and political relationships between the country of origin and adoption form the experience.

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