

TYRANNY TO TRIUMPH: THE EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN IN SELECT SHORT STORIES OF CHITRA DIVAKARUNI BANERJEE

Dr. Vidhyavathi Prasath

Assistant Professor
Department of English
Government Arts College for Men
Nandanam, Chennai-35

Abstract

Rediscovering identity has become inevitable in the present socio-political scenario. The recent diasporic studies no more discusses the issues of “identity loss” or “culture loss” or “loss of roots” as something that is aching; rather it propagates to rediscover the marginalised self with all its limitations and thereby strive to gain emancipation and empowerment. Re-creating—from being to becoming—will lead the marginalised to the centre thus attempting to assimilate into the mainstream. The trial will be harder but it is within oneself; to recreate the identity to fit the survival. It has now become a must to have an “alternate identity” as said by Jhumpa Lahiri in her debut novel *The Namesake*. “Biological identity” will always remain within and that can never go out of the skin. “The real important things can never change” (*The Maid Servant Story* 111). But to have an “other identity” is also essentially important. However it is a great challenge to acquire other identity and adapt to that identity. But to overcome the challenge is presently becoming easier. Earlier strategies of survival were too complicated. But now besides contradictions, assimilating to the new identities is becoming easier. Of course there are lot of struggles in imbibing. With the by product of gender issues it becomes a double challenge for women to recreate or rediscover their alternate identities. To answer these issues Chitra Divakaruni Banerjee; works act as an emblem against oppression of women besides discussing the issues of rootless, migration and identity. Her works draw attention to issues of marginalization against the illusory echo of recurring reality and a self-constructing self.

Chitra Divakaruni Banerjee’s works, particular the collection of short stories from *Arranged marriage*; chosen for the present study, exemplarily advocates the need for every woman to create her own space; fix her own identity and have her own choice to determine how her life should be. Thus this paper is an attempt to find out how women can re-fix their role; evaluate their latent potential; retrieve for a rebirth and eventually evolve to emancipate by shaking their tyrannies to shape their triumph.

Key Words: Chitra Divakarauni Banerjee-Arranged Marriage: The Bats-Clothes-Silver Pavements, Golden Roofs-The Word Love-A perfect Life-The Maid's Servant Story-The Disappearance-Doors-The Ultra Sound.)

Chitra Divakarauni Banerjee introduces her first story *The Bats* in the collection of *Arranged Marriage*—the patriarchal society that is dominated by the superior masculinity which treats women as the other—the inferior femininity. In such a society Man is a motif of all supremacy attested by power, endeavour, might and command. But woman is a motif of all inferiority attested by timidity, gracefulness, docility, and submissive. Man's self-centred egoistic trait will disable him to consider woman as his counterpart. As Shiela Ruth puts forth in her work *Issues in Feminism: An Introduction to Feminism*:

No "real man" may tolerate (within himself at least) the tender qualities. He must deny himself any tendency toward them, any personal experience of them. Instead, these traits must be projected outward. The compliment of his masculine character is settled on his sexual complement, woman: 'I am man; she is woman. I am strong; she is weak. I am tough; she is tender. I am self-sufficient; she is needful. (19)

It is within this society Chitra Divakarauni Banerjee urges her readers and the socio-culturally repressed women to rediscover their self-marginalised and thereby gain emancipation and empowerment. Women must understand how they have been deprived of their right by the illusory chains of custom and culture. No culture advocates treating other human as under privileged. It is the dominance of Man as emphasised by Sarah.M.Grimke in her work *Letters on the Equality of the sexes and the Condition of Women*.

Man has subjugated woman to his will, used her as a means to promote his selfish gratification, to minister to his sensual pleasure, to be instrumental in promoting his comfort, but never has he desired to elevate her to that rank she was created to fill. (Sarah 10)

The Bats is a manifesto of how women are self-bound to the illusory culture and tradition; completely ignorant as the bats in the mango orchard that refuses to attempt for an escape; even after learning the danger in their place. There is a choice for the bats to fly elsewhere; but it has to choose. Same way every suffering women has a solution to their suffering; but only they have to find and fix it. The story introduces to the unnamed woman protagonist caught between the tangles of the unsuccessful arranged marriage. The cause of the unhappy marriage is not explicitly discussed. But it must be because of the very many customised reasons of almost many arranged marriages in India back then.

"THAT YEAR MOTHER CRIED A LOT, NIGHTS. OR MAY BE she had always cried, and that was the first year I was old enough to notice" (Bats 1). She had been married to a rough man who was working as a foreman at the Rashbihari Printing press. He earned material for them but did not earn a marital or parental love for his wife or for his daughter. The little daughter has not received any attention from him since her birth; "since she usually put me to bed before he came home, I didn't see him much" (2). The bruises that are seen on her mother: 'a yellow blotch' (2), on the cheek and a "a reddish-blue mark" (2), on her face, showed the little daughter that something is wrong between her mother and her father. But beyond the realisation

of the hurt that her mother felt physically she could not understand the emotional hurt of her mother. The mother is not only deprived of love but also deprived of freedom. When she decides to come out of this suppressed life she does not have any economical freedom to set her way to her uncle's house at Gopalpur. With huge efforts she manages to buy two bags to carry their luggage and little money to spare for the train tickets.

I wondered when mother bought them and how she'd paid for them, and then I wondered how she would buy our tickets. She never had much money and whenever she asked for any, Father flew into one of his rages. But may be she'd been saving up for this trip for a long time. (3)

The little girl is over excited to go to a village which had a real well, buffaloes and goats. At the outset knowing the fact that she has a grandpa was a double excitement to her. Because all these days she had only heard about grandpas who gave birthday gifts and entertained their grand-daughter with their company in the Zoo. "I didn't know I had a grandpa!" (3). The bond of arranged marriage has made them to lose their roots.

Gopalpur gave the little girl a new happy life. The old man, her mother's uncle has become the girl's most favourite grandpa-uncle. He showed her a different world that is filled with bounteous nature and unconditional love. She became his regular companion to the Zamindar's orchard which the grandpa-uncle took care. Learning the names of the trees, fruits, animals were enticing her. Learning to fish was yet another interesting deal. Her most challenging job was to help her grandpa to chase the bats that are biting the mangoes in the orchard. After many failure attempts to chase the bats the grandpa ended up to kill the bats by poisoning. But it left every morning for them to clear the carcasses all over the orchard.

You would have thought that after the first week the bats would have figured it out and found another place to live. But no. Every morning there were just as many dead bodies". (8)

It is here Divakaruni draws the comparison. The bats knowing that it would get hurt in the mango orchard; could not stop going to the same place even though it had an alternate place for survival. Same way here her mother knowing that she has an escape could not seek refuge in the alternate possible life, but only stick to her husband's place.

The gender biased social tradition would not allow women to emancipate. Within a short stay at her uncle's house she could not with stand the humiliation that she received on separation from her husband. On his promise to run a smoother life she intends to go back. May be like the bats she does not really understand what actually was happening to her. "I guess they just don't realize that by flying somewhere else they'll be safe. Or maybe they do, but there's something that keeps pulling them back here" (8). Of course she had a defensive reason in going back to her husband's place. "I couldn't stand it, the stares and whispers of the women, down into the marketplace. The loneliness of being without him" (11-12).

However defensive she is for the outer world; the sadness of her inner world is tightened to herself. Her grief is too mysterious to be found out. Her tough heart is like the waters of Kalodighi.

I knew it had to be the largest lake in the entire world. Near the shore there were little ripples, but in the middle of the lake the water lay quiet and powerful, deep beyond imagining.

"Kind of like there's a mystery hiding in there". (9)

In the shuttle between the mother's plights the little girl is forsaken. She was excited to take up swimming coaching from her grandpa-uncle. But that has been disturbed. Her supposed happy life came to be short lived. The mother's shuttling plight has become a continuous process; as and when the bruises appear and fade. The girl loses her hope eventually and she also loses the magic-ring that her grandpa-uncle gave her from the Kalodighi River. So it is understood that she cannot expect any magic to happen. Thus Divakaruni introduces her first story to give a lesson that no miracle can happen but only women should be determined to negotiate their identities to empower. The succeeding stories set as an example of how women try to establish themselves by decoding the fixed custom.

In contrary to *The Bats* Divakaruni present *Clothes* where the protagonist brings magic to empower herself. She emancipates to break through the barriers of ill-fate widows to become an entrepreneur. Unlike the heroine of *The Bats* who finds to be happy within the cage, Smita the protagonist of *The Clothes* does not let her imprisoned in the shutters of social stigmas. Her excited American wedding life is shattered in no time with the gun shot on her husband in his 7-Eleven Store.

Born in Calcutta, Smita constantly dreamt about her married life through whatever fairy tales she heard. "And she married the handsome prince who took her to his kingdom beyond the seven seas" (18). Her dream came true when she wins the matrimonial quest by dazzling Somesh and his parents from California. She has never learnt anything about America until the previous day of her bride viewing day. Her father showed the country on the metal globe.

A chunky pink wedge on the side of multicoloured slab marked untd.Sts. of America. I touched it and felt the excitement leap all the way up my arm like an electric shock. Then it died away, leaving only a beaten-metal coldness against my fingertips. (18)

Nevertheless Smita knew that even her excited married life will die away as she felt when she touched the metal globe.

Smita was very happy to start a new life. She was not even worried to part from her old friends. "Who cares about friends from a little Indian village when you're about to go live in America?" (17-18). Initially she suffers from culture shock. The very name of the store that her husband co-owns sounded strange to her.

The store was called 7-Eleven. I thought it a strange name, exotic, risky. All the words I knew were piously named after gods and goddesses—(*Ganesh Sweet House, Lakshmi Vastralaya for Fine Saris*)—to bring the owner's luck. (21)

The store selling beer and wine is another shock to her. It is through this sale they have a very good income is yet another shock to her. "The only places that sold alcohol were the village toddy shops, "dark, stinking dens of vice" " (21). Drinking is not immortal and it is a part of American culture is even more a stronger cultural shock to her.

Besides the cultural shock, Smita is still happy to drape into her new identity as Smita Sen. Her father had told her that Somesh Sen is a "good", "kind:", "patient", and an "handsome" man" (22). So she gears up to start her new life; "Of my new American life" (25). She has very many colourful clothes. Right from the pale pink expensive embroidered sari with real golden zari thread—"the color of transition" (9)—that her father gifted for her bride-viewing day to midnight blue with a thin red boarder—blue symbolising "possibility" (20) and red symbolising 'luck for married women" (20), all her clothes to American journey were colourful and

associated with the brighter side of the life. Even the new western outfits that her husband stealthily presented were of bright colours. She loved the colour of the jeans;

“the same pale blue as the nayantara flowers that grows in my parent’s garden” (25). The colour of the T-Shirt sounded new hope. “The T-Shirt is sunrise-orange-the color I decide, of joy, of my new American life”. (25)

The other saris that she packed for her new life were also very colourful.

Thick Kanjeeपुरam silks in solid purples and golden yellows, the thin hand-woven cottons of the Bengal countryside, green as a young banana plant, gray as the women’s lake on a monsoon morning...my wedding Benarasi, flame-orange, with a wide *palloo* of gold-embroidered dancing peacocks. (24)

Unfortunately she has to end up with a colourless sari in America. At the loss of her husband she is left to wear just a borrowed plain white sari. Her bride-viewing sari was chosen in a particular colour that symbolised “the color of transition” (19). But little did anyone know that Smita will have this kind of transition.

There was huge difference between Smita’s American dream and American reality. While preparing to move to California she dreamt about her new life.

That night I dreamed I was at the store. Soft American music floated in the background as I moved between shelves stocked high with brightly colored cans and elegant-necked bottles, turning their labels carefully to the front, polishing them until they shone.

But in reality there is no glitter. “Now sitting inside this metal shell that is hurting through emptiness” (23).

Smita is left to suffer from double consciousness.

Sometimes I laugh to myself thinking how ironic it is that after all my fears about America, my life has turned out to be no different from Deepali’s or Radha’s. But at other times I feel caught in a world where everything is frozen in place, like a scene inside a glass paper weight. It is a world so small that if I were to stretch out my arms, I would touch its cold unyielding edges. I stand inside this glass world, watching helplessly as America rushes by, wanting to scream. (26)

However, it is the same country that helps her to empower eventually. She develops an unquenched desire to withhold her colourful clothes. “Then I’m ashamed. Mita, I tell myself, you’re growing westernized. Back home you’d never have felt this way” (26). But it is the coloured clothes that help her to mend herself. “Cream-and-brown skirt set. (color of earth, color of seeds)” (27), boosted her confidence. When Somesh parents planned to go back to India after Somesh’s demise, Smita refused to go back.

That’s when I know I cannot go back. I don’t know yet how I’ll manage, here in this new dangerous land. I only know I must. Because all over India, at this very moment, widows in white sari’s are bowing their veiled heads, serving tea to in-laws. Dove with cut-off wings. (33)

Even though the store hurts her with the memory of Somesh; she has geared up to start a brave life. It is through her courageous effort she was able to negotiate her identity from being a Dove cut with wings to a freedom bird.

The next story *Silver pavements, Golden Roofs* is a refrain of Jayanti’s dream as a girl in India and a woman in America. In India Jayanati as a small girl used to sing “*will I marry a*

prince from a far-off magic land, where the Pavements are silver and the roots are gold?” (46). She had come to the far-off magic land but left to face many struggles as a marginalized and as a woman doubly marginalized. However she is caught between two worlds and her thoughts about brighter American life forsaken, Divakaruni makes her a makeshift to reconstruct her identity. Being brown or becoming white is left with the individual. There is beauty in everything and also pain in everything. Balancing both and learning the art of living is what Divakaruni advocates through Jayanti.

When I finally look down, I notice that the snow has covered my own hands so they are no longer brown but white, white, white. And now it makes sense that the beauty and the pain should be part of each other. I continue holding them out in front of me, gazing at them until they’re completely covered. Until they do not hurt at all. (56)

Jayanti’s long time dream is to come to America for her higher studies. “I’VE LOOKED FORWARD TO THIS DAY FOR SO LONG THAT when I finally board the plane I can hardly breathe” (35). The very minute she steps into the airplane she tends to be Americanised. In picking up the airhostess pronunciation; “No problem” (35) self assuring to cut her long hair and style it according to American fashion, or in her self-thought about her luck that chanced her to going “to the land of Almond Rocas”; that had been deprived to her friends Prema and Vaswati; Jayanti is all love for the new land.

Jayanti has to stay along with her maternal aunty Prema and her husband Bikram uncle whom she knows that they are her blood relatives but not in any other way closely associated as they left Calcutta shortly after their wedding. Jayanti was only eight years old then; too young to remember them. She gets a strange welcome from her aunt and uncle at the Chicago airport. Observing the mismatch matrimonial tie between her aunt and uncle she decides; ‘No arranged marriage like Aunt’s for me! (45). Her aunt comes from “an old and a wealthy land owning family” (39). But her uncle hails from a “low class” (39). Their tiny room in their apartment which Jayanti had to share is another disappointment to her.

My monogrammed leather cases are an embarrassment in this household. I push them under the bed in the tiny room I am to occupy—it is the same size as my bathroom at home. I remember that cool green mosaic floor, the claw-footed marble bathtub from colonial days, the large window that looks out on my mother’s crimson and gold dahlias, and want to cry. (41)

With all her disappointment she wants to join the university in September. Though her uncle warns her “Things here aren’t as perfect as people at home like to think. We all thought we’d become millionaires. But it’s not so easy” (43). Yet Jayanti is more excited about her classes in the university. Though her uncle repeats about danger;

The Americans hate us. They’re always putting us down because we’re dark-skinned foreigners, *Kala admi*. Blaming us for the damn economy, for taking away their jobs. You see it for yourself soon enough. (43)

However America is still a land of hope for her. The anticipated fantasy of the land still continues in her and she enjoys her new venture in spite of her uncle’s repeated cautions.

She is happy with her bobbed hair and with high spirits in her classroom and happy to win the heart of the handsome professor. It is when she realises her childhood dream. “Will I marry a prince from a far-off magic land, where the

pavements are silver and the roofs are all gold?...And now here I am. America, I think, and the word opens inside me like a folded paper flower placed in water, filling me until there is no room to breathe. (46)

Little did Jayanti realise her uncle's warnings about the racial discrimination until for the first time when she is attacked by group of small native boys on a deserted street. She and her aunt took an evening walk out of Jayanti's compulsion. She too tempted to take a walk accompanied by her niece ignoring for the first time her husband's rule. "Nigger" (50). They were attacked with the "fistful of slush" (51) thrown by the gang of boys.

Now the others take up the word, chanting it in high singsong voices that have not broken yet, *nigger, nigger*, until I want to scream, or weep, or laugh, because can't they see that I am not black at all but an Indian girl of good family? When our Chauffeur Gurbands Singh drives me down the Calcutta streets in our silver-colored Fiat, people stop to whisper, *isn't that Jayanti Ganguli, daughter of the Bhavanipur Gangulis?*

The pride of their biological birth has no role to play here. They are treated like second class citizens. They were very badly affected. "I try not to stare at Aunt's mud-splotched cheek, her ruined coat, her red-rimmed, pleading glance. But I can't drag my eyes away" (53). It is when Jayanti realises; "*Is this my life too will be like?*" (53). She gets a second thought about her dream. "*Will I marry a prince from a far-off magic land?*" (54). She gets to understand the other side of American life. "It pretends to give and then snatches everything back" (54). She couldn't forget the face of the boys whom attacked her and her aunt.

Home, I whisper desperately, *home home home*, and suddenly, intensely, I want my room in Calcutta, where things were so much simpler. I want the high mahogany bed in which I slept as long as I can remember the confronting smell of sundried cotton sheets to pull around my head. I want my childhood again. But I am too far away for the spell to work, for the words to take me back, even in my head. (55)

She cannot do away what had happened. "Am I to ignore it all (can I?)" (55). She cannot discard but she can discover; rediscover indeed. She can renegotiate her identity. Besides biological identity one should possess an "alternative identity" as Jhumpa Lahiri says in her debut novel *The Namesake*. Thus Divakaruni moulds her protagonist not to stumble with identity barriers but to re-modify her strength to acquire an alternate identity that could enable the fittest survival.

When I finally look down, I notice that the snow has covered my hands so they are no longer brown but white, white, white. And now it makes sense that the beauty and the pain should be part of each other. I continue holding them out in front of me, gazing at them, until they're completely covered. Until they do not hurt at all. (56)

Her brown biological identity is always there under the bottom layer of her skin. It cannot be torn away. Therefore there is no issue of losing one's own identity; for identity can never be lost; it will be within. Her hands becoming white with the cover of snow is the symbol that she is becoming one as the mainstream and no more a marginality.

Being from becoming is always a welcome process to progress. "You had to cut the umbilical cord sometime" (68). Thus the protagonist of the story "The Word Love" cuts her

umbilical cord by discarding her mother's emotional weakening to live a life of her choice shows her triumphant to come out of the clutches that no longer gave her any piece of happiness.

American life in some aspects has given women a complete freedom. Meera views in 'A Perfect Life' that her American life had actually given her own space.

Because in Indian marriages becoming a wife was only the prelude to that all-important, all-consuming event—becoming a mother. That wasn't why I'd fought so hard—with my mother to leave India; with my professors to make it through graduate school; with my bosses to establish my career. Not that I was against marriage-or even against having a child. I just wanted to make sure that when it happened it would be on my own terms, because I wanted it. (76-77)

However Meera's supposed perfect life is taken into task when she adopts the little boy. She parents the street boy; names him Krishna and prepares to take any risk in having him with her for the unconditional love that she had developed for the little boy. She never minds even to break her relationship with her boy friend Richard who had actually given her much space and freedom; something which she cannot expect from Indian marital life. "Motherly-love, that tidal wave, swept everything else away. Friendship, Romantic fulfilment. Even the need for sex" (98-99). When the American law does not permit her to foster a child she gives back. Later she agrees to marry Richard but on one condition not to have children. Because she is determined that one day she would meet Krishna again and fill the emptiness that swirled around her.

Manisha in "The Maid Servant Story" tries to emancipate through her wedding to Bijoy; the Bengali Professor at the university in California where she taught English. She desired for this transformation as she had been deprived of maternal love from her widowed mother.

All through my childhood, everything I wanted—everything material, that is—was provided to me, often before I needed to ask. But what she thought, what she longed for, what made her cry out in her dreams (for I'd heard her, once or twice), I never knew. It was as though she'd build a wall of ice around her, thin and invisible and unbreakable. No matter often I flung myself against it, I was refused entry. (113)

It was only through her aunt; Deepa Mashi, she comes to know the hidden sadness of her mother. It took time for her to realise that it was her mother's real story that had happened in her house when she was a little girl. "The Maid Servant's Story"; which the aunt narrate—the misfortunes of the maid; Sarala; and the helpless situation of her mother and aunt—had actually weakened the lively spirits of her mother; leading her to live a lifeless life. Her husband's fidelity is not drawn to light but Sarala becomes a victim of the marginalised section. Deepa Mashi is the one who knows the true picture of her brother-in-law, but she remains dumb; not revealing to even her sister, because; "And the wife herself, what future was there for women who, no matter how pressing the reason, left their husband's homes?" (156). Nor can she imagine her niece and nephew to be orphaned without father.

The guilt of not having rescued Sarala from becoming a whore disturbed Manisha's mother's life. But even now Deepa Mashi is not outwardly accepts that the story she is now narrating to Manisha is the real story.

I know she will not tell me anymore. It's how we survive, we Indian women whose lives are half light and half darkness, stopping short of revelations that

could otherwise crisp away our skins. I'm left alone to figure the truth of the story, to puzzle out why it was given to me. (167)

The story and the unsolved puzzle of its being narrated to her at the point of her wedding process left Manisha under confusion about her willing transformation to American life.

I wonder if the story (though not intended as much by my aunt) is a warning for me, a preview of my own life to which I thought I had fashioned so cleverly, so differently from my mother's. But which is only a repetition, in a different *raga*, of her tragic song. Perhaps it is like this for all daughters, doomed to choose for ourselves, over and over, the men who have destroyed our mothers. (167)

However Divakaruni leaves a challenge to Manisha to take up the life taht she had cleverly drafted into which she will not be drifted.

"The Disappearance" accounts of the Disappearance of a woman and the search of her husband in vain. He recalls his marriage with her. He loved her; but was not sure if she did. They had small differences, which is usual in all marriages. And when she disappears suddenly, he didn't know how to handle it. He didn't know how to tell her parents in India. But little did anyone knew that "how much she must have hated me to choose to give that up" (180). Unlike the protagonist of "The Bats"; she broke the clutched that never gave her any love and freedom.

"Doors" is set to give a lesson; "It's never too late to stop yourself from ruining your life" (184). Preeti struggles to cope with Deepak and his male chauvinism. Indian Men either raised in India or raised in America would never want their woman to have an individual set of values. In fact they would hesitate to marry the Indian girl raised in America as they term them as "ABCD—American-Born-Confused-Desis" (185). They will in fact marry girls from their country as "American' women are always bossing you, always thinking about themselves. . . ." (185).

When Deepak announces his wedding with Preeti to his friends; one of them says; "I'd go for an arranged marriage from back home any day, a pretty young girl from my parents' village, not too educated, brought up to treat a man right and not talk back. . . ." (185). But Deepak opposes that girls are not either dolls or slaves and he is proud to marry Preeti who is self-equipped to take her own decision. With the intrusion of Raju into their family Deepak failed to give respect to her ideals of keeping the Doors closed and certain other discipline parameters that she would want anyone to follow in her house. Thus she decides to close the marital doors once for all when she decides to move to stay in the city with Cathy. 'And when the door finally clicked shut, she did not know whether it was in the guest room or deep inside her own being" (202)

"The Ultrasound" introduces two friends Anju and Runu growing up together to set apart through the ir marriages. Anju is married to Sunil and comes to America. Runu is married to Ramesh and settles in Calcutta. After five years of their married life they both become pregnant.

Five years might not seem that long to people in America, but where we come from it is. Marriages can be broken in half that time, and barren wives sent back to their parents' home in shame. (217)

But Runu's in-laws were not like that. But at the same time they belong to a place—"It's a man's world in India" (218). They do not want a female child to be born so they planned for Runu's foetus to abort. Runu is helpless. She could not go to her mother's house as Anju advises her.

“It’s not so simple”. And now Runu sounds scared again. “I called Mother just before I called you. She says it’s not right that I should leave my husband’s home. My place is with them, for better or worse. She’s afraid they’ll never take me back if I move out, and then what would happen to me? people will think they threw me out because I did something bad. They’ll think my baby’s bastard. . . .
“Her voice breaks on the last word. (225)

But it is Anju who sets her the right and brave decision. She forces and stops her return to her in-laws house. Rather she asks to stay in her mother’s house ignoring all social stigmas. She can manage her survival through her artistic needle work and embroidery work. Later she can even influence Sunil to sponsor her migration to America where her son Anand and her daughter Dayita play and grow together. Thus Runu finds her emancipation.

Thus through each of the stories selected for the study, Divakaruni shows women as “collective victims struggling for survival” (Atwood 11). But at the same time she shows every possible way for the emancipation of women from the marginality to the centre only if they could overcome their trials to triumph.

Women are so much degraded by mistaken notions of female excellence that this artificial weakness produces in them a tendency to tyrannize, and gives birth to cunning—the natural opponent of strength—which leads them to exploit those contemptible infantile airs that undermine esteem even while they excite desire. Let men become more chaste and modest, and if women don’t become correspondingly wiser it will be clear that they have weaker understandings. (6-7)

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