

## **A Study of the Female Psyche in the Novel The Immigrant**

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### **Abstract**

*The Immigrant is a treatise on male masculinity as the artist confirms that right approach should be adopted by the couple for enjoying happy marital life. Secondly, the artist satirizes Nina and Ananda for having extra marital affairs as they disturb social discipline. Thirdly, she has admired the bright aspects of Canadian economy where adventurous and hard working people have new opportunities for progress. Fourthly, there are happy relations between immigrants and the natives. A full length book can be written on Sex Together with the help of this novel.*

**Keywords:** *Halifax, Paradise Lost Book, Immigrant, Second Sex, Lesbian, Materialism, Strange Interlude, Nishkam Dharma, Miranda House*

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## **Introduction**

As a psychologist Manju Kapur has pointed out the difference between negative psychology and positive psychology. In her novels she condemns the negative thoughts and vices such as greed, lechery, adultery, violence, theft, materialism, anger, pride, etc. A man of negative psychology is highly possessive by nature and wants to be at the top in society with his qualities.

In *The Immigrant* she satirizes Mandy who fails to control her lust for sex and proves a hurdle in the life of Nina and Ananda. Dr. Sharma, Nancy, Gary, Sue etc. are examples of positive psychology as they help Ananda and Nina without any selfish aim. They never discourage them in life as advanced people attach importance to culture, civilization and progress.

As a matter of fact, Manju Kapur does not support the concept of Lesbian love though it has been approved by a few European countries. India has its own culture and Indian law doesn't justify this new concept of love-making. In bed with Pipee, Astha feels herself deserted and horrified. Secondly, she demands a car for herself to become independent. But her subconscious mind does not permit her to make fuss in the family for a car. For her family delight is top important. The artist establishes Astha's faith in the unity of joint family with these words :

Whatever you buy will be for both of us. Don't I use the car we already have? It is not Papa's or mine. And now we will have a second car, besides the one upstairs, neither Papa's nor mine, but for everybody. We are a family growing needs.(MW 228)

As a realist the artist refers to various yatras that are arranged in India by various groups to raise their voice against social and economic vices. But Hemant does not trust them at all. Pipee hopes much from such activities but Hemant does not. Astha wishes to be blessed by god for getting inner peace and 'stability'. Let her life have a meaning as she recently led a life of nothingness. She wanders from one corner of the country to another in search of truth, righteousness, fortitude, tolerance, restraint, purity etc.

There is no denying the fact that Manju Kapur studied Eugene O' Neill's tragedy *Strange Interlude* with great interest. The heroine of this tragedy Nina Leeds loved army officer Gordon Shaw who was going to take part in the war. Hence her father Prof. Leeds advises her to wait for the results of war and get married after the war is over. Unfortunately, Gordon Shaw dies in the war and Nina finds herself dull, sad, morose and heart-broken. Here Eugene O' Neill asserts that 'life has got to be lived'.

Similarly Nina, the heroine of *The Immigrant* serves Miranda House, Delhi as a lecturer in the department of English. She is thirty years of age and yet never thinks of doing research work. As a degree college lecturer she has achieved nothing

in her career. she is happy with her friendship with Zenobia who is also not progressive in life and continues to survive in a barsati of a building. It is strange that a Miranda House lecturer has no positive approach to life and does not confirm the theory –# A wise man creates more opportunities than he finds.

Fortunately, Mrs. Batra is approached by Alka, the sister of Ananda with a proposal of marriage of Ananda and Nina. There is no limit to the joy of Mrs. Batra but it makes Nina think too much –# How can she accept a proposal from a young man whom she has not seen? What about alien culture? Would he approve her? How would she adjust in western land? Will there be a proper mixture of Indian and western values? Is it not risky to resign her permanent job? What about job security in future? After all these doubts she decides:

... she had to live in the real world ...

Risks were inevitable if one wanted change.(TI 73)

As Ananda settled as a dentist in Halifax he thought of his own marriage. After all he had lived here for seven long years. Once he had the company of Sue when she was unmarried. She failed to get sexual pleasure as Ananda discharged within seconds. She left him saying –# May be it was for the first time when he enjoyed sex. Unfortunately Ananda does not take this weakness as a warning for getting himself diagnosed. Once he studied a few chapters of *The Gita* and accepted the theory of Nishkam Dharma. When he plans his marriage he is a settled man in Canada –# a perfect immigrant. So far he could not maintain any standard of living. He hoped to lead a prosperous and decent life after putting hard labour. He accepted Dr. Sharma's hopeful advice :

'If God shuts the door, he opens a window'.(TI 25)

As Dr. Sharma had widely travelled, he regarded himself 'a citizen of the world'. Quite often he recollected the Indian festivals of Holi, Deepawali and hence established India Club in Halifax. Of course, he passes a bitter remark about India :

The whole country is crawling with disease, filth, flies and beggars. (TI 26)

Manju Kapur had lived in Halifax, Canada as a young girl and took her Masters degree in English from there. Naturally she knew a lot about social, economic and political merits and demerits of Canadian life. After 1975 Canadians planned their economy enthusiastically as they didn't want to depend upon others for raw materials and other necessary tools. Secondly, the Canadian government planned for advanced transport system in the whole country so that the rural areas may be connected with the urban areas. Thirdly, Canadian capitalists developed heavy industries in steel, metal, cement, cloth, wood etc. There are a lot of lakes and rivers in Canada and their water is used properly for agriculture and production of power for the factories. In *The Immigrant* Ananda and Dr. Sharma qualify from Canadian Dental College and then they practise. Similarly Nina's experience of teaching degree

classes in Miranda House, Delhi, is not considered for Canadian teaching post.

For the time being Ananda stops thinking of the problems of immigrants and plans to visit India to have a look at Nina. The first meeting is pretty short and yet he approves her in his heart. Then he proposes to take her out at night and both enjoy the dinner at Oberoi. By now Nina also feels interest in him and yet fails to take quick decision. Now Nina fails to sleep properly at night as there is no limit to her expectations and anxieties. Her friend Zenobia advises her not to miss the opportunity. It is not that easy to get married with a Canadian dentist. Marriage with an N.R.I. is a security of every kind in itself. But she fails to understand:

Truly an immigrant had to be skilled in many things. (TI 43)

After reaching Halifax Ananda writes letters to her every week as he thinks of her quite often. He is planning to buy many things for her comforts. However, Nina at times becomes tense as Manju Kapur says :

The wrinkle was the future and she was afraid. (TI 49)

As a realist Manju Kapur describes the lives of immigrants in details. Many Indians develop new habits slowly as they are supposed to adopt a new way of life as immigrants. Referring to their past the artist remarks:

They are not among those who have fled persecution,  
destitution, famine, slavery and death threats... (TI 120)

In *The Immigrant* she describes the natural cure for man's inability to perform sexual intercourse. Dr. Hansen was consulted and the treatment given to Ananda proved successful. The problem with Ananda was that he was always in a hurry to penetrate his organ into the vagina. Due to lack of confidence, he could not relax. Thirdly, he did not enjoy sex-play i.e. playing with her breasts before fucking. Certain books on sex were given to him to read in the hotel. Now he studied *Male Sexuality*, *Male Sexual Response*, *Together in Bed* etc. as sex is purely a matter of mind. Confidence comes with inner confidence. This is how one week passed and Ananda felt that he had no sexual success so far. Manju Kapur remarks:

One week was over, and he still hadn't had what he considered sex.

When he raised this point, both Carla and Max laughed. Of course, he was having sex, it was all sex, every bit of it. The stroking, the touching, the myriad physical sensation.(TI 199)

After settling in Canada Ananda preferred to be addressed as Andy so as to appear European rather than Indian. Actually he soon freed himself from Indian culture, religion and traditions. Dr. Sharma possessed the small statues of Lord Ram, Lord Krishna, Sita, Radha, Hanuman etc. as he had faith in his religion. But Ananda never thought on such links. Nina didn't throw her bra and panties to join the Women Liberation Movement, so popular in America and European countries. Yet her

psychology had changed due to her interest in Simon De Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*.

Her experiences of life have taught her positive lessons. She has struggled so far and hence the new job may prove to be a delight. She accepts the challenge as an immigrant and like Jasmine of Bharati Mukherjee she controls her sadness and sense of fear. After all she is not being exiled from Halifax. There is no unbearable rift between Ananda and Nina as the latter controls her anger. She knows the art of creating balance between two cultures.

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