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Pain of Migration in seeking identity in Divakaruni's *Arranged Marriage*

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ABSTRACT

As a result of an exhaustive running commitment with the host nation regarding the outsider, diaspora is synonymous with new writing of migration. Characters in Indian movies often attempt to assert their glorious Indian culture by expressing their complex experiences in the Eastern and Western countries. A prominent diasporic literature writer, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni presents a matrix of diasporic consciousness, including alienation, loneliness, rootlessness, nostalgia, questioning, cultural conflict, and more, in her first collection of short stories, *Arranged Marriage*, which won the American Book Award. A study of her acclaimed collection of short stories, *Arranged Marriage*, examines these elements and highlights Divakaruni's concerns regarding racism, economic disparity, miscarriages, divorces, etc.

Keywords: Diasporic, Immigrant, Migration, Isolation, Memory

Introduction

Human existence is defined by migration. People have migrated from one country to another throughout the history of each country. Food and shelter might have driven the first humans from place to place on this planet. From the beginning of time, all life forms on earth have chosen to journey for food and breeding places in every season. Migration was primarily a means of meeting basic needs in ancient times. It has become necessary to move people and goods from one location to another with the passing of time due to the increase in human needs. It is true that migration removes past associations and opens up a world of opportunity for the future, but the transition from the past to the future is a complex process full of obstacles. A key difference between diasporas and migrations is that diasporas are groups of people who share a common heritage and are scattered around the globe, whereas migration is movement between places in search of a permanent home. In addition, diaspora communities maintain strong bonds with their homelands, cultures, and roots, unlike migrants who lose such ties. It is also important to remember that people in diaspora have collective memories of their native lands, which influence their identity and religious beliefs. As a result of economic, political, social or environmental factors, people migrate from one place to another.

It is said that diaspora writings represent the literature of migrants, expressing their experiences of displacement and loss of national, ethnic, racial, linguistic, and cultural constructs. As well as revealing their Identity Crisis, alienation, nostalgia, loss, and emptiness, such literature revealed their feelings of loss and emptiness. Members of the diaspora no longer share the unique bonds that once bound them together as people of the same race, nation, or ethnicity. As a result of social isolation, culture shock, and stress, they experience social distress. Thus, Diaspora literature often addresses themes such as emptiness, frustration, disillusionment, homesickness, racism, discrimination, displacement, cultural crisis, and identity crisis. An era of globalization, upward mobility, and migrants crossing oceans to seek greener pastures inevitably led to diasporic literature.

There were spaces where host country and immigrant cultures intersected, creating a multicultural space that was hybrid, luminal, and marginal. A majority of the Diaspora migrates to a foreign country of their choice in search of a better life. In reality, they struggle a lot to survive, although they migrate to live a happy life. Neither the west nor India are at home for the diasporic person, who is therefore 'homeless' (Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*) in its conceptual sense. It follows that all types of diasporic writing require an understanding and interpretation of the concept and meaning of 'home'. When living in diaspora, you usually live in forced or voluntary exile. Living in exile usually leads to severe identity confusion, problems with identifying with the old and new culture, as well as alienation from the homeland. As a multicultural, multi-religious, and multilingual country, India's migrants across the sea speak different languages and preserve their different cultures, but what binds them all together is their first and foremost Indian identity, which is part of one of many branches of Indian culture.

Divakaruni was born in Kolkata in 1956 and is an Indian American novelist. Diaspora identities are explored in her works. In her novels, she explores themes such as multiculturalism, alienation, and the quest for self-discovery. She bases most of her novels on the struggles and experiences of middle-class women who feel alienated, dissatisfied and unable to express their feelings. In *Arranged Marriages* (1995), Divakaruni examines cultural dilemmas through the lens of a feminist perspective. In this collection of eleven short stories, Bengali migrants in the United States are the subject matter. Indian marriage institutions are affected by westernization in these stories. The stories are narrated by female characters. Immigrant brides get freedom from cultural restrictions, while others are caged by them. Throughout the stories, the emancipation journey is explored. Though she has made America her homeland, Divakaruni writes about the alienation of America and its crisis of identity, like other diasporic writers. A major characteristic of her writing is the tension between identity and alienation, along with nostalgia. Divakaruni's collection of short stories, *Arranged Marriage*, deals with the pain of diasporic identity and alienation. Divakaruni's characters feel both inside and outside of a certain culture and place at the same time. In Jayanti's case, the virtual and material worlds converge, as she lives between the imaginary and the real. Jayanti is standing on the balcony of her aunt's apartment in a snowy weather, thinking about her life in America and makes sense of the excruciating pain her hands are experiencing.

There should be a balance between beauty and pain. They remain covered until I completely cover them by staring at them. Until they are no longer painful.

Immigrant women are greatly affected by the conflict between career and family in *Arranged Marriage*, which is interwoven with the other diasporic consciousness. The demands of family and work, coupled with the claims of old and new patriarchies, challenge women in diasporic situations on the one hand, and on the other hand, they struggle with the material and spiritual insecurities of exile.

Culture clashes and conflicts between family and career, which mainly affect immigrant women in *Arranged Marriage*, are interwoven with other Diasporic consciousnesses. There is a struggle between the insecurities of diaspora life on the one hand, and family responsibilities and work demand on the other. The other is the emergence of new patriarchies. In their attempts to settle and adapt to a new country, they encounter a spatial, cultural, and emotional vacuum. In "Perfect Life", Meera, an Indian girl, rejects traditional roles like that of a wife and mother for the sake of getting an education and pursuing a career in America. Eventually, however, she considers becoming a mother and even adopts and raises Krishna by herself. She can see herself as the orphan's mother and envisions the first day of school, Disney land, and baseball games. As a result, she has a much better understanding of motherly love now. After Krishna disappeared from the foster home's office, Meera was caught up in the role of mother and contemplated quitting her job, distancing herself from Richard, and even considering an arranged marriage with a widower in India because she was caught up in her new role as a mother.

Divakaruni gives America an unmistakable role in enlivening her female characters when they come up for themselves in these stories. A reasonable expression of the way in which each freed female character from arranged marriage appears to discover flexibility and arousal by disposing of India and grasping America is when Anju, one of the two heroes in "The Ultrasound," attributes her feeling of equity and women's liberation to America. In a large part of *Arranged Marriage*, the United States of America remains for opportunity, illumination, and guarantees of children's story satisfaction, not just as a nation that holds numerous openings, but also as a legendary "guaranteed arrival" (AM 293). Her characters are often portrayed as refugees seeking refuge in the United States in Divakaruni's writing. A few of the terms she uses over and over in her stories are so well established that they have become legends. Examples include the land beyond the seven oceans, the pixie kingdom, and the guaranteed arrival. It is also evident that clear parallels are developed between India and the United States, with the United States demonstrating the vast majority of the positive and saving qualities, and India representing the retrogressive and malevolent characteristics that need reclaiming. An Indian girl, living with an American man without being married, is the subject of the novel *The Word Love*, which presents a fascinating perspective from an Indian perspective. She is hindered from forming interracial relationships by her mother's instruction regarding basic living and customary values.

Conclusion

One of the world's largest Diasporas today is the South Asian Diaspora. Many literary awards and honours have been won by Indian diasporic writers of the first generation. By showing disarray in the lives of the characters in the stories, the title of *Arranged Marriage* seems to mock itself. Through the varied experiences of its characters, *Arranged Marriage* explores the existence of diasporic individuals. Dislocations, changes in sociology, psychology, politics, and culture have led to their fractured identities, particularly those of female characters. She has also demonstrated how the dual life with multicultural identities leads to a fractured female self through showing the plenitude of women's abilities to assimilate and synthesize different cultures. In Divakaruni's *Arranged Marriage*, Indian-born women struggle to carve out an identity for themselves while torn between Old World and New World values. Apart from racism, interracial relationships, economic disparity, abortion, and divorce, the stories of *Arranged Marriage* address topics such as racism, interracial relationships, and economic disparity. As Divakaruni's *Arranged Marriage* shows, women make up the bulk of the story - women in love, women in relationships, and women who are having difficulty. There is a strong sense of pathos in each story, evoking the struggle of the women to adapt to a foreign culture. In her writing, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni affirms that diasporas are not simply scatterings or dispersions, but a matrix of consciousness encompassing conflicts of different kinds. Immigrant to the United States herself, Divakaruni has managed to capture the experiences of Indian immigrants through the stories in this collection. Consequently, *Arranged Marriage* is more than just a collection of short stories; it is also an assortment of immigrant experiences, particularly those of Indian women.

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