



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

English Literature

REPERCUSSION OF CULTURAL CLASHES IN MANJU KAPUR'S THE IMMIGRANT

KEY WORDS: Alienation, Displacement, Cultural Conflict, Transformation.

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ABSTRACT

Manju Kapur primarily writes about the plight and repression of Indian women as well as their resistance to it. Marriage, families, complexities in relationships and separation are some of the most pervasive themes in her fiction. Manju Kapur's *The Immigrant* is a story of dislocation and cultural conflict. The novel revolves around a thirty-one-year-old spinster, Nina, who lived with her widowed mother in Delhi. She marries Ananda, an NRI, dentist and she flies to Canada to start her new life. The paper discusses how the novelist brings up the life of a married woman, with only her husband to talk to, all alone in a foreign land where Indian culture and individualism have often remained alien ideas. This paper delves into the issues of alienation and the search for cultural identity, as well as transformation of Nina and Ananda as a result of becoming an immigrant.

INTRODUCTION

Manju Kapur is one of the most accomplished and acclaimed contemporary Indian novelists, and has had a notable impact on her portrayal of anguished yet strong women who ultimately dissolve conventional boundaries. The main focus of her novels is marital bliss and the role of women at home and on the move, especially in a culture where individualism and gossip are always viewed as foreign languages. Most of today's contemporary female writers speak frankly and boldly about various issues without advocating feminist perspectives or social issues. In their novels, immigrants are usually caught between the traditional culture of their homeland and the culture of a foreign country. *The Immigrant* (2008) is the fourth novel for Manju Kapur and, as the title suggests, sets his work in the turbulent context of globalization with far more momentum than any of Kapur's previous novels. It divides the fictitious locations into India and Canada.

Diaspora– A Key Element

The term “Diaspora” suggests one's own room of language, culture, tradition in the host country. Julian Wolfreys makes it more explicit by uttering: “Setting of various peoples away from his homeland; often appared with the nation of the Jewish Diaspora in modern Israel, but extended in Cultural studies, Post colonial studies and Race theory to consider the displacement of people by means of force such as slavery” (Wolfreys 2005).

In the twentieth century, Indian immigration to the United States, England, Canada, and Australia was mostly a personal matter. Whether for scholarly or commercial reasons, their reception in foreign places has not been without controversy. These countries' residents have traditionally reacted differently to these immigrants, isolating them and fighting their integration into the mainstream. Immigrants have always encountered a tight contested culture, which has always been followed by their attempts to modify or engross, either to be recognised by a distinct identity as a racial group or to be known by a separate identity as a racial group. The expatriation experience gradually disconnects immigrants from their roots but does not totally dislocate them. The constant transition between two phases of dislocation and relocation complicates an individual's ability to survive in such a setting.

Diasporic theme in *The Immigrant*

The novel explores cultural conflict and displacement through Nina's story, the arranged marriage system, and interpersonal sexual compatibility. Manju Kapur's *The Immigrant* tells the story of Nina and Ananda who immigrated to Canada. The focus of this contribution is how Manju Kapur's protagonist, despite different ideologies, seeks to construct and find an identity as his Indian diaspora in Canada, and how

such people find themselves in foreign countries. Manju Kapur describes the Indian diaspora situation in three main parts of this novel.

Discovery of one's self as the key theme of *The Immigrant*

The women in Manju Kapur's novels have experienced various struggles in their lives, and under the dictatorial mechanisms of a closed society, the deep scrutiny of their lives is a major part of Manju Kapur's writings. theme. In addition, her novels consider life's complexities, especially those of women. This includes the myriad patterns of human values that women deal with and deal with in the context of diverse histories, diverse cultures, and national and international socio-cultural contexts.

The novel *The Immigrant* takes place in the 1970s and focuses on middle-class Indian society; its life blood is the diasporic existence in Canada. This is the story of Nina and Ananda. Ananda is a male protagonist who is determined to become a full-fledged Canadian citizen. *The Immigrant* can be categorized into two sections: the mother-daughter relationship and the husband-wife relationship. Nina's mother is a typical Indian mother as well. The novelist introduces Nina as follows:

Nina was almost thirty; Friends and colleagues consoled her by remarking on her radiant complexion and her black hair, but such comfort was cold. Nina's skin knew it was thirty, broadcasting the fact at certain angles in front of the mirror. Her spirit felt sixty as she walked from bus stop to the single room where she lived with her mother. Her heart felt a hundred as it surveyed the many years of hopeless longing it had known” (1)

Manju Kapur's portrayal of displacement

The immigrant's psyche undergoes a constant interaction with the traditional culture of the native home and the adopted culture of an alien land. It begins to reconstruct the inherited habits and culture of the “immigrants”. The cultural diversity that immigrants are concerned with is primarily the setting of this novel. Moving to a new country no longer causes segregation, but is perceived as rebirth and reinvention in new places, cities and countries, manifested through new cultures. While defining more about this situation, Julian Wolfreys compiles it more openly by saying: “Setting of various peoples away from their homelands; often appared with the notion of the Jewish Diaspora in modern Israel, but extended in cultural studies, post- colonial studies and race theory to consider the displacement of peoples by means of force such as slavery (1 10).

Nina, the novel's protagonist, marries Ananda, a dentist in Halifax, Canada. Ananda travels from Halifax to find an Indian bride. Even though Nina does not see the spark in him, her

mother and a friend encourage her to marry Ananda, telling her that her future lies in travelling overseas with Ananda. They persuade her to consider Ananda as an excellent partner because relocating overseas will provide her with more opportunities. The strongest and unreasonable obsession for parents to build a sanctified picture of diaspora life for their daughters has been the special allure for NRIs. Most Indian parents think it is prestigious for their daughters to live overseas.

Ananda And Nina's Sense Of Drift In A Distant Nation

Manju Kapur deliberately emphasises the intention of boys who aspire to get a suitable girl from India "who would surround him with familiar traditions" (The Immigrant 77) and, in exchange, the girl will get to experience the prosperity of the West and freedom that she is not used to in her motherland. She also emphasises the predicament of such married ladies by employing the most fitting epithet "like a tree and vine," where vine, like creeper, must rely on the individuality and firmness of a tree. Nina's destiny is determined by such foggy hopes and illusory convictions. So, Nina resolves to traverse the seas to marry someone from an unknown place. The mission of Nina's mother's is complete. Nina's mother has fulfilled her duty by marrying off her daughter abroad. Nina arrives in a new foreign place with hopes of starting a family and living a beautiful life, but her ambitions are quickly dashed. Nina is forced to suppress her urges due to her husband's ego.

Nina does her best to adapt to the conditions in the new world. However, things don't go as she expected. Her friend Anton's violent sexual assault shocked her the most. She continues to suffer from her mother's death. Her own existence seems poorer than anyone else's. Frustrated Nina takes her displeasure to her husband in the form of a letter, "This is not your country. You are deceived and you have deceived me. You made it out to be a liberal haven where everyone loved you. This woman is looking for a reason to get rid of me. I am the wrong colour, I come from the wrong place. See name in this airport, of all the passengers the only one not allowed to sail through immigration, made me feel like an illegal alien" (107).

Manju Kapur writes that Nina is responsible for carving out and shaping her own life and she has no right to blame anyone or demand an explanation from anyone for displacement. (323). Like her wife, Ananda oscillates between her two different worlds and does her best to try and adapt to foreign countries. His story also begins in India where he started his career as a dentist. The sudden accidental death of his parents left him and his sister Arkas orphaned. As an immigrant, he first joined his uncle's family. His new life begins as a paying guest with his friend and business partner Gary Geller. All these developments suggest that the protagonist has been "shifted" from one role to another, causing complete confusion when it comes to making the right choices in life.

Nina's journey in a distant nation begins with her emotional and financial reliance on Ananda. However, the situation changes once she achieves financial independence. Nina makes the decision to take charge of her life. Nina, like every traditional Indian woman, accepts the suppression of her happiness and wants as a part of the marriage. Ananda is presented as a stereotypical Indian male who subordinates his wife without regard for her sentiments. This type of disregard for one's spouse might also be interpreted as repression. Ananda lacks the sensitivity to comprehend Nina's viewpoint.

CONCLUSION

Home and identity are two of the most significant aspects of every person's existence. Despite the fact that immigrants live in a foreign culture, they are deeply tied to their traditional and cultural identities, as well as their respective homelands.

They always attempt to preserve a separate area in their heads for their native-land cultural identities. These people are unwilling to abandon their own habits and traditions. Nothing is constant and stable in a strange land, as is well known. If one method fails, the immigrant will try another. He or she has no other choice but to return. However, the individual moves from one posture to another. "The continent was full of people escaping unhappy parts. She too was heading towards fresh territories, a different set of circumstances, a floating resident of the Western world" (334).

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