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## **WOMAN'S PERCEPTION AS AN IMMIGRANT IN MANJU KAPUR'S *THE IMMIGRANT***

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### **Abstract**

*There are many renovations perceived, in the earliest decade of the twenty-first century, particularly in the field of issues related to the strengthening of woman's position in the fast-growing and fast-changing society. The questions of identity, liberty, economic freedom, have become the subject of the past. Woman's empowerment is the main subject of theorists, writers, critics, and scholars. They are eager to present different ideas related to the empowerment of woman in the society where nothing is enduring. The writers are in search of different options which force to put back the notions of identity- related to womanhood, after the postmodernism. Marriage, divorce, motherhood and above all, woman-hood has become ineffective provision as far as new choices are anxious. Here, one thing must not be mistaken that women are hoisting their mottos now for the sake of revolution next to manhood. Women are at present searching their new alternatives in to fulfill their desires by showing a strong sense of separation from the traditional norms specified for the continuation of this universe.*

Manju Kapur shows her individuality in her look for different options. Manju Kapur tries to find out alternatives. Kapur makes her woman characters are individuals who have strong likes and dislikes. Her characters like Virmati in *Difficult Daughters*, Astha in *A Married Woman*, Nisha in *Home*, Nina in *The Immigrant* and Shagun in *Custody* are some of the bold characters in the context of feminism. Their way of living always put them in the milieu of divergence in which their individuality, identity, recognition, and independence as a human being are tested.

Manju Kapur's fourth novel, '*The Immigrant*', she mostly talks about the theme of feminism. Through this novel, she presents the female body as a physical site which has to live between the conflicts of mind-body dualism. She explains how society demotes woman to a secondary position by recognizing the woman with the body and with the mind. The central character Nina trusts the superiority of the life and the mind but it makes and compulsory to feel insufficient and insecure and relent to the patriarchal demands upon the body though Nina is financially self-reliant, yet like all other Indian daughters, she is a burden on her mother. She is an archetypal Indian daughter who represents the liability, or a responsibility. Her mother would like to arrange her marriage and fulfill her responsibility. In India, daughters suffer because of this mind set of the parents who would like to free themselves by performing their duties by marrying their daughters as soon as possible.

Nina's mother, at last, finds out Ananda is bridegroom of her daughter who is a dentist in Halifax. He does not like Indian girls in Canada. He is also searching for his life partner. Finally, Ananda selects Nina as his life partner. Nina accepts the marriage with Ananda. Before the marriage, both of them have

sexual relationship. On the time of relationship they do not remember they are not married yet. They enjoy their sexual relationship. Both Nina and Ananda are too grown-up to have sexual fulfillment.

Their marriage fixes in December. Nina is very much fascinated to go to Canada. Both of them do not interest in the rituals of marriage and not believe that. So their marriage is performed simply. K.K. Singh rightly observes that,

In the era of globalization, it is quite beyond the imagination for a man living abroad to think about an arranged marriage. The immigrants are very selective in their approach towards the institution of marriage they begin to dislike Indian marriage system for many reasons altogether (98).

In the bridal night, Ananda does not fulfill the sexual needs of Nina. This dissatisfaction leads to remember Rahul, who is her boyfriend in the college days. He talks about sex endlessly. Ananda becomes physical abnormality. He is not able to satisfy Nina's sexual needs. Nina's life in Halifax seems to be totally hell. She is in complete anguish and dilemma because of her emotional void. She does not want to lead on this kind of life for a longer period. Her sexual crisis with Ananda also seemed to increase her problem more. In the house, she is weary, and in the outside, she did not feel accommodative. Manju Kapur writes this juncture,

Eventually lying in bed become boring, she must explore, she must examine her territory in private. Boldly she strode about in her nightie, the shape of her breasts visible, as was the shadow of her pubic hair. No servant, landlord, landlady, neighbor or mother was there to see. After years of night and day protection against the eyes of the world, it felt strange to abandon the shield that had defended her modesty. (*The Immigrant* 22)

Nina lives an unhappy life, and there is no mental satisfaction in Canada. She begins to question the hope of her arranged marriage. She thought and thought above her position as a wife of the immigrant abroad. There is physical and material wealth for her but because of her sexual unfulfilment, she was always in a dilemma to consider over her place. Thus, both Nina and Ananda become immigrants in Halifax, Canada. They are educated and well versed in speaking English which is the tool of victory abroad. They are in Canada because for them; there is not a money-oriented problem at all. But their main problem is to adjust in new environment. It is very hard for them to adjust in a new tradition leaving behind the great cultural loads. In the West, there are different social values, social tradition, and morality. It seems very difficult for the immigrants to adjust in a new system. Naturally, they are divided between what they want and what they do. Manju Kapur writes about this problem faced by the immigrants in these words:

Certain Indians become immigrants slowly. They are not among those who have fled persecution, destitution, famine, slavery and death threats, nor among those for whom the doors of their country slam shut the minute do they leave its borders. (*The Immigrant* 24)

These immigrants are always in two minds. On the outside, they adjust well. Educated and English speaking, they allow deceptive suppositions about a heart that is divided. Both Ananda and Nina try to realize each other, try to share the same bed, try to resolve their troubles and try to come out from the cobweb of modernity. They are in a foreign country for superior vision in their lives. But their association is not usual for the reason that Ananda's inability to satisfy the sexual needs of Nina. Gradually, Ananda begins to understand his problem as well as his role in Nina's life. He understands that without physical fulfillment, his relationship. He decides to meet with the medical consultant for improvement in his sexual power. Nina and Ananda do not only this problem but, also they are immigrants, so they adjust and accept the new type of culture and environment. Dressing sense is the big problem with aboard. Mostly, men's clothing has low variation from their motherland but woman's clothing style is varied from the Western clothes. K.K. Singh rightly remarks that,

The immigrants have faced many problems because of different system and different surroundings. Food, clothing, atmosphere, etc. everything is quite different. They have to adjust in entirely new condition. Especially for women, clothing puts many problems before them. They find new types of clothing which is not adjustable for them. They have to wear new type of clothing. (103)

Not only Indian women have adjusted clothing, but also they have to adjust at many points abroad. They feel clash with the tradition and convention. It is not easy for them to come out from that cobweb. Since there is no one to support them in abroad apart from their husbands, they are bound to follow each and every word of them. They do not show their own perception and it seems to be one of the fundamental causes. Nina experimented with the Western clothes. She would like to transform her in new way. But her dilemma is obvious in her decisions. Maithra aptly observes that,

The psyche of an immigrant constantly interacts with the traditional culture of the natural home and the culture in an adopted alien land and brings about a change in the inherited tradition and culture of the immigrant. Cultural disparity which the immigrants are subjected to is dealt with primarily in this novel. Immigration compels them to adopt the contrasting culture of a foreign country breaking down the native boundaries. Migration no more leads to separation but may be seen as rebirth, reinvention in a new place, city, country marked by a new culture. The baggage of the past never sheds but carries with him and he starts to interpret and recognize the contemporary alien experience. (403)

External happiness does not affect Nina because she is mentally disturbed by her husband. Her hopes and desires are collapsed by her husband's lack of physical power. In spite of many attempts, Nina does not become pregnant. She feels childless life is insecure. Indian woman thought that after marriage getting child is very important one and it fulfills their life. Nina and Ananda feel uncomfortable with each other, especially at the time of the physical relationship. So Ananda goes to America for sexual treatment without knowing his wife Nina. But there is no use for that treatment because she does not show any interest her husband's new outlook in sexual relationship. This is badly affects Ananda. So he finds Mandy is the substitute for Nina. Nina chooses Anton to fulfill her sexual needs. Both of them enjoy their illegal relationship. Nina gets more pleasure with Anton relationship. K.K. Singh observes that,

Nina seemed to get full pleasure during her physical relationship with Anton. It seemed that for the first time in her life. She enjoyed such type of sexual pleasure. (107)

Nina leaves the relationship of Anton for his unwanted attitude with her. She is dejected. Her life is not easy in Canada after the death of her mother. She finds herself out of any kind of responsibility after her mother's death. She would like to adjust things in her own way although it is not easy for her. Ananda blames Nina because of her ill-temperamental behavior. He does not understand her wife's condition. She bears all these things because she is an immigrant. Nina does not get any type of consolation in Canada

Manju Kapur writes about the problems faced by the immigrants in abroad. The problems are totally different from woman to men. Women suffered the attitude of her husband. They compel to tolerate the torture of her husband. There is no way to escape from that because she is an immigrant. Women have adjusted and accept more and more. They are far away from their homeland and the traditions and conventions substance much for them. They have to adjust in new circumstances which are not favorable for them all the time. In the nineteenth century, the problems of the immigrants were commonly money-oriented.

In the twentieth century, the problems faced by the immigrants are psychological. They are abroad for better hopes and a better life. They would like to enjoy a happy and wealthy life. But they suffer from emotional distress. They have failed in their approach. Their problems have been complex than the

other. Women have also become the victims of men in a foreign country. Men settled abroad come to their motherland to select the bride who might help them in their career and business. They cannot endure abroad without money. The pomp and show of the abroad also lure the immigrant woman to become the Victims of their cobweb.

Nina's life journey of herself from poignant collapse takes her away from her fanciful husband to Anton but the moments of delight turns upsetting as Anton cruelly Nina's self-pride and body by physically harm his senility on her and term the physical sadness into an emotional shock. Nina embellishes the betrayal of Ananda, and this violates of dedication outcome in its arrangement of companionship in marriage; she gathers her freedom by throwing away her marriage. At the moment of crisis, she overwhelms the trouble of mind and leaves the connection behind. She now hikers her body and sensuality and looks forward to reinvent her body as site of self accomplishment. Astha in *A Married Woman*, Nina is also in look for of a substitute of fulfillment. But the difference between Astha and Nina is quite evident. Astha has been fascinated in the companionship of Peeplika as a woman whereas Nina goes in the lap of Anton, a man for her physical fulfillment; in both cases the clash between mind and body in search of substitutes is fairly visible.

Finally, Nina arranges for a job interview at the University of New Brunswick, and it is irresolute if she will return to her Halifax life or not. It feels, though, as if she is now ready to take control of her destiny. The bewilderment of Nina goes on, and the pattern of the stability for immigrant people like Nina endures from the alienation and the quest for identity in shaping individual identity. The conflict between Indian culture and Western influence results in the emotional predicament for the people.

Kapur's works remind the readers of Showalter's third phase of the feminist writing-tradition, i.e., the female phase. She is of the opinion that the recent women writers portray women as dissatisfied with their cultural values and so they resolve to defy and defile the norms and values of their culture and come out to lead the life of independence. They challenge their conventional beliefs which, they firmly believe, relegate them to the secondary status in the society and not allow them to be treated on par with men. They show their protest against the unfair treatment and finally attain liberation in life.

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