

**NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES IN CHITRA BANERJEE DIVAKURANI'S
SELECT NOVELS OF "THE VINE OF DESIRE & QUEEN OF DREAMS"**

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Abstract

. Divakaruni's narrative in "The Vine of Desire" and "Queen of Dreams" are gracefully structured as a piece of chamber music, with its interplay of themes and voices, ensemble and solo, working their way towards a final resolving chord.

Keywords: *Diaspora, myth, cultural conflict, displacement, narration.*

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni was born and raised in Calcutta and then left for America to pursue higher studies. She settled there and started working as a Professor. She is the McDavid Professor of Creative Writing at the University of Houston. Divakaruni is a co-founder and former president of Maitri, and also a member of advisory board of Daya, a for South Asian women dealing with domestic abuse, trafficking, and other problems. She has a wide range of themes such as marriage, alienation, the pain of immigrants coming of age, search for roots and identity, the findings of love loss self-dependence betrayal, the interaction between women and men etc.

Divakaruni writings reveal postcolonial consciousness, cultural studies, and postmodernism to a large extent and therefore, she stands at par with other Women Diaspora writers like Jhumpa Lahiri, Shashi Deshpande etc. She writes in numerous narrative styles such as realism, magical realism, fantasy, historical and existentialism. Divakaruni's fictional writings are interesting not as much for revealing the torture inflicted on women, the identity crisis of the immigrants and their disappointment, as for the subtle references to fantasy in the realistic narrative. Her writings are full of the cultures, tradition and a sense of pride in a family which are the basic characteristics of an Indian. The novel has mystery, romance, family history, heritage, emotions, and business. In Chitra's "The Vine of Desire" focuses on the Diasporic Indian immigrants who are caught between two different worlds. The experience of being caught between two worlds remained a prominent theme of her writing. The novel maps out the curves

and lines of the new South Asian Community in the United States and its struggle for identity. The characters seem emotionally preoccupied to their past, that they cannot rejoice at their newly achieved freedom without an inquiry and a sense of skepticism.

Divakaruni's "The Vine of Desire" expresses the story of two friends and their quest for identity, freedom and social and economic progress. Divakaruni's two novels, The Vine of Desire and Queen of Dreams reveal the conflict between traditions and cultures of their places of adoption as well as of their homelands. She analysis the anxiety, sense of dislocation and relocation of the protagonists. Racism, inter-racial relationship, economic disparity, social oppression, and divorce are among the other themes that she usually deals with.

This novel focuses on family-arranged matches, a century-old tradition in India. The story of "Queen of Dreams" is also about Indian immigrants to the United States and it vividly shows how the dislocation of immigrants is making tradition problematic. Far from Calcutta, the city of their childhood, and after years of living separate lives, Anuj and Sudha rekindle their friendship in America. Sudha left a ruined marriage with Ramesh. Sudha wanted to escape from a society where the people are sunk in old beliefs, who are blindly attached to superstitious faiths and where she faced a life of suppression and nothing else.

Chitra's in her novel "The Vine of Desire" succeeds in portraying how the life varies for an Indian and Indian American, what sorts of difficulties, attitudes, and beliefs they have towards their lives Myra and her husband Trideep's are an excellent example of this. Myra is sick and feeling tired of life, taking care of Trideep's father who irritates her lot, immigrants, when they enter as initially wish to live like white Americans by absorbing the native habits and culture, later they tend to lose interest and their attention goes towards their native countries. Similarly, Trideep's father enjoys his life in the US initially, but later he asks his son to send him back home. He suffers from a sense of displacement, which leads to his mental ill health. He lacks the inner resources to cope with the alienation that he experiences in America and he gradually goes down into Psychotic-Violence. The displacement also gives rise to the concept of double consciousness and unhomeliness, which are the major features of Diasporic situation.

Immigrants hold's double loyalties, one is with an origin and another is with his adopted land. This duality sometimes becomes domineering and cracks his mind. The old man makes life very difficult for his modern assimilated son Trideep and daughter-in-law Myra. The initial enjoyment of the old man is only momentary in America. Later it is turned into disappointment and distress. The life in an alien country becomes too agonizing and leaves the old man in depression and nostalgia for his own country where he wants to spend the rest of his life. Nostalgia is the homesickness is a phenomenon most of the immigrants face in their adopted lands. It is the condition of being homesick it is a moral pain with the desire of returning home. It may cause functional disorders that may weaken one's energy and vigor. Sudha identifies that the old man is not happy because he suffers from a sense of displacement in the alien land; "In this

bed, in this house, in this country, all of which is alien to him" (Divakaruni 278) she senses that he may get peace in his homeland.

Divakaruni's characters in her two novels "The Vine of Desire" and "Queen of Dreams", reveals the root cause of displacement in the social oppression and economic status. The character in both these novels one to escape from the clutches of misery and the emotional suppression in their homeland. This makes them move away from the place of origin, to find solutions and amelioration. Both these novels are exquisitely rendered tales of passion, jealousy, and redemption. The character of Divakaruni's in "The Vine of Desire" and "Queen of Dreams" need a change and they want to uplift their lives. The idea of progressiveness made them dislocate from their home. This dislocation occurs only when their lives face new ideas. In both these novels, the characters have directly experienced certain problems in their lives before entering into a new country.

The novel "Queen of Dreams" is a work of an emotionally disturbed mother and a daughter trying to find themselves transcending cultural boundaries. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's preoccupation with romantic exoticism is characterized by the interspersing of the factual and the imaginary into a tale of mystery. She turns the mystery into romance, revealing hidden facets of character and identity as the novel progresses. Innovative in narrative structure, the condition of the characters before displacement is expressed in various points of view. In these two novels, the author renews the narration and theme that has been explored through the ages: national identity, the connection of body and times, and that love will transcend place and time.

Both of Divakaruni's novels "The Vine of Desire" and "Queen of Dreams" portray the title of women in India, where they cannot decide their life on their own. The invasions of society always interrupt women's lives in India. Divakaruni's has a remarkable gift for intertwining romance with trenchant insights into the harsh realities of immigrants' past lives. Independence is an absent paradigm in their lives and in their homelands. Both of these novels are riveting stories eloquently written. Her attention to details in descriptive passages is beautifully portrayed, being not all overblown. And her socially and psychologically precise fictions possess a mystical dimension. The narrative in these two novels is a narrative about the assimilation of an Indian family from Calcutta, who move to America, the cultural dilemmas experienced by them their American life in different ways; the spatial, cultural and emotional dislocation suffered by them in their efforts to settle at "home" in the new land.

The readers greatly admire Divakaruni's magic-realist exploration, breaking down the generic boundaries. There is a subtle relation of the past and present throughout her writing. Her America is a more of a nuance, a terrain, and habited space, where the baggage of history jostles with the actions or passivity of its inhabitants and where hopes are satisfied. The displacement from one's culture and finding oneself in a totally new environment is difficult but the difficulty

teaches them to become independent. In both the novels Divakaruni's embellishes her characters with their identity. The identity in the third world is boldly experienced by the characters in the host country.

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