

Exposition of Semi – Autobiographical Nature of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni with reference to The Mistress of Spices, The Vine of Desire and Queen of Dreams

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Abstract

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's semi-autobiographical elements has been focussed since she is an immigrant from the year 1976 as an under graduate student of Calcutta. For sure, she has undergone studies in racism, multiculturalism, and hybridity as the P.G. student. That is where, she might have thought human beings are to be treated only as human beings irrespective of their origin, mindset, culture and cult method. Moreover, she accepts that people is , the mindset everywhere are not changed and that has been clearly shown in abusing one's wife mentally, physically and sexually because in India wives are the objects of play and the same thing is followed even after the displacement. As an educated fellow, she believes in sisterhood and solving women's problems through the discussion in open discussion forum among the women. Divakaruni is the sure witness of twin tower crash of the year 2001 and recession where Indians are the mostly affected people and has made an imprint in Divakaruni's mind.since she couldn't come out of certain impact, unconsciously her subjects revolves around the women's problems, racism, impact of the Twin Tower crash. A majority of her themes revolves on Indian culture with regard to marriage, food, life style, house, mansions of Calcutta. Every novel of hers is around the city of Calcutta as a compatriot and patron of her words and in her novels the citizen of India basically.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is basically an immigrant and being an author is secondary.. Her experience as an immigrant has become a subject of all her novels in various perspectives. After an experience and through that experience she has voiced out the idea of cosmopolitanism ,which means every human being should be treated only as a human being irrespective of the religion, race, culture, living style and cult. It could be stated otherwise that everyone's life is equality under the sky and above the earth; everyone needs water, air, food and shelter to live on this earth. Survival technique is applied by everyone to make ends meet.

Since Divakaruni is the diasporic writer she talks about recession, other countries try to send back migrants to their own country centered on spatialization, unemployment problems, and to prevent the collaboration of cultures, functions and festivals of one's cultures and the mindset of the people. It proves that it is all about the mindset, and how we are dealing with the things. Most countries hate Indians due to their intelligence, attitude, behavior, respect and survival technique and moreover their flexibility and their adaptability. In addition to it, Indians are getting highly paid because of their education. India always send teachers, doctors, nurses, coolies, contract labours , etc. They are always capable of filling in every gap the foreign countries have.

Since she is a woman, she could see the women's problems clearly, especially the South Asian women. As an author, a social worker and co-founder of MAITIRI helpline for South Asians believes in sisterhood. Sisterhood treats the other woman as sister and naturally the problems can be solved by discussing it in open forums. She always brings out the significance of India through the words. She has carefully crafted out India's culture; they are the spice bazaar in *The Mistress of Spices*, the kurma house in *Queen of Dreams*, Interpreter of dreams in *Queen of Dreams*. The two other characters in two different novels have the same perspective in assisting the South Asian community especially women; one is the mistress of spices, Tilottama in *The Mistress of Spices*, the other one is interpreter of dreams in *Queen of Dreams*. The former one has to rectify the customers' problems only through the spices and the latter one is to assist them in through interpreting their dreams and telling them the remedies to be followed on to come out of their troubles and sometimes pacify them through the pretext of something which they believe to follow to come out of it.

Divakaruni refers to Dotbusters. Dotbusters are all infuriated at seeing a Hindu women, identified by the Bindi on their forehead. Dotbusters' aim is to burst their dots the minute they see them. In the novel *The Mistress of Spices*, Haroun, the taxi driver, by birth he is a Kashmiri, has come over to California after the riot he has witnessed in Kashmir especially in the Lake. The local kasmiris in the and has been attacked severely in the hides of the customers because Haroun is an guise of customer attack the taxi driver because he was from other part of India., The MOHAN INDIAN FOODS in the same novel is a wheeler dealer shop, which is run by Mohan and Veena of Indian tiffin and foods and again they are here in America

only for their survival. The MOHAN FOODS has been destroyed, and Mohan was seriously injured and later carries a scar that was a leftover of the injury. In addition to it, the words the Dotbusters have spoken while beating Mohan, “ ‘Sonofabitch Indian, shoulda stayed in your own goddamn own ” (170). Along with this and after the incident Pentagon tower crash in the year 2001 and the consequences has been focused on the novel in *Queen of Dreams*, when the kurma house of Mr. Gupta was violently brought collapsed by the Americans. They are not ready to accept the second generation immigrant Indians green card holders of America as their citizens. This is clearly shown through the beating of Jespal, one who is a Punjabi with turban in order to protect himself from such beatings say, “We’ re Americans, just the way you are. We all feel terrible about what happened” (267). The response to Jespal’s words by the real Americans are “‘Looked in a mirror lately?’ one of them spits. ‘You ain’t no American! It’s fuckers like you who planned this attack on the innocent people of this country. Time someone taught you faggots a lesson” (267).

After his recovery, Mohan with crutches has started moving hears of the news of acquittal of the Dotbusters. It showed that always the countrymen would not forego their own country Dotbusters. is crystal clear It becomes that citizens of every country hate Indians and the Dotbusters are the representatives. That is why they say through the words, “(He doesn’t know that later a lawyer will show the young man’s stone-bruise to the judge and say the Indian had started it all, his clients were only protecting themselves)” (170). The narrative would be cooked up to prove that like the Dotbusters were only defenders and Indians as attackers, that would also be believed by everyone including the Indian Government accepts the narrative . The Indian Government and Indian people are always insisting that the Indian people wherever they move should be like a barking dogs rather than a biting one. Divakaruni has insisted her words to indicate about the Indians who suffered in other countries’ Divakaruni’s character represents the predicament Tilottama, the mistress of Spices and interpreter of dreams in *Queen of Dreams*, try to safeguard and strengthen the immigrants from the problems through psychological way. Divakaruni’s representative says the prayers for every Indian in the other man’s country, “All night instead I will whisper into air purifying prayers for the maimed, for each lost limb, each crushed tongue. Each silenced heart (173).

Tilottama whose duty is to care for the South Asian community and exclusively the protection of women of the same community. Sometimes the trainer of the mistress of the spices resembles the author herself in giving the instructions to help the persons of certain community are, “‘Remember why you are going, the Old One said. ‘To help your own kind, and them only. The others, they must go elsewhere for their need” (68). This type of safeguarding always remind the author that they are all diasporic in nature and have only come to other countries only for satisfying their family needs and close all the loan that has been a due for a very long time and to live a peaceful life. Through the character Geetha’s Grandfather it is revealed that how treated American life style and how felt ashamed to live in other man’s country and how due to the

compulsion he came, ““But mental peace I am not having , not even one iota, since I crossed the *Kalapani* and came to this America,...”(85).

Tilottama especially focuses on Mrs. Ahuja @ Lalita who is the security in America and always have some disconnection within them and he doesn't even have the proper fertility to impregnate Lalita and the problem has become bigger when Lalita has consulted the American lady doctor and in response she has got the report stated that she is fit enough to bear the baby and the doctor has insisted on bringing her husband to check his sperm count and moreover Lalita has been told by the doctor that these kinds of checkups has been common. Due to these statement Mr. Ahuja has become angry and harassed Lalita sexually for having been insulted as a man who proves that Sigmund Freud's statement of Phallus, the structure of eruption stands for the firmness and strength.

In the same way Basudha in the novel *The Vine of Desire* art has forced herself to move out of her sister Anjali's house from America with the assistance of Lupe as having found her a suitable job as to take care of an old man physically and mentally and the reason behind her moving is not to spoil her Anjali's life and not to fall in love with Sunil, her sister's husband. Though initially the situation is Mr. Sunil's is marriage relationship ends. Unknowingly Anjali has reopened it by having invited Basudha to America, with the comforting words of saying like nobody would care in America as being a single parent to Dayita, to come over her tragedy of having lost her boy baby Prem. Both Lalita and Basudha could be compared due to their ideas in sewing the clothes and designing the clothes to stand on their own and both has been helped by the organization for Lalita and by the individual for Basudha represent the MAITIRI organization, in which Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is the co-founder of the organization in helping the South Asian women from their domestic violence.

The focus of assistance on making Mrs. Ahuja to become Lalita as herself and to make her as she has wanted before her marriage to run a tailoring shop by herself and has wanted all her life to be independent. This kind of help has been made without Mrs. Ahuja's knowledge through sliding a magazine into her purchase before she has knotted to make her to know through the helpline number that she would be of utmost help when she is in need. The need also arise after the harassment the daylight also has broken out as she has been dawned with a idea of making a move through rummaging the waste paper to pick the magazine that which bears the helpline number to help her and then she has rung and reached her safe zone there she has been given the idea to make a police complaint, to read a lot of books and given an idea to open a Tailoring shop to stand on her own. At last Lalita has become her real self.

I went through the pile again. My head was feeling dizzy, I was so nervous he'd come back early.
When I found it I started crying. I could hardly talk when I phoned.

The woman on the line was very kind. She was Indian like me, she understood a lot without my telling. She said I was right to call, they would help me If I was sure of what I wanted to do.

I packed a bag, took my passport, some wedding jewellery that was in the house, whatever money I could find. I didn't want to touch anything of his, but I knew I'd have to survive.

Two women picked me up at the bus stop. They drove me to this house in another town. (271)

Since the author is an Indian she believes in spices which could do some magic in Daksha's life, Jagjit's life and even in Geetha's Grandfather's. For the first one the seed of black pepper has been given to strengthen her mind and to raise will power to say 'No' to her in-laws for all their instructions to make her do the drudgery, since she is the Nurse, she has to take care of all the patients irrespective of her timings according to the shifts. The second one Jagjit's life has been taunted and insulted in school because of his punjabian outlook with green turban, she feels that the spice cinnamon would remove all the hurdles in his life and Geetha's Grandfather with *kantak* the thorn herb to make him suffer from cramps of the last stage to bind everyone with his words to join the family together.

On the whole, these are all the experiences and incidents Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni has witnessed while she has come as an immigrant and tried her life with trial and errors along with odd jobs. Those things have made a mark on her mind. Since she is the care taker of entire South Asian community especially women. MAITIRI is still an alive organization for women with helpline numbers. She is more than an author and is really an activist and that has been revealed in all her novels through the female characters' sternness in achieving things though not in the beginning, at least after realizing for their own life and not to waste any more of their days in harassment and abuse. Divakaruni's success always depends on the women's wish for success with full independence.

Work Cited

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