



THE STRUGGLE FOR IDENTITY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MANJU KAPUR AND ANITA DESAI'S SELECTED NOVELS

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ABSTRACT

Manju Kapur as well as Anita Desai seems to be on the quest for order and that means in lifestyles in their Indian English fiction writing. Their protagonists undergo a struggle to locate their real self; due to the cramping pressures of anxieties, they seem to have misplaced it. They revel in a disparity between the better needs of the character's internal nature and the unalterable cosmic conditions of existence. Those who are able to comprehend and surmount their private problems appear to advantage a healthy vision of existence after a few struggles. Desai stays in most cases a novelist of moods, of chronic states of mind, of the psyche. Most of her novels are prolonged narratives of states of being which do not cohere right into a plot or shape in the conventional sense, Desai sees the sector in phrases of enjoy as it emerges from the come across of the self with the arena out of doors. This depth and density of texture compensates for the absence of a robust plot or story lime in her fiction. Kapur has carefully located and portrayed the small human info of actual relationships. The bewildering ranges of communication and false impression among the characters are depicted almost fondly, yet contrast strongly with the exhilarating freedom of being in a dating in which there's authentic intimacy. This paper attempts to expose how they reap the outcomes they are seeking to advantage, so as to expose no longer handiest the extremity of the struggling endured with the aid of ladies, but additionally the deep psychological troubles that beset many humans.

Keywords: Real Self, Conditions of life, States of Mind, psychological Issues, Real Relationships, Struggles.



INTRODUCTION

Fiction writing has reached the top of its glory with the writings of hooked up ladies writers of fiction like, Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Atia Hussain, Nayantara Sehgal, Kamala Markandeya Anita Desai, Santha Rama Rao, Kiran Desai, and Manju Kapur. The primary view is that our civilization is pervasively patriarchal, is male-focused and controlled and organized and performed in such way as to subordinate women to men in all cultural domains: familial, religious, political, economic, social, legal, and inventive. In the patriarchal view, women are taught in the technique of being socialized and are advocated to co-operate in their subordination. (Naik, M.K.)

Feminism being a crucial motion within the contemporary global, lady's region, role and mainly the query of her identification are the primary problems in India additionally. In India, considering that a long time, a female's function in lifestyles became strictly compartmentalized; she was a daughter, a spouse or a mother. In these kinds of roles she needed to adhere to certain appointed norms; she had no separate identification as a person. Things are searching up in recent times, specifically most of the groups where women's education and material prosperity have ushered in a degree of enlightenment. In commonplace with girls all around the international, Indian female is also voicing her choice to be emancipated, to cast off the unjust restrictions imposed on her and the pervasive discriminations against her. She is seeking the right to be regarded as an entire man or women, not definitely as an adjunct to her male family. (Iyengar, Srinivasa)

Quest for identification and Female-Assertiveness in Contemporary Indian Fiction in English is a bifocal subject. It directs its gaze towards philosophy and psychology and looks towards social technological know-how and literature. The very expression 'Quest for Identity' has end up an elegant time period in literary and different research. Day-in and day-out, the newspapers document on numerous sections of society resort to the expression 'look for identity'. Their memories inform us about 'country wide identification', 'nearby identity', 'tribal identification', 'cultural identity', 'guy's identification', 'women's identity', 'Indian identification', 'European identity', 'institution identity' and hoards of other identities. One has no idea what number of identities are at present floating in the air. It may be very hard to have been counted of them, to seize them, and to realise them.

Psychologists verify that female identification varies in lots of methods from the male identity. Therefore, ladies alone can convey their experience without a doubt and authentically. Again, inside the changed occasions of these days, she would be the fittest medium to inform the arena approximately her feeling of hurt, and approximately her experience of struggling.



Anita Desai

Anita Desai's treatment of the issues of alienation, maladjustment, isolation, the absurdity of human lifestyles, the hunt for final that means, and time as fourth dimension, have an existential learning. In certainly one of her interviews, she admits to having been influenced consciously with the aid of Proust, Dostovesky, Lawrence, Checkov and Kawabata. Like some of the above writers, her works are also a quest for order and meaning in lifestyles. Her protagonists go through warfare to discover their actual self, which they had lost, because of the pressures of anxieties. They experience a disparity between the better desires of the character's inner nature and the unalterable cosmic condition of existence.

Desai's self-alienated personages are frequently entangled in non-public problems and can't feel existential angst, due to the fact they may be gripped by using neurotic tension. Hence such characters lose their real self, forgo human values and create irredeemable situations for them. These characters try to find a 'substitute' for their misplaced self. Each desires to shield his identity in order that he remains meaningful to himself and is able to see himself as a person vast. The vital urge of everyone is to 'carry himself above others', to defend himself from the antagonistic and determined atmosphere perpetuated by means of a damaging adolescence climate. Maya sees herself as a "doll" to be pampered by means of all, Monisha glorifies her self-image as an intellectual, superior class other ladies of Jiban's family. These characters, ensnared of their delusions of glory, skip thru extreme alienation and become with their strange self-detrimental conduct. (Iyengar, Srinivasa)

In Anita Desai the urge for self-expression is in itself a effective force towards self-actualization. Her valuable characters are usually engaged in a quest. Her characters like Monisha, Amla and Nirode are free spirits, who upset with the habitual of everyday happenings of the sector, spoil away from their existing existence patterns, handiest to realize that family and social ties cannot be so effortlessly substituted. The reputedly stoic Nirode, seeks some type of achievement of their lonely lifestyles, is interested in their lonely environment over and over. For a number of Desai's characters the realization comes finally and that character's freedom should create a few kind of new dating out of the mundane daily happenings.

Anita Desai creates a international in which the internal and the outer selves aspire for concord. She is an analyst of the human thoughts, a creator of tremendous characters, and an astute interpreter of existence. She affords a gallery of bright and sensible images. The motivational device of her characters works within the abnormal way, proper to their surroundings and their basic needs. The characters are caught inside the net of their own compulsions. One starts to recognize that their objectives, disappointments and loneliness are actual. The psychological intricacies of the conduct of her protagonists, their struggles to find



which means of their lives, signify the concern of current man with the everlasting human situation, which speak of the altered point of view of writers in depict characters Jain and Jasbir.

In her *Voices within the town*, most people of her characters - Maya, Monisha, Nirode, Raka, Nanda - live lives in phantasm by using chickening out into fabrication and fantasy, or display their reluctance to face fact; they stay in self-imposed solitary confinement. Then, there are characters that compromise with lifestyles - Sita, Sarah, Amla, Bim and Devan. Although they have their conflicts, they manipulate to go beyond their personal hassle. Amla suffers existential crisis, but soon decides that she cannot allow herself to be lost like her sister. This affirmation is spontaneous. Bim accepts her gift, and linking it along with her beyond, marches in advance toward a shiny destiny. In Sita and Bim, there is, as a minimum, a decision to verify existence. The growing urge for self-discovery in Desai's characters for that reason famous the growth ability of her protagonists, as also the ever-growing vision of their creator. Her primary career in all her works is not how one receives together with others, but with oneself.

Nirode had no experience of real self. He is losing contact with fact. All his efforts are diverted towards his identification. In Nirode's individual, Anita Desai shows her prowess for a effective dramatization of human isolation. Dissatisfied with his family and society, Nirode seeks solace in his self-conceived international of imagination. In Nirode's case, his real self, the "I" isn't weighted down: it's far shunted out by means of his exquisite-ego that is his glorified self-image. Consequently, he can't arrive at a correct self-definition. He is positive that you can still hold one's sanity through being secretive and final oneself off to all verbal exchange. To Monisha he exhorts, "Never tell them your secrets" (Desai, Anita. p.132). Communion seems to him painful and humiliating as to Monisha. "I made myself inferior to all these frauds by making an attempt to make them read anything I'd written. Anything that is of any value to oneself to be kept great secret" (Desai, Anita. p.135).

Withdrawal is a critical answer Nirode adopts, to counter the difficulties generated by his "ontological insecurities". In the primary few pages of the unconventional one learns that he has opted for a lifestyles of "shadows, silence and stillness" (Desai, Anita. 8). This is a protection mechanism to guard his idealized self picture as a self-sufficient and impartial person. Nirode creates for himself a useless silence. It does now not vibrate with the voice of the spirit. It isn't always a sign of everyday withdrawal, but a neurotic compulsion.

Desai's paintings are also a quest for order and that means in life. Her protagonists go through a conflict to discover their real self and because of the cramping pressures of anxieties, they'd lost it. They experience a disparity between the higher desires of the character's inner nature and the unalterable cosmic conditions of lifestyles. Their personal



and historic issues play a large position in exaggerating their existential issues and in perpetuating their neurosis. Those who are able to comprehend and surmount their private problems seem to advantage a healthy vision of life. (Kumar, Ashok).

Anita Desai remains typically a novelist of moods, of continual states of mind, of the psyche. Most of her novels are prolonged narratives of states of being which do not cohere right into a plot or shape within the traditional feel, Desai sees the arena in terms of experience because it emerges from the stumble upon of the self with the sector outdoor. Anita Desai dwells on the variety and complexity of this restricted international with the sensitivity and imagination of a poet. She observes every sight and sound with a depth that now not best damages however also baffles the readers. This depth and density of texture compensates for the absence of a sturdy plot or story lime in her fiction. (Iyengar, Srinivasa)

Manju Kapur

The subject matter of marriage was emphasized by using Manju Kapur in her *Difficult Daughters* thru heroine Virmati who taken into consideration marriage as the journey's end. Viewed from this factor of view *Difficult Daughters* is an innocuous human document. It is a cry for freedom. The very identify of the e book is assertive. By placing the adjective 'hard', earlier than daughters, the author sends a signal that the characters inside the novel are not gentle and pliable. They are not in all likelihood to yield to pressures - familial and social and are certain to carve out the radical route that meets their aspirations. They are for making daring picks in the unkind global.

An incident that eloquently tells us about Virmati's assertive nature is her squatting on the floor in a category of 4 hundred boys and six ladies, with a 'rattling the world' attitude This gesture jewelry alarm bells in lots of hearts, and the ambitious step turns the fictional global the other way up. Her anger and assertiveness, ranging from small to big length, may be seen inside the tart replies she gives to Kasturi.

“What is wrong with not wanting to marry?”

“Tell him I don't want to marry?” (Kapur, Manju. 54)

Further, her leap into the swirling waters of a river, her pre-marital sex and different episodes may be seen as acts of assertiveness, of defiance. After all, defiance is the first step of asserting one's character. This takes us lower back to the query of identification“Which forces change your identity?” Which forces alternate your identification?” The simplest answer we get is, “What you identify yourself with” (Kapur, Manju)



Virmati's identification starts off evolved to change as she identifies herself with Shakuntala and with Lahore. This identity step by step creates in her a desire to be unfastened. And to meet that preference she demolishes something comes in her manner. She accordingly constructs her new identification. The tale starts off evolved with Ida's intense preference to align herself with her mom's beyond, as she journeys backwards in time after her mom's funeral. She then relives via the pages of her book, the acute battles of her mom as a daughter, rebelling in opposition to her convention sure own family and looking for success of her passionate love affair. (Kapur, Manju)

The theme of *Difficult Daughters* is the conflict of a girl against lifestyle, which keeps even today. Those who swim with the tide are comfortable, and people who dare to strike towards convention have a painful strife on their hands. But it is the latter that form the middle of such books and no longer the previous, which's at ease lives move unsung.

Virmati is a daughter born right into a big family wherein girls are alleged to marry, breed and cater to the meals-fixated Punjabi patriarchs. The description of an average Punjabi family is ideal; even today certain households stay the equal way. She has controlled to capture the taste of Punjabi existence by way of the use of the typical terms bhraji", "pehni", "acchar murabe" (Kapur, Manju) and so on.

The author goes forwards and backwards, as she transcends the time barrier; she starts with the existing; she traces her mother's story, punctuated with the event of her grandmother's existence to provide contrast. Of route, the core of the book stays Virmati's conflicts in a politically surcharged and convention-ridden society. She concludes through the appearance of Virmati's daughter Ida. Her mother fought to give legitimacy to her love via marriage regardless of family competition. Ida succeeds in breaking out of an unsuccessful marriage and staying unmarried, a phenomenon unparalleled in her grandmother Kasturi's time. The focus of the writer is on the arena of girl, but she additionally factors out that men too were in traditional fetters. Like the Oxford knowledgeable Professor, sure in a loveless marriage to an uneducated woman.

The creator's style is soaking up; she has an eye for detail, particularly, that every one too acquainted existence fashion of Punjab. Through the unconventional *Difficult Daughters*, the social and political milieu of the period emerges very powerfully, as it blends smoothly with the emotional fabric. Strangely, there may be a paucity of social records in English of this era, in assessment to the abundance of political records.

Difficult Daughters need to be examining by using the Lahore fixation for a return journey to a generation, so one can fade away because the pre-partition era, the primary supply of that oral history, step by step dwindles. The current spurt of books, some of which provide a



thrilling blend of fact and fiction, might upload to the style of social history. Kapur has intently determined and portrayed the small human information of actual relationships. The bewildering tiers of conversation and false impression among the characters are depicted nearly fondly, yet evaluation strongly with the exhilarating freedom of being in a relationship in which there may be proper intimacy.

In depicting the inner subtlety of a lady's thoughts, Kapur displays a mature understanding of the girl psyche. Most of all, Kapur manages to lend the personalized effect with the external. She speaks as a person who has lived through the unrest of the communal riots, which in some way or the other affected the lives of all Indians. These communal riots were a chief historical occasion and Kapur has entwined them with simplicity and information into the lives of Astha and Pipeelika. She shows an India which is applicable each to folks who stayed on in their use of a to face the aggression of Western impacts and heightened opposition, and people who opted to view the USA from Western climes.

In each novel, *Difficult Daughters* and *Voices inside the City*, the authors reveal the response of the heroines subjected to uncaring and willfully negligent mind-set in their family individuals to appearance beyond vistas without delay available. They try for his or her liberty and equality with their counter components, undergoing great problems and benefit them on the give up.

A personal record of the protagonist is connected with the social and national history. In *Difficult Daughters* the turmoil at the political front corresponds with the turmoil inside the lives of the individuals. Virmati does no longer positioned questions to herself and she or he does now not evolve as a person. Virmati's humble and heroic struggling, with the intention to comfy her love and marriage with the professor, who's already married to Ganga and has a infant, stands as a image of her assertiveness and the concept of the emancipated girl, who's destined to carve out a gap for herself.

Some of Kapur's characters are vitally alive. In the process of individuation they have self electricity and a tendency to emerge out in their isolation, lack of confidence and anxiety and gain a kind of closeness and harmony. The primary problem she points to, is how is one to combine in society, and but maintain one's individuality. A profound feeling of sympathy springs from her artwork of making human beings caught inside the terror of facing lifestyles with all its sickening truth.

The developing urge for self-discovery in Manju Kapur's characters consequently well-known shows the boom capability of her protagonists as also the ever growing imaginative and prescient of their man or woman. Virmati's general negation of self in her efforts to merge along with her husband's family is more consistent with the conventional notion of



adjustment. She adheres to the age-vintage advice, which her mother additionally gave her, as to in no way argue with the elders, respect them and do as they wish. Manju Kapur explores the loneliness of human psyche in *Virmati* and *Ida*, where all lifestyles as seen as one large abyss.

Manju Kapur and Anita Desai

Surely, “neat, excellent and humorous” aren't the proper adjectives to define the happenings within the *Difficult Daughters*. Manju Kapur talks approximately the equal name in her different novel, set in Amristar across the time of partition. Kapur's novel is a singularly astounding fiction, one of a kind from Desai's although it deals with another very Indian topic, marriage. Yet, this maximum used and abused challenge of Indian fiction is dealt with through Manju Kapur in quite an uncommon manner and with very few concessions to the typical fashions both of Indian and European female narrative.

Actually the opening of the unconventional - ‘The one aspect I had desired was now not to be like my mother’ - would possibly remind the reader of Jane Austen in its tone and of Shashi Deshpande in its topic. On the contrary, once the narrator has reported this horrible count number of truth announcement, the story she tells, takes a one of a kind turn both from Austen's center magnificence irony, and Deshpande's female doubts and issues. *Ida*, who tells the story, tries to show that she has better motives than the ordinary female identity crisis for now not wishing to be just like her mother.

However, telling the long tale of her mother's strife to be a unfastened man or woman, regardless of all of the policies and impositions of the Indian culture, *Ida* manages most effective to gain a form of very last sympathy for her rebellious mom. Actually, *Virmati*, who's in no way painted as a heroine, reaches many desires. As common, *Virmati* was refused the liberty like every Indian lady inside the colonial times, and by no means did she get that freedom she longed for therefore badly. The tale of *Virmati* isn't best the tale of a *Difficult Daughter*, but additionally of a stubborn student, a hopeless lover, an unwanted daughter-in-law, a despised second spouse, a rejected mom, in a phrase, an intruder to the give up of her days.

Written in a brisk style, without concessions to watercolor descriptions and self-complacent musings, *Difficult Daughters* suggests, despite the fact that, some naiveties usual of a first novel. Kapur has some problems with points of perspectives (*Ida*, who must be the narrator, is no extra than a shadow, whose voice may be very regularly forgotten with the aid of her writer). (Kapur, Manju)



Kapur's novel leaves a fantastic affect. It is a e book that makes the reader reflect- about circle of relatives, marriage, love and the commitments they contain. But most of all, it is a tale about the problem of being a daughter - and the errors daughters dedicate a good way to stay Lives one of a kind from their moms. This is an enjoying all ladies proportion; and so this novel isn't thrilling to examine, nor is it as easy as Desai's. But it remains within the reader's heart for a much longer time, as it successfully speaks at the theme of Quest for Identity.

Desai's women, live in a global in which harmony is aspired to but never arrived at. Total alienation is Monisha's dharma; it's miles in self realization and whilst that appears inconceivable or when the Quest for which means in life fails, she chooses between "propose life and dying"- suicide in the company of an extra existential way toward actuality. Desai's protagonists choose extinction when life ceases to have meaning.

CONCLUSION

My Conclusion, the search for identification as a subject genuinely manifests inside the novels of Manju Kapur and Anita Desai. For the fulfillment of a fully pleasant, mature, intelligent, satisfied and innovative personality, this quest is to be met with fulfillment. Otherwise one shall have an emotionally and intellectuality dwarfed persona with a purpose to be greatly lacking in all internal pleasure and peace, and real interest in experiencing the numerous charms and beauties that life gives.

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