



## Objective Characterization Of Female Characters In The Novels Of Manju Kapur

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Obedience is no longer considered among the duties of a woman and every woman has the right to do her work herself, but the civil liberties keep theoretical as long as they are solo by economic freedom. A woman is always supported by men and is not emancipated from the male because she has her own choice; if custom stresses less restraint upon her than formerly, the opposite side is that freedom implied has not modified or motivated her situations. She keeps bound in her condition of vassalage. Woman has traversed most of the distance through her employment that separated her from the male, and nothing else can guarantee her liberty in practice. Once she ceases to be an equal, the system based on her dependence crumbles, between her and the universe there is no longer any need for a masculine mediator. As Simone de Beauvoir says in her *The Second Sex*,

The curse that is upon woman as vassal consists, as we have seen, in the fact that she is not permitted to do anything; as she persists in the vain pursuit of her true being through narcissism, love, or religion. When she is productive, active, she regains her transcendence; in her projects she concretely affirms her status as subject; in connection with the aims she pursues, with the money and the rights she takes possession of, she makes trial of and senses her responsibilities. (Beauvoir 689)

It is the fact that men are beginning to resign themselves to the new status of woman; and she, not feeling condemned in advance, has begun to feel more at ease. Woman is neglectful of her femininity who works and she does not lose her sexual attractiveness. This is the success, though already indicating progress towards equilibrium, is not yet complete; it continues to be more difficult for a woman than for a man to establish the relation with the other sex that she desires.

In *Difficult Daughters* like other sub continental women Virmati 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. In this case, Virmati may be looked as representative up to a point, but not absolutely so. It is well known that woman participated forcefully in the social movements that led up to independence. The pages of this novel tell the story not only Virmati, but not difficult daughters, who succeed better than she did in their parallel struggles for independence in their times. From the narratives centre, it is confronted with a woman who fights but fall by the way side, but at its edges, as no doubt less representative but still symbolic figures, we encounter as will be seen below other women, whose relative success points the way to the future. In Sirmur, she gains the greatest degree of control over her life; there are rules every time that she has to follow and breaking than proves her demolish. In spite of all she can teach inside an ordered framework and her performance wins her an unthinkable dignity. The fact is that the single or widowed lady teacher or headmistress is something of a stock figure in modern Indian Literature. But the particularity of Virmati's destiny is that she has to do her life. She has no family or close friends. She meets a near exemplary level of female autonomy. Even her married life with the Professor turns out to be a disaster. She wilts under the implacable and hostile gaze of Ganga, her husband's first wife, with whom she has to live. She loses all senses of identity. In this novel, there are other women like Shakuntala and Swarna Lata are representatives of a certain female type that recurs in Indian literature; the emancipated women militant. In Virmati's extended family, Shakuntala and Swarna appear from the beginning as the exemplar of the modern or liberated women. Swarna is the only female who gets out of life what she wants. It is shown in the words of Cristopher Rollason,

At all events, it may be said that Virmati's frustrated life is, as it were, framed- as if in a triptych- by those two other, much more successful lives: those of Shakuntala and Swarna Lata, both emblematic of the educated, politicized and emancipated women. In other words, the psychological annihilation of Virmati, at the hands of her own family and her husband's, should not be read as a fatality. What happens to Virmati is no doubt the most representative destiny of the Indian woman, quantitatively or statistically, but Kapur's novel shows that other paths also exist, while further stressing that choice are by no means simple or either-or. (Rollason 7)

The novel is not a pure third person narrative and Virmati's story is told mostly in the third person. It is searched that Ida, Virmati's daughter seeks to reconstitute her mother's history. Ida is an educated, divorced and childless who leads a freer life than her mother's life. The Indian women have indeed achieved their successes in half a century of independence and much remains to be done. It is the fact what we want is always gone far from us and whatever we leave we can gain it easily. It is done in the matter of Indian women that the fight for autonomy remains an unfinished combat.

*A Married Woman* is published only after five year, that Manju Kapur has says that this time from an eminently contemporary view point, returns to the narration of woman's issues deploying an approach that, as in *Difficult Daughters*, arranges to be simultaneously, not only an Indian but universal also. In this novel Astha has everything that a woman can ask for – a husband, children and a nice surrounding in the heart of India's capital, Delhi. Besides all, Astha's requirements to assert her identity find expression in the paintings that she makes. Art is recourse for her, she struggles to explore herself, put her thoughts and desires on the canvass. The novel talks of chaos, horror and senseless killing, though it

portrays different time frames. Societal behavior as far as lovers are concerned begins on a note of disapproval. As Astha prepares her mind to the demands of Aijaz and the theatre she gives expression to her creativity only to realize that Hemant does not much appropriate her involvement. Not only she writes script, but she sketches also and Aijaz is immensely pleased with her work. And this appreciation captures a glow of happiness on her face. Astha would have felt a more complete woman. But because of Hemant's egoistical and dogmatic nature Astha knows that this thing cannot be carried so much longer however much she may try. The novel depicts the themes of marriage, alienation, loneliness and the hunger for love that dominate the novel.

In India, the novels are being written with Western touch that is modernization, industrialization and the effects of a western life style on Indian society. Astha realizes the futility of her sexual forays with Pipelika even though she is in love with her. Astha is not interested in leaving her husband and family and this complicates matters, even though Astha continues to meet Pipee. One gets the feeling that is using Astha to serve her own needs. And Astha torn between her feelings for Aijaz and her desire to do her mite to save the nation from further senseless killings. In the context of Indian family, home is the center of every family and the importance of the home cannot be neglected. Apart from that home are the side where conflicts begin and every married woman accepts it, and compromises with the situations. People believe that marriage is the destiny traditionally offered to women by society. Simone de Beauvoir writes in her *The Second Sex*, Marriage has always been a different thing for man and for woman. The two sexes are necessary to each other, but this necessity has never brought about a condition of reciprocity between them; women, as we have seen, have never constituted a caste making exchanges and contracts with the male caste upon a footing of equality (Beauvoir 445-446)

Manju Kapur is the first Indian feminist writer to introduce the lesbian relationship as an important question to be discussed by the advocate of women rights. And it creates much hue and cry. Kapur raises the question of feminism in this novel by depicting Astha in all her moods and colors. She becomes a devoted wife to her husband, a docile daughter-in-law and a careful mother. Astha is an educated woman who wants independence of thought and action too. The novel enables us to get an idea of the feminist struggle against biases. One gets the impression that a woman's life is like the life of a nation while reading the novel which is passing through various trials and tribulations.

Manju Kapur portrayed *Home* as a foreground as well as a background in her third novel which has the identical title. It is a saga of domestic bliss, a state of gender equilibrium in which the protagonist and other subsidiary characters attempt to reconstruct a set of circumstances. Even though the setting of a novel is full of contemporarily, yet it marks a return to traditional Indian milieu. In the modern times of advancement and parity, sons are preferred in comparison to daughters because they belong to weaker sex. The book captures the differences which exist in our society as far as castes are concerned. It displayed the closeness and disastrous confinements of Indian family norms. It makes us to how much we might claim of being an advanced nation and how much we suffer from limitation in our process of thinking. Domestic delight is placed on a lower pedestal than social respect. Kapur shares her ideas of voice to the ordinary sentiments; all the turbulence of passion and pain, happiness and sorrow, guilt and anger are normally assumed to belong only to extraordinary. Female bonding, female sexuality and mother-child relationship are the themes which span two generations in this narrative. Kapur depicts a phantasm of the human perplexities. Sona observed strict rituals to overcome her curse of infertility. When Sona conceives, Rupa felt a storm in her heart. There is a parallelism of structure. In the same situation, the sad fate of Yashpal's sister, Sunita, compels her lead a hard and unhappy life.

The patriarchal decision, Banwarilal proved to be the harbinger of calamity for Nisha, the daughter of Sona and Yashpal, as Vicky started sexually abusing her. The seeds of incest were sown in the family. Ingratitude, selfishness, roguish instinct, callousness are his especial attributes and is certainly an unruly character. Though he is given a very significant place in home and shop, and looking and handling customers himself and feeling pleased in the game of persuasion and seduction. Nisha, the protagonist revolts against the old patriarchal family. But she never crosses any boundaries of morality and values. In spite of her unwillingness, Nisha has to do all *pujas* and to learn the art of service and domesticity. After finding her a manglik, day and night the issue of her marriage is discussed and around whom the rest half novel revolves. Great was the joy and firm was the women's resolve to follow forever the path laid down by their elders but after the death of Lala Banwarilal gone were the days when woman needed to be silent and it is the cry of each crushed heart. Finally Yashpal gives some opportunities for Nisha. And she becomes the best suited example of the heroines who suffered a lot throughout her life but the novelist seemed to prove that it never ruins but it pours at last.

Finally she gets rid of the parental home and claustrophobia and takes heaven in a new home of her own dreams after getting married with Arvind another manglik of the same caste. Another home in which there is no any tension, no chorus rather intension and too much care of the mother-in-law for her twins. As Mr. Satendra Kumar quoted in one of his articles-

In the fitness of things, it can be quoted that very genuine problem of one female being reflected by another female is the outcome of the novel and the novelist gives the message to the society that females are not always at the fault as they are treated and rejected. (Kumar Satendra 125)

In *The Immigrant* the same theme resorts. It is not the story of immigrants but the revolt and rehabilitation of woman has been placed in a different set up. The theme is not of east west clash or of alienation. The two aspects which are discussed herein man woman relationship – a sexual and psychological. Nina is struggling to make herself settled somewhere but like Virmati, Astha and Nisha, the question of her marriage is a vault in a peaceful living of her mother. In such atmosphere, the question of herself automatically rises in her mind, as Ashok Kumar says,

The astringent and conical social web constrained women to obliterate her 'self', her eccentricity and separate identity. In modern era the self finds it intricate to come to stipulations with the social web because the central values nurtured by

the self and the outer social demands are incompatible. This helplessness to formulate the self familiar with the social web results in the alienation of self. (Kumar Ashok 163-134)

Nina doesn't want to leave her long attained career due to the marriage proposal which is come from Ananda, but her mother and relatives' compulsion, she has to marry him. Ananda and Nina are connected together by their lapping loneliness. It is usually true that for Nina, Ananda is all she has in Canada. Kapur carefully untangles the story of this despairing, but moving marriage. Kapur expresses the special challenges facing immigrant wives the way a young woman's life; already so pressured in professional and reproductive terms, becomes an even more impossible balancing act inside a foreign culture.

Manju Kapur as a novelist basically concerned with the issues of the newly emerging urban middle class. In her novels, the female protagonists rebel against the male domination and the marginalization of woman. She describes the details how the unthinkable becomes the everyday, as the Indian woman begins to set her as Western getting. Ananda was so determined to see the bright side of things that at times she shrunk beneath the glare of those spotlights as they searched harshly for dark shadows, those shadows that her made what she was. Nina has been faithful indeed to Ananda, as he has been to her. But he is caught in his illicit relationship

This novel can be read in two sections. In first section, there is a life of an unmarried Nina as lived in India in a conventional orthodox society, and the later section explores the life of married Nina, the wife of an NRI Dentist husband as she lived in Canada amid Western values. Nina's struggle is bit different from her predecessors, like Virmati, Astha and Nisha. She has to stand against the patriarchal set up of the Indian middle class society, but on the contrary, she has to fight against her loneliness, frustration and the western ethos. Nina's life passes through certain ups and downs. She lost her mother, the only one defense of hers as she feels in India. Only Ananda seems to be her solitary anchor in Canada. But it seems useless when she finds a wavy blond hair next to her pillow which tells a story of her husband's transgression. Nina feels herself free from bondages of her life and enjoys her regeneration. Indian marriages are not based on the chemistry of relationship but beyond it. Nina, like every woman, either she is an Indian or western, feels insecure without children. But soon she learns to live for herself and sets herself free from a conservative thinking of motherhood, etc. Kapur not only in *The Immigrant* but in other novels also deals with some patriarchal and some universal issues, referring to the Indian middle class society.

In *Custody* Manju Kapur depicts the two different aspects of female counterpart, infidelity and infertility. Infidelity empowers a woman, on the contrary infertility disempowers her. In this novel, it is examined how woman has begun to grow as an individual in the primary center of collision for her becomes the institution of marriage which has, so far, constituted the limits of her space. Kapur explores the extramarital relationship in her novel and uses this sexual freedom as a tool of resistance to thwart patriarchal values and myths. Shagun as depicted as this kind of female characters who enjoys her sexual and appropriates its generative principle through deliberate inversion of patriarchal morals. She rebels against the patriarchal mechanisms and male domination of surveillance and control. Not only woman but man like Ashok Khanna can be seduced by the beauty of a woman like Shagun. She is also enticed by his loving words and sterling elegance and leaves behind the essential constraints of marriage and floats its sacredness through sexual transgression. But as a married woman she has to suffer from her love affair. She has to face the conflict as she neither upholds the strong stoic and self sacrificing image of her predecessors nor curbs her dangerous womanly desires. Whether to sublimate herself as social conformist as strike out as rebel is a dilemma for her. It also shows that the support from the society for the woman is insufficient in physical world as society casts an unforgiving shadow on the female who is infidel.

In spite of all these things, this affair gives her a delightful experience and teaches her to be self reliant, confident, powerful, independent and resourceful as she pursues sexuality, equality and independence. She explores her character bravely and brilliantly and then creates proper response intelligently. As Asha Saharan gives her opinions,

She does not submit to the regulations of the society but displays her power to overcome problems so as to get delight in her new relationship. The power derived from exploration, interpretation and empowerment of the female sexuality experience leads to self affirmations and self recognition as an individual. (Saharan 68)

Shagun follows her heart and seeks a divorce from Raman and embarks on a new life with Ashok. So the marriage institution which in our country is much more than sex and children is thwarted of its sacredness through divorce. Infidelity is briefly discussed here.

The second aspect of this novel, infertility, is tolerated as the incapability of a woman to complete the expectation in a culture where much stress is given to motherhood and virility. So childless is to be taken not only in kinds of regenerative health in a physical sense, but more so as a social concern. Kapur presents Ishita, who starts off in a subordinate role as daughter, a stand that is transmitted to her husband in marriage. Her childless marriage is carried with tension, social stigma, emotional exploitation and psychological pressure. Ishita feels a lack of identity and experiences that she is not fulfilling her role as a woman when she encounters divorced Raman; a rapport is established between the two broken hearts. She has denied her sexuality for long, who has stifled the passion of sex exercises her desires and enjoys erotic moments with Raman, and vice-versa. Her motherly indictments are fulfilled when she enjoys intimate emotional bonding with Roohi. Kapur explores and writes about the labyrinth of a woman's sexual experiences in order to decode the merry tropes of violation that effect the body's materiality as well as its psyche.

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