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### Chitra Banerjee's Novels an Universal Saga

Post-modern Realists have emerged with the post-modern spirit of experimentation and power of storytelling to reflect the changes in contemporary world. The label realist is just a tool that includes many writers who have completely different approaches towards literature but believing in the power of words. It is significant to note that literature at the end of the twentieth century has exceptionally diverse, and all indications have pointed to an increasingly multicultural literature in twenty first century. New voices have begun to speak out. Women's issues remained at the forefront. Many feminist movements and ideologies have started to achieve for what we have considered today a practical and normal life of a women. Chitra Banerjee as a women writer finds the subterranean truths behind the illusionary feelings and the habits that adrenaline in the life of women and men.

Like the New Journalism movement which has tried to combine journalism and novelistic techniques to describe the contemporary world, Chitra Banerjee is a writer who has given her novel combining Post-modern philosophical theories of life – it's absurd vision, its reflection in techniques, and didacticism. Truth is universal and so Life. Her novels console the man in the face of the tedium of existence. She gives solutions for the existing problems of man-woman relationship. Her novel tries to reform the decomposing values of life. She generates the life of man through her novels – cautions women of their follies. Chitra

Banerjee universalises men, women, and their problems and gives the universalised solutions to resurrect their life.

The past's re-edition is presented and so co-edited would make the future in better way. We derive from past and reciprocate to the future and the overlapping of past and present strengthens the future. Three generations of Women and men – generation laps and its reciprocations are presented in Chitra Banerjee's novel. By presenting Generations, she deepens the understanding of millennial struggles involve in achieving what we are today – naturally its need to be cared, leaving the absurd base of today's life.

Gouri Ma, Pishi, Nalini and Sunil's mom are all the first generation mothers portrayed in the twin novels *Sister of My Heart* and *The Vine of Desire* by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. Gouri Ma, Anju's mother, was married at the age of sixteen and lost her husband at the age of twenty four. Gouri Ma is practical in attitude, modern in thoughts, an understanding mother and wishes the betterment and the good for both the daughters and worries of passing heritage to Dayita. Gowri Ma advises Anju to keep herself busy. Pishi writes letters to both Anju and Sudha, to tell stories from epics to Dayita and believes that the old wisdom is embedded in them and she makes arrangements to send a copy of the children's Ramayanam picture book to the alien country, to Anju and Sudha. Through her stoically austere characters, Divakaruni depict the hardship and alienation faced by a widow in upper class Hindu Bengali society. Nalini, the mother of the more beautiful Sudha, is a woman doubly handicapped in attitude, firstly by a patriarchal tradition, and secondly, by the modern need for reinforcing identities. Sunil's mother represents women who suffer materially and victimized by her husband. When her husband refuses to give money, she goes to the extent of begging money to send her son Sunil to the matinee show during his school days.

The first generations women abide and under run the traditional habits in the name of tradition, heritage and culture. Though they abide, they are not forcing it on the second

generation. Their acceptance makes the second generation or the protagonists in the novel to face reality with cheerful attitude in their desperate times, and makes them to undertake a positive attitude. From the marginalisation, the first generation boosts up the second generation. The unheard voices of the mothers seek expression in the pages of the life of their daughters. The confidence of Anju and Sudha echoes their voices for the third generation.

Second generation women treats career and family with same importance as they believe it dovetail each other. Her women characters are not questioning their nature of lives. Thinking of their role instils confidence and strength to walk ahead. Sudha in *The Vine Of Desire* doesn't feel and burden to shoulder Dayita, even at her desperate situation. Rakhi, in *Queen Of Dreams* a separated single mother struggles with her café business and to be a painter for the economical status to be maintained to keep her daughter with her judicially, as she feels that her husband is an irresponsible man.

Second generation women are rational and assertive at work but in terms of family they become unresisting. Rakhi in *Queen Of Dreams* faces all the troubles in her coffee shop business. She courageously appears for painting competitions. She constantly tries to inherit the boon of dream telling from her mother. She faces the physical, emotional and psychological affliction during 9/11 incident. But she couldn't forgive her husband who has left her at one of the parties to defend herself from a gang.

When women forms their economical structures, a new power dynamics. In *The Vine Of Desire*, Anju after busying herself in the university with her writings, ignores the disastrous consequences of her past. Sudha understands that she needs more in life than a man to take care of her and becomes a care taker of a old man.

Like The First Mother in *The Mistress Of Spices*\_Chitra Banerjee fosters the problems of everyday's life with her potent voice to realize. She wants the reader to understand the difference between cultural habits and practices and tradition and culture. When there is a

necessary, when the tradition becomes the barrier to the flow of the modernity, there is no wrong in breaking the tradition and its customs.

Expatriate women consciously have conflicts over cultural dissonances where as the abroad born third generations are not even introduced to their cultural assimilation. All the third generations are proud, sharply observant, passionate, self – centred, straight forward and heartless at times. *One Amazing Thing* carries the third generation vividly. Uma doesn't like the frivolous life nature of India. But Uma couldn't come out of the description made by Malathi about the ayurvedic richness of India. Malathi doesn't even give a think to punish Mrs.VaniBalan for having derailed the fate of her servant girl Nirmala towards the play boy, for fallen in love with her son. Lily scratches the face of Mangalam for slapped Malathi in the melee and disrespecting her right from the beginning. Uma is a courageous proud literary American Indian student with a belief that people ought to rise above the challenges of circumstances. “the nature and function of feminism as a global process and the social function of feminity within different cultural contexts” (Yadhav 105) are presented.

Chitra Banerjee's novels precise over women's love on which the world swirls. She presents the contrast how women easily fall in love with men forgetting their business, profession and studies, where as men easily leaves their love life for their profession and move towards their future. Sonny in *Queen of Dreams* doesn't even worry a lot about Rakhi's separation. Actually the separation is caused by his profession only. Sunil in *The Vine Of Desire* stimulate the idea of forming the life of three – Sunil, Sudha and Dayita, by settling with transfer – the power of his profession and divorce from Anju in a faraway place. In *One Amazing Thing* Cameron wants to be a doctor for which he leaves his people and going to the extreme of aborting his own baby, accusing he is manipulated. Mangalam being over ambitious without thinking consequences marries Naina, the daughter of higher government official. After understanding that on giving his independency only he explores his luxury,

decides to leave her. Mr. Pritchett doesn't want to look back his past, he marries Vivienne showing his future in the far away mountain, silencing the truth of his past at the back. Mrs. VaniBalan's son easily moves away from Nirmala, on seeing her with Gopalan.

She details the way women makes their blunder mistakes. Unforbiddenable first time and attraction are derailing the young women. The first and foremost suggestion to the woman is to kindly avoid the thrill of adrenaline rush towards love at first sight that comes from attraction and the first time feeling of the difference. Even if they have encountered, they should act intelligently and bravely to come out of that. Women of this generation are not totally inexperienced with men. Even if it is so, they fall in love with men very easily which should be changed.

All women begin their love with invitation for café – coffee with dessert, growing up with clandestine meetings and stolen kisses, visiting restaurants and movie theatres, offerings their community's richest dessert and lands them on an abandoned land. Chitra Banerjee stresses the temporal distractions of women and men. She presents the absurdity they create with the adrenaline emotions by forgetting their self development.

Woman should not be in absurd suffocation after breakups in life. Their knowledge on self should rise. Their perspective of life should get better – to be independent, to be desired and to be true. They should resurrect themselves like the old snake worn out its old skin. They should be alert and intelligent at every step in changing their fate or karma even after the aftershock of their life. Sudha in *The Vine Of Desire* after encountering Sunil physically, decides to vacate the apartment in two hours. After understanding what she does need is not a man but more than that she clears her mind. She says, "it was only a body, after all: blood and cartilage, hair and muscle and waste matter" ( VD, 200). Cameron's lover Imani stopped crying when he says he is manipulated and proceeds with life.

Occupying Busy one's self is the remedy for all sorts of problem. Sudha in *The Vine Of Desire* like to work a lot without even having time to think of past. According to Jiang in *One Amazing Thing*, only fools would think of the cud of the past. There is no substitute for hardwork. Woman should develop the reciprocity relationship with woman. Woman should understand that even man – woman relationship can be fulfilled only by reciprocated love. Chitra Banerjee doesn't ask us to leave the family life, she asks us to form the family brilliantly. Woman should accept their responsibilities. These understanding of life would bring women to the high degree of emotional maturity awareness, time and self-development. Some people value affection as an important condition for a healthy relationship as Mrs. Pritchett in *One Amazing Thing* and Rakhi in *Queen Of Dreams*. But infact, as Jiang says, "we can live without love with a gentleman" (OAT, ). The relationship needs to be honest and respecting eachother's beliefs and needs.

Forming women centre society is stressed. In *One Amazing Thing* Malathi a brave girl, courageous enough to punish by mixing perming chemicals with hair massage and made her head bald, Mrs. VaniBalan for derailing Nirmala with a play boy Mr. Gopalan to divert from her son. The implied meaning is to be understood by the women reader, is that women should be courageous enough to voice forth when they feel agitated for their neighbouring fellow women. Loyala the owner of the parlour helps Malathi to escape from Mrs. Balan's wrath by moving her out of the city. She helps in getting job in U.S. Through Loyala, the writer stresses that if a woman is not supporting a woman then who will. Malathi, Lily and Uma joins hands in the melee, when Mrs. Pritchett was annoyed by taking out her medicine bottle by Mr. Pritchett. In the same way in *The Vine Of Desire*, Sudha and Anju proves their sisterhood joining their hands at the end and leaving Sunil at the back.

Chitra Banerjee presents a philosophy in *One Amazing Thing* through the life of Jiang that only fools would chew the cud of the past. Mrs. Pritchett's life astounded with the

philosophies that we should learn to accept and forgive. We should stop blaming anyone including our self. We should be alert and intelligent at every step in resurrecting ourselves. Death is a breaking out of sorts. But death would not necessarily end up in better place, especially if we kill ourselves. Terrible karma that will just have to go through everything we tried to escape, in a different form in any case. Mrs.Pritchett in *One Amazing Thing* and Sunil in *The Vine of Desire* stresses the same idea that no matter how far away we move, we cannot escape for what we carry within. All characters accept the power of hard works. Divakaruni invokes the reader to raise above all the constraints.

In short, vividly Chitra Banerjee proofs herself as the Post modern Feminist and her novels, a universal saga to uplift women by presenting their follies thereby to resurrect themselves. She deals with everyday life and universalized women and men world. Her women with problems are real and her solutions are practical and universal. Her philosophies are acceptable. Her novels are the counseling for the women who seeks for.

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