

Representation of Breaking Beyond Patriarchy: A Study of Manju Kapur's *Home*

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Abstract

Indian English authors have broken out of their shells and started to speak up for the society's voiceless individuals. Manju Kapur is one of them who has written novels to combat the marginalization and exploitation of women. The purpose of the essay is to evaluate Kapur's treatment of her female characters in *Home* in order to comprehend and respect the difficulties that come from the conflicting demands of both contemporary and traditional society. In Indian society, individualism and disagree are regarded as exotic notions, and the position of the woman in the house and her marital satisfaction remain prominent concerns. The main characters in Manju Kapur's work express their resistance in various ways and work to subvert accepted norms. The article also attempts to demonstrate that women in Kapur's works are opposed to patriarchy rather than males.

Keywords: Patriarchy, Suppression, Marriage, Conformity, Deviance

In her books, Manju Kapur explores a variety of concerns associated with Indian patriarchy and how it impacts women. Her books largely focus on educating women so they can live really emancipated lives. Women who are attempting to build their own identities are depicted by Kapur in her writings. The author effectively highlights their shifting and suffocation within the conventional boundaries of family and marriage. In her works, Kapur conveys anguish on the physical and mental levels. In a patriarchal society, women are not treated similarly to males; instead, they are either given second-class status or are completely ignored. Women are oppressed in a society where men predominate, and radical feminists speak out against this.

Radical feminism is a worldview that places an intense focus on the patriarchal causes of gender inequality, or more precisely, the social dominance of women by males. According to radical feminism, patriarchy largely divides society privileges, obligations, and authority along

sex lines, which have the effect of suppressing women and elevating men. It maintains the stance that a society governed by patriarchal norms is fundamentally oppressive to women and searches for the underlying causes of such subjugation. They contend that women belong to a sex-based class and that the dynamics between men and women need to be reformed. They aimed to make gender meaningless and radically reconstruct both public and private life and wanted to uproot patriarchy entirely. The patriarchal rules, which have a long history of male supremacy over females, are so deeply entrenched in both men and women that even after decades of feminist struggle against patriarchy, it has not entirely got rid of restricting standards.

Manju Kapur's third novel, *Home*, puts us on a tense yet pleasantly appealing journey through three generations. The patriarchal family of Banwari Lal, who adhere to traditional Indian practices, is the subject of the book. Kapur is a symbol of modern women who challenge patriarchal norms and ideas about what it is to be helpless, feeble, and dependent. Nisha, the novel's protagonist, is a contemporary woman who fights to establish her own identity by turning into economically independent while remaining detached from the patriarchy. The head of the household, Banwari Lal, runs a sari store in Karol Bagh. He is the father of Sunita, a married daughter, and Yashpal and Pyarelal, two sons. The three female characters in the novel are Sona, Banwari Lal's daughter-in-law, Rupa, Sona's sister, and Nisha (Sona's daughter), the protagonist.

Two sisters, Sona and Rupa, who are introduced in the novel are one charming and the other simple. Each of them believes the other to be calmer and more fortunate than they are. Both of their lives are difficult in some respects. In a patriarchal shared household, Sona suffers a lot. Due to the fact that she brings less dowry and has been infertile for ten years—two very painful facts—her mother-in-law criticizes and insults her. Rupa's husband supports her in every manner despite the fact that she is infertile.

Sona's submissive and adjustable attitude are the only reasons why her marriage is always viable. Sunita is tortured by her intoxicated husband, but she always keeps it a secret from her parents. It's because the patriarchy trains women how to get along with their husbands and in-laws. She leaves her ten-year-old son Vicky behind when she commits herself by burning as a result of her miserable marriage and patriarchy. Vicky is pushed towards Sona, who is barren, without any prior discussion because everybody else regards her as a poor-quality object. Sona leads a solitary existence because she has no one with whom to discuss her concerns. Her grievances are silenced, and she receives complete disregard.

Sona, who is childless, works hard every day to uphold her position in the family. Nisha, the protagonist of this story, is a girl child who is born to her after she has suffered extremely over the previous ten years. Nisha's teenage cousin Vicky sexually harassed her as a young child. She is taken to her aunt Rupa after the incident because this has made her psychologically vulnerable; there, she excels in school. However, in the traditional family of Banwari Lal, having expertise in taking care of household responsibilities gets priority above education for girls.

Rupa and Sona have opposing views on matters of education and profession, which is symbolic of the two attitudes, conformity and deviation, that women have towards patriarchal society. Sona is a conservative woman who values being obligated to her family. She cares

deeply about her familial responsibilities. And for her, this devotion means the world. Sona, believes that marriage is her daughter's ultimate goal. She also wants her daughter to pursue in her footsteps.

In Kapur's words, "Sona was making up for negligent upbringing. Nisha needed to be grounded in the tradition that would make her a wife worth having. The art of service and domesticity should shine in her daughter so brightly that she would overcome her negative karma to be a beacon in her married home" (*Home* 128).

Girls are often regarded as a marriage material at home. Rupa believes that females should receive an education so they can develop as individuals. Girls should receive an education that prepares them to stand on their own, says Rupa's husband.

Her traditional family structure does not embrace her changes, so as soon as she enrolls in college, she alters the way she dresses and cuts her hair. Her subtle modifications have tuned her to be self-assured and forward-thinking. When Nisha falls in love with Suresh and decides to marry him, conventional ideals and discrimination based on race enforced an end to their relationship. Nisha endures hardships throughout the story as an outcome of society's beliefs being in contradiction to hers. She has never been bothered by cultural norms because she wants to be a self-sufficient, independent woman.

She has a lot of challenges to overcome since ending the relationship. She is effectively imprisoned in her own home and is not even permitted to leave the house alone. Nisha disapproves of the custom of arranged marriage. The author of the work illustrates how a girl in an Indian home is not allowed to make her own decisions, particularly when it comes to marriage. She is required to give up all of her desires in order to protect her family. Nisha decides to start working since she is sick of being alone. Nisha starts working at an area play school.

She thinks about the potential for accomplishing greatest things in the world. Nisha utters to her father, "I want to do something of value" (286). In order to establish herself in the business sector, she aspires to set up her own firm. Nisha has opened her boutique and "her father suggested she call her line Nisha's Creations" (292). She does not find it difficult to navigate the business world because she comes from a family of business experts. Sona has helped Nisha with her company, but she is quite concerned about her daughter's future as a mother. For her, the girls should have been able to cook, care for children, carry out familial duties and handle household chores.

On the one hand, Nisha's business is expanding daily, and on the other, family members are keen in Nisha's marriage. They have finally approached a manglic widower whose horoscope matches Nisha's. Nisha has a conventional upbringing, yet she is motivated to demonstrate her talent and capacity for hard work. She does not concern about what the society thinks about her breaking the patriarchal set up. "Nisha didn't care what people said or thought" (289).

The transition from first-generation women taking care of the home to third-generation women fulfilling more significant professional responsibilities is comprehensive. In order to

continue with her success in business after giving birth to twins, she also had the moral backing of her husband Arvind.

The difficulties that a typical Indian woman encounters in daily life and how society complicates those difficulties have been expertly depicted by Kapur. One type of female figure that has been used is the stereotype of conventional society, like Nisha's mother, who has a history of oppressing women under the guise of tradition. Nisha is an example of the second kind of character since she has grown past her lack of expertise and is now a self-reliant woman. This essay illustrates how crucial family and society values are, unless they are biased against either gender. Additionally, it affirms that deviants from social norms are not against men but patriarchy that curtails women's individuality in the name of tradition.

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