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Transnational Habitus and Patriarchy in Indian Immigrant Fiction: an Analysis of the Immigrant By Manju Kapur

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TRANSNATIONAL HABITUS AND PATRIARCHY IN INDIAN IMMIGRANT FICTION:

AN ANALYSIS OF *THE IMMIGRANT* BY MANJU KAPUR

by

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A Major Research Paper
presented to Ryerson University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
in the Program of
Immigration and Settlement Studies

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Desirée Lydia Gomes
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ABSTRACT

This major research paper is an analysis of a fictional novel, *The Immigrant* by Manju Kapur, using the two main themes of transnational habitus and patriarchy as reflected in the novel. This paper aims to understand how one immigrant woman's identities are transformed within her transnational habitus. Although relatively stereotypical of the issues that prevail through Indian immigrant fiction, the above reinforces the issues immigrant women face and calls to attention the need for these issues to be acknowledged and addressed.

Key words:

Transnational habitus, patriarchy, Indian immigrant fiction, immigrant women

Dedicated to my husband, *H.P.*

For all your love and support.

For making this possible.

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Introduction

In the field of immigration and settlement studies, there is much emphasis on how migration and settlement processes take place with respect to institutionalized and social policies, programs, and services and their effects on immigrant identity and ideology. However, there are other equally important areas that provide an understanding of the migration and settlement processes for immigrants—one such area is that of creative arts, particularly literary fiction.

It is important to understand how literary fiction also contributes to shaping and understanding immigrant identity because it provides a forum where immigration and settlement issues can be subjectively expressed. Certainly, prior studies have been done on the negotiation of Indian women immigrant identities in immigrant fiction. Some of these discussions include literature by De (2009), Aujla (1999), Niyogi (2011), Alfonso-Forero (2011), Banerjee (2004), Panjabi (2010), and Hussain (2005). These prior studies have addressed how such fiction replicates the real issues faced by immigrants, albeit in prose form. I want to add to these debates by also exemplifying how the language and concepts of transnational habitus and patriarchy are woven into Indian immigrant fiction; and how this can help us to better understand how Indian immigrant women negotiate their identities through their transnational habitus. In other words, I am interested in analyzing Indian immigrant fiction as written by transnational authors because I would like to explore how the women protagonists experience transnational habitus in order to understand how their identities change with migration.

It is not my intention to represent all Indian culture as homogenous. I am trying to explore the themes of transnational habitus and patriarchy as described by the author in the story.

It is also important to understand that certain cultural nuances could also be interpreted differently by both the researcher and the reader of this paper. Therefore, my analysis of the issues as portrayed in the novel is representative of my interpretation of these issues in the novel.

In this paper I will start by providing a brief historical background on Indian immigrant literature as well as specifically providing a synopsis and character introduction for the case study fictional account: *The Immigrant* by Manju Kapur. I will then discuss the main concepts for my analysis: transnational habitus and patriarchy, and their related terms as established in critical literature. This will be followed by a section on the research methods I have chosen for my analysis, followed by the case study analysis itself based on the above novel before concluding.

Background

Authors of immigrant Indian literature markedly entered the public mainstream literature as transnational literary works in the last decade with the likes of Anita Rau Badami, Shauna Singh Baldwin, Chitra Divakaruni, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Thrity Umrigar, to name a few. These authors mainly wrote about individual feminist struggles in a predominantly patriarchal culture. Their political discourse played out in the pages of their writings in the form of cultural reproduction and through questioning what it was to be an Indian immigrant woman in the west. Their writings were of private endurances in private spaces and of their struggles in adapting and identifying to their new homelands. They wrote of transnational issues that were core to the process of migration and of migrants, who still maintained and missed their connections to India; who sought out India as the anchor that formed their identity.

Makarand Paranjpe's (1991) analysis of five South Asian works written in the eighties resonates the lingering theme of "the other" as understood in that era. She discusses the predominant theme of the time: postcolonialism; and states that, "Its story is in another and very powerful sense the other side of colonization, and if the story is told by women, it then becomes more valuable, more privileged, more saleable." (pg 1)

Prior to the last decade, specifically in the eighties and early nineties the once male dominated field of Indian immigrant literature with the likes of Salman Rushdie, Rohinton Mistry, Amitav Ghosh, and Vikram Seth, held a handful of renowned women writers like Bharati Mukherjee and Anita Desai. Such fiction has since then become filled with feminist discourse and nouveau stylistic endeavours¹ which have emerged in the form of authors like Arundhati

¹ Different literary writing styles and genres used to write Indian fiction, such as, using humour and satire (Rockwell 2003, Lau 2005, Butler & Desai 2008, Paranjpe 1991).

Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1998), Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006), and Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* (2004) to name a few.

About a decade ago, most Indian immigrant fiction did not discuss themes such as sexuality, feminism, divorce, generational divides, acceptance of western values and customs, as they were once unacceptable topics of discussion, but are now included in almost all contemporary work. Stylistically, writings have even been included in genres such as humor and satire, political participation, and feminist advocacy; these were not traditionally widespread themes. Authors like Kavita Daswani and Sonia Singh take a more modern-day, humored approach to writing about traditional matters such as marriage and feminism in their writings *For Matrimonial Purposes* (2004) and *Goddess for Hire* (2004). The number of Indian women authors writing transnational fiction has increased exponentially over the years (Butler & Desai, 2008). Transnational authors often write fiction that closely resemble realities and thus parallels changing issues and situations that Indian women experience in their daily lives as transnationals. Some of these issues include arranged marriages, the role of women in the home, the father and husband as patriarch, food and clothing, migration and identity, and divorce and sexuality. These issues can be seen in the examples of *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri and *Desirable Daughters* by Bharati Mukherjee.

In this paper I have chosen to discuss the novel *The Immigrant* by Manju Kapur published in 2008. The author Manju Kapur was born in 1948 in Amritsar, India. She currently lives in Delhi, India with her husband and children. Although she does not live in North America, she was part of the migrant process when she studied at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, where she obtained her Master of Arts in English. She parallels her life and this novel by also situating the story in Halifax; and like Nina, the female protagonist

of the novel, Kapur also graduated from Miranda House University College for women, and is also teaching English Literature at her *alma mater*, Miranda House, Delhi.

The Story

The story revolves around an Indian couple-- Nina and Ananda, and the issues that surround their arranged marriage, and Nina's transformation through becoming *the immigrant*. Predominantly based on the concept migration through an arranged marriage, it discusses common themes of transnational habitus, identity and patriarchy. The story spans the spaces of the host country and home country, which is a key point in providing a transnational context. The main themes in this novel will be discussed further in the paper, however at this point the following contextual background should be considered.

The Immigrant is based in Delhi in North India for first half of the novel, and in Halifax in East Canada for the latter half. The novel is set in the seventies, in Indira Gandhi's India and Pierre Trudeau's Canada. India at the time was going through much social and political reform. It is also because of this political and social climate in India at the time that the reasoning for Nina's move to Canada was considered in her best interest. The story starts in the year that Nina and Ananda meet and marry and continues to span over approximately the first three years of their marriage.

The migration policy climate in Canada at the time the story is set, was reflective of a burgeoning Indian immigrant cohort. It was around the 1960s and early 1970s that immigrants from non-European countries were allowed to migrate under the Skilled Worker class- an immigrant class based on the point system according to one's skill set (Walton-Roberts, 2003: pg

242). However, Nina migrates to Canada under the family reunification class² via marriage to her Canadian Indian-born husband. The family reunification class was one of the first immigrant classes in which women immigrants were allowed to come to Canada. The time also reflects the minority demographic in Halifax; which showed that persons of Indian origin were very few in the already scarcely populated East Canadian Coast (Department of Manpower and Immigration: 1970-1980).

Nina is a teacher of English literature at Miranda House University College for women, Delhi. She lives at home with her widowed mother and their lives have been glamorously foreshadowed by a past of international travel and culture while her civil servant father was alive. Nina is illustrated as *still* youthful looking and pretty for thirty and fair-skinned with luxurious long black hair. She is well educated and earns her own income while partly supporting her mother. She is independent, cultured, well read and eloquent. To her advantage, with respect to her migration qualifications for Canada, she also speaks French.

The story begins just before Nina's thirtieth birthday by immediately delving into the issue of her being unmarried and thirty. Nina has had many opportunities where her mother has tried to find prospective suitors to marry her, but to no avail. To quell her mother's constant obsession with Nina's impending marriage, mother and daughter consult with an astrologer as to when Nina will marry. Her mother is naively led to believe that the next suitor will turn into a husband for her daughter and will take her far away to another land. This bizarrely is the case, when Ananda agrees to come from Canada to meet Nina, and after a short courtship, eventually asks her to marry him.

² The family reunification class is Canada's migration category that allows family member such as spouses, children and parents to migrate to Canada to join the family member living there (Walton-Roberts 2003).

The marriage takes place within the year while Ananda makes two trips back to India from Canada for the process. Soon after, Nina leaves India to join Ananda in Halifax and thus begins her life as an immigrant and a wife in Canada. She soon learns that her identity as a woman from India is exoticized by others in Canada while subdued by her own husband. Within the year she learns about her husband's problem with premature ejaculation. She also learns that they are unable to conceive a child right away. Although she spends her time at her will, she finds herself lonely and bored and eventually looks for work to keep occupied.

Her romantic notions of the arranged marriage eventually dissipate and a gradual rift is born between the couple. Arguments, blame, guilt, indifference and ultimately infidelity all ensue to create a much different atmosphere within their marriage than that of the beginning. Although the novel is divided into three parts, Nina's life thematically divides the story. The first half where she holds on to her Indian identity, values and customs; and the second half where Nina returns to school for postgraduate studies at the local University and in doing so 'after much finding of feet' gradually finds her own independence and identity in Canada (Kapur, 2008: pg121).

Ananda's story starts when he begins his career as a dentist in India. This is followed by the untimely death of both his parents in an accident leaving him and his older sister, Alka, orphaned. In his grief he leaves his life in India and migrates to Canada as a professional, where he pursues his further studies in dentistry and eventually starts his own practice. Starting off as an immigrant himself, he initially lives with his mother's brother Mr. Sharma, his Canadian aunt Nancy, and his mixed-race cousins Lenny and Lara. He learns quickly that despite his uncle's generosity, family in Canada is not as self-sacrificing as those in India. His desire to leave his

uncle's house quickly has him living as a paying guest with his Canadian born friend Gary Geller who is also studying to be a dentist.

Here, he has his first female sexual encounter with Sue, a white Canadian woman, who eventually marries Gary. It is at this time where Ananda starts to learn about his problem with premature ejaculation. Having no girlfriend or potential wife in the picture, Alka begins to take on her matriarchal responsibility to get Ananda settled down, as she is a married woman and the only female relative of Ananda. She acts as matchmaker and tries to persuade Ananda to come to India to find a bride. Thus, after much persuasion, Ananda visits India, meets Nina, they marry and eventually start their lives in Canada as husband and wife.

However, Ananda is portrayed to have two main things on his agenda throughout the novel. The first one is his need to assimilate into Canadian culture as soon as possible by becoming non-vegetarian, enjoying Canadian cuisine, celebrating Christmas and Thanksgiving, changing his name to a westernized 'Andy', changing his clothing, his mannerisms and glorifying all things Canadian while nullifying the Indian ones. He also tries to encourage Nina to do and be the same, not for the fact of her integration in Canada but so that she is not so noticeably Indian. Second, his obsession with his premature ejaculation leads him to constantly worry over everything that surrounds it, fertility, sexual performance and gratification, fidelity, and his relationship with his wife and her feminist journey through her own self discovery.

While Nina's journey through the story is that of finding her identity as a woman and immigrant in Canada, Ananda's journey is also that of self discovery through finding a solution to his premature ejaculation. The story does end with Ananda finding a solution to his sexual issues and Nina finding her new identity through her journey as an immigrant in Canada. Nina

eventually finds out about Ananda's infidelity and chooses to leave the marriage and start her life anew in the province of New Brunswick.

Reading *The Immigrant*, two interrelated themes arise. The first one is the transnational habitus and the various and complex pathways through which an immigrant woman of colour adjusts in this new habitus. The second theme involves the re-telling of patriarchal norms in immigrant fiction, and this initially begins to appropriate itself in the form of an arranged marriage, and continues with the infidelity and sexual dissatisfaction that invades the marriage. Based on the above two themes, I will now aim to define and discuss these themes as established in critical literature.

Literature Review

In this section of the paper, I will discuss some concepts that will be used for the analysis, including the key themes of Transnational Habitus and Patriarchy. In order to understand transnational habitus, it is important to first try to understand the concept of transnationalism and its related concepts, space, and habitus as established in critical theory.

According to Vertovec (1999: pg 151), "...most social scientists in the field may agree that 'transnationalism' broadly refers to multiple ties and interactions linking people and institutions across borders of nation-states." In addition to creating linkages across border, transnationalism is also understood to be a process that invokes a sense of belonging and an imagined sense of community for those who partake in transnational transactions within such spaces and communities (Monkekar 2002, Kao and Do Rozario 2008, Wong and Satzewich 2006). Transnationalism can be of various types, e.g., economic, social, political and cultural. Recent research has also clearly demonstrated that immigrant transnationalisms differ along the axes of 'race', admissions class, immigrant status, time of arrival, as well as their economic, social and cultural capital. There is a general agreement in the transnational literature that in an increasingly globalised world, most immigrants live in transnational communities.

Although the idea of a transnational community is directly related to *diaspora*³, compared to diaspora, transnational communities are understood to engage in a more voluntary movement of people and transactions. Unlike in the diaspora, transnational communities include

³ Van Hear (1998: pg 6) defines "diaspora" as a population that has dispersed from its homeland but is able to maintain social, economic, political and cultural exchanges with the homeland. Diaspora alludes to a forced and involuntary displacement and movement of peoples. According to James Clifford, "the term diaspora is a signifier, not simply of transnationality and movement, but of political struggles to define the local, as distinctive community, in historical contexts of displacement." (1994: pg 308). Clifford makes an important point on how the process of diaspora influences the role of women. He discusses how women, while still attached to a "home" culture often find themselves caught between "patriarchies, ambiguous pasts, and futures" and how communities can be a site of support for women, but also of oppression.

the homeland as another point of referral in the migration process. The homeland is simultaneously experienced with the receiving country via various transnational spaces and transactions.

In both transnational and diasporic communities, hybrid identities are formed and expressed based on the different levels of connectedness immigrants maintain with their respective communities (Pande 2007, Swyngedouw & Swyngedouw 2009). Transnational space plays an important role in creating the transnational habitus and identity because transnational space holds meaning and allows for transnational identities to be negotiated in (Kao and Do Rozario 2008). According to Richard Hartshorne, “Space... (is) a universal of human existence, an external coordinate of reality, an empty grid of mutually exclusive points, ‘an unchanging box’ within which objects exist and events occur” (Gregory, 2000: pg 768). David Harvey further questions the human production of space in asking how “different human practices create and make use of distinctive conceptualizations of space” (Gregory, 2000: pg 769). Some geographers analyze the concept of space as real, physical and concrete, while others choose to consider space as imagined and symbolic. Within either of the above spaces, space can also be gendered, racialised, socio-cultural, political, economic, etc., all acting individually or in combination with each other (Gregory 2000, Kao and Do Rozario 2008).

This is applicable to the space created in immigrant fiction as well. The story creates real and imagined spaces for the immigrant characters in the book. It is where their lives take place and it connects them physically and imaginatively to their homeland through the imagery the words evoke. These spaces can also further be gendered, racialised, socio-cultural, political, economic, etc. acting variably to form the story and the characters’ experiences.

Transnational spaces are the spaces where transnational experiences occur. *Real or physical transnational spaces* are spaces which allow transnational individuals to connect in some physical form and acquire tangible representations of transnational spaces through transnational transactions. They can include transnational experiences of communication, commodity consumption, social interactions, identity negotiations, real/imagined movement, among others (Wong & Satzewich 2006, Kao and Do Rozario 2008, Monkekar 2002). Transnational transactions are emotions and ideas that readers can partake in or relate to. Examples include buying goods and services that are reminiscent of the homeland, eating home foods, or wearing ethnic clothes. Other examples include living real experiences, for example, travelling to the homeland, communication with relatives and friends back home, among others. This allows for the expectation of achieving the sentiment of belonging and connectedness to the homeland; the sense of community in which to evoke the sense of nostalgia; and to eradicate the feeling of loss.

Imagined transnational spaces have all the characteristics of real transnational space insofar as the connectivity it creates and nostalgia or sentiment it evokes among those transnationals that imagine or experience it. It is a space that is imagined in the mind; that which is not tangible but can evoke the same feeling as participating in real transnational space. A good example of imagined transnational space is transnational art form i.e. fine, literary or performing arts, that when experienced, evokes a sense of nostalgia and memory of the homeland.

With respect to women's identities, Clifford (1994) makes an important point on how the process of diaspora influences the role of women. He discusses how women, while still attached to a "home" culture often find themselves caught between "patriarchies, ambiguous pasts, and futures" and how communities can be a site of support for women, but also of oppression

(Clifford: 1994, pg 314). Another way of understanding identity formations in transnational spaces is by developing an understanding of the *transnational habitus*.

According to Pierre Bourdieu, *habitus* is a sense of one's own dispositions and behaviours acquired through various social and cultural conditioning. Although Bourdieu considers *habitus* to be relatively permanent, we should also consider that it is dynamic and can change depending on an individual's experiences and knowledge at any given time in their lives (Cargile 2011, Kelly & Lusia 2006)). Following suit, we must then define what *transnational habitus* is. According to Guarnizo *transnational habitus* is:

A particular set of dualistic dispositions that inclines migrants to act and react to specific situations in a manner that can be, but is not always, calculated, and that is not simply a question of conscious acceptance of specific behavioral or sociocultural rules. The transnational habitus results from the migration process itself, which has spread people's lives across national borders and becomes like a second nature. The transnational habitus incorporates the social position of the migrant and the context in which transmigration occurs. This accounts for the similarity in the transnational habitus of migrants from the same social grouping (class, gender, generation) and the generation of transnational practices adjusted to specific situations.

(Guarnizo, 1997: pg 311)

The duality of *transnational habitus* can leave the transnational migrant swinging from various ideas and sentiments of home and receiving country. Therefore, migrant spatial practices that are influenced by such multi-dimensional *transnational habitus* can reflect practices practiced within their home, their host country and their country of origin (Ghosh xxxx, Kelly & Lusia 2006). From the above, we can discern that the transnational spaces, whether real or imagined, experienced by the characters in transnational fiction, allow them to partake of a transnational habitus, which can also be exemplified in these stories as dynamic, influenced by the space that changes around them.

Now that we have established a basic understanding of transnational habitus in current literature, the analysis section of the paper will aim to exemplify transnational habitus as experienced by the female protagonist in the story, *The Immigrant*. Next we will discuss the issue of patriarchy as retold by the authors of Indian fiction by first defining and understanding the concept of patriarchy, especially with respect to that experienced by immigrant women.

Linda McDowell defines patriarchy as,

In its most general sense, the term...refers to the law of the father, the social control that men as fathers hold over their wives and daughters. In its most specific usage within feminist scholarship, patriarchy refers to the system in which men as a group are constructed as superior to women as a group and so assumed to have authority over them.

(McDowell, 1999: pg 16)

McDowell continues to discuss patriarchy on two separate levels: in public and private spheres. Typically, the domestic realm of the 'home' is what is considered the private sphere in which patriarchy can exist. Patriarchy in the private sphere of the home is based on the exploitation of women based on private endurances of sexual abuse, domestic division of labour, male-dominated hierarchical role structures within the house, and the exclusion of women from the public. The power of exploitation is held in the hands of the patriarch of the house. In the public sphere, patriarchy takes on a more institutionalized systemic role, leaving the power of exploitation in the hands of men collectively over women. Public patriarchy does not seek the exclusion of women from the public but rather the subordination and segregation of women in the public arena; especially in the areas of wage differences, gender divisions in paid employment, and structural hierarchies of state and culture (McDowell 1999).

McDowell further discusses that patriarchy and gender relations can be further categorized and experienced under other fields of age, class, ethnicity and region. For example,

in some cases an older woman who is not financially independent may be more susceptible to patriarchal oppression in the household, as opposed to a younger woman who has a job and can support herself and the household financially and she is privy to the public sphere. Within the fields of age, class, ethnicity and region, women can also negotiate and manipulate patriarchal constraints to their benefit or detriment. For example, in certain cultures women of certain patriarchal kinship lineages may have to ensure the prosperity of the very same patriarchal system that oppresses them because it may be the only route to ensure their own prosperous futures and those of their children. However, knowing that they may be confined to such a system indefinitely, they negotiate their roles by employing various aspects of their identities to even subvert patriarchal systems to some extent. In essence, they may be subordinate but not necessarily subservient (McDowell 1999).

With respect to Indian culture, identities of women are traditionally tied with the domestic space and idea of home especially in situations where families live in a multi-generational household⁴. Thus it also calls for understanding the various hierarchies among the women of the family (Rockwell 2003, Das Gupta 1997, Lau 2006). “Widows...new daughters-in-law, and unwanted wives are amongst those who could traditionally expect the lowest levels of consideration within the joint family system” (Lau, 2006: pg 1099).

The hierarchical structure among these women can confer the right of power and privilege among them. Even though their identities are also contingent on the patriarchal social systems that they live within, the women have to also face various discrimination and power

⁴ A multigenerational household is essentially a family household that consists of more than two generations of that family living under the same roof. Many multigenerational households entail the sharing of resources and responsibilities. It also implies a hierarchical and patriarchal structure among the family members. For women in the Indian culture, this structure defines their role by the relationship to the patriarch, their marital status, their ability to bear children, and their parents' socio-economic class. A multigenerational household is a type of joint family system, where the former entails family member living in the same home and the latter entailing family members living close to each other but not necessarily in the same home (Cohen & Casper 2002, Lau 2006).

struggles among both other women and the men. The home, also considered in the culture as the women's domain, is the ideal place for such struggles and power negotiations to take place.

Although I will not analyse this further in this paper, a short reference should also be made to the burgeoning concept of heteropatriarchy for possible future analyses. In the Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories, Sarah Hoagland defines heteropatriarchy as that which:

Ensures male right of access to women. Women's relations - personal, professional, social, economic - are defined by the ideology that woman is for man. Heteropatriarchy is men dominating and de-skilling women in any of a number of forms, from outright attack to paternalistic care, and women devaluing (of necessity) female bonding. Heteropatriarchy normalizes the dominance of one person and the subordination of another. Carol Pateman argues that social contract establishes men's political right over women and orderly access by men to women's bodies. The logic of heteropatriarchy includes the invisibility of lesbians, the construction and tolerance of dominant male violence together with intolerance of female violence against abusers, blaming the 'feminine' victim, and targeting a group of men as predators against whom dominant men can 'protect' chosen women, most notably in peace-time USA, black men.

(Hoagland, 2000: pg 245)

On an individual basis, patriarchy demands the oldest male patriarch's control over the rest of the kin, over both men and women. On a communal basis, it is an umbrella concept that also includes patriarchal oppression of majority groups over minority ones, for example white male dominated social structures that oppress ethnic or immigrant men. Heteropatriarchy, while keeping the overarching basis of patriarchy intact, focuses more on the *heterosexual* premise that women are subordinate to men and should be controlled by men within a heterosexual relationship. It ignores and nullifies the existence of homosexual relationships.

According to Shankar and Northcott (2009), patriarchy is in essence the economic, social, and/or political oppression of women by men. In multi-generational households, which predominantly still exist in immigrant families in the west, it usually means that the oldest living male family member is the patriarch and has control over the rest of the family. It is often

seen as an issue faced by women in developing cultures and among immigrant women in the west. Shankar and Northcott also imply the ability to escape patriarchal cultural norms is possible through migration.

Women are often depicted as deeply confined and restrained by patriarchal traditions and culture...The migration process is seen as providing immigrant women with the economic independence, new social and cultural opportunities due to the different gender norms of the receiving country, and new expressions of gender and identity.

(Shankar & Northcott, 2009: pg 425)

However, this is not always the case. Most times patriarchy pervades well into the migrant women's new life in the host country, until some form of egalitarian achievement is attained by the woman. "Couples who migrate from societies where patriarchal ideologies prevail may find themselves forced to confront more egalitarian notions of male/female relations in Canada" (Guruge et. al., 2008: pg 160). For example, if the woman in her home country had never worked for pay, was never educated and was never financially or socially depended on, and now has acquired any of the above in the host country, she may be able to escape the patriarchal norms of her culture (Naidoo 2003, Shankar and Northcott 2009, Guruge et. al. 2008).

As depicted in the novel, Indian culture is beset with specific and unique traditions, religions, gendered obligations and expectations, and domestic spaces. Women in the Indian diaspora as daughters, wives, and mothers are responsible for the survival of and reinvention of their traditions especially in a foreign land with no tangible connectedness to the homeland. Their identity revolves around being dutiful, obedient, and honourable women, as wives, daughters and mothers (Das Gupta 1997).

Therefore, as the immigrant woman enters her new country and learns about her new habitus, she has a conflicted positionality. She now has to understand, differentiate and

negotiate between her pre-migration patriarchal-dominated habitus to a post-migration habitus; which privately may still be dominated by her patriarchal culture, and publicly may dictate that she negotiate through western ideals while either maintaining or discarding her cultural ones. Furthermore, considering that western systems still maintain various systemic and institutionalized patriarchal constraints on women as a group, immigrant women may also have to struggle against these public patriarchal systems alongside non-immigrant women, while simultaneously enduring private oppressions at home (Nadeau 2009, Butler & Desai 2008).

The topics of interest to women authors of diasporic Indian literature originally and predominantly included patriarchal ideas of familial expectations, the home, marriages, culture and traditions and how women negotiate their identities regarding these issues. From the various fictional accounts written in this burgeoning field, patriarchy and gendered relationships of power and privilege are constant key issues in Indian immigrant literature that most women authors write about. The theme is retold many times over and is reflective of the realities faced by Indian women, and in this case transnational Indian women. Patriarchal norms in such fiction take many forms, mainly focusing on: arranged marriages, control of women's identity in private and public spheres, lack of decision making for women, financial control, infidelity, sexual dominance, emotional abuse, and violence, to name a few. In other words, the authors exemplify that *to be* an Indian woman, is to negotiate the various patriarchal norms that Indian culture is known for. "...Diasporic literature produces a culture which it then circulates and legitimizes...This is initially an imagined culture...having grafted itself into the imagination of the diasporic community, it becomes part of the thriving culture" (Lau, 2005: pg 243).

In this respect, for those Indian women who are outside India, it becomes important for authors who write about these key themes within the transnational communities to deliver a

close replication of reality in their writings. Indian women authors in particular can be seen to use their writings as a forum of re-telling their culture and influencing the dominant discourse of Indian identity and culture. Their writings can invoke the sense of feminist solidarity through strife or celebration, and an understanding of feminist histories and futures (Lau 2005, Lau 2006, Rockwell 2003, Dirlik 2002, Walkowitz 2006).

According to Shirley Geok-lin Lim (1993), feminist immigrant discourse in the west has traditionally focused more on issues of exclusion, race, isolation and discrimination. Although these themes are important, many authors did not explore the issues of gender and class struggles among immigrant women. In this case, ethnic identity superseded gender issues. Therefore, Lim continues to discuss how Asian women authors reinvent their written works to exemplify gender struggles in their stories and to validate as well as undermine the patriarchal systems of their culture,

For the woman writer whose ethnic community is patriarchal, ethnic and feminist values and identities must inevitably intersect...In male-centered ethnic societies the woman usually remains on the margin, invisible, mute, constrained to limited stereotypical roles of possession-child or mother, domestic worker, or sexual object.

(Lim, 1993: pg 579)

Lim (1993) makes an important point by stating that women authors have the power to disenfranchise patriarchal norms by using their literary tools to create the disempowered patriarch against a racist and classist white society. For example, by highlighting the immigrant patriarch's economic or class struggles against the white, western, receiving society in which he has not attained equality, the author provides a sense of patriarchal impotence for the patriarch and a modern emancipatory literary tool for the immigrant woman. As discussed previously in this paper, this can also be paralleled with McDowell's analysis of how women in certain patriarchal cultures negotiate their identities in the patriarchal system they are embedded in.

Having discussed the two themes of transnational habitus and patriarchy as established in literature, I will discuss the methodology used to analyze these themes and then aim to exemplify them through an analysis of Manju Kapur's novel, *The Immigrant*.

Research Methods

For the purposes of this research, a qualitative approach was deemed as the most appropriate research method. Within this broad framework of methodology, I have chosen to use document analysis as the research tool because it allows for the content to be interpreted thematically, thereby allowing for a subjective analysis ---an imperative in analyzing creative art, specifically literary art as it provides a richer interpretation of the themes in question (Neuman 2003, Yue & Durepos 2009).

Given that the research problem focuses on understanding how Indian immigrant women's identities are transformed through transnational habitus as depicted in literary fiction, it was imperative to analyze a case study in fiction that brought out the two main themes of my analysis: transnational habitus and patriarchy. I have thus read the novel using these two themes as my lens. The fictional account chosen was the novel *The Immigrant* by Manju Kapur (2008). I have chosen to use a case study as part of my qualitative research as it: allows for subjective interpretation, is context dependent and allows for the researcher to have an insider perspective. Since the themes chosen are based on social context, "the treatment of fiction as 'data' offers an opportunity to examine text(s) that both contain [social context] and are products of their social context" (Yue & Durepos, 2009; pg 395). I have only chose a single case study because the nature of the case study, being a novel, already provides for a large context for interpretation. Although comparative to issues of arranged marriage, patriarchy, identity and migration in other similar fiction, the issues that are derived from this particular case study only pertain to itself, and stands as another example in similar literature.

Other examples of Indian immigrant literature such as Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*, Anne Cherian's *A Good Indian Wife*, and Chitra Divakaruni's *Arranged Marriage*, are also

comparative with respect to addressing similar issues of transnational habitus and patriarchal constraints as portrayed in Kapur's *The Immigrant*. Although not unique in its theme, this book further reiterates the same issues that pervade Indian immigrant literature. The authors in their re-telling of such issues thereby confirm that these issues also exist in Indian immigrant women's realities. Although there are many examples of Indian immigrant fiction, as noted above, which could provide with the discussion of similar themes, I chose to analyze this particular novel for the following reasons. First, this book discusses a combination of stereotypical and unique issues faced by Indian immigrant women in North America. It is stereotypical in raising issues on arranged marriages, changing identity of the immigrant woman, the woman joining her husband in the west, cultural patriarchal constraints and adjustment to life in the west. It is relatively unique insofar as the themes of sexual difficulty, *subtle* as opposed to overt patriarchal influence, the privilege of women's choice, and finding independence.

I have also chosen to limit the field of analysis to Indian immigrant women in North America, and specifically in Canada with respect to the case study. The story is also based on the Canadian context as it unfolds mainly in Halifax, Nova Scotia. This allows for analysis based on issues faced by immigrant women in Canada. Indian diasporic literature falls under the plethora of South Asian literature which would allow for a vast field of comparison. However, due to the very nature of its vastness, discussing comparative issues under the umbrella of South Asian literature would not provide a focused approach. This would also avoid discussing the various cultural nuances and differences among other South Asian country-specific literature. Also, to maintain a more focused analysis it would be easier to analyze fiction as told by women authors from India. I have also chosen this gendered approach focusing on the issues faced by immigrant women, so as to put into perspective gender roles as affected by patriarchy. Also, the exponential

increase in such fiction in the past decade calls to attention that issues faced by immigrant women in such fiction are reflective of lived realities and should thus be acknowledged and explored.

Another important aspect for this particular choice of book is that it is written by a woman author who has experienced her own transnational habitus. Again, not unlike other books in this field that have also been written by transnational women authors like Lahiri, Mukherjee, and Anita Rau, this novel reifies the issues faced by immigrant women. This is important to my analyses as it will allow for a gendered perspective on how women authors create transnational habitus for their characters as women in the Indian diaspora who are held responsible for the survival and reinvention of their identity and traditions. In other words they are seen as the voice of their ethnic communities and their work is generally taken as ethnographies by others. Thus transnational Indian communities hold them accountable for an authentic representation. This is important to my analysis as it shows how transnational authors can create authentic imaginary spaces and characters through their stories that reflect lived realities.

Positionality

Considering my positionality in this research as the researcher, I have some similarities to the author and the protagonist of the novel insofar as that I also am a transnational first generation woman immigrant from India to Canada (Neuman 2003, England 1994). Having experienced some of the issues of negotiating identities as the protagonist herself, I cannot say that I can entirely relate to all the issues she faces in this story. The difference being, that I did not marry and migrate to Canada, I did not move to a small metropolis like Halifax, I did not migrate in the seventies, I am not of the same religious-cultural background, and I did not have an arranged marriage. It is important to also note that differences in religion, regionalism and

language of the reader and researcher also affect the interpretation of the various underlying cultural ideas and nuances in the novel. The reading of the novel also helped me realize the various subtle and overt processes of patriarchy. From this perspective, this may be reflective in my analysis of the novel.

Case Study Analysis: “*The Immigrant*” by Manju Kapur

In the following analysis of *The Immigrant*, I seek to understand two things: (1) how the female protagonist’s, Nina’s, transnational habitus is created and transformed through her migration to Canada, and (2) how the issue of patriarchy through marriage, sexuality and infidelity is explored by the author and how it influences Nina’s transnational habitus.

Nina’s transnational habitus has been mainly shaped by her life prior to being married and her life after, at which point she becomes a transnational Indian woman by migrating to Canada. Therefore to understand her transnational habitus, we must understand her habitus prior to and post migration. For Nina, her transnational habitus includes her habitus as acquired both in India and in Canada, as both experiences have contributed to her current dispositions and behaviours.

Nina lives in Delhi, India’s capital, during the early seventies when the country was undergoing socio-political reform under Indira Gandhi’s leadership.⁵ While in India, Nina remains a thirty year old, unmarried woman whose sole identity to the rest of the community revolves on whether or not she would be getting married. She herself, although well educated, well traveled, and financially and socially independent, believed herself lacking as a woman for she was not a wife or mother as most women her age in India were. The story opens with, “And her womb, her ovaries, her uterus, the unfertilized eggs that were expelled every month, what about them? ...Had she been married, thirty would have been heralded as a time of youthful maturity, her birthday celebrated in the midst of doting husband and children” (pg 1). This

⁵ During the seventies, although a relatively prosperous socio-political time for India, Indira Gandhi had also implemented some controversial laws. The Emergency was declared which gave her complete rule by decree, thereby undermining the democratic process which India had strived so long for, Gandhi also implemented the 20-point economic program which, although increased trade and economic growth, denied large groups of workers union rights and wage increases. Gandhi had also implemented forced sterilization of young men by government officials as a method of family planning (Rangarajan 2009) .

implies her habitus at the time to be one similar to most women in India at the time: that prosperity, security and happiness would ensue if one was married with a family.

Her idea of womanhood, as portrayed in the story, is increasingly influenced by her culture, which predicates to be a woman is to be a *married* woman. “We are conditioned to think a woman’s fulfillment lies in birth and motherhood, just as we are conditioned to feel failures if we don’t marry” (Kapur: 2008, pg 230). Even her once married and now widowed mother has no self identity or status without her connection to a living husband. Nina’s openness to an arranged marriage is also romanticized when the right suitor in Ananda comes along. After some thought, Nina eventually marries Ananda. To her Ananda is the enviable suitor, a suitable Non- Resident Indian (NRI) living in Canada, who is a white collared professional, financially stable, attractive, of similar background and values. Her habitus dictated that she needed to be well settled and secure in ways of marriage and family, and not be burdensome on anyone else, especially since she has seen her widowed mother struggle socially and financially in a husband-less world. Also, having had a father who provided for them when he was alive, who was also an honest, upright, citizen allowed her to look for similar qualities in a husband. At this time and in that era, marrying an NRI was the next best thing to a secure and stable life.

To her Ananda presented himself as an eligible, well-off professional, settled in the first world country, and honest, upright citizen...Nina- she wanted to settle down, she wanted children, she could continue in the same rut for years...this could be her last chance. What were the odds of marrying after thirty?

(Kapur, 2008: pg. 72-23)

Even though her habitus includes being a thirty year old, well-educated professional who has made most of her life’s own decision, she is willing to play house and wife when she moves to Canada. She is even willing to not work and start a family right away, as per her cultural and biological demands. It is obvious at this time in the story that marriage and family are quite

important to Nina, and that despite her independence and education, her unconventional status of being an unmarried, thirty year old woman in India drives her willingly into accepting a proposal for an arranged marriage. Thus she has succumbed to the demands of a traditional culture. It is interesting to note that this was also the liberated feminist seventies of the west, where casual relationships, women's choice and free thinking were burgeoning. After she gets married, she arrives in Canada with an expectation of a happy married life and an exciting immigrant experience. Soon loneliness sets in and Nina finds herself as "the immigrant who comes as a wife [having] a more difficult time. If work exists for her, it is in the future and after much finding of feet. At present all she is, is a wife, and a wife is alone for many many hours" (Kapur, 2008: pg121).

Canada in the seventies was just getting used to accepting immigrants from non-European countries. Although not overtly addressed in the story, it was also a time where immigrants faced issues of racism and discrimination by the majority white society (Ralston 2000). However, Nina is not shown to have faced these issues. Perhaps this is because unlike most wives who had immigrated to Canada under the sole merit of their husbands and were entirely dependent on them, Nina was well spoken, educated with a graduate degree, independent and relatively financially stable. This would make it easier for her as she would not have to face the main issues most immigrant face with respect to acquiring economic and social equality in Canada (Walton-Roberts 2003, Naidoo 2003). Thus her habitus can only be compared to Indian women experiencing the same immigrant process from the same social class.

Nina also moves to Halifax in Canada, a small east coast city with a very small Indian immigrant population. The main immigrant receiving cities were, and continue to be, the big metropolitan cities of Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver (Department of Manpower and

Immigration: 1970-1980). Perhaps if she were to move to any of those cities her habitus would have been influenced differently. Since there were established Indian communities in these cities, perhaps she would have held on to her Indian traditions, food, and clothes more vehemently being comfortable to be Indian in an Indian community while facing similar adjustment issues in Canada. Or perhaps, because many of these communities were not predominantly of the same social class as her, she would not be able to relate and thus feel disengaged and indifferent to her fellow immigrants.

Two important aspects that shape Nina's habitus prior to and when she arrives in Canada are the clothes she wears and the fact that she is vegetarian. Coincidentally both these aspects also change when we see a shift in Nina's transnational habitus toward a more western way. She arrives in Canada with her traditional wear, saris and salwar khameezes⁶. Much to the dismay of Ananda, she wears them as part of her daily wear as well as for social occasions. She holds on to her Indian habitus by wearing her traditional clothes and considers this an integral part of her identity as an Indian woman. Apart from her own husband, everyone else in the story finds her traditional clothing exotic and beautiful and an appropriate complement to her exotic 'Indian' features and looks. However as the story progresses, it is noted that in order to fully adapt and function in the winters of Halifax, she must eventually resort to wearing western clothing suited for Canadian winters. She hates the way western clothes make her feel and look, and feels a part of her identity as an Indian woman slowly slipping away. The references to clothing are numerous throughout the novel, therefore indicating an important symbol of identity for Nina, how it connects her to India and how she is perceived by others. "She took out her saris and stroked the intricate woven surfaces. Benarasi, Kanjeevaram, Orissa patola, Gujarati patola,

⁶ Salwar khameez is an Indian traditional dress which consists of a long tunic and pants.

Bandhani; she had fancied carrying all parts of India to Canada in her clothes. She...gazed at the magic of the green, yellow and red Gujarati weave” (Kapur 2008: pg 112).

Being vegetarian is also an important part of Nina’s identity and habitus. When she finds out that Ananda eats meat she is slightly appalled and feels betrayed at this behavior which she interprets as misrepresentation. To her it vegetarianism is the core of their culture and believes that food connects them to the memories of India. The author also places much emphasis on this. The act of cooking and eating Indian food in the novel symbolizes the shared consumption of that which is Indian. “Turmeric...red chillies...onions and garlic...releasing sweet sharp smells...cumin and coriander...these smells and imagined sights travelled across the world from north India to eastern Canada to kick her sharply in the stomach” (Kapur 2008: pg 139). However, being steadfast in her resolve to maintain this aspect of her Indian habitus, she willingly cooks Canadian cuisine and meat for Ananda, while insisting on eating her separately cooked vegetarian meals.

However, toward the end of the story where Nina feels tainted by her own infidelity with Anton, a fellow student, she partakes of eating fish, and eventually meat. “After she had sex with Anton, it seemed especially hypocritical to hang on to vegetables” (Kapur, 2008: pg 267). She thus parallels her fidelity and vegetarianism to all that is pure and Indian, and her infidelity and eating of meat to that which is tainted and un-Indian. This also indicates a shift in her transnational habitus, which throughout the story is constantly changing.

Her disappointment with the sexual relationship between Ananda and her, the lack of intimacy on his part and lack of orgasm on hers, the inability for them to conceive, all lead to Nina’s change in expectations of who she has to be as an Indian woman and the promising expectations of a happy married life. At this point in the story Nina’s main purpose is to sustain a

successful marriage and have a family. To her, this part of her habitus needs to be fulfilled because to be happily married is to not be divorced, and to not be divorced is to not be humiliated. The shame divorce signifies in Indian culture is worse than being widowed as it signifies a willing detachment from one's husband and one's security in life (Guru 2009). It shows that her marriage forms her identity as she sees herself foremost as a wife. Even though she tries to discuss possible solutions with Ananda, she faces much opposition and realizes that it is her own expectations that have to change if she wanted to be happy, and it was on her own that she would find the answers to her identity.

In her attempt to escape these issues and to find herself she joins a co-counseling feminist group. It is interesting to realize that the group is made up of predominantly white Canadian women, who have come together as a supportive measure against patriarchal constraints of the white, male, dominated Canadian society of the early seventies. It is in this forum that she is able to confide her problems and she realizes through various exercises and reading that she perhaps does not want to be confined with children at this stage in her life. She realizes what is more important is that she would instead like to find her own feet by finding a job of her own, and eventually pursuing a further education⁷. The author portrays this as an important shift in her transnational habitus, wherein she has now immersed herself as a woman in the Canadian context, with all her previous dispositions of being an Indian woman and an immigrant somewhat changed. She focuses more on her image, wears western clothes that flatter her, and even indulges in a sexual affair, behaviours she would not indulge in if she were the typical dutiful Indian wife. She believes that once she gets her degree and a job within her field she would have then fully completed her metamorphosis into a more independent woman. Although

⁷ Nina had already achieved a Master of Arts in English Literature while in India. At this time her further studies would include a Master of Arts in Library Sciences.

Nina worked in an academic profession and held a graduate degree in India, she was still unable to make her own decision with respect to remaining unmarried and her family and cultural demands of her class dictated that she get married in order to attain a respectable identity. However, coming to Canada allowed her the freedom to escape such cultural and familial demands, and although an education in India did not provide her much choice, an education in Canada would provide her with financial and social independence.

At the end, when her mother passes away and she discovers Ananda's infidelity, she realizes that there is nothing of her previous habitus left to hold on to and that she must start her life anew. Her mother's demise signified that there was no need to return to India and thus be confronted by all things Indian. Her discovery of Ananda's affair signified the end of their marriage and the end to her identity as his wife. She has thus broken free from the patriarchal constraints of her marriage and her previous romanticized notions of being a dutiful wife. Thus, Nina's character, while typical of many Indian women immigrants in the west, as portrayed by many transnational Indian authors, had experienced a constantly changing habitus. This habitus was a transnational one where the borders of India and Canada blurred and distinguished themselves at many points, and eventually led to becoming a very different woman in the end with a much changed identity, unlike the Indian bride she had set out to be. Shankar & Northcott's (2009) idea of being liberated from one's cultural patriarchy through migration holds ground in this case, however, after much "finding of feet" (Kapur: 2008, pgs 121, 213, 233). According to the author, Nina has thus liberated herself from the patriarchal constraints she faced in the story through the various processes that changed her habitus and identity: the ability to choose her own career through education, the ability to decide whether she wants to have

children, her sexual freedom, her change in dress and image, and eventually her decision to leave her husband.

Perhaps that was the ultimate immigrant experience. Not that any one thing was steady enough to attach yourself to for the rest of your life, but that you found different ways to belong, was not necessarily lasting, but ones that made your journey less lonely for a while...For an immigrant there was no going back...When one is reinventing oneself, anywhere could be home.

(Kapur, 2008: pg 330)

One of the main features of this novel is the arranged marriage; a patriarchal tradition entrenched in Indian culture; irrespective of class and caste distinctions (Chawla 2007). With respect to patriarchy, the institution of the arranged marriage is where more often than not, a woman has very little say in the choosing of her husband. If a suitable husband is presented, it would be shameful for a woman to reject him as it would reflect poorly on her family's reputation. Since a woman then goes into a marriage with very little choice, she has to stay in this marriage, as divorce or any kind of emancipation from in would lead to a fate full of same. Many women in these situations are bound to suffer abuse and ill-treatment (Abraham 1999). However, in this story the prospect and reality of an arranged marriage is romanticized by both protagonists and is shown to provide Nina with her own choice and control over her own future. However, it is the consequence of this marriage that reflects the patriarchal issues that follow.

It is important to note that patriarchal issues do prevail in this story, as in many writings of Indian immigrant literature by authors like Bharati Mukherjee, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Kiran Desai, to name a few. However, the patriarchal issues as portrayed by the male protagonist, Ananda, are not completely overt. There is a subtle underlying patriarchal tone to his character and his actions. He is not seen as one who overtly tries to control and oppress his wife. However, through his various attempts to change her and steer their lives according to his reasoning, we

can see how he tries to control Nina throughout the story. Ananda is portrayed to be an Indian immigrant man who has successfully integrated in Western society. Through his successful integration he is also struggling against a white classist western society as he constantly competes to be and to have all that is Canadian: an Indian-turned-Canadian bride, sex with stereotypical white Canadian women, a white collared Canadian profession, Canadian food and clothes and Canadian ideals. It can be argued that due to his struggle for equality in such a society, his need to maintain power and control over his wife and their life together pacifies this yearning.

This also continues with Ananda's fascination with fair skin and white skin. Prior to his arranged marriage, the women he had relationships with were the typified blonde, blue-eyed, white skinned, sexually assertive women of the west. His inability to detach from these women and his need to relate to them depicts his aversion to his own culture and a desperate effort to assimilate into western society. Naturally when the woman he marries is the opposite of this, he makes every effort to westernize her so that she would seem less Indian and fit better in Canadian society.

Kapur has initially made him out to be an established and successful dentist, who is ideal husband material hailing from a respectable family with respectable values. He does not ask for any dowry for the wedding and takes care of most of the expenses, thus implying that he is a modern and western man who has not succumbed to the Indian oppressive tradition of the dowry (Samuel 2002). He initially treats Nina with respect and affection, and ensures that she is comfortable when she arrives in Canada. However, as the story unfolds, a subtle patriarchal side to Ananda emerges as he tries to control Nina's dress, eating, name, sexual practices, and even her desire to have children. This is because Ananda finds it necessary that Nina fit in with white

Canadian society by discarding all things that identify her as an Indian woman, thus erasing her identity as an Indian woman and as an immigrant. This stems from his own need to assimilate with white Canadian society so that he too is not seen as an immigrant and that he can avail the socio economic equality he so desires. “They [Canadian society] were the ones among whom he...intended to pass their lives, and it was important they be understood for what they were [educated, professional, adaptable to and accepting of Western culture], rather than be judged by stereotypical ideas” (Kapur, 2008: pg 148).

He anglicizes his name to conform his identity to western culture, by preferring to be called ‘Andy’. Nina cannot understand why this is necessary to fit in with Canadian society. Ananda makes a point that to Nina’s advantage her name can be Indian as well as western and she should thus fit in well in Canada because of that. He then asks Nina to stop wearing her saris everywhere as they are too formal. “Women who are not used to wearing Western clothes find themselves in a dilemma. If they focus on integration, convenience and conformity they have to sacrifice habit, style and self-perception... in Nina’s case it took months to wear down her resistance” (pg 150). Ananda continues to suggest throughout the story that Nina’s life would be much more exciting and easy in Canada if she were to conform to eating meat. This is yet another way Ananda tries to control Nina and indirectly and incredulously questions her own decision making on an act as simple as choosing what she should eat.

Ananda: How about a special combo [pizza] with pepperoni, anchovies...nothing in India quite compares.

Nina: I thought you were vegetarian.

Ananda: At home they think I am. But here I eat what everybody else does, it is simpler and convenient. You too will get used to it.

Meat had never crossed Nina’s lips in thirty years, how could she change now?

(Kapur, 2008: pg. 112)

Sexuality and extramarital affairs is thematic in the novel as an element of identity and power struggle with Ananda. He finds sexual relations with his wife less fulfilling than if they were to be with his white Canadian mistresses. According to Ananda, sex with his wife is mundane and routine whereas on the other hand it is exciting and powerful. His infidelity can be construed as his control over Nina's choice, for if she were to find out it would require her to make her own choice with respect to the course of their marriage. Thus by hiding this from her, she is left without choice and is obliquely controlled.

Ananda's preoccupation with his penis controls every other aspect of his life in this story. It is realized that his need to marry was because he believed it would solve his problems with premature ejaculation.

As a wife she would show...patience and understanding to any little problem that might crop between them. He saw now that many of his difficulties with women in Canada had come from his anxiety to prove himself. Nina and he had the luxury of their whole live [and marriage] in which to sort things out. He put his hand protectively around his organ and caressed it gently. Poor thing, it had such a hard time...but now that trauma was going to end. A loving mistress [his wife] was about to enter the picture."

(Kapur, 2008: pg 86)

Before their marriage Ananda did not disclose to Nina that he was having problems with premature ejaculation. When Nina finds this out after their marriage she is confused and hurt by this surprise and at times left sexually unsatisfied. This would then imply that if she were to have known prior to her marriage, it may have played a role in her decision to marry him. Thus, his deception has led to his control over her choice of husband and their sexual relationship as a married couple. In the beginning he thought that having sex with Nina was actually helping his ability to sustain himself, despite that it lasted a couple of minutes, despite that he used his dental anesthetic on his penis to sustain erection, and despite that it provided no pleasure to his wife.

Eventually when Nina confronts him with this, he gets defensive and angry, implying that only his sexual satisfaction was paramount to both.

He knew he had miles to go before he reached his goal of pounding some woman to sexual pulp, but with marriage he had gained his confidence. One day he might try again with a white woman. He loved his wife, but he didn't want to feel that she was the only one in the world that he could have sex with.

(Kapur, 2008: pg 149)

When Nina asks if they could see a fertility specialist, after many failed attempts at trying to conceive, he justifies his non-cooperation by stating that it was still too early for them in their marriage and that there was no rush. However, all the while he was more concerned about the scrutiny that his penis and sexual performance would be under with fertility testing. This is an example of how he has put his needs above the needs of a prospective family, again by subtly controlling the situation and directing the course of their married life.

Ananda, being the only earning partner, also controls the finances and pays the bills. On one occasion Nina spends three hundred dollars on clothes, western clothes which he encouraged her to buy. However, upon receipt of the bill, he gets very angry at her frivolous expenditure. When she says that she doesn't even know how much she earns, and thus does not ask for much, he claims that it is very expensive to run a dental practice and that he is still recovering from the wedding debt, insinuating that she shouldn't be questioning him after all that he has done for her financially. What he does not tell her is that he is actually recovering from a very expensive sexual therapy session and a financially demanding mistress on the side. Knowing that she has no proper income of her own, he continues to make her feel guilty for spending his money and continues to control her expenses. Financial control over women is one of the main acts of patriarchy by men. This is especially true if the woman is not working and/or is financially dependent on the man who is earning (Bowlby et. al 1997). In this way, if a woman does not

have any money of her own, it then curtails various other aspects of her life that involve certain expenses. She cannot socialize, buy herself necessities, have an emergency fund, pay for health needs, or even something as simple as paying for transportation. She can thus be confined physically and financially. In this case, although Nina is able to spend money for the most part, it is obvious that if it does not suit Ananda, then the expenditure is not warranted, this indicating that he ultimately makes the financial decision for what is and is not needed and by whom.

As part of his need for power and control with the act of sex, acquiring sexual prowess is foremost on his mind and with this he secretly attends sex therapy in California. The therapy he seeks does not just include 'talk' therapy, but involves sex with a surrogate. By most standards this would be considered a form of infidelity. However according to Ananda, if it will solve his problem then it is worth the over three thousand dollars he has spent on it and justifies that it could not be infidelity on his part. His therapy does help him with his sexual issues. When he returns to Nina, his sexual performance is visibly timed by the digital clock by their bedside, for every time he sustains himself longer he logs it into a diary. The statistics that he gathers on himself gives him more self confidence than whether or not his wife is experiencing any pleasure. Sex to him has become studied and strategic. This also exemplifies his control over sex and over Nina's sexual needs and the fact that his performance is paramount.

As his sexual performance improves and his marital relationship grows distant, Ananda begins to have an affair two years into his marriage with his temporary receptionist, a white, blonde Canadian named Amanda. After an intense affair, Ananda seeks to end it with Amanda, only to go on to have one night sexual encounters with anonymous women in the city, every time claiming to be a different identity.

He had experimented while Nina was away...he had made his way to the bars near the quay. The first girl was blonde...he was a traveler passing by, he said, on

his way to India. In bars, he was anonymous; he could experience the thrill of being anybody. The second time he claimed he was Egyptian, Omar Sharif. He looked different, sexy and intense at the same time. She knew what he was after... (Kapur, 2008: pg 294)

The author portrays that he does not find anything wrong in his infidelities and in fact revels in them. Although unbeknownst to Nina, his infidelity could be construed as his control over the meaning of their marriage and that his deception could have very hurtful consequence to Nina, and thus exerts control over her trust and emotions.

The above illustrates how the author suggests that even in a story which denies certain oppressive traditions and acknowledges the educated socio-economic class, patriarchy can and does exist. Apart from the issue of arranged marriage and part of Nina's cultural habitus, the issues mentioned above are not entirely cultural norms specific to Indian culture. Many immigrant relationships in the West are notably similar as portrayed in many Indian works of fiction as previously stated. Although both protagonists do not face very unique situations, and in some stances they even face stereotypical ones, it is important to understand that these are some of the main themes that pervade Indian transnational fiction, and are possibly reflective of the lived realities in the transnational Indian community.

The author also illustrates the binaries of patriarchy: individual and systemic, cultural and universal, and public and private. An example of individual patriarchy in the novel can include Ananda's control over Nina's clothes and choice of food; whereas an example of systemic patriarchy could include Nina's inability to find equitable employment and wages. An example of cultural patriarchy could include the tradition of the arranged marriage; whereas an example of universal patriarchy could include Ananda's control over the finances. An example of public patriarchy could also include Nina's inability to find equitable employment and wages; whereas

an example of private patriarchy could include Ananda's control over when they should have children.

Nina's transnational habitus has constantly changed throughout the story. Every change was influenced by something meaningful that had occurred as a result of her marriage and as a result of Ananda's patriarchal actions. And every change also resulted in a change in her own identity. The woman who arrived in Canada was a very different woman at the end of the story. Canadian ideals and society had a significant impact on this transformation. As portrayed by the author, the freedoms of western society sometimes superseded certain constraints of Indian cultural demands and universal patriarchy by allowing Nina the choice to make certain decisions in her own life. The author seems to suggest that her journey of self-discovery into the woman she becomes in the end is one of freedom and choice. While this could be true, it is not known what happens to Nina after she decides to leave Ananda and start her life on her own. As a reader, there are many questions that arise. Does Nina really begin to live her life on her own terms? Does she escape the systemic and universal forms of patriarchy that still exist in Canada? Does she marry into another patriarchal relationship? Is her new transnational habitus devoid of anything Indian? Or does she still hold on to her notion of what it is to be Indian? And does she still consider herself to be an immigrant? Thus, as the issues of transnational habitus and patriarchy, as depicted in the novel, is indicative of this particular time in Nina's life, it does not predict whether or not Nina will continue to face the same issues despite her metamorphosis as portrayed by the author.

Conclusion

In summary, I have considered how Indian immigrant women's identities are dependent on their constantly changing transnational habitus as portrayed in Indian immigrant literature. I have also considered how cultural and universal patriarchal systems continue to exist as a prevailing theme in Indian immigrant literature, and how although fictional, such issues reflect the lived realities of Indian immigrant women.

Using qualitative document analysis I have tried to analyze established critical literature as well as an example case study of Indian immigrant fiction as the main documents. I have used a conceptual framework involving the concepts of transnationalism, space, habitus, transnational habitus and patriarchy in order to analyze and exemplify such themes in Indian immigrant literature, through a case study of *The Immigrant* by Manju Kapur. A literature review defining relevant terms provided a basis for understanding this framework, which was then applied to the case study analysis by using examples of the female protagonist's negotiations within her transnational habitus and the prevailing patriarchal behavior of the male protagonist.

From the analysis, we can see how Nina negotiates her transnational habitus throughout the story. She enters the story with pre-migration habitus governed by cultural norms and expectations from her Indian culture and identity. Through her various experiences in her marriage and her self-discovery in Canada, her post migration habitus changes as it adapts to Nina's transformation into a much changed woman than the one she arrived in Canada as. She finds her new found freedoms and ideologies have allowed her to make her own decisions for herself despite Ananda's attempts of patriarchal control. The story of *The Immigrant* thus reflects the metamorphosis of the immigrant to one of a confident and settled citizen who is no longer lost in her new world or in the shadows of her husband's identity.

Simultaneously, we can also see how Ananda, an immigrant himself, tries to control Nina by employing various aspects of patriarchal oppression on both cultural and universal levels. His need to become all-Canadian heightens his desire to have Nina follow the same path. Thus, his need to control Nina's Indian ways is perhaps not just patriarchal action but it is how he tries to hide his struggle against a white classist western society. However, his patriarchal control has an effect on Nina's transnational habitus and consequently changes the path she chooses and transforms her identity as a woman. The story is not conclusive to any positive or negative outcome for Nina. Although she has changed through her journey as an immigrant, much is to be left to the imagination as to whether or not hers is a success story in the end.

The above two issues are not unique to this particular story; in fact issues of patriarchy and changing transnational habitus among immigrants are often stereotypical in such fiction, as noted previously in this paper. However, *The Immigrant* does confirm the realities lived by immigrants, and in this case, immigrant Indian women, by the mere re-telling of such issues in the subjective forum of creative literature. Understanding how creative art, specifically fiction, can provide imperative insight to immigrant issues is important to surmising how other fields of analysis can also shed light on immigrant issues.

“In modern literate societies, the written text has largely supplanted storytelling. The written text, which is both more private and more public than the spoken word, has its own unique power of transforming reality” (Tuan, 1991: pg 690). Transnational authors use their authority and authenticity as insiders, their tools of language and idiomatic manipulations, and concept of cultural markings to create an imagined transnational space in fiction. They act as cultural emissaries by portraying their culture to others through their writing (Dirlik 2002, Lau 2005, Lau 2006, Rockwell 2003, Banerjee 2004, Walkowitz 2006). Thus it would be interesting

to contemplate for future research how, in the process of writing and creating such fictions, transnational authors play an important role in re-telling immigrant issues through their work.

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