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POST COLONIAL VISION IN CHITRA BANERJEE DIVAKARUNI'S  
*THE MISTRESS OF SPICES*

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ABSTRACT

The present paper "Post Colonial Vision in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices*" shows how post colonial issues like exile and immigration have been dealt in the novel *The Mistress of Spices*. It shows how migration with roots leads to adjustment in food habits and dress materials. The paper shows how immigrant experiences, wisdom and passion have been imbibed in the selected novel of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. Male dominant society and female identity can also be seen in *The Mistress of Spices* by the eyes of this research paper. Diasporic life has impacted a lot of people and how this life reflects the changes in human nature is the true essence of this paper. Cultural hybridity is also analyzed in this paper.

Post colonialists tackle the image of female who suffer from the oppression of society. Post colonial literature particularly deals with two issues emigration and exile. The basic theme of post colonial text is migration with root - lessons, facing the problem of racism and longing for home. For a person migrating it is not easy to adjust with the cultural displacement and dilemma leading to crisis in the identity of an individual.

*The Mistress of Spices* portrays the hopes and aspirations of people migrating from India to United States. Chitra Banerjee, has the first hand experience of the differences in Indian culture and American culture as she herself has settled in United States. She narrates the adjustment through food and dress habits.

The chief motif in American society constructed by Chitra is of her immigrant experiences. Chaturvede says, "Her objective is to deconstruct myths and stereotype. She hopes to dissolve through her writing boundaries between people of different background, communities, ages and worlds." (56)

The central character of the novel is Tilo, who is an immigrant from India. She has a spice shop in Oakland California and she sells spices for cooking as well as the medicine for homesickness. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni portrays the fact that the world is actually male world where the other halves of humanity have no place. The magical figure of Tilo (short for Tilotamma) is trained by her mother with the emphasis on spices. She has her own wisdom and an enlightening passion towards

spices. She was lonely and also a burden of dowry debt. Moreover, she has no real pleasure and is devoid of herself “as a daughter, a wife, a good daughter in law, a good mother.” (3)

To obtain perfect happiness, one has to compromise and his own personal identity is lost in this process. Jung in his psychology has remarked that a women always carves for being complete but this completion is never perfect. Thus the dreams and desires of women are lost in this male dominant society. Realistic novel, *The Mistress of Spices* portrays the contemporary urban society in the light of psychology with the strengths and weakness of human psyche. Opportunity, Courage, hope and optimism are the lying motives of the novel.

The identity of the central character is vulnerable in the novel. Divakaruni herself says about the novel, “I wrote in a spirit of play, collapsing the divisions between the realistic world of twentieth century America and the timeless one of myth and magic in my attempt to create a modern fable.” (Quoted by Vanjula Valli 16)

The central character extracts the essence of spices to solve the problems of people. The construction of novel on magic realism explains the interwoven nature of life of people who mix culture and rationalism together. The novel is set in two spaces, namely, physical and mental. The central character is always working between old and new values. The feminine character is a women of love facing difficulties in life. The plot seems like a roller coast ride.

Tilo possess supernatural powers and suffers from alienation. It is a typical study of post colonial study. It reveals the study of family fortunes with suspicion and distrust.

To conclude, Clifford has written in diasporas, “—Life for women in Diasporic situations can be doubly painful- struggling with the material and spiritual insecurities of exile. With the demands of family and work and with the claims of old and new patriarchies.” (27)

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