

A Comparative Study Of The Archetypal Concepts Of Jhumpa Lahiri And Manju Kapur

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ABSTRACT

The paper highlights the comparative study of writers with regard to Archetypal Concepts of Jhumpa Lahiri and Manju Kapur. However, Annis Pratt, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, are some of the writers whose work have also been highlighted here. The majority of female writers have depicted the enclosed household space and their own experiences. Women are the major upholders of a rich oral legacy of storytelling, through myths, stories, songs and fables. Many Indian women novelists have explored women related issues as theme in their writings, ranging from childhood to womanhood in the form of a Bildungromans. The writings of Jhumpa Lahiri and Manju Kapur can also be classified as Bildungromans, in which the protagonist grows morally, psychologically, and intellectually from childhood to old age.

Keywords: Comparative, Study, Archetypal, Writers, Jhumpa Lahiri, Manju Kapur.

INTRODUCTION

Archetypes are fluid and dynamic, allowing for the growth and development of women's personalities. Some feminist theorists consider stereotype and archetype to be interchangeable terms. Both, according to Mary Daly, are part of a "trap constructed by society's physician of the soul" that creates a false "paradise" of archetypes and repetition (161).

Archetypes, on the other hand, are both projective and "repetitive," futuristic and grounded in women's history (Pratt, 135). In their topics and characters, women writers have followed archetypal patterns that deal with typical difficulties of everyday life and man's journey towards fulfilment. The usual order of life phases in women's literature is interrupted at every step by the conflict inherent in women's experience. A hero's inner growth determines how authentic she is to herself and how unconventional her connection with patriarchy is.

The quest for identification of the youthful self is a key theme in mythology, religion, and literature, and it is typically codified in a ritual entrance into the mysteries of maturity. In her stories, Manju Kapur portrays women who are trying to find their own identity. In *Difficult Daughters*, *Virmati*, the novel's key character,

rebels against tradition in her search for individuality. In *Virmati*, Kapur uses a traditional thread to depict the need for autonomy and independent identity. The novel's title, *Problematic Daughters*, foreshadows the message that a woman who tries to find her identity is labelled as a difficult daughter by both her family and society. The patriarchal nature of Indian society is well-known. Women who were subjected to patriarchal coercion and control were subjected to far more abuse and social exclusion. They faced discrimination and bigotry because of their gender. *Virmati* achieves a near-exemplary level of female liberty in Manju Kapur's work, but she still falls. She marries Harish, but she is unable to acquire a position in the household. She isn't even recognised for her intelligence. As a result, she embodies the archetype of the Damsel in Distress. She is not allowed to make her own decisions. It is ingrained in her, that males are the providers and that a woman's "shaan" is to marry. *Virmati* believes that it would have been better if she had not married Harish throughout her wedded life.

Virmati's ambition is doomed to fail because to the lack of understanding she receives from both her own family and the guy she marries. Because she cannot fight patriarchy, *Virmati*'s

battle for autonomy and unique identity stays unfinished.

The story of *Virmati* is told through the perspective of her daughter *Ida*, who embarks on a quest to understand her mother following her mother's funeral. *Ida's* trip into her mother's past is a journey into the unconscious. As a result, when the daughter begins writing about her mother, she is attempting to discover her own roots, identity, and a deeper knowledge of herself and her mother.

Astha, the protagonist in *Kapur's A Married Women*, is on a journey into the unconscious as well. Her goal is to become one with herself rather than with the society she has found to be hostile to her ambitions. After the monotony of her married life began to stain her new life, *Astha* embarks on her journey. "A woman should be cognizant of self-control, strong willed, self-reliant, and reasonable, having faith in the inherent strength of womanhood," *Manju Kapur* says through *Astha*. "Only through being free in the deeper psychic sense can genuine change be brought about from within." (90) *Astha* prefers to be independent of others and pursues full human status, posing a threat to *Hemant* and his male superiority. She is, however, caught between the demands of a modern developing society and the constraints of ancient biases. In her lesbian relationship, she embarks on a quest for a more meaningful life. She canonizes and remembers her wounded feminine sensibility as a catalyst for societal change in the male tantrum.

Nisha, the protagonist in *Manju Kapur's* third novel *Home*, embarks on a journey as well—a voyage for independence. She finds herself waiting and doing nothing once her romance with *Suresh* ends. She wishes to accomplish something worthwhile and begs her father to allow her to start her own company. This is the heroine's call to adventure, her path of tribulations. This is the period when she is put to the test, when the journey refines and strengthens her.

The female protagonists of *Kapur's* work are on a quest for identification and survival. They refuse to accept the patriarchal and male-dominated culture and instead want to forge their own unique identity. In a patriarchal society, a woman's role is limited to domesticity and childcare. This has been in practice with women as their duties to due domesticity under the constraint of patriarchal concepts (system) and regulations, however

Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* challenges why a woman is restricted to domesticity and childcare under a patriarchal society. "The demand for self-fulfillment—autonomy, self-realization, independence, individuality, self-actualization— is as vital for women as it is for men..." she remarks. (Friedan, 282). This is why *Manju Kapur's* female heroes embark on a mission.

The study of *Jhumpa Lahiri's* novel *The Namesake*, released in 2003, examines the long search for cultural identity by Indian American immigrants. The problems of first-generation immigrants to claim a western identity while maintaining rich eastern customs are explored in this novel.

It also looks at the obstacles that second-generation immigrants experience, as exemplified by the main character, *Gogol*, who tries to lose his Bengali identity in order to fully embody his American position. *Ashima* gives birth to her first kid, *Gogol*, as the *Gangulis* call him. This is the name that causes the protagonist, *Gogol Ganguli* or *Nikhil Ganguli*, to have an identity crisis. The letter with the new born's name never arrives, and in America, a birth certificate with the baby's name must be produced on the day the baby is discharged, whereas in India, "it wasn't unusual for years to pass before the appropriate name, the best possible name, was selected" (Lahiri, 25). In a desperate situation, *Ashoke* names his baby *Gogol Ganguli*, after a Russian writer *Nikolai Gogol*, who saved him from a railway catastrophe many years before. With this name, *Gogol* experiences an identity problem, as he does not feel like he belongs in either his birth nation or his birthplace, and he is well aware that he is not a Russian. "Gogol's life was a slow descent into madness...he was believed to be hypochondriac and a terribly neurotic, frustrated man," says the author (Lahiri, 91). His quest for re-invention and self-discovery is motivated by his odd name and the problems that an immigrant faces in trying to uncover his true identity in a society where he is assigned dual identities based on his roots and birthplace. The title *The Namesake* alludes to *Gogol Ganguli's* struggle to come to terms with his odd name. His quest to find his place in the world is a two-fold one. A person's name, which ultimately identifies his uniqueness, becomes a burden for him. It does not provide him with an identity, but it does place him in a quandary concerning his true identity. Second,

being the child of immigrants in America, he is continually confronted with difficulties originating from his Indian heritage.

We get a thrilling and freeing picture of the Diasporic scenarios commonly encountered by immigrants throughout the narrative through diverse individuals. Gogol's search for identity is never-ending; he can't completely renounce Indian culture or even entirely accept American norms.

The plot *When Pirzada Came to Dine* is told from the perspective of Lilia, a ten-year-old girl. This narrative depicts an uncommon situation in which a family clings to their Indian heritage, expressing and re-expressing their passion for Indianness. Little Lilia also starts on a quest to get to know herself in this novel. Mr. Pirzada's memory forces Lilia to look deeper within herself in order to discover herself. She's on a spiritual quest, a self-discovery voyage. Lilia obtains insight into a window, a world far away from her own, through Mr. Pirzada. Alienation, loneliness, homelessness, existential rootlessness, nostalgia, questioning, protest, and assertions drive Lahiri's characters on a quest, as do issues such as cultural amalgamation or disintegration, discriminating margins of two social milieus, internalizing nostalgia, and suffering forced amnesia. Both Lahiri and Kapur present their female characters as victims. Lahiri's victims are victims of marginalisation and alienation who, having been relocated, are striving to survive in strange circumstances, whereas Kapur's victims are subjected to patriarchal constraints. In Jhumpa Lahiri's novel *The Namesake*, Ashima is a victim of marginalisation. She marries at a young age and travels to distant lands to be with her husband Ashoke, who is studying in America. Ashima's troubles in America are best expressed by her own words: "For being a foreigner, Ashima is beginning to realise, is sort of like a lifetime pregnancy—a perpetual wait, a constant weight, a constant feeling out of sorts" (Lahiri, 49).

Ashima's difficulties are psychological rather than physical and material in nature. Ashima is already frail, and she feels much more vulnerable now that she's pregnant. If one were to comprehend the significance of her voyage and the emotional stress it has on her, one must understand her insights at this tumultuous period in her life.

However, Ashima adjusts to the American surroundings and assimilates into her new

found identity as an American Indian after overcoming the first trauma of dislocation.

Mrs. Sen is also portrayed as a victim in Jhumpa Lahiri's debut collection of short stories, *Mrs. Sen. Eliot*, who is looked after by Mrs Sen while his mother is at work, keeps a close eye on Mrs Sen's family. Mrs Sen's inability to integrate into American culture is demonstrated through Eliot. In her attempt to settle and adjust to the new life, she is also a victim who endures nostalgia, loss, and the anguish of obligation, as well as a cultural and emotional vacuum, which are the roots of diasporic identity.

Similarly, Kasturi, the protagonist in Kapur's critically acclaimed novel *Difficult Daughters*, is a victim of biology, gender, and circumstance. "There is a male within every woman and a woman within every guy," Kapur believes. When masculine is called into doubt, womanhood becomes fragmented" (Naik, 13). Nisha, the heroine of her novel *Home*, is a small child who becomes a victim of her young cousin's carnal urges. Kapur exposes the underlying, deeply ingrained social preconceptions about women in this way. Nisha, who is too young to express her fright, stops eating and has trouble sleeping. She is relocated to her aunt's place for a change, based on the seriousness of the circumstance.

Nisha is also subjected to gender prejudice. Her admittance to college is likewise a major challenge. Her own mother, who married at a young age, chooses the same fate for her daughter and prevents her from pursuing higher education. Nisha goes through a period of disappointment after an unsuccessful affair with a college classmate, but she eventually emerges as a successful businesswoman with her own store. Nisha's journey from the border to the mainland cannot be underestimated, given the Banwari Lal family's hard core patriarchal structure, which considers marginality as a given fact in a woman's life. Nisha does not thwart or disregard the long-standing hegemonic institutions or processes, which makes her path even more admirable.

Many Indian women novelists, both in India and abroad, have made female subjectivity a central element in their works. Shashi Deshpande, one of India's most illustrious and well-known female novelists, tackles the sorrow and difficulties of modern educated Indian women who are bound between tradition and modernity, but nevertheless constructively

pursue their personal goals in life. They are primarily introspective, and their search for personal meaning in life becomes the central theme of her work. Almost all of her characters, from Indu in *Roots and Shadows* to Saru in *The Dark Holds No Terror* to Jaya and Devyani, start out confused. However, as the story progresses, we see them introspecting and self-analyzing, eventually coming to self-realization. They emerge more self-assured, in command of themselves, and unquestionably upbeat. Deshpande, like Manju Kapur, considers her characters to be from middle-class families grappling with challenges that arise from their culture as a “insider” writer. Their identities are the result of the environment in which they were raised. Both Deshpande and Kapur keep their characters steeped in situations that are more indigenous, and their themes and characters follow similar patterns. For example, in *That Long Silence*, for which Deshpande won the Sahitya Akademy Award, Jaya, who is married to Mohan, has a dilemma when Mohan is found guilty of some unlawful activity, and Jaya takes a break to reflect on her history. She realizes how many times she has given in to Mohan’s demands. She does a thorough examination of their marriage and concludes that, while Mohan was controlling, it was her own unquestioned role that contributed to her current condition of misery. Jaya emerges as a woman who, after years of unselfish surrender to her marriage, awakens and makes a little but decisive step to reorganize her life. We see a steady demarcation of self-assured girls from Jaya to Devyani, who, while being raised in a conservative society, have the confidence to speak up for female freedom.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is another Indian diasporic writer who has probed the depths of identity crises as a prominent theme in her writings. Chitra Banerjee, like Jhumpa Lahiri, is of Bengali ancestry. *Arranged Marriage* (1995), *The Mistress of Spices* (1997), *Sister of My Heart* (1998), *Vine of Desire* (2002), *The Unknown Errors of Our Lives* (2001), *Neela: Victory Song* (2002), *The Brotherhood of the Conch* (2003), and *The Queen of Dreams* (2004), are her prominent works. Alienation, marginalisation, sadness, nostalgia, readjustment, integration, adaptation, and adoption are all themes explored throughout Divakaruni’s literary work. Her writings are autobiographical because she is a woman

writer. She shows a sort of cultural liminality. Such ‘marginal’ persons can be found in any communal community where cultures are cross-fertilized. It is no exception in the United States of America, a nation of opportunity and a culturally varied culture. She also compares and contrasts the lives and opinions of first-generation immigrants and their children who were born and raised in another country. And, of course, it involves the Indian-American experience of attempting to reconcile two identities.

Annis Pratt, convinced that women’s literature has established a body of work with a continuity of themes and issues throughout the previous three centuries, embarked on an inquiry based on the Jungian concept of archetypes. Pratt set out to discover what archetypal pictures underpin women’s narrative, as well as whether these ideas are shared by men’s literature. Women writers, she discovered, share thematic patterns with male writers, but they also have their own thread, reflecting a uniquely feminine body of worries and difficulties. Pratt discovered that women’s fictional writings appear to fall into numerous archetypal groups after studying a significant number of them. A prevalent literary topic, according to Pratt, is the young person’s search for self-identity. She demonstrates how this pursuit is often depicted by female authors. Women writers tackle this issue differently than men since the desire for self-development includes the opposite pressure to narrow oneself down into the roles and behaviours considered proper for womanhood.

STYLE, TECHNIQUE AND CHARACTERS OF JHUMPA LAHIRI’S WORKS

Lahiri is a South Asian woman writer who is multi-cultural, diasporic, post-colonial, marginalised. In her poems, she expresses herself as an outsider and yet an insider living in the United States. One of the things that makes Lahiri’s commercial success all the more remarkable is her lack of interest in either charming or impressing her readers with a sleek style. Her stories are painstakingly accumulating material, only gradually building up a great emotional charge. They are unflashily written, ponderous, and almost solemn in tone. In the classic sense, her works lack intrigue, mystery, or a formal denouement.

Her stories are declarations of human misery, particularly as it relates to the institution of marriage. Her characters are frequently depicted as having shattered minds and ragged nerves, beneath which the uneasy murmur of sick passions may be heard. We see an inner drive and determination to overcome the emotional imbalance in her stories, as well as an indication that it is never too late to start anew. Lahiri is well-versed in the craft of fiction and its nuances. Her approach is so quiet, subtle, and unimposing that the reader sometimes thinks she isn't using any at all. Her characters demonstrate her artistic talent to produce a wide range of characters. Her stories are filled with ordinary, everyday characters who have lived a dull existence. Lahiri writes in both male and female voices. The stories are told in a style that blends economy of phrase with appealing lyricism, conveying the nuances of the scenario and people as much through the hinted as through the stated. She builds visual images for the reader in a strikingly realistic manner, using little words but being incredibly expressive. The freshness of Lahiri's language is, of course, one of the reasons for her stories' appeal. She likes to experiment with words; for example, the title narrative rests on the definition of the word "interpreter." Lahiri's work is imbued with a special strength and grace, thanks to an ear for conversations, a sense for odd analogies, and perceptive descriptive abilities. Her stories' endings are brimming with possibilities, which is a true feature of the genre.

STYLE TECHNIQUE AND CHARACTERS OF MANJU KAPUR'S WORKS

Manju Kapur has maintained a consistent style and broad subject focus since the publication of her first novel, *Difficult Daughters*, in 1988, which received the Commonwealth Writers Prize for Eurasia. Few writers have recounted the Indian middle-class family with as much nuance and affection as she has, and deservedly so. Kapur has a knack for drawing the reader into the minds of her feminine Indian characters. She is a generous writer in her own right. She's also a meticulous writer. She takes few risks in terms of language and structure, and the ones she does take are carefully calculated. Her subject matter is also confined to the sphere of everyday middle-class life.

Despite this, her books are remarkably captivating. They are not just read by thousands of regular readers; they can also give a wealth of material for literary critics, particularly from a gender viewpoint, but not only. She is often referred to as a "talented storyteller" by literary critics, but unlike many other such "storytellers," her seemingly simple narratives also interact gently with themes.

Her own simple explanation for her work's sophisticated, almost anthropological character is that it stems from a lifetime of studying and teaching literature. Manju Kapur is a 'storyteller' in the traditional sense, in that her novels are heavily narrative and descriptive, but also in the sense that the stories are fascinating and well-told. Kapur follows the evolution of women's life as a result of their education.

CONCLUSION

The writings of Jhumpa Lahiri and Manju Kapur can also be classified as Bildungromans, in which the protagonist grows morally, psychologically, and intellectually from childhood to old age.

The principal characters in Lahiri's novels are Bengali Indians, and she alternates between female-centered and male-centered narratives. With roots in both Indian and American culture, she portrays the voices of Indians in India and Indian immigrants in America with zeal and skill.

Manju Kapur writes on Punjabi joint families and has attempted to deal with physical, psychological, and emotional stress in women with candour and honesty. The psychological handling of female characters, as well as the concrete development of the storyline, makeup, is the main strength of Kapur's works. She intuitively recognised the gender difficulties that women face and portrayed women as individuals who fight patriarchal oppression and subjugation.

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