



## A CRITICAL STUDY OF MANJU KAPUR'S NOVEL-*HOME*

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### Abstract

The main theme is the pursuit of control over one's destiny. Manju Kapur represents the middle class and has even drawn similarities to Jane Austen because of her perceptive, ultimately sympathetic character representations of people in perilous circumstances. In his third book, *HOME*, Kapur skillfully interweaves "conflicting loyalties, intrigues, triumph" along with the "small rebellions and intense power struggle" that characterise the common human experience. The Sunday Times described Manju Kapur's third book, *Home*, as "glistening with detail and emotional acuity." This book was included on the Hutch crossword prize shortlist. The narrative of a family living in the hustle and bustle of the Banwari Lal cloth shop is fascinating. The home, which is used in both its physical and metaphysical manifestations, is the main subject of the work. In her books, Manju Kapur has always attempted to paint a more nuanced image of women's struggles.

**Keywords:** Satirical, emancipation, patriarchal, tranquil, craves, dichotomy, Expatriate, prefiguration, profusion, parochialism, effeminate.

### Introduction

One of the most prominent Indian woman authors of English is Manju Kapur. She has joined the increasing group of contemporary Indian women authors who have considerably advanced Indian fiction. Kapur instinctively understands how women are treated in a patriarchal society. Society and addresses women's issues. Her books depict women's aching effort to define your identity. Her female protagonists shatter and redefine patriarchal expectations and limitations in order to declare their uniqueness and find happiness and fulfilment in their lives. In her novels, a strong feminist tradition is clearly discernible. The main theme is the pursuit of control over one's destiny. Manju Kapur represents the middle class and has even drawn

similarities to Jane Austen because of her perceptive, ultimately sympathetic character representations of people in perilous circumstances. In his third book, *HOME*, Kapur's skillfully interweaves "conflicting loyalties, intrigues, triumph" along with the "small rebellions and intense power struggle" that characterise the common human experience. Three generations of an Indian family are shown in the book, whose fate and aspirations are bound to the Banwarilal fabric store. Manju Kapur, in particular with regard to the protagonist Nisha, has beautifully portrayed women characters in general. Nisha needs to fight to find her place in this world that is ruled by men and to survive. The patriarchal culture is described in the novel, and one of the daughters defies the law due

to shifting social dynamics. Because the story adamantly emphasises that the interests of a business family come before personal considerations, the old house and fabric shop prosper despite individual desires and legal restraints. Home is a brilliant book about the acts of generosity, concession, and secrecy that form the foundation of every family. All of Manju Kapur's main characters are female and are depicted as fighting against all circumstances. In her books, Manju Kapur has always attempted to paint a more nuanced image of women's struggles.

For more than 25 years, Manju Kapur taught English literature at Delhi University's Miranda House College. She has published five novels: *Custody* (2011), *A Married Woman* (2002), *Home* (2006), and *The Immigrant* (2008). Additionally, she curated the 2014 book *Shaping the World: Women Writers on Themselves*.

Once the relationship gets strained, she finds it difficult to accept another man in her life. The family shows the horoscope of a decent man to Nisha. They want her to express her consent. But Nisha questions how anyone could trust marital relationship with strangers. Nisha feels like giving up the idea of marriage.

Her oscillation is useless, because she herself is powerless, quiet and mute. Her family members give too much importance to their duty and responsibility towards their daughter but they hardly make any efforts to ensure a happy married life for their daughter. The primary duty of the parents of a girl, especially father, is to find her a suitable match and the ultimate goal of a woman's life is considered to be marriage and coping with marriage. In the event of bridegroom searching, Nisha disapproves to be a doll in front of the prospective groom and when her mother and aunt order her to wear thick gold bangles, necklace and bangles, she reveals her displeasure and discomfort. This statement explains the behaviour of Indian mothers and their expectations from their daughters. Kapur here expresses how women are subjugated. Women silently accept the patriarchal system. They consider social oppression as something natural. Kapur tries to unearth the truth

that the real cause of a woman's troubles is not man and his attitude towards women, but the system that shapes man's ideas and thoughts. Nisha's misfortune continues and the first proposal fails because of her past involvement with Suresh. The failure makes her mother grudge. She says:

"Are you satisfied Madam? She demanded. This is what your roaming around has done. This is the way people talk. Are you pleased? With our humiliation?" (Home 222).

Her second proposal also fails when she tentatively remarks that there is something not quite right with that bridegroom. Nisha blackened her own respect and tarnished the morals of the traditional family. Hence she is asked not to take any decision on her own about her life. Nisha suffers emotionally due to her family principles. She receives another prospective groom. But, this also drops. Because the groom's parents insist on immediate marriage for which Nisha's father refuses. Nisha's psychical suffering increases her physical pain and she is suffering from severe skin disease. As the only girl child of the whole family, from the day of her birth her complexion has been protected from the sun and safeguarded against pimples by bitter herbs. Right from childhood, Nisha is instructed not to go out in the sun, mix with boys or play in the street like boys. She is a girl and she must take care of her fair complexion which is considered as an essential pre-requisite of a prospective bride in the traditional Indian mind set.

The seeds of gender discrimination are sowed in her innocent mind from the very beginning. The family's immense care about preserving the beauty of Nisha becomes a failure, for her face now has lost its charm. Nisha feels frustrated. Earlier, she used to visit beauty parlours with Suresh. Nisha is asked to follow the diet of juice, fruits and vegetables cooked without spices, oil or salt. For two months tea, coffee, synthetic food, refined sugar and starches are forbidden. Every morning they cover her body with a pack of herbs and mud to draw out the toxins. All these things make her more disheartened. Eating boiled food is a strain for Nisha. Nisha's skin disease brings to light her internal tremor which splits her personality and blemishes her fair skin. She loses

dignity and in her own home, all her sisters- in-law keep distance from her. Even Pooja, her brother's wife, does not want her to touch her baby.

Nisha finds herself unwanted and undesirous. She wants to go to ashram to be with homeless widows. Thus she feels herself an outcaste and untouchable in the family. The novel contains a lengthy description of Nisha's beauty and her family's efforts to sustain her beauty. It is conceived by the members of the family that Nisha could make herself eligible bride in the marriage market. But the underlying fact is that beauty is ephemeral. Nisha has lost her virtue as well as her external beauty. So there are two losses and that increase her suffering.

### **Conclusion**

The book demonstrates Manju Kapur's comprehension of human personalities and her growth as a writer. I don't really care how you convey my feelings as long as they are accurate, as long as they are read. Manju Kapur argues that "cultural trends, gender dynamics, and class dynamics are all brilliantly depicted in the novel." As a teacher as well as a writer, she finds the novels appealing. In an environment of socio-political upheaval, Kapur, a writer of the younger generation, has captured the truth in her fictional story with the desire to alter Indians' perceptions. She talked about the tragedies that her female protagonists go through and die from in order to succeed. Manju Kapur explores in her book how women's roles are evolving from the traditional ones of strong, selfless women to those of self-assured, aggressive, and ambitious women who make society aware of their needs and so provide themselves a platform for expression.

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