

Image Of The New Draupadi In Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's The Palace Of Illusions

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Abstract

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is an Indo-American writer. She has won many accolades and awards. Among her novels "The Palace of illusions captures the magical world of epic for its twenty one century readers. The Palace of illusions is a novel which attempts to redraft the epic. Apart from the normal andocentric focuses of the epic. Divakaruni's Draupadi becomes the "hero" and offers a gendered description of the epic. She creates a narrative world where Draupadi is feelings and sentiments comes into question and thus she fills up with extraordinary new viewpoint of narration. Draupadi occupies a central stature with all human qualities. The life of Draupadi one of the celebrated women character to the modern times. Divakaruni's novel facilitates in foregrounding Draupadi and thus to conquer the ancient conventional icon,

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An epitome of feminine assertion is exemplified "The Palace of Illusions", in Divakaruni's refuses to accept traditional and idealistic approach in her work, rather she excavates the disturbed psyche of the ancient mythical

heroine. She felt that women characters are presented in the epic unjustly and biasedly and appears only as object to fulfill the necessities of male characters. They are not depicted as human being hearing their own heart and soul. She writes in the introduction of quotation.

"I was left unsatisfied by the portrayals of the women" they remain shadowy figures, their thoughts and motives mysterious, their emotions portrayed only when they affected the lives of the male heroes, their roles ultimately subservient to those of their fathers or husbands brothers or sons if I ever wrote a book.... I would place the women in the forefront of the action. I would uncover the story that lay invisible between the lines of the men's exploits"

Banerjee takes on Indian epic Mahabharata and weaves an imaginative novel around its most maligned & suffering female character Draupadi. Draupadi endowed with a critical thinking capacity, the writer raises her voice against social evils prevailing in the patriarchal society Draupadi is a good vantage point to observe the depth and power of an oppressed woman

"The place of Illusions" Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni has redefined the old Hindu mythological saga "Mahabharata" from Draupadi viewpoint. She does not change the story nor does she provide an alternative ending but instead she offers a fresh new perspective imaging seeing it through Draupadi's eye.

Draupadi was tremendously beautiful, intellectual and righteous woman. There are few women in Hindu mythology who were belligerent and who spoke their intelligence in a world of men, Draupadi was one of them she is considered by many as the first feminist of Indian mythology. After Draupadi knows about

her birth, we see a questioning Draupadi who does not like the name given to her. About this she feels. "Something more suited to a girl who was supposed to change history?" Draupadi is seen as a woman who is not happy with her present status. She is one who easily reasserts herself and remains herself as Panchali which is derived from the Kingdom of Panchala, She therefore opposes the shallow label that her father gave her and refuses to accept that her personality is tied by a man in her life.

Banerjee's princess is a young rebel a tomboy. She is determined to leave a mark on this world. Draupadi is a fire born princess with lofty goals for her life. Sadly, none of them come true when married the Pandavas. It is only fair that she keep thinking of where things went wrong for her and wondering if she married the right guy (s). Though Draupadi seems to be a woman who detests traditional way of living, she has the attitude of being a true wife and companion to Arjun. Without knowing the feelings of Draupadi, Kunti asks her to marry her five sons. Draupadi detests this idea but she cannot help, and suffers within herself. She married to five males

Emotionally, we see the bitterness that shapes up Draupadi from the start. We see her angry, we see her withdraw, we see her contemplate, we see her lash out in blind fury, we see her curious, we see her loving. The insight into Draupadi's inner doubts and fears become much our own. We see the princess who felt like misfit at her own dad's place but eventually found a home in "The Place of Illusion. "Draupadi's story is that of a woman so blindly confident of her unique destiny that she brought about her own misfortunes. Her pride fell. And then, she grew learnt humility kindness surrender and acceptance. She grew to

find a woman's power in her, She grew to identify her devotion to Krishna and her love for him which is beyond body and mind.

Meanwhile, we never lose sight her complicated friendship with the epigenetic Krishna or her secret fascination for the mysterious man who is her husband's most dangerous enemy. The author makes the right amount of of fiction into the archaic tale without taking away its originals flavor. I have never heard of Draupadi's love story in the original. The new Draupadi falls in love with Karna who she sees him at her swayamvar. Her love for him is only intensified after her marriage and she yearns for him all her life. She would find him capable and deserving of her love not only because he is and handsome but also he would respect her and treat her like the queen. She is so despite her fate every time she sees him her heart gives a jolt. He was her one true love until the end. Draupadi's love story before comes a surprise because I have never imagined the possibility before just assumed that Draupadi accepted her life and marriage with satisfaction. Banerjee expertly weaves the original stories from Mahabharata, while adding her own spin events.

Draupadi is an introspecting woman. She feels she should have controlled her laughter when Duryodhan fell into water. But Draupadi could not stop herself from smiling. And Draupadi decides to solve the problem herself instead of seeking Yudhisthir's help. She becomes a good decision maker. She does not brood over the problems instead thinks of a solution. Draupadi has become a new woman who no longer cares for what people would think of her and her way of living. She attributes this change to the Palace of illusions. The Palace has has imbued in her a renewed energy

confidence and freedom. Divakaruni's Draupadi is highly self-centered and anxious and the one who was rigid and a woman with an unwavering will. The proud and angry heroine of the epic Mahabhrata. Draupadi has remained an enigmatic woman of substance. She diagnostically her palace in changing the history as prophesied at the time of her birth. It is the fate of a woman to accept her situation without complaint. But here is a daring and self-respecting woman like Draupadi who questions the injustice done to her, Draupadi's life shows how women are expected and forced to accept the concept of tradition and culture without any questions. The view of Draupadi are totally different from those of ordinary women and the outcomes are as powerful as She is Her determination and courage has been explained all through the novel. Draupadi's life seeks to break the shackles of stereotypical concept of how women can be women.

Thus the journey of Draupadi which is quite different from other women, mortals, ordinary women comes to an end. Divakaruni seems to suggest that certain incidents in the life of Draupadi are quite similar to the predicament of a woman in the twenty-first (21) century. As a modern woman I felt very connected to Draupadi, How Chitra Banerjee manages to walk the fine line between the old and new interpretations of the character of a strong woman.

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