

Search for Roots in Manju Kapur's a Married Woman

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Abstract--Women have always been ignored and she longs for appreciation and recognition in life. The moral values and age old traditions are always there in the minds of every individual. The Westernization impact on Indian Society and its reflection in the characters of educated Indian women is inevitable. Manju Kapur's *A Married Woman* is no exception to that. Manju Kapoor's novels portrays the Indian women characters who are in continuous search for roots and identity. Kapur is known for her bold themes in her novels like lesbianism, divorce, infertility, adoption, etc. This paper focuses on the struggle between family traditions and customs that run in the minds of the protagonist in "A Married Woman" which makes her to feel dissatisfaction and drives her to run-in search of roots, identity crisis and their minds are filled with the sense of nowhere belongingness.

Key Words--Identity crisis, Root lessness, Westernization.

I. INTRODUCTION

Literature reflects life, human emotions, customs, traditions, culture and knowledge are shared through poetry, drama, novels etc. Indian writing in English became popular since 19 C. Elaine Showalter in her essay "Feminist Criticism in Wilderness" – she speaks about liberating women from old customs, traditions and conservative fetters. She emphasizes on the idea of gynocentric which concerns about the experience of looking at themes from writers point of view and compares the feminist critique to the old Testament, "looking for the sins and the errors of the past and gynocentric to the New Testament, seeking the grace of Jeremiah's of the feminist critique can lead us out of the Egypt of female Servitude to the promised land of the feminist vision" (IGOU, MEG-05, P.39).

The post-colonial writers like Manju Kapur, Bharati Mukherjee, Anita Desai, ShobhaDe, NayantraSaghal, Kamala Das and some of the few Indian women writers voicing out the feelings of women in their writings. The writings of the women authors workcome under the female phase because their theme of works are much with alienation, rootlessness, Quest for identity and assertion. Manju Kapur's "A Married Women" "is no exception to that. In Married Woman Astha the protagonist of the novel, suffers from rootlessness, search for identity and dissatisfaction. The inner conflict between herself and the society can be seen throughout the novel. This paper focuses on her struggle to find her roots and a satisfaction in life.

II. MANJU KAPUR- A WRITER WITH BOLD THEMES

Manju Kapur is a contemporary Indian women novelist with modern themes in her novels. She has written about five novels, her first novel is *Difficult Daughters* (1998), which was awarded with the Common Wealth Writers Prize, *A Married Woman* (2002), *Home* (2006), *The Immigrant* (2009) and *Custody* (2001). Manju Kapur's novels are translated in many Indian and other languages.

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Manju Kapur novels deals with the shift that women moving from the traditional old themes of self-sacrifice, longing for the love of men, accepting male dominance, which the women thought as their plight. Kapur's novels are built in the Indian middle-class family setup and all her women characters in her novels are well educated and we can see a constant struggle between modernity in the characters. The concept of traditional social values which Kapur doesn't want sacrifice and *A Married Woman* is no exception to that.

III. SEARCH FOR ROOTS IN "A MARRIED WOMAN"

In *A Married Woman* Kapur writes about her Astha who struggles to find meaning and roots to fix themselves. The Protagonist Astha is very different from other normal women. Astha finds difficult in adjusting with her family and her husband. All through the novel Astha seems to be disturbed and struggles to express. The loneliness and her search for roots turns her as an introvert and she starts sketching and writing poems. Through her writings she finds temporary relief. Her poem titled 'Change' explicitly shows the readers about her feelings, loneliness and relief. The eventual release from pain in the tearing relentless separation from those in habit loved can come so slowly it seems there will never be a day of final peace and tranquility (p.80).

As the novel moves her search for roots and her lack of involvement in the family grows stronger. Her spirit spikes up when Aijaz, a theatre personality asks her to write the script for the school play. When her script on Babri Masjid gets enacted and appreciated by Aijaz, she feels happy and recognized. But to Hemant, it sounded like a parrot. He tells her: "please, keep to what you know best, the home, children, teaching. All doesn't suit you"(P.116). Hemant being a husband expects Astha to take care of his family and children and he says these kinds of things doesn't suit her.

Astha involves in political movement, the death of Aijaz affects her so much that in an effort to comfort his wife she goes to an extent of having a sexual relationship with her. The sense of dissatisfaction in family life with Hemant is obvious through this act of her. When Pip makes her decision to move away from Astha, she realizes that nowhere she can relay except to go back to her family and to continue with her painting: "There she was with the shrouded canvases, bottles of turpentine and linseed oil, tubes of colour lying in baskets around the easel, and grey rags stiff with dried paint. These were the tools of her trade, these were the things that established her separate life, and touching them was comfort (p. 299)

Self realization comes to her in the end of the novel, that she cannot go elsewhere and escape from has no place to fix her. Though Astha seems to be very different in some places in the novel, the age old family traditions and customs are there within her which is a reflection every Indian woman. She is dare not to express her relationship with Pip and her search for roots continues and never made her way out. She longs for appreciation, identity and satisfaction as a modern woman. She fights with Hemant in the novel where she refuses to share a room for her sister in law who is in abroad. She questions Hemant that it is necessary to share a room in her house for a person who is there in abroad. Astha wishes to be her house and the incidents one after the other makes her to feel alone and to search for her roots. Her feeling of identity crisis and search for roots never finds a solutions. She accepts her reality and continues with her family life. Through her search, she realizes that her family is the only place where she can get rooted.

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