



## **DIVAKARUNI USES MAGICAL REALISM TO PORTRAIT FEMALE WITH MYSTICISM AND EXOTICISM.**

**Author Name: MINAKSHI SHARMA**

**Institutional Affiliation: Minakshi Sharma, Research Scholar at the Department of English, Capital University, Koderma, Jharkhand (India).**

---

### **ABSTRACT**

*This study's overarching goal is to investigate Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's use of magical realism, myth, and culture in imbuing her female protagonists with a sense of otherworldliness and otherness. Divakaruni revives the vitally essential but mostly lost Indian myths, beliefs, traditions, cultures, and dreams. She narrates all that has happened to her, recounting what she has seen, heard, and understood, sometimes literally and other times through dream visions, which is also common in mythology. This study draws on critical evaluations of the protagonists in many of Divakaruni's works. According to the findings, the author introduced the East to her Western English reader by skilfully combining the fantastical with the real. She challenges sexist portrayals of women by creating her heroine as a metaphor and employing magical realism.*

Key words: Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Magical Realism, Mysticism, feminist

---

### **INTRODUCTION**

"Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni" is a well-known author born in India in 1956. Currently, she resides in Texas and teaches Creative Writing at the University of Houston. Her personal experiences are the driving force behind her writing on the woman who is caught between cultures and customs. She is a first-generation immigrant from her family to the USA. She

---



conveys her concern for women of her ancestry in her short stories and novels. She is also actively involved in the work of organizations whose mission is to empower women.

The New Yorker and the Atlantic have published short tales and poetry by Divakaruni. Her works have also been included in about fifty anthologies and translated into twenty languages, some of which include Dutch, Hebrew, and Japanese. The movies are based on two of her books that were first published. English is the language in which filmmakers Gurinder Chadha and Paul Berges crafted their version of *"The Mistress of Spices"* (2007). Anbulla Snegithiye is the name of the adaptation of Suhasini Mani Ratnam's *Sister of My Heart* that aired on Sun TV in South India in 2001. The show was shown in Tamil (Mahesh, 2001).

Maxine Hong Kingston was the first person who inspired Divakaruni and served as a model when she was in graduate school. Kingston's piece titled *"The Woman Warrior"* profoundly impacted her. The recurring topics, such as remaking one's identity, moving to a new country, passing down stories from generation to generation, shifting gender roles, racial tension, and myth, struck a chord with her. She was also affected by Bharati Mukherjee, whose works like *"The Middleman and Other Stories"* shaped her thinking about racial and ethnic dynamics in literature.

Divakaruni was captivated by books like *"Jasmine and Desirable Daughters,"* which examine the shifting identities of immigrant women, although in the setting of a more violent world (Sindhuja, 2022). All of them would go on to become essential topics in the work that she produced. She concentrates on the many characteristics of immigrants that tie them to India and sections of the novel in her book *"The Unknown Errors of Our Lives"* and *"One Amazing Thing."* One way she may be setting herself apart from other authors is that she read and analyzed the magical realism in books like *"The Mistress of Spices," "The Queen of Dreams," "Palace of Illusions"* and the fantasy of children's trilogy, *"The Brotherhood of the Conch."*

After the attacks of September 11, she changed her aesthetic to be more accepting of ancestry. In *"One Amazing Thing,"* she tried to delve deeply into the literary history of



India's ancient past. It was ancient forms of storytelling, such as the "*Panchatantra*" and, to some extent, "The Arabian Nights." It alluded to ancient Indian epics of *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, amongst others. In essence, it was blended with a cast of people from more recent times.

### **Women-centric Writing**

Putting women at the nerve of writing is bold enough; giving her humanity and narrating her story is another step in the right direction. It elevates her to the status of a hero because she provides us with her perspective on how the world is. However, she does not write to pit one gender against another; instead, she does it to overcome her pride and ego. The following individuals created by Divakaruni are noteworthy.

Using the Mahabharata, "*The Palace of Illusions*" seeks to comprehend our modern-day search for the truth and meaning in life by placing women at the center of the storylines. The book tells *Panchaali's* tale beginning with her birth and ending with her passing away. In her book, Krishna is shown as Panchaali's constant friend, philosopher, and guide from the moment she first comes into being to the time she passes from this world.

She described the condition of women who immigrated to the United States with their husbands in her book, "Arranged Marriage." Movements between the two realms were apparent in "The Unknown Errors of Our Lives," which included a similar concept. Divakaruni sheds light on the shifts of natural and imaginary human landscapes due to decisions made by male-female at every stage of their lives in this collection of short stories, which features stories set in India and the United States.

This topic of abused women appears in several of Divakaruni's novels, including "*Arranged Marriages*," in which a beaten woman decides to return to her abuser. In the novel "*The Mistress of Spices*," a female character is depicted in a precarious situation due to her immigration. It abruptly disconnected her from their support system, including her family and old friends.



Tilottma (Tilo), the main character in "Mistress of Spices," embodies the complexities of human nature and expresses those complexities. They include significant and influential female characters, typically elderly and sage women, who have gained knowledge of the hidden workings of the natural world and can apply that knowledge to benefit others.

"*The Conch Bearer*" trilogy" has written to transform the boy on the journey and the girl from the outcast society into spiritual heroes. However, individually, neither of them can be considered a hero. Collectively, they are the entity that keeps the planet from collapsing. The fact that Anand and Nisha, the two protagonists, can only complete their mission by working together serves both as a potent metaphor and a potent symbol.

### **Critics of Divakaruni's work**

Regarding literary criticism, Divakaruni's work has garnered much debate in anthologies where it has been included. She is generally connected to other contemporary authors of Asian origin, particularly women, and, more specifically, to those who left India and decided to write in English. Women writers of Asian descent are significant in this regard. As a result, many critics and academics place her works within the context of international critique. For example, Rajini Srikanth is concerned with establishing the uniqueness and originality of modern women authors of Indian backgrounds (Nalini Iyer et al., 2009).

According to the arguments made by Ketu H. Katrak, categorization based on race, ethnicity, and nation, along with sex, class, religious and linguistic identity, should be considered. They are in jeopardy throughout the process of "diasporic identities and communities" being formed (Tejero et al., 2007). In the context of an investigation of Divakaruni's short stories by C. Wong, the difficulty of complete "Americanization" contrasts the characters' intense yearning to break away from the restrictive and authoritarian traditions of their Asian heritage.

Susan Moller Okin has shown an interest in the intersection of transnationalism, feminism, post-colonialism, and multiculturalism regarding the plight of immigrant women. Some of Divakaruni's writings have been criticized for enticing Western desires for exoticism. In



contrast, others have been defined by their combination of social concerns, acculturation, mystical realism, cultural pluralism, immigration, and anti-Semitism (Rajan, 2002). Divakaruni, who discusses this topic in her article "*Dissolving Boundaries*," considers "*The Mistress of Spices*" to be the beginning of a new chapter in her writing career (Iyer & Zare, 2009).

### **Magical Realism as a Literary Theme**

In the 1920s, magic realism was associated with school of German surrealist painters. It was later used to describe the exposition fiction of Jorge Luis Borges in Argentina and that of Gabriel Garcia Marquez in Colombia, Isabel Allende in Chile, Gunter Grass in Germany, Italo Calvino in Italy, John Fowles, and Salman Rushdie in England. In a consistently engaging manner, these authors interweave realism with fantastic and whimsical aspects and fantasy and fable-derived materials while describing everyday occurrences and subtleties.

Postmodernism is the progenitor of magic realism, which is now commonly understood as an aesthetic categorization but originated in painting, film, and other visual manifestations. As its name implies, magical realism is the blending of magic powers and reality incorporated in stories, folk tales, traditions, and sagas from one's own culture or around the globe.

A fundamental illustration of magical realism is the presence of such characters that live through ages and plays a critical role in the progression of the plot. Through such a persona, magical realism is applied in such a scenario. In his internationally bestselling and award-winning novel *Midnight's Children*, Salman Rushdie uses an actual event or setting as a backdrop, enhancing it with elements of imagination and dream. A significant political development is woven within Rushdie's blend of history and mythology (Borg Barthet, 2009). India's Independence and a few moments from his own experiences inspired him to create a fantastic, imaginative, believable universe, which is the core of magic realism.

This study aims to thoroughly examine three topics that often appear in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's works: mystical realism, myths, and cultures. While magic realism is a recently



developed modern subject that Chitra Banerjee explores to its maximum extent, her use of mythology and culture darkens back to the rudimental use of such elements in the ancient exemplars and old work. Several mythical references in her writings reveal that she has extensive knowledge of mythology. Her writings are categorized as magical realism due to potent events.

### **Aim and objective**

The poet and author Divakaruni prepares a delicious reading that is part mystery and half imagination. It demonstrates the author's skill as a storyteller by evoking a mystical India and attracting the interest of a broad readership, particularly in the West. However, similar to the previously stated studies, they do not investigate whether the aspects of magic realism, the images of an exotic India, transcend beyond titillation and contribute to our comprehension of the narrative's genuine concerns or stay purely decorative.

In this research copy, I have analyzed Divakaruni's novels to explore and establish that exoticism and magical realism are part of her writing. She portrays most of her female characters, including Tillotma, Mrs. Gupta, Rakhi, Korobi, and to some extent, Panchali, under the influence of mysticism and supernatural forces to ameliorate western writers.

**Objective:** To achieve the aim mentioned above following objectives has set:

- ✓ Critically analyze the selected literature of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni
- ✓ Investigate the inclusion of the Magical-Realism in those pieces of literature.
- ✓ Investigate the dimensions and points of view put forward by the author for such mysticism and exoticism.

### **METHODOLOGY**

As literature research is based on the work done by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, a data analysis-based approach cannot be adopted. In this study, a critical, comparative, and



descriptive approach to analysis will be utilized. The subsequent novels have been included in this research:

- “The Mistress of Spices” (1995),
- “The Conch Bearer” (2003),
- “The Queen of Dreams” (2004)
- “The Palace of Illusion” (2008)
- “*The Brotherhood of Conch*” (2009)
- “The Oleander girl” (2013)

The majority of her works, including “*The Mistress of Spices*,” “*Queen of Dreams*,” and “*The Conch Bearer*,” have mystical aspects. *Sister of my Heart* and the *Palace of Illusion* contains a variety of mythological connections. All books include social elements, particularly those that deal with concerns of outsiders.

## **ANALYSIS AND RESULT**

### **Mysticism in Divakaruni’s writing**

Significantly, Divakaruni satisfies the hunger of American readers for Eastern feminine mysticism and exoticism (Jahan, 2003). Jahan observes that Divakaruni's characterization frighteningly reconstitutes the colonial binary of East and West as savage vs. civilized.

Focusing on cosmopolitan diversity, Divakaruni's writing is more obviously concerned with consumption and strategy that differentiates through an exotic aesthetic. “*The Mistress of Spices*” also instigates ethnic identity for multicultural consumption using the acceptable language of modern America and ancient India (Grewal, 2005).

Fear of distorting the other or eroticizing the Selves and the other has been reinforced in postcolonial authors by neo-modernist glory, especially in ethnographic narratives. Therefore, paralysis impacts how people see themselves in postcolonial discourse. This anxiety, which would rather minimize the intricacies and capabilities of indigenous cultures



than enable them to fuel the Western yearning for the odd and mystical, is demonstrated by Jahan's criticism of Eastern feminine mysticism in *Divakaruni*. Many of *Divakaruni*'s American readers are enchanted by her exploration of female mysticism because it appeals to their sensibilities in ways they have never experienced before. Some of her works lend themselves to an orientalist reading. When the *Mistress of Spices* visits Tilo's spice shop in Oakland, California, she cannot help but think of it as a jail. Tilo was either given or made to observe a form of *purdah*, evoking the notion of Hindu women's traditional seclusion from men (Borg Barthet, 2009). To be clear, what resonates with Western audiences need not lead to gross misrepresentations of Eastern cultures and vice versa.

Even though concerns of folklore and culture are regularly derived from historical circumstances, the idea of magic realism has only recently emerged as a sub-genre attributed to its widespread employment as a leitmotif in the present literature. The writer infused it with a metaphysical framework. It clarifies their connection and lends a touch of strangeness to her writing. Most of the time, *Divakaruni* use dream to expand the mystical components of her stories. The mystical occurrences in the characters' dreams manifest in reality. In her tales, inanimate objects such as amazing snakes, spices, and conchs may converse with the characters as if they were humans. The author has applied them in a way that they possess life and intelligence. The characters do not question or query them. Instead, acknowledge, discuss, and respond. She has thus blended magic and realism.

### **“The Mistress of Spices”**

*“The Mistress of Spices,”* *Divakaruni*'s debut novel, is an attempt at magical realism that merges myths, tales, and superstitions with modern American societal issues. The allegorical tale focuses on the magical abilities of an immortal, mystical Indian woman named Tilotamma (Tilo), who hails from a spice island in the Indian Ocean and owns a spice shop in Oakland, California. The novel begins with a line that elicits reader responses.

*“I am a Mistress of Spices. I can work with the others too. Mineral, metal, earth and sand and stone...but the spices are my love”* (*Divakaruni*, 1998).





By presenting herself as Tilo, whose name is derived from the nourishing spice 'Til' (sesame seed), it is clear that the author is attempting to transport the reader to another planet.

Each chapter is titled after a different spice and reads like an Indian cookbook, except for the last chapter, "Maya," in which Tilo is reborn as an Indian American.

At first sight, the reader may perceive the text as a cookbook separated by spice names, but the enchantment lies in their application. All spices are under the power of (Tilo), the spice mistress; she converses with them and manipulates them for healing, protection, and nourishment. Divakaruni emphasizes that the spices have a supernatural ability to communicate with Tilo.

Snakes were Tilo's closest companions. They rescued her from the pirates. The novel's opening phrase strikes a chord with its audience:

*"She lives with the snakes and it is through them she comes to know about the Island of the Spices (in the Indian Ocean). She yearns to achieve the taboo island. The snakes ask her to live with them and turn into their Sarp Kanya (wind Woman) yet as foreordained she goes to the island and turns into the Mistress of Spices"* (Divakaruni, 1998).

She is a healer and spice vendor. Using her telepathic abilities, she diagnoses the physical and psychological diseases of her multiethnic and multigenerational clients, which she then seeks to cure with her secret spices, generally without their awareness.

Tilo can enjoy spiritually and intellectually what she physically denies herself. Her decision to devote her life to spices by becoming a magically enhanced Mistress mandate that all who visit her spice bazaar view her as unattractive.

When Ahuja's wife, Lalita (another female character), encounters difficulties owing to her violent relationships and bad marriages, Tilo employs "Fennel" to tackle the issue. Lalita flees a life of domestic abuse and violence. In a letter of appreciation to Tilo, she writes:

*"Meanwhile, I will pound almond and chyavanprash for mental strength and physical and set it outside the door for the wind to carry to the woman-house where you wait"* (Divakaruni, 1998).

In this instance, using one of the Earth-wind's five elements (energy) highlights mystical realism.



Weaknesses of her work include its improbable premise and too stylized, seductive, and spicy appeal, in which the alien "Mistress" and her immigrant culture appear eroticized for mass consumption. She then successfully connects *The Mistress of Spices* to the American consumer society and its yearning for the exotic.

### **"The Queen of Dreams"**

*Queen of Dreams*, the sixth novel by Divakaruni, was released in 2004. It revisits the narrative of migratory women. Similarly to "*The Mistress of Spices*," it reveals the narrative through incomprehensible, mysterious, and supernatural forces. In this book, Divakaruni uses the elements of dreams, snakes, and spiders to create a universe in which humans-animals civilizational boundaries and nature get blurred.

Mrs. Gupta, one of the novel's main characters, sees a snake in a vision that helps her prepare for her death. Mrs. Gupta was a dream analyst who disclosed their future good fortune or misfortune to strangers. She does not charge a fee for her work. Instead, she actively seeks people's dreams which she has accidentally invaded.

Mrs. Gupta's death in a vehicle accident affords Rakhi a glimpse into her mother's secret life and profession as a dream reader and her days as an intern studying her art in India's sandy caverns. Mrs. Gupta's narrative lends to mystical, mysterious, and supernatural qualities. It can be inferred that by depicting this dream-reading character, Divakaruni delivered two critical messages: one- a glimpse into a prehistoric time and place when women's transformative abilities of healing, oracles, fertility, mediation, and second, destruction were routinely and unquestionably wielded.

Jona, Rakhi's daughter, has inherited her grandmother's ability to have prophetic dreams and nightmares. As a youngster, she lacks the skills to analyze her nightmares, so she draws them instead. Rakhi views her mother's creative ability as a misfortune since it prevents her from having a meaningful family life. Jona can foresee the future, which will ruin her and prevent her from navigating the complications of ethnicity, race, and gender.

The story portrays the ability of women to predict the future as a misfortune rather than an opportunity for societal reform. Divakaruni provides her reader with the binding energy necessary to understand the narrative in the context of the lengthy history of masculine de-



legitimization of such feminine skills and wisdom, which are today labeled witchcraft, superstition, and primitivism. Mysticism is built on interiority and is intimately associated with the concept that God personally influences the outcomes of human acts. On the other hand, this exploration of the mysticism in *Queen of Dreams* focuses on goddesses and their language, which develop a profoundly different society from the empirical and materialist one that now rules. Even though the snake is a minor character, its abundant symbolism of the feminine divine is clear. For example, the novel's opening sentence is "*Last night the snake came to me,*" and the snake is instantly connected with the caves in which women dream readers reside. Mrs. Gupta recognizes the serpent as mentioned follows:

*"He was more beautiful than I remembered. His plated green skin shone like rainwater on banana plants in the garden plot we used to tend behind the dream caves.... The last time he'd appeared was a time of great change in my life.... He had not returned after that, though I'd cried and called on him until I had no voice left"* (Divakaruni, 2007).

This tactic of reveling in exoticism and exploiting re-orientalism offers the author a simple method to attract western and diaspora readers while also allowing her to sidestep the book's essential themes.

### **The Palace of Illusions**

*"The Palace of Illusions"* by Divakaruni retells a story. Her reworking of the *Mahabharatha* transports readers to the third era but focuses on the current search for truth and comprehension of life. *The Palace of Illusions* is an innovative and insightful feminist work that requires a re-examination of the original text.

The reincarnated portrayal of *Panchali* as a mighty woman is Chitra Banerjee's finest work to date. However, it is suggested that her resolute acts contributed to the downfall of humankind's third era. She was "kritiya," a misfortunate lady, a dark mark on the history of Bharat, which is why no girl child has ever been called after her. In other respects, the women in the epic were shrouded in mystery: their motivations were never made clear, their feelings were never shown until they directly affected the male protagonists, and their positions were always secondary to those of their fathers, husbands, or brothers.



## The Oleander Girl

In the story, the protagonist is a young Brahmin woman from Kolkata, a city that regularly appears in Divakaruni's works and where she was born. Her grandparents raised Korobi following her mother's death during childbirth. Her name means "oleander," implying that she is beautiful and resilient. She is about to marry into a neo-rich Bengali society when she embarks on an unexpected journey across the United States in search of her father, who is oblivious to her existence.

Korobi encounters her mother's ghost frequently in Calcutta, portraying India as a realm of spirituality and mystical mysticism where the dead walk free to torment the living with their unfinished business. The following sentences are worth noting here:

*"My mother's frame shivers with effort as though she longs to speak. She begins to dissolve. I can glimpse the ocean through her tattered body, waves breaking apart on rocks. An urgent sorrow radiates from her disappearing form. Then she is gone, and I am finally awake, blinking in the first rays of the sun entering the room through the bars"* (Divakaruni, 2013).

The East is commonly connected with wraiths, ghosts, and ghostly bodies—think of the woman in "Kubla Khan," who weeps for her demon lover—as well as the capacity to communicate with these ethereal beings.

In the very opening chapters of *Oleander Girl*, Divakaruni employs standard orientalist language. Divakaruni depends on her customer's acquaintance with the numerous marks of Orientalism so that excesses of language and pictures, which frame and anchor the novel's deeper meaning, are readily identifiable.

The Orientalism in this novel demonstrates Divakaruni's evolution as a writer is far more intricate, aesthetically, and conceptually than in her earlier works.

## The Brotherhood of Conch

In *The Brotherhood of Conch* series, Anand, a Calcutta slum-dwelling 12-year-old child, has a deep belief in magic and enjoys reading fantasy novels. Abhaydatta, a renowned healer and magician from the Himalayas, requests Anand's assistance in returning the magical conch



shell to its rightful position in the mountains. Each of us, as children, may have envisioned a magical realm or school existing someplace in the globe, as Anand does.

In the novel *The Conch Bearer*, Anand embarks on a quest to the Himalayas and discovers the Silver Valley, a school of magic. Abhaydatta told Ananda about the Brotherhood of Silver Valley and their magical powers. He stated

*“Some can look into the future and advise men and women of what to do, and what to avoid. Some can cure sickness of the body and mind. Some transport themselves to places thousands of miles away. Some travel through time to bygone ages. Some know special chants to create rain or storm - or wind and fog”* (Divakaruni, 2005)

Nisha, Anand's close friend, was thrilled to know her new name. Abhaydatta pulled a sheet of paper from the bag, tore it in half, and asked the girl whichever half she preferred. She chose one, but that paper was not an ordinary piece; as Anand described-

*“He saw that indeed one of the papers was on fire. But it was a strange kind of fire. It didn't burn the paper to ashes but only made it glow red, like lighted coals”* (Divakaruni, 2005)

Anand and his buddy Nisha go on a journey in *The Conch Bearer* to protect the mystical conch shell from Surabhanu, who seeks to steal it. When he exposes his personal belief in magic to her mother, she explains that such magical events only occur in fiction. Even though he strongly believes in magic, he does not express this to his mother. Anand accepts Abhaydatta's request for aid and prepares for the journey. As in several legends, Anand finds a one-eyed deer, a speaking monkey, and a mystical river.

## DISCUSSION

Her works' legendary structure contributes to the construction of a feminine universe. Myth's realm is predominantly feminine rather than masculine. She seeks both to construct new myths and dispel old ones in her writings. She sees the new myth as symbolic of the female experience, in which women look out for one another and do not depend on men for support. She utilizes myth to reconnect with India and to think again before giving up on Indian women. One of the most basic ideas in magical realism is the use of the fantastical. After leaving India, Divakaruni takes the opportunity to critically examine and challenge the



misconceptions and biases about Indian women. Divakaruni debunks several misconceptions, including the one that widowhood is a curse. The community, dominated by men, expresses sorrow for widows: Young or old, the dowager transforms into an agamic, misunderstood entity that foretells ill omens.

*“Magical realism attempts to capture reality by way of a depiction of life’s many dimensions, seen or unseen, visible or invisible. Rational and mysterious. In the process, such writers walk a political tight-rope between capturing this reality and providing precisely the exotic escape from reality desired by some of their Western readership”* (Singh & Singh, 2020)

In *Mistress of Spices* and *Queen of Dreams*, India is portrayed as mythical and enchanted. Tilo and Rakhi's mother possess magical powers; Tilo can harness the healing power of spices, while Rakhi's mother can read dreams. Both were born into Indian households, but due to a magical occurrence, they become members of a female-only community where elder women educate the younger women in their magical abilities and refine their inherent talents. Both ladies left India for America to pursue their respective professions.

The genre of magical realism encompasses the book *Queen of Dreams*. In it, Mrs. Gupta's daughter's everyday worries contrast with the fantastical world of her mother's dreams. Her search for personality and a feeling of eager completion is not confined to little sections of the globe as it analyses the relationship between awareness and intuition in Rakhi's mind as she attempts to separate from her family and find a way to coexist with them after a relative dies.

*The Place of Illusion* provides a view of events from the perspective of a strong feminist. The tale begins with Panchaali's supernatural birth in the five prosperous kingdoms. Her unique situation as the lonely wife of five brothers is then examined. She encourages them in their quest to reclaim the kingdom they were tricked out of. *“The Palace of Illusion”* is filled with charm and images that only Chitra Banerjee could create.

As a follow-up to her earlier work, "Sister of My Heart," "The Vine of Desire" (2002) is a narrative of great intricacy and tenderness. Through subsequent installments, readers may see how the protagonist develops. Two young women, Anju and Sudha, from Calcutta, are rekindling their romance in the United States. They have known each other since childhood but have been living separate lives for some time.



## CONCLUSION

In an oriental story, Divakaruni subverts traditional depictions of Asian American women and is critical of all types of dictatorial control. By doing so, Divakaruni examines both the portrayal of Indian-American women and how they respond to power relationships. In her gendered discourse of immigrant experience, she transcended the fundamental binary opposition between colonizer and colonized. In her meticulously written tale, Divakaruni accomplishes what most diasporic literature strives for, the provision of narrative motifs that encourage deeper critical inquiry into the interrelationship of discourses on minorities, gender, and globalization. Since literature generates discourse, Divakaruni must be attentively studied. She brings back to life the long-forgotten Indian mythology, belief, traditions, culture, and even dreams, all of which are essential to the present and are, in fact, merely a synthesis of them all in magical realism. As the story continues, the dreamlike quality fades, and the more realistic aspects take center stage.

In her works, Divakaruni alters and reimagines classic Indian mythology. Her studies included the plight of migrants as well as Bengali folk tales, Indian mythology, eastern mysticism, and eastern philosophy. The protagonist, who socially and culturally positions herself as an immigrant Indian, does not acclimate to or assimilate into the culture of the people around her but adjusts to it by modification rather than radical self-transformation.

Through magical realism, Divakaruni was successful in critically constructing the gender-determined ethos. By using magical realism in the creation of her protagonist as a metaphor, she subverts stereotypical depictions of women. *Ordinary Enchantments: Magical Realism and the Demystification of Narrative* by Wendy Faris is a significant addition to recognizing women writers' propensity for magical realism in this setting, both as a narrative method and a literary genre.

\*\*\*\*\*

## REFERENCES

Asian American novelists: A bio-bibliographical critical sourcebook. (2000). *Choice Reviews Online*, 37(11), 37-5983-37-5983. <https://doi.org/10.5860/CHOICE.37-5983>

---



- Bhardwaj, R. (n.d.). *Exoticism as Evasion in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's Queen of Dreams*. 9.
- Borg Barthet, S. (2009). *Shared Waters: Soundings in Postcolonial Literatures*. BRILL.  
<https://doi.org/10.1163/9789042027671>
- Divakaruni, C. B. (2005). *The conch bearer* (1st Aladdin Paperbacks ed). Aladdin Paperbacks.
- Divakaruni, C. B. (2013). *Oleander girl* (1st Simon & Schuster hardcover ed). Simon & Schuster.
- Jahan, H. (2003). Colonial Woes in Post-Colonial Writing: Chitra Divakaruni's Immigrant Narratives. *South Asian Review*, 24(2), 149–169.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02759527.2003.11932306>
- Lamor, L. (n.d.). *Fractured Identity—The Jagged Path of Diaspora in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's The Mistress of Spices*. 92.
- McPHERSON, K. (2007). Excavating Waves and Winds of (Ex)Change: A Study of Maritime Trade in Early Bengal - By SHANAJ HUSNE JAHAN: REVIEWS. *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*, 36(2), 440–441. [https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1095-9270.2007.163\\_9.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1095-9270.2007.163_9.x)
- Merlin, L., & Divakaruni, C. B. (1998). The Mistress of Spices. *World Literature Today*, 72(1), 207. <https://doi.org/10.2307/40153724>
- Mortensen, C. H. (2006). Fairy Tales and Feminism: New Approaches (review). *Marvels & Tales*, 20(1), 124–127. <https://doi.org/10.1353/mat.2006.0015>
- Nagajothi, K. (2015). *Desires and Conflicts in Female Bonding in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's Novels: Sister of My Heart and Vine of Desire*. 16.
- Rahman, S. (2005). *Resisting women: Orientalism, diaspora, and gender*. UMI.
- Rajan, G. (2002). Chitra Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices*. *Meridians*, 2(2), 215–236.  
<https://doi.org/10.1215/15366936-2.2.215>
- Revathi, R. R., & Sivakumar, D. K. (2021). *Rudiments of Magical Realism in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's The Mistress of Spices*. 5.
- Sanga, J. C. (Ed.). (2003). *South Asian novelists in English: An A-to-Z guide*. Greenwood Press.
- Singh, A., Field, R. E., & Najmi, S. (Eds.). (2022). *Critical perspectives on Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni: Feminism and diaspora*. Lexington Books.
- Singh, J., & Singh, D. S. (n.d.-a). *A study of magic realism in 'the conch bearer.'* 4.





- South Asian Novelists in English: An A-to-Z Guide. (2003). *Reference Reviews*, 17(8), 33–34.  
<https://doi.org/10.1108/09504120310503944>
- Tunca, D., & Wilson, J. (Eds.). (2017). *Postcolonial gateways and walls: Under construction*. Brill Rodopi.
- Xu, W. (2010a). Reading Feminine Mysticism in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Queen of Dreams*. *South Asian Review*, 31(1), 186–207.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02759527.2010.11932735>
- Adagbada, O. (2008). A Retrospect Towards Change: Proverbs In Gynocentric Yoruba Written Plays. *Journal of Philosophy and Culture*, 3(1).  
<https://doi.org/10.4314/jpc.v3i1.36467>
- Agarwal, R. R. (n.d.). Captivating Experiences of Discrimination, Disasters as Agents of Change for Diaspora in Chitra Banerjee's Novels: 1.
- Dhaliwal, M. (2018). FOOD AS A METAPHOR IN CHITRA BANERJEE DIVAKARUNI'S. *JOURNAL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE*, 1, 9.
- Iyer, N., & Zare, B. (2009). *Other Tongues: Rethinking the Language Debates in India*. BRILL.  
<https://doi.org/10.1163/9789401206754>
- Lara, M., Gamboa, C., Kahramanian, M. I., Morales, L. S., & Hayes Bautista, D. E. (2005). ACCULTURATION AND LATINO HEALTH IN THE UNITED STATES: A Review of the Literature and its Sociopolitical Context. *Annual Review of Public Health*, 26(1), 367–397. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.publhealth.26.021304.144615>
- Morey, P., & Tickell, A. (2005). *Alternative Indias: Writing, Nation and Communalism*. BRILL.  
<https://doi.org/10.1163/9789401202596>
- Pessar, P. R. (1999). Engendering Migration Studies: The Case of New Immigrants in the United States. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 42(4), 577–600.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/00027649921954372>
- Sindhuja, M. S. (n.d.). THE THEME OF DIASPORA IN BHARATHI MUKHERJEE'S JASMINE AND DESIRABLE DAUGHTERS. 10, 5.
- Stilz, G. (2002). *Missions of Interdependence: A Literary Directory*. BRILL.  
<https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004486423>
-