



Quest for Identity in Oleander Girl by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni.

1. V.Madhumidha (Research Scholar), 2. Dr.P.Harshini, (Research Supervisor)

Department of English literature, Dr.M.G.R Educational and Research Institute, Maduravoyal, Chennai 95.

Abstract :

This paper basically attempts to concentrate on scan for character in Oleander Girl. It manages the hero Karobi's powerful urge to think about her dad and her outsider experience. To know the foundation of her dad, she essentially keeps her marriage plan aside however she knows and adores her beau Rajat very much. The paper likewise stresses Karobi's change in India as mellow little youngster and in America a solid developed lady who is prepared to oppose on the off chance that anything turns out badly. It depicts the character conflicts, outsider issues and the self discipline she gains to fund-raise to live with budgetary independency. It concentrates how Divakaruni utilized women's liberation to enable the characters. At the point when she goes to America looking for her dad, she encounters social conflicts as a worker. It shows how she investigates her character and finds her dad subsequent to confronting a few physical experiences.

Keywords : Identity, Search, Transcultural, Immigrant, America, Transformation, Marriage.

I. INTRODUCTION

Search for thyself is the most discussed topic by several writers and critics in the post-colonial literature. The circumstances play a major role in the life of many people because of their cultural and rich traditional background. Therefore, they are sometimes getting isolated and becoming the victims in the society and family. They themselves question that who am i? Where am i from? Why am i here? These questions make them to haunt about their life. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is one among the youngest writers bringing out the social realities. She has been well received as writer who has explored the hybrid identities in most of her novels. In many of her works project the autobiographical elements which were used in her works in an artistic way. Her works mainly focus on an immigrant experiences having India as base and travelling to other countries especially America second for better opportunities and standard life styles. Her works also challenge the patriarchal dominance in the society. Men characters are replaced by the women characters in many of her novels. All her women characters are so powerful after getting realization about their life. The protagonist Karobi's transcultural journey has a strong impact on her life. Karobi Roy, the protagonist of this novel is a 17 year old girl who lost her mother at birth. After that she has been brought up by her grandparents Bimal Roy and Sarojini. Bimal Roy is a powerful person, a retired barrister with high social status in his society. His wife Sarojini also belongs to the family of high social class. They are traditionally and culturally rich and very much respected in their locality. Their only daughter is Anu.

She won the scholarship to study in America. Her parents are very much reluctant to send her study in America especially her father doesn't want her to send her to America. Finally, all his and Karobi's well-wishers ask Bimal Roy to send her saying it is a wonderful opportunity for Anu to show her academic talents and will be able to win in her life. As he gets enormous motivation from all the sides, he accepts her to send to America for her studies. However, he gets a promise from Anu not to marry anyone from America. He gets afraid due to the multi culture in America which motivates young people to mingle easily and so Anu may get married that spoils the entire reputation of his family. However, Anu loves Rob and wants to get married in America. But there is barrier to get married that she has promised her father not to marry anyone in America. As she gets pregnant, she longs to visit her parents for which she seeks permission through her mother Sarojini. When her father Bimal Roy accepts, she comes to her home where she is denied to return to America and gives her birth a female child named Karobi and then died.

Karobi is raised by her grandparents in their town giving her a way of life as a grandkid of Bimal Roy family. She has been given over consideration and never allowed her to get some information about her folks. She finds a sort of murkiness in her brain and feels total detachment in her life. There is a quietness that drives her life feeling that whether they are alive or not. The main proof about her folks is the letter that Karobi gets from her mom's book. The demise of her granddad Bimal Roy during her commitment with Rajat totally dispersed into pieces about her life. She says to Rajat, " I'm so confounded. All the things I was so glad for, my family, my legacy they're just half-valid. The other portion of me-I know nothing about it. Then again, actually all this time my dad was alive, and in America" (66). Feeling scared about the passing her husband; Sarojini opens reality of Karobi's folks saying her mom Anu kicked the bucket and her dad is an Afro – American named Rob who is as yet alive in America. Promptly Karobi has taken a solid choice to go to America keeping her marriage furthermore, Rajat aside looking for her dad. Her energy and interest to think about her dad drives her in her search. Huge numbers of the pundits acclaim Karobi's choice at the most youthful age all by her. At first Rajat doesn't need her to go alone. In the wake of understanding her solid and decided self discipline, Rajat is prepared to help in her search . Mrs. Bose recommends to conduct the marriage at the most punctual yet Karobi needs to look through her dad first. She denies however she comprehends Rajat is an awesome individual and she will have an ideal favored life in the event that she weds him. She has a women's activist decided psyche that is the reason she has picked looking through her dad first.

Women's liberation challenges the male centric structure and emphatically opposes the since quite a while ago acknowledged generalizations and sex jobs push onto ladies. It battles for equivalent treatment and open doors for ladies According to dictionary.com, the word women's activist signifies "an individual whose convictions and conduct depend on woman's rights". Divakaruni shows Karobi as a resilient lady who sets out to confront any difficulties throughout her life. As indicated by R.S. Malik and JagdishBatra , " Feminism" truly investigates the genuine situation of ladies in the public arena which oppresses ladies chiefly because of sexual distinction" (76). Chandra Talpade Mohanty, a prominent postcolonial women's activist in her paper "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses" talks about the domineering women's activist methodology of the west. She reprimands the depiction of the Third World Ladies by Western women's activists. She scrutinizes „ Eurocentric Feminism" which homogenizes and arranges the encounters of various gatherings of ladies of the Third World nations by eradicating all minor and safe methods of encounters. GayatriChakravortySpivak, an Indian researcher, scholarly scholar and women's activist pundit in her exposition " Can the Inferior Speak?" underscores that the inferior can't talk since they don't have the force. On the off chance that they raise their voice for anything promptly they are stifled that she says in her exposition " the inadequacy of the colonized to shout out". This hypothetical definition can be unmistakably applied to the denied state of ladies in freed Third World nations including India, where structures of intensity don't allow the inferior to articulate their dilemma. Ladies are not allowed to voice in light of man centric authority. Be that as it may, woman's rights totally restricts ladies' subjection to men particularly in the general public and family. It attempts to compare the male centric dominance. Divakaruni has portrayed Karobi as a women's activist who needs to follow what her heart says and needs to take choices herself without agonizing over the outcomes that she will confront. Karobi is a Bengali name implies Oleander. It is extremely excellent to see and contact yet exceptionally solid and intense in attributes. Here, Divakarunni shows Karobi as both the mix of excellence and durability alongside assurance. Seema Panjwani in her examination paper composes that "the title of Oleander Girl has a significant which means and it is a common picture all through the novel. Indeed, even the little youngster Karobi is named after the oleander bloom in the Bengali language."

When Karobi chooses to go to America to look through her dad in the wake of knowing the genuine truth from her grandma, she keeps aside of her marriage plan however she has been demanded to wed first. A little youngster, who is a vagrant, has lost her defensive granddad, who has upheld her all the ways. It is her own boldness remains by her choice of looking for her dad. She isn't apprehensive about anybody and the remarks individuals make. She simply needs to follow her heart. She strikingly pronounces, " But neither do I need a difficulty to you. I comprehend the amount of an issue for you my legacy has become" ... "In the event that it is so significant for your business, I'm willing to discharge Rajat from the commitment" (79).Karobi is prepared take up another excursion to New York looking for her father with blended emotions. Her grandmother's favors give her unfathomable quality and certainty to begin her excursion. During her stay in America she gets help through Rajat. His family runs a craftsmanship display in New York. One of the staff from his specialty display encourages her to scan for her dad. She carries on with the life of a settler lady with assurance to discover her dad. Oftenly she faces personality emergency.

When Karobi plans to make a trip to California looking for her dad, she comprehends that she doesn't have enough cash. Promptly Mr. Desai proposes her "call your youngster, request that he wire you some more reserves" (172). Anyway she is so decided and not be prepared to ask any sum from anybody particularly from Rajat. Divakaruni gives a solid voice to Karobi when she composes, " I'll get the cash," I state with jolly thoughtlessness, however I have no clue how. I know this much, however: I'm not going to ask Rajat" (172). Karobi needs to offer her thick and dark hair to get cash for her California trip. She remains with Seema in New York. Seema gets stunned by Karobi's choice to sell her hair for cash. On the off chance that any of her family members thinks about her arrangement of the hair style, they never license her to do it. In this manner, She gives herself a sort of support saying that "It's my hair, "I Say resistant. However, my announcement is just half evident, That hair had a place with Bimal and Sarojini's granddaughter, to Rajat's life partner, to Papa and Maman Bose's girl in law to be" (178). From this it is well comprehended that she needs to have the monetary independency and she can't be constrained by anybody yet she needs to control her life herself. Divakaruni presents Karobi as an autonomous lady and she takes choices in light of the necessities and prerequisites of her life in America. She is all around created and changed character who has the fortitude and certainty and furthermore feels that it isn't required to get the consent from anybody to cut a sell her hair. Here again we see Karobi's female reasonableness. She displays her self-sufficiency on her life. Mohanty contradicts the distortion of ladies living in non-western nations. She demands that the most significant kind

of women's activist research must keep away from credible speculations about the Third World Women and take the lived encounters of explicit ladies into account as a reason for hypothesizing.

Dr. Priyanka Vaidya in her book "Women's activist Explorations: A Study of Contemporary Indian Ladies Writers" while talking about the subject of "Uprooted Existence" all around utilized by Feminist Indian Diasporic authors, expounds because of transcultural excursion on different heroes of various creators. She talks about Ashima in NamesHomi K. Bhabha in his book, Location of Culture explains aboutthe idea of hybridity relevant to the diaspora. The personality of settlers in any general public is undermined by the way of life of the host nation. The outsiders experience area, separation and migration. The procedure of cultural assimilation isn't just moderate yet in addition uneven alongside a sentiment of a feeling of misfortune. It is likewise not a reasonable change; it offers ascend to hybridity stamping various phases of cultural assimilation. Karobi as a settler faces a few issues and difficulties which are all around appeared by Divakaruni in this novel. Mr. Desai, the criminologist who attempts to assault her for which she quickly stood up to. Mr. Desai is a local man doesn't have the psyche to acknowledge the settlers. At the point when he attempts to assault Karobi, she deals with the circumstance shrewdly. From this episode she learns the ingrained instincts to deal with any basic circumstance in America.

Divakaruni clarifies the issues Karobi needs to experience to engage and stand herself holding her head with nobility and assurance thus she can have the solidarity to battle despite seemingly insurmountable opposition to discover her dad. Her assurance in looking through her dad invigorates her to modify every single odd episode in America. She appearsKarobi's procedure of social alteration and her half breed character. Despite the fact that Vic is an alien to her, she feels typical. The American culture and her feministic demeanor make her to follow the total dress code as the local American. At whatever point she goes to meet individuals, she wears Seema's dress which gives her a genuine American look. In India, she has been so customary and driven her life dependent on the desire of her grandparents. She is never allowed to go with any of outsider in India. Be that as it may, in America, she never delays to travel and do anything with any one in view of her cultural assimilation.

Seema gets spurred by whatever Karobi does so she approaches to trim and sell her hair along with adornments to fund-raise to return to India for conveyance. She doesn't have the enthusiasm to remain with Mitra as he doesn't have any worry over his better half. Seema leaves her wedded life since she doesn't need endure quietly confronting the male centric strength of her significant other. The difficult character of Karobi propels Seema to consider her for instance in her life and move her life from gave spouse to devoted mother. At long last she wants to be with her mom so she feels security and solace in her conveyance and afterward the child can be minded quite well.

Karobi faces physical attack from the people whoever goes over her way looking for her dad. She is totally attacked pieces as a result of these horrendous uncouth episodes. In any case, she gets an thankfulness from Vic for dealing with things easily. Vic appreciates, cherishes and extends to an employment opportunity for Karobi. The activity he offers makes her remain all alone. In any case, when Vic proposes her she gets enticed. The proposition and money related independency engage Karobi to consider her character. Here, she gets total disarray about picking her life whether to be in America with Vic or to be in India with Rajat. She comes to comprehend another dad from Meera Anand who is a companion of her mom Anu. At the point when she meets her dad after a long battle, she is exceptionally content with her new character. During the gathering with her dad Rob, at first he isn't prepared to acknowledge her but Karobi finds out about their life. Her dad Rob and mother Anu haven't got hitched yet her dad doesn't have a goal to swindle her mom and Karobi was conceived out of their physical closeness. Feeling dissatisfaction Karobi questions herself whether she is genuine youngster or ill-conceived kid.

This totally demolishes her satisfaction. She says "a few sorts of accomplishment are more awful than disappointment. It would have been exceptional not to have discovered my dad than to live with this significant disgrace. I'm irate with everybody my mother, my dad, my grandfather"(246). Feeling disappointed Karobi comes to India with another way of life a sill-conceived kid whom the Bose family wouldn't like to acknowledge. She doesn't feel anything for that. Therefore she chooses to proceed with her examinations. Her grandma Sarojini feels eager to see Karobi as an enabled lady. Karobi's dad Rob and Vic regularly converse with her over telephone welcoming her to come to America. In any case, she chooses to be in her nation of origin with Sarojini. She says, " I feel a twinge, I can't deny that America's alarm melody had pulled at me. Be that as it may, I returned, voluntarily. Clearly that means something. I love my mom. In any case, I am not her. My excursion has instructed me that" (280).

Subhra Roy, in her article portrays Karobi's character in a reasonable manner. She states, "While in America, with numerous allurements around her, Karobi oversees not to surrender to them, however she understands her opposing self better." Karobi is a tough lady and she knows her vision in America. she prevails in the quest for her dad and her own character. Understanding the real factors of Karobi and her folks, Rajat's family makes all courses of action for marriage. They all vibe so happy with Karobi's boldness and come to know the state of workmanship display business in America. Finally, her sincere nature and veritable love for Rajat cause Bose family to acknowledge her wholeheartedly as her dad is an Afro – American.

Conclusion

This tale primarily centers around the feministic viewpoint of the hero Karobi's journey to America at the youthful age to search for her father. Her solid energy with assurance has inspired her quest for her father. In spite of the fact that she faces physical attack and allurements, she kept with or without centering her lone vision. Therefore she discovers her dad. The American life and it's way of life makes her a resilient lady. The depiction of Karobi, Anu, Sarojini, Seema and Ms. Bose are resilient ladies by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. The Indian and American culture both impacted her a lot. Karobi acquires the feeling of effects for her family from Indian convention. She gets the empowerment and beready to confront the difficulties that she gains from America. In this manner, she could discover her personality.

Work cited:

- [1]. Divakaruni, Chitra Banerjee. Oleander Girl. Penguin Random House, 2013
- [2]. Bhabha, Homi K. Location of Culture. Routledge, 2004
- [3]. Malik, R.S. and JagdishBatra . A New Approach to Literary Theory and Criticism. Atlantic, 2014.
- [4]. Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." Feminist Review, No. 30 (1988): 61-88. JSTOR 10 July 2013. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1395054>
- [5]. Panjwani Seema. "Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's Art and Technique in Oleander Girl." International Journal of humanities, Arts, Medicine and Sciences, Vol 2, Issue 9, Sep 2014
- [6]. Roy Subhra. "The Unfolding of Korobi: A Critical Analysis of the Gradual Growth of the Central Character in Oleander Girl." Language in India, Vol. 15:5, May 2015.

