Examining the Intersection of Modernism and Sexual orientation in Manju Kapur's Writings

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Abstract:
Manju Kapur exhibits a wide range of gender, sexual, and cultural identities. The book creates self-reflexive venues where the voices of the marginalised may be democratically included. In addition, it challenges the distinctions we make between mainstream and queer, us and them, masculine and female, and private and public spheres. It wouldn't be incorrect to say that, in part, this article supports and argues for the opening statements made by the protagonist, who sees lesbianism as a protest against patriarchal beliefs by examining the history of many gender manifestations across the nation.

Keywords: modernism, gender, identity, sex and queer.

Introduction:

The term post-colonial is frequently used to describe literary and literary-related practices that sprang from colonial experiences that occurred outside of Europe but as a result of European colonial expansion and exploitation of "the other worlds." A range of writing genres that have their roots in both Europe and North America, as well as works that defy traditional Euro-American stereotypes and seem to belong there, are collectively referred to as "postmodern." Like postmodernism and post structuralism, it "usually includes arguments against conceptions that are Euro-American" (Tiffin, 1). India's architecture is influenced by many different cultures. Throughout the British era, Indian culture was greatly influenced by Western culture through political engagement. Through political interaction, Western culture had a significant impact on Indian culture throughout the British era.

Western theories have disrupted ancient cultural customs in India. We must categorize Indian tradition and western tradition in order to distinguish the various types of modern hybrid Indian setting from the ancient context. Indian society has historically been more of a cultural entity than the western tradition, which is built on the modernization brought about by rationalism, individualism, and utilitarianism. Indian society was shaped more by the practices than by the meanings and justifications for them. This behavior develops into a required habit. We learn that there was no gender inequality in pre-colonial Indian society.

According to Nadeem- "Socio- cultural change in India under the effect of the advanced west presents one more significant feature of socio cultural dynamics. India has consistently been a profoundly traditional society and it is just through contact with the advanced west that the course of modernization, both technological and cultural, was initiated into Indian society. The sociologists have depicted these progressions as heterogenetic process of change. Also, however the Portuguese, the French and the Dutch, as well, had contacts with India yet it is the British impact significantly affected Indian society" (Rajlakshmi and Maithily, 5).

Language is a declaration of life; the will to express oneself and the interest in people and their behavior are the two main sources of inspiration for writers; the various literary genres are just the channels that man has created to express his social nature; a woman with awareness and social consciousness is the most important prerequisite for the advancement of both herself and society; the social initiatives of any group to safeguard the populace are subordinated to the advancement of individual women in her work. Women authors added to the corpus of Indian literature. Manju Kapur, one of the most prominent figures in Indo-Anglican literature, rose to fame as a result of her writing's significant societal influence. Her writings focus more on the self-progress of the individual woman for the benefit of society's advancement than they do on any collective efforts by society to safeguard the general public. As a result, she explores the quest for presence and independence on many levels in her writing.

Objective -

An analysis of Manju Kapur's writings about the intersection between modernism and sexual orientation. In a nation like India, it is necessary that we recognize and reclaim the

precedents for non-binary genders, though a tough act, but a much-needed one.

Author's details:

Indian author Manju Kapur instructs literature at Delhi University. She was born in Amritsar in 1948. Following her graduation from Miranda House University College for Women, Kapur pursued an MA at Delhi University and an M.Phil at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Her debut book, Difficult Daughters, was published as a best-seller in India, the US, and England after winning her the 1999 Commonwealth Prize for debut Novels (Eurasia division). Readers and critics praised and enjoyed her previous three works, A Married Woman (2003), Home (2006), The Immigrant (2008), and Custody (2011).

The Modern as Perceived by Kapur:

There has always been a conflict between modernity and tradition in Indian English literature. The growing internal tension between contemporary knowledge and cultural consciousness has been seen by Indian English fiction writers' researchers from R. K. Narayan to the present. The majority of female authors have also used their writing to candidly address contemporary issues and societal issues. Women's writing saw a dramatic shift in the 1970s when authors began to express their gender and experiences as women via literature, breaking with convention. Shakuntala, Savitri, and Sita were replaced by the "new lady," a symbol of suffering and submission. Indian women authors serve as examples of the transition from traditional to contemporary Indian literature.

Nisha, in Manju Kapur's 2006 book The Home, is a perfect example of how conventional and contemporary ideas may coexist. Her mother forced her to take the traditional route. Despite this, her financial acumen motivated her to start a successful retail company. Nisha is shown as a strong woman who works hard to establish herself in the family and the community. She is a perfect example of a contemporary woman who wants to be like men and uses her strength and skill to achieve success in the workplace. Her life ended after she married Arvind and gave birth to twins.

She uses the family to illustrate the tension that occurs in society between tradition and change. As Indian society develops, the ideas held by the preceding generation regarding marital systems, economic practices, and family structures are no longer relevant to the next generation. The current generation is different since they are shaped by corporate culture and the western way of life. The new generation wants to forge their own identity and follow their own set of rules since they feel that the old generation's ways of thinking are impeding their ideas and strategies. The outcome is a conflict about societal norms and ideals between the younger and older generations. Tension exists between the younger and elder generations as a result of modernity's consequences. The study claims that by going up against customs, traditions, and values—the core of modernity—the female protagonists struggle and create their identities inside their families and in society. This is accomplished by contesting one's educational background, family history, and life experiences (Zubair et al., 2).

Manju Kapur's Difficult Daughters (1998) is a collection of captivating stories on mother-daughter relationships. The book tackles modern themes, such as the flamboyant and bizarre ways that marriage, sex, and love are portrayed. Being in love with a married guy had traditionally been frowned upon in her little social group. She battles her need for education, her obligations to her family, and her longing for forbidden love. It's a story of love, loss, and compromise. Swarnalata and Ida are presented as contemporary symbols in Shakuntala. Swarnlata and Shakuntala, as modern females, use their current viewpoints to overcome the limitations of the feminine gender. They never misuse their liberty. While Kasturi was developed as a traditional symbol who believes that education is a basic necessary for marriage and that marriage is a primary target for girls, Ida believes that marriage is a goal for girls and that education is a fundamental necessity.

Despite this, Virmati, the embodiment of social discontent, defies stereotypes by being extremely intelligent, inquisitive, and receptive to new information. The heroines of Manju Kapur's works portray the conflicts and challenges that arise from trying to strike a balance between tradition and the desire to live a new life that knowledge has enabled them to lead. Although the female characters in Kapur's work are rational thinkers, they are still separated from their home nations and retain certain traditional beliefs. While the main female characters reject all conventions, they are nevertheless unwittingly constrained by them. Kapur wishes to convey how the expansion of education has changed the contemporary situation. These days, women are putting up a fierce battle to find their identities inside the family and in the community. They could also live by their own standards in order to achieve autonomy (Wani, 5).

Kapur's Ideology and Modern Sexuality:

Non-heteronormative culture arises as a new culture in the context of India. Individuals that don't follow heteronorms have mutual understanding with their partner and their own set of standards. There is no opportunity for the Third Space. The third space doesn't leave the family or accept things as they are. Through the pursuit of hybridity or identity, the younger generation is heading towards the third domain. Manju Kapur's Married Woman (2003) presents an anti-cultural myth. The novel shows how legendary works connect with historical

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circumstances while expertly tackling lesbianism. Astha received a very western and culturally specific education and upbringing. Her identity is what she's looking for. The conventional perception of a woman is that she only belongs at home. The novel's opening lines explain Astha's middle-class family background. As mentioned in the opening few words, Astha was reared correctly, as befits a lady, with great boosts of dread. Regardless of the circumstances, her mother must provide for her with a safe family life since her father wanted to teach her. She may find herself exposed, defenseless, and alone after one lapse. Astha was drawn to the safe and secure from then on, even though there were countless ways she could be hurt that were unknown to her (1).

The main introduction to the marriage is covered in these phrases. Both her mother's and her husband's families have erratic lives.

Indian women are viewed as traditionalists in this way. In order to facilitate marriage, Astha is brought up in a conventional Indian home. Astha was brought up in this way because she is a woman, were she a guy, her upbringing could be different. In this work by Kapur, gender disparity in modern Indian culture is well portrayed. The preservation of women was the main focus of social feudalism and several foreign invasions that occurred in India throughout the mediaeval centuries. They would point the finger at the gender gap that existed in India under British rule. Gender conservatism in Indian society actually existed in a variety of ways. Nadeem Hasnin's 2010 book Indian Society and society: Continuity and Change describes the minute adjustments that were deeply embedded in Indian society. India's many regions have come together. Even if there is a vast range of cultures, during the eighteenth century, new forces and factors have emerged, leading to an increasing fusion of cultures. Among the standard political framework, shared legal system, standardized administrative and educational frameworks, and increasing economic interdependence, one may also list the emergence of a novel type of rising national consciousness as a factor in the formation of an "Indian society." Indian civilization has historically functioned more as a cultural entity than structural one."(4)

She gradually shows a different perspective on having a kid when married to Hemant - Foreign Return, who first appears to be a contemporary thinker. It highlights the issue of gender inequality in India and provides evidence of women's exploitation. The old Indian societal structure is contradicted by science. Generally speaking, women are born strong enough to do a wide range of duties. Gender Difference in Strength and Muscle Fibre Characteristics (1993)" by A.E. Miller analyses that women are more grounded than men are in their upper and lower bodies, respectively. Men

nevertheless take action to ensure that women have this chance. They have to assume the external debts of the family (Rajlakshmi and Maithily, 4). Foreign invasions and social mixing have caused the disintegration of the Indian cultural system. It is at its height due to the most notable consequences of westernization. As a result, women are overworked and given greater duties. This is the definition of patriarchy. The task of protecting women is not entirely accomplished, despite the emergence of several women's activist groups. Women may be entitled to some basic freedoms and privileges in the job and in school, but they are also deeply emotionally tied to their roles as wives, mothers, sisters, daughters, and other family members.

People have a tendency to believe that even if women have accomplished many other social milestones that are rarely celebrated in gender-focused culture, being successful domestic women will considerably enhance women's lives. Whatever the situation, make an effort to make the other party whole. Because it is their responsibility to provide for their families, fathers started to take charge. A mother's only job is to care for her kids and the entire household, even at the expense of her own emotions and successes. The complete historical Indian family structure still in place in modern India has crumbled.

When considering female homosexuality and classical psychoanalytic theory, it is evident that women mentally endorse lesbianism in the following ways: "Lesbianism, or female homosexuality, was depicted by Socarides (1978) as the idealized embodiment of male homosexuality, corrupted mostly by premedical formative disappointments that led to conflicts around partition individuation. According to Socarides, his female homosexual patients differed from males because, as children, they were unable to cope with real or imagined oedipal dissatisfactions towards their father because they were afraid of being hurt and eaten up by their mother (4)."

Astha's mother's lack of support when her father interfered with her genuine enthusiasm and interest in A Married Woman is described in the words above. A child who succumbed to its severe asphyxia would be unable to free herself. In such document, the "Third design" would be mentioned. In Indian cultures, women's fear of males has often resulted in substandard thinking. Because of the masculine mastery, a lady desires her female mate in any case—for her sensual convenience as well. Their simple yet thought-provoking split drives them into isolation, even within their own family. It is neither a mental illness nor a masochistic shift; rather, it is a character issue. There is nothing else that can be done but set aside space for the third construction. Women are homosexual due to serious premedical psychopathology, namely difficulties in

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the separation/individuation stage, according to McDougall (1980). At that moment, she finds a female partner with whom she expresses her rage and need for approval from her dominating, narcissistically distant, and hard-to-reach mother. According to Rajlakshmi and Mainthily (6), this arrangement is seen as a bizarre "third structure," not psychotic nor hypochondriac but clearly character disarranged.

The Prospects of Kapur:

It may be concluded from a study of Manju Kapur's works that modernism hasn't completely destroyed Indian culture. Indian culture is vast, intricate, and enigmatic. Many spiritual people and organizations from the east and west have breathed new life into Indian culture and traditions by providing empathetic translations. Because scholars continue to disagree over what constitutes good and evil in our society, Manju Kapur purposefully avoids tackling problems with culture and modernity. But there's no denying that those who speak up against injustices ought to suffer, and those who are willing to ought to suffer by accepting their bad luck (Tatte, 4). Manju Kapur has shown in her works how crucial it is to alter patriarchal society's customs in order to protect women's freedom and rights. Women are released from traditional restrictions by marriages between individuals of other classes and religions. They are always attempting to set themselves apart. Manju Kapur has battled against this tyranny of women in her works.

Her primary protagonists reject the preconception of women being submissive and accepting by seizing opportunities. For them, financial potential is not enough on its own. The socioreligious culture has to embrace their uniqueness. Manju Kapur writes in a way that encourages us to read with more senses than just our eyes while discussing women's liberation and their struggle for equality. A number of Indian women writers have explored the concept of female subjectivity in an effort to forge an identity independent of a patriarchal culture.

The female characters in Manju Kapur's books seem to represent "New Women," who have long since grown weary of constraint and are now ready for freedom. Manju Kapur also talks on what it means to be a woman in the roles of wife, daughter, and mother. She started a trend by transforming the victimized female superhero into an incredible, brave lady. She has altered people's opinions on how brave women can be. The female heroines in Manju Kapur's works barter for their independence and a respectable standing in society. In the strictest sense of the word, the main character is cognitively advanced (Sweetline and Senthamarai, 3). Many Indian women writers have written books that reveal the real face of Indian society and the way it views women. Contemporary writers highlight the diversity of women and their individuality, rather than limiting women's lives to a single ideal.

The works of Anita Desai's Cry, the Peacock, Where Shall We Go This Summer, Githa Hariharan's The Thousand Faces of Night, Rama Mehta's Inside the Haveli, and Nayantara Sehgal paint a picture of shifting images of Indian women who are on a journey and struggling to find their identity. Voices in the City, Two Virgins by Kamala Markandya, To Whom She Will by Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, and Remember the House by Santha Rama Rau.These are just a few examples of how women are seen in Indian civilizations. Among these Indo-English authors is Manju Kapur, whose writings veer between protest and mimicry before reaching self-discovery. As per Honey Sethi and Seema Dhillon, Manju Kapur is a novelist who focuses on issues related to the newly formed urban middle class. Her books' female heroines rebel against women's marginalization and male dominance (Zubair et al., 2).

Conclusion:

Thus, based on the conversation above, Kapur appears to be arguing that realising there is more to life than depending just on parents, marriage, and other like institutions is important, especially for those who have both financial independence and education. There isn't a simple, workable answer to the woman's query. This book by Kapur contains examples of strong, independent, intelligent, and confident women. In the end, the outside forces that seek to suppress their uniqueness and identity are crushed. They seem to be regaining their lives because of their inner strength, determination, and, finally, ability to rely just on themselves. Indian society serves as the basis for the characters, topics, and surroundings of Kapur's work, which portray Indian moral values, culture, and way of life. Kapur skillfully projected a variety of female issues of urban Indian middle-class families, with a focus on man and woman relationships, the impact of modernity on women, women's suffering, marriage, divorce, education, migration, partition, tradition, culture, and the socio-political condition of Indian society. She also addressed women's individuality, identity, and economic independence following India's independence.

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