

FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE IN *THE PALACE OF ILLUSIONS* BY CHITRA BANARJEE DIVAKARUNI

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Abstract

A sort of revolt against conventional literary scrutiny gave rise to feminist criticism. The idea of women's writing was weaker because of male-centered. A critique promotes women's equality in terms of politics, economics, society, psychology, individuality, and aesthetics. The feminist reader need to identify with female characters and their issues on a thematic level. The first kind focuses on women as readers of literature created by males. This initial form of feminist criticism is referred to by her as feminist critique. The second category of feminist critique focuses on women as authors of texts and works of literature. La gynocritique is a French phrase that Elaine Showalter has adapted. Characters from the middle class are portrayed by Kamala Marakandaya, Shashi Deshpande, Bharati Mukherjee, and Anita Nair, who also offer a hidden glimpse of the Indianness in Indian women. Female subjectivity, the representation of new women, and their fight for identity have all been examined by several Indian women authors, including Jhumpa Lahiri, Kiran Desai, and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. Divakaruni's concerns were purely humanitarian, so she is a feminist. The treatment of Indian women by men is shown by immigrant author Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. In her poetry, short tales, and novels, she consistently emphasizes this issue. After hearing the Mahabharat narrative as a youngster, Divakaruni, the author, was influenced by Panchaali's character. From Divakaruni's perspective, Draupadi's hardships are reflected in *The Palace of Illusions*. It recounts the story of the epic Mahabharat. In her novel *The Palace of Illusions*, the author retells the Mahabharat story. This Research examines the treatment of women by men in *The Palace of Illusions*.

Keywords: Feminism, freedom and self-determination, indian culture.

In the past, women were not supposed to be literate or go outside. She had to live for her spouse, kids, and parents. She puts herself in danger for her loved ones. She didn't have the same rights as males. When feminist theory, in its broader sense, was applied to language and liberty issues in the late 1970s, feminist criticism emerged as a major influence in western literature studies. Feminist literary criticism has evolved and changed in many ways since the early 1980s, and it is currently distinguished by a worldwide viewpoint.

By nature, men are superior to women; one dominates while the other is subjugated. For their own benefit, they ought to be ruled by a master. For these reasons, Aristotle supported women's subordination since he thought that a woman's biology supported the social forces that maintained her inferior status. The first obstacle feminists have had to overcome is biological determinism.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni an Indo-American novelist and in addition, she co-founded and served as president of a South Asian women's emergency line. Her novels, *The Mistress of Spices* (1997), *Sister of My Heart* (1999), *Queen of Dreams* (2004), *The Vine of Desire* (2002), *The Conch Bearer* (2003), *The Mirror of Fire and Dreaming* (2005), *The Palace of Illusions* (2008), *One Amazing Thing* (2010), *Shadow Land* (2011), *Oleander Girl* (2013), and *Grandma Great Gourd* (2013) are among her notable works, as are the short stories *The Arranged Marriage* and *The Unknown Errors of Our Lives* (2001). This Research paper examines the treatment of women by men in *The Palace of Illusions*.

Women are not to be treated as slaves in this society; they have equal rights. She is not a toy or something to be used and then discarded. She has all the feelings and passions of a person, including pleasure and sorrow, laughing and tears, fear and fury. These ideas are conveyed in Divakaruni's most recent novel, *The Palace of Illusions*, in which she recounts the Mahabharata's epic tale. In *The Palace of Illusions*, she retells the tale of Draupadi's suffering through marriage, love, vengeance, and death. Panchaali is forced by Divakaruni to recount her dreams and unknowns, her hardships and heart breaks, her triumphs, and the distinctively feminine perspective she has on the world and her role in it.

A different sort of marriage ritual is swayamvar, when women choose their husbands. Heaven is the place where marriages decided. In this Research paper, it shows Divakaruni has recounted the study of feminism. A female world emerged as a result of feminism, which is the emotional separation of women. She highlights several facets of feminism, such as the fight for sexual autonomy, equal

opportunity, and the freedom to self-determination. Divakaruni's revolves around Daraupadi's marriage and love in *The Palace of Illusion*. Daraupadi's love for Karna remains a secret till her death, and her brother Dhri does not support it. The sole explanation for Dhri's failure to counsel his sister Draupadi is Karna's low caste. Despite being an independent woman, Draupadi conceals her love and refrains from proposing to Karna after her brother's advice. She is therefore entitled to choose her life spouse in Swayamvar.

In Swayamvar, she is asked by Lord Krishna and others to marry Arjun. Her name is changed to Panchaali after her marriage. On Kunti's command, wedded the Pandavas. "All five of you must wed this woman," declares Kunti (108). Draupadi becomes upset when she hears the phrase "this woman," and she responds as if I were an anonymous servant. It hurt, but it also infuriated me (108). Can a woman live, as a married lady, with five men? However, this has happened in the past. The woman must adapt to the situation because even her wish is not fulfilled. There are moments when she suppresses her deepest desires. It displays the perspective of an Indian woman who is prepared to follow her mother-in-law's instructions.

A woman emerges as a subjugation survivor. Women must survive in their lives when there are issues in their families. Wives are seen as moveable assets. The characters appearance serves to emphasize this idea in *The Palace of Illusion* through Draupadi. In *The Palace of Illusions*, the author makes reference to morally upright women in the following section.

Traditionally upright women were transported straight to their next birth, where, with luck, they would reappear as men. However, I reasoned that if locations existed at all, decent women would undoubtedly travel to one where males were not permitted in order to be at last free from male expectations. (155)

Although modern women are starting to properly declare their independence and are in a reasonable position to overthrow the myth of femininity, they still struggle to fully embody human existence. Women who are raised in a feminine environment are typically destined to marry, which still entails being virtually subservient to males because masculine status is still very much in place and has strong social and economic underpinnings, according to Simon De Beauvoir. (203)

Draupadi's name was changed to Panchaali after her marriage, signifying her role as a mediator and the spirit of the country. Panchaali plays five distinct roles: wayward daughter-in-law, queen who ruled in the most wonderful palaces, distracted mother, Krishna's favorite friend, and revenge-obsessed female character. Duryodhan, who slides down carelessly while visiting Indhraprastha to view the

palace of illusions, is made fun of by Draupadi. She and her buddies loudly mock him while she watches him. She made an awful goof. "Let her suffer the consequences of her foolishness," Kunti chastises her (174). The spirit of revenge is induced in Duryodhan by loud laughter and scathing remarks. "One of the younger women, encouraged by my smile, exclaimed in a clear, gay voice that it appears the king's son is also blind." (173)

Women across the world are typically mistreated by males as slaves. In the game of dice, the Pandavas and the Kauravas compete, with the Kauravas winning when Sakuni assists them. After learning of the Pandavas' setback, she lets her emotions run wild. "The wife is the husband's property, no less than a cow or a slave," she states (190). The writer depicts the status of an Indian woman after marriage, and another viewpoint has highlighted that a woman is not a male's plaything to be exploited as he pleases.

A feminist viewpoint is presented by the author in the Palace of Illusions. Duryodhan's act of tyranny in front of all the elders in the court has humiliated Draupadi. "A hundred masculine eyes were piercing through me when I found myself in court. I gathered my tattered saree over me and asked my husband for assistance (191). She cries for help from everyone, but it is in vain. She passionately asks Lord Krishna to save her from the humiliating circumstance. Lord Krishna comforts her by telling her, "No one can shame you if the court represents the culture which is insensitive to the shame and humiliation experienced by women," as a sign of her virtue and chastity. Maybe the masculine feminist or Lord Krishna is the one who understands women's repression.

Indian women are often quiet, calm, and docile by nature, but when injustice occurs in the world, they lose their patience, get enraged like fire, and express their feelings like the goddess Kali. As Kannaki in *Silappadikaran*, Draupadi damns the Kauravas. I pulled my long hair so that everyone could see it. Now that I understood everything, I spoke in a calm voice till the end of time. I should offer a bath in Kauravas' blood.

All around the world, women suffer in societies that are ruled by men. Draupadi in *The Palace of Illusions* is a suitable subject for this point. Draupadi serves as Queen Sudheshna's maid at King Virat's Palace while they are disguised. She is dressed as a maid servant as usual, while Yudhisthir is dressed in a white Brahmin dhoti. Sahadev and Nakul are employed in the king's barns. Arjun works in the King's stables as a dancer. Princess Uttara receives ballet instruction from Arjun, while Bheem works as a chef. Draupadi has completed the tasks that Queen Sudheshna gave her.

Keechack, the brother of Queen Sudheshna, frequently makes fun of Draupadi and annoys her due to his fascination with her allure. Yudhisthir is informed by Draupadi about his torture: "If Keechack touches me again, I will swallow poison" (231). This represents the pain Keechack caused her. Bheem promises to have him put to death the next morning. In this sense, her spouse Bheem solves her problem. Keechack causes Draupadi to suffer greatly. Within the male-dominated world, women are viewed as potent, intoxicating substances.

Keechack treats Draupadi as an object of intoxication in the Palace of Illusion. Whether she makes errors, Draupadi Indian women suffer in contemporary society. Draupadi is portrayed by the author as an Indian woman who is obedient to her mother-in-law and husband despite being traditionally bowed. She can, however, pick her spouse on her own and condemn the Kauravas for unfairness. Similar to the epic Mahabharat, the female characters and their function in the home are clarified by Palace of Illusions.

They are the forerunners of the war in spite of ignoring their place of lives. This work depicts and elegantly weaves together the several roles that a woman performs in her life as a mother, friend, wife, sister, and daughter.

The Palace of Illusions by Divakaruni itself is a universal metaphor for life. Human beings continue to endure hardships, disputes, cruelty, and humiliation, yet Maya is a delusion. Panchaali's own ideas about her life are presented in the novel's first-person narrative. A universe of warriors, gods, and the ever shifting hands of fate is being redefined for us by the fiery female character Panchaali.

Draupadi's life was filled with emotional highs and lows that the typical lady would not encounter. Even though Draupadi is commended for her fortitude and confidence in the face of terrible difficulties, her secret love serves as a metaphor for her self-desire in The Palace of Illusions. The author challenges the notion that women should be obedient to men and give up their interests for the good of the community by showcasing Draupadi's passions and honoring women as beings as ought to live life to the fullest. As it shows of her unfaithful love for Karna, Draupadi voluntarily accepts the fall from the mountain on the path to paradise. In conclusion, Divakaruni demonstrates her particular concern for the female characters who endured abuse and neglect in the Mahabharata within the storyline of The Palace of Illusions.

The voice of humanity as a whole is given utterance by feminist recognition. As a result Draupadi is drawn into their struggle to recover their birthright and sticks by them over years of exile and a horrific civil war that involved all of India's great rulers. Women and men are on equal footing these days. She is defiant, and she succeeds in life as a modern woman.

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