

The Role of Gender and Cultural Psychology in the Discourse of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Arranged Marriage*

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Received: January 10, 2022

Accepted: February 15, 2022

Online Published: March 15, 2022

doi:10.5430/wjel.v12n2p3

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v12n2p3>

Abstract

The term 'Cultural Psychology' refers to the idea that culture and mind are inseparable. Cultural Psychology has its root from the 1960s and 1970s. But it has attained its zenith and popularity during the 1980s and 1990s. Some of the prominent cultural psychologists are Harry C. Triandis, Fiske, Hofstede, Susan T. Fiske, Eva Magnusson, Jeanne Marecek, Hazel Rose Markus, Shinobu Kittayama, Richard Shweder etc. The present study aims to portray the issues of gender bias and male domination through the cultural conflict which affects the characters physically and psychologically in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Arranged Marriage*. The Introduction deals with the overall view of the stories and themes. The Literature review focuses on the studies relevant to cultural psychology. The Methodology section discusses the cultural and gender issues with the theory and approaches of Eva Magnusson and Jeanne Marecek's *Gender and Culture in Psychology*. The Discussion part gives the results of the study. The study is compared and discussed with the other studies relevant to gender-based and cultural psychology concepts. The conclusion sums up the entire study and its limitation and scope for future researchers.

Keywords: cultural psychology, gender, oppression, suppression, male domination, alienation, dislocation, sufferings, immigration, physical, and psychological abuse

1. Introduction

Rudyard Kipling aptly says about the cultural encounter in *The Ballad of East and West* says: "East is east and West is west, and never twain shall meet". Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's "Arranged Marriage" portrays many themes such as cultural encounter, cross-cultural psychology, claustrophobic psychology, identity crisis, sufferings, dilemma, various experiences of immigration, alienation, dislocation, love, and affairs of the immigrant people, physical and psychological abuse. There are eleven stories intertwined in this book. They are The Bats, Clothes, Silver Pavements, Golden Roofs, The Word Love, A Perfect Life, The Maid Servant's Story, The Disappearance, Doors, The Ultrasound, Affair, and Meeting Mrinal. All the women characters are struggling and suppressed in these short stories. Gender plays a vital role in these short stories. The collection of short stories won an American Book award, a PEN Josephine Miles Award and a Bay Area Book Reviewers Award. The researcher investigates the cultural encounter between east and west, gender-based issues, and the psychological condition of the characters in these short stories.

2. Literature Review

The literature review is an essential part of every study. This study's literature review proves no research on the current study's ideas and shows the present study's uniqueness. This research is focused on Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Arranged Marriage*. So, the literature review gives the different studies done with *Arranged Marriage* novel. Many studies provide different ideas. For example, Pallavi Rastogi's study examines Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Arranged Marriage*'s political, social, and literary issues. The study discusses racism, freshness, nuance, and richness. Also, this study used eleven short stories as classroom teaching. The researcher says that "teaching Divakaruni in general and *Arranged Marriage* in particular so that students can approach the text with greater

knowledge of the political, social, and literary issues underpinning Divakaruni's work" (Rastogi, 2010).

Damore's study focuses on female foeticide and female child murder in *Arranged Marriage*. This study primarily concentrates on the themes of self-renouncing and submissive women. Feminist concepts are used in this study to analyse the women's duties inside and beyond the house and household (Damor, 2015). Jayasree's study is that Self-seeking concepts are utilised as feminism in *Arranged Marriage*. Also, this study explains every story in a feministic view. The study also analysis Divakaruni's eleven short stories in *Arranged Marriage* to show that the "Modern Indian Woman" is a fusion of Western liberal perspective and traditional Indian values, continuously creating alternatives and redefining herself (Jayasree, 2018).

Fernandez's study uses realism concepts or ideas in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Arranged Marriage*. The realism concepts include Indian women leading a life abroad. This study's practical narratives negotiate with the emotional and social problems of Indian women living in the USA and Calcutta (Fernandez, 2014). Mufidah and Miftahur's investigation reveals that women's positions in Divakaruni's *Arranged Marriage* specifically desire to perform household experiences (Priyadharshini, Mohan, Hariharasudan & Sangeetha, 2021). While, two disputes are encountered by the women; domestic violence and psychological stresses by their husbands and household. In addition, it also suggests that most women are always dominant to the future as homemakers and serve their husbands' demands (Mufidah and Miftahur, 2020).

Another study of Shanthi centered on the lives and incidents of women. The images of this investigation contain interracial relationships, abortion, discrimination, divorce, and financial distinction (Shanthi, 2014). There are many studies related to the concepts of feminism and women's life. Also, some studies are done with retelling the stories of Divakaruni's *Arranged Marriage*. For example, Poornima's study focuses on a feministic point of view. She discusses abusive marriage, identity, father's frustration, Place of Women within Patriarchy, and so on (Poornima, 2018). Another study examines the idea of diasporic feminism theory in Divakaruni's *Arranged Marriage*. Also. This study also focuses on Divakaruni's style of writing, such as problems of displacement, transnationalism, multiculturalism, colonialism, migration, exile, cultural conflicts, and cultural trauma.

There are many studies analyzed in various themes, but there is no research on the ideas of cultural psychology. This encouraged the researchers to study cultural, psychological analysis in Divakaruni's selected works. To fill this gap, the researchers determined concepts of cultural psychology.

3. Methodology

The methodology of this study explains the research gap and uniqueness of this research. From the literature review, researchers can tell no research on cultural psychology ideas in Divakaruni's select work. To fill this gap, the researcher has selected concepts of Eva Magnusson and Jeanne Marecek's *Gender and Culture in Psychology*.

3.1 Bats

The women characters meet a lot of cultural encounters in *Arranged Marriage*. They are oppressed and suppressed in multiple ways. Physiologically as well as psychologically, they get affected by male domination. Generally, psychology refers to the interest and attitudes of the male generation of society. In the words of Magnusson and Marecek, it is understood about the patriarchal society. "Psychology was *androcentric*; that is, that the discipline and many of its practices had been shaped by the interests and experiences of men" (Magnusson & Marecek, 2012). The first story, "The Bats" explains the oppression and male domination. The very beginning of the story portrays the suffering of the woman character. "That year mother cried a lot, nights or maybe she had always cried and that was the first year I was old enough to notice" (Divakaruni, 1995). The pathetic condition of the woman is revealed through the main character. "A couple of days later Mother had another mark on her face, even bigger and reddish-blue. It was on the side of her forehead and made her face look lopsided (Divakaruni, 1995). Eve Magnusson and Jeanne Marecek rightly express that "Often women and children suffering from the consequences of physical and sexual abuse were diagnosed as mentally disturbed rather than as reacting to violence and abuse" (Magnusson & Marecek, 2012). The child expresses the situation of her mother. The story "The Bats" beautifully portrays the plight of the Indian woman in the alien land amidst their settlement and dislocation issues. In the alien land, the women are not self-dependent. They fully depend on their husband or father. That is the reason for male domination and suppression. The women are physically weak and afraid to face the cultural challenges of foreign countries. They are financially insecure. They are not ready to fight for their freedom. They don't have the courageousness to survive alone. They meet cultural shock wherever they go, such as language barrier, dressing sense, behavioral pattern, etc. They automatically cut themselves off from their familiar culture and environment and the rules practiced. The woman character in the story suffers a lot because of disillusion and disappointment in the name of marriage. She is a

silent sufferer in this story, "The Bats". She doesn't express any of her feelings towards the main character. When the child, the main character, enquires about the wound on her face, she diverts the notion and question of the child. As an orthodox and traditional Indian woman, she lives her life amidst the thorns and wounds to give her child the brightest future. She bears all sufferings and is ready to live in the darkest hours for the betterment life of her child. She cannot imagine a miserable and complicated life without the protection of man. Most Indian women are leading their life in such a manner (Pandeewari, Hariharasudan & Nawaz, 2021). Divakaruni has beautifully interwoven this story as a natural and living example for most of the livelihood status of Indian women.

The narrator expresses the nostalgic pain in "The Bats" story. She loves to experience the company of her grandpa-uncle. She doesn't have the heart to leave her grandpa-uncle. She replies to her mother, "But I can't leave now! Grandpa-uncle is going to teach me to swim!" Whenever she gets a chance to visit her grandpa-uncle house in Calcutta, she feels that much pleasure. It is indescribable to see her happiness. She needs the love of her grandpa-uncle. Whenever her mother feels suffering and unbearable pain, she leaves the child in her grandpa-uncle's house.

As she lives in mental agony, she doesn't take care of her child the way her grandpa-uncle loves, takes care of her and spends his precious time with her. She comforts herself and forgets her sorrows and miserable condition in his house. The title of the story, "The Bats" is very apt. It is a symbolic representation of the life of bats compared to the life of many immigrants. They willingly or unwillingly accept the cultural changes. So, there is a huge impact in all walks of the life of immigrants. "I guess they just don't realize what's happening. They 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 (Divakaruni 1995). Divakaruni presents how women are exploited and marginalized in a male-dominated society. The author has raised her voice against the male-dominated culture. Gender plays a predominant role in the patriarchal society. It impacts the mental agony and psychological oppression faced by the womenfolk.

3.2 Clothes

In the short story "Clothes" Divakaruni portrays the cultural conflict of the immigrants and young couple Sumita and Somesh Sen. Sumita experiences a lot of suffering and pain. She is under the cruel clutches of destiny. She lives in her dream world in India to be an American when her father chooses to marry Somesh Sen. "Look at her, already dreaming about her husband, and she hasn't even seen him yet!" Deepali jokes. Then she adds the envy in her voice, only half-hidden. "Who cares about friends from a little Indian village when you're about to go live in America" (Divakaruni 1995). She also feels fearful of leaving her parents and starting a new life with an unknown man. "And she married the handsome prince who took her to his kingdom beyond the seven seas" (Divakaruni 1995). She also feels arranged marriage is a destiny in which every woman is trapped. She doesn't dare to depart her parents and meet new cultural challenges. "Would I ever see my parents again? Don't send me so far away, I wanted to cry, but of course, I didn't. It would be ungrateful" (Divakaruni, 1995). Magnusson and Jeanne Marecek observe the immigrants' livelihood. "Ethnicity is regularly connected to immigrant cultures, which are portrayed as alien, menacing, and consisting of immutable traditions" (Magnusson & Marecek, 2012). Sumita abides by the rules of Indian culture. She accepts to marry the guy whom her father has chosen. She doesn't contradict anything with his point of view. She also feels proud of Indian culture when he has chosen her sari in Calcutta. He runs a 7-eleven store in California where he sells apple juice, American bread, potato chips, beer, and wine. These are the popular items in the store which sold like hot cake. She hates the moment whenever he gets addicted to liquor. The cultural conflict arises between the livelihood style of Americans and Indians. Finally, she adapts herself to the American culture. He convinces her.

A lot of Americans drink, you know. It's a part of their culture, not considered immoral, like it is here. And really, there's nothing wrong with it. He touched my lips lightly with his finger. When you come to California, I'll get you some sweet white wine and you'll see how good it makes you feel (Divakaruni, 1995).

Magnusson and Marecek compare cultural adaptation and practices to distress and anxiety. "Cultural practices related to gender and ethnic identity also shape expressions of distress" (Magnusson & Marecek, 2012).

In all the way, the couple starts to adapt to the new culture. They forget to lead their life traditionally and customarily. They are not considering anyone interfering with their privacy life. Indian culture slowly fades in their memories. They kiss in front of everyone and do not care about their fellow Americans. "We will kiss in front of everyone, not caring, like Americans, then pull back, look each other in the eye and smile" (Divakaruni, 1995). Somesh has bought so many different collections of dresses for her to wear. While clothing also forgets Indian culture and adapts to the new culture. She starts to wear Jeans and a T-shirt. "I'm wearing a pair of jeans now, marveling at the curves of my

hips and thighs, which have always been hidden under the flowing lines of my saris" (Divakaruni, 1995). When she flees to America, she takes Kanjeeपुरam silk with her. In her mind, she fixes a hallmark for Indian traditional wearing. She doesn't call her husband by name in front of his mother Sen. As it is not respectable, she follows the way how other Indians behave. For special occasions, she loves to wear an expensive Indian sari. She laughs to herself by thinking ironically about the fear of living in America. Later she realizes that her life in America is not different from her friends Deepali or Radha's life. She feels that she is running her life inside the glass world. She also feels ashamed of herself because she is willingly or unwillingly adapting her life in a westernized manner. Often cultural conflicts arise in the minds of Sumita.

Whenever Somesh buys clothes for her to wear, he appreciates her a lot. He tells her that she is the most beautiful woman in the whole world. He wants to keep on seeing her beautiful face. Even though, she likes to follow Indian culture in all the ways of her life. She loves to please her husband in her dress code and behavior. In India, private life will be confined within the four walls of the house. Most Indian women are domesticated. They are not supposed to raise their voice, they have to cover themselves fully, they are not supposed to express themselves in the name of freedom. But in America, her life is totally different. She can buy and wear the dresses which she loves to wear. The couple can express their love like kissing and hugging even in public places. He also wishes her to come out of the domesticated life. In the way of adopting modernity, she agrees to go for work. Somesh helps her to adopt modernity and be free from all the clutches of cultural barriers. She feels worthy of having him in her life. Magnusson and Marecek rightly comment on it. "Moreover, it has been easier and more acceptable to infringe on women's space than on men's space" (Magnusson & Marecek, 2012).

Unfortunately, Sumita loses her husband Somesh during a robbery in their shop. He is attacked severely and killed. Bullets are pierced into the chest of her husband. Their flourishing marriage life very soon comes to meet an end. All their happiness goes away. The realities they experience turn into an illusion in their memories. Somesh' parents decide to return to India with Sumita. They have not scolded Sumita. They consider her as their daughter. They don't want her to suffer in the alien land alone as an immigrant amidst the trans-cultural conflicts. In India, a widow should wear only white sari as a symbol of widowhood. She feels her wings are cut-off. The sari, a thick voile that will bunch around the waist when worn, is borrowed. "White, Widow's color, color of endings" (Divakaruni, 1995). She undergoes all sorts of bangle-breaking ceremony. All her glass bangles are shattered. Ocean of flood flows from her eyes as tears. She regrets over her un-lived life. She prefers to live only in America. She doesn't like to live amidst the traditions of Indian sentiments. She hopes to manage herself to live in this new dangerous land. 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 saris are bowing their veiled heads, serving tea to in-laws, Doves with cut-off wings (Divakaruni, 1995).

Finally, she straightens her shoulders and stands taller. She takes a deep breath. She starts to breathe the same air of her husband. She is not broken of her situation. Courageously she wakes up from all her burdens which pull her down. She looks steady when she looks at the mirror. She also wears a blouse and skirts the color of almonds. She is not abided by the rules and restrictions of Indian society (Pandeewari, Hariharasudan & Kot, 2021). As an Americanized woman, she stands taller and breaks all shackles and snares. She prefers to live a free life in America. She feels that the life in America is thousand times better than living as a widow in India with all boundaries. Divakaruni visualizes her as a new independent woman. People may think that her life has to come to an end by placing full stop in her life. But Sumita has put another full stop and continue her life as a challenging and risk taking one to be continued in the alien land. She hates the conventional and traditional restrictions of the pathetic plight of widow in India.

3.3 Silver Pavements, Golden Roofs

Jayanti is a first-generation Indian American. She faces many troubles as an immigrant when she moves from Calcutta to California. When she enters the plane, the air smells different from the air she had breathed in Calcutta. "The air inside the plane smells different from the air I've known all my life in Calcutta" (Divakaruni, 1995). Her imagination about the alien land is unique. She expresses her thought genuinely in everything, including the food and chocolate which she tasted. Her mother doesn't like to send her to America because of the cultural dilemma. "I couldn't ask my mother—she'd been against my coming to America and would surely use that letter to strengthen her arsenal" (Divakaruni, 1995). She has gone there to live with her aunt Pratima and her uncle Bikram. In India, most people love to live with their joint family than nuclear family because their children live happily and shelter under the shadow of their grandparents. She also hesitates to interfere in their life because Americans like their privacy. "Americans, I'd heard, liked their privacy. They liked their lives to be smooth and uninterrupted by the claims of

relatives" (Divakaruni, 1995). Magnusson and Marecek rightly say that "Rapport is one key to obtaining rich interview material; privacy and guarantees of anonymity and confidentiality are also crucial" (Magnusson & Marecek, 2012).

The narrator maintains her Indian culture in the alien land which surprises every citizen of America in the airport. "I touch their feet like a good Indian girl should, though I am somewhat embarrassed. Everyone in the airport is watching us, I'm sure of it" (Divakaruni, 1995). Most of the people in America consider this kind of activity as a submission and slavery but in India, well brought up children get blessing by touching and greeting the feet of elders as a symbol of respect and politeness. At the same time, she hates the habit of addiction to drinking. In America, drinking alcohol is not at all a bad habit. Majority of the people are addicted to it. She feels nostalgic about Calcutta where none of the family touches alcohol. She feels surprised on seeing her uncle's addiction to beer. It is a cultural shock to her. The narrator also describes about the aversion of Americans towards Indian people. They consider the Indian people as dark-skinned foreigners. The colour complexion plays a vital role in their culture. The white people look down upon the dark-skinned people for their poor economy. "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'll see it for yourself soon enough" (Divakaruni, 1995). Race and culture play a significant role. According to Magnusson and Marecek, "For these women of color, the focus was not on the aesthetics of the body, but on the ethics of the body and the race-related politics of appearance" (Magnusson & Marecek, 2012).

The narrator feels happy and sings a song often when she lives in India. The song represents her imaginative land of America. She used to play skipping games with her girlfriends. She doesn't care about anything at childhood, laughs carelessly, and lives thoughtlessly. She often goes back to her nostalgic days in which she cherishes her golden memories. She finds dislocated when she tries to assimilate and adopt the new culture, she faces several difficulties and dilemmas inside her mind and heart. As a child in India, sometimes I used to sing a song. "*Will I marry a prince from a far-off magic land, where the pavements are silver and the roofs all gold?*" (Divakaruni, 1995). She also describes the incidents how she enjoys her precious time in India. She hopes that Aunt Pratima can hear the longing in her voice. It also makes her aunt to feel guilty. She blames America where she cannot enjoy the things. She admits that except India, nothing can console her and give back her happiness where she gains her indelible memories.

Jayanti expresses that Indians are bound to lead the life of the marginalized community in America. The exposure to the reality of immigration makes her feel nervous about her survival in America. Divakaruni reflects the psychological insecurity of those immigrants who survive in America with their inferiority complex. She finds nothing new and exciting in America. She remembers the street side in Calcutta. The narrator forgets the time completely when she talks about the feel of her native homeland. She cannot forget all such smells of Calcutta. "I thought I had left all such smells behind in Calcutta" (Divakaruni, 1995). She loves to spend her golden treasury of memories with her aunt Pratima. While sharing all her burdens and painful memories and longings, she can feel and relax her mind. In India, most neighbours talk to one another about their joys and pains. But in America, the situation is quite contrary where no relationship is true to express their grief and is not ready to lend their ears towards others' burden in their busy schedule. Jayanti feels very lucky to talk to her aunt about her homeland. "Yes yes, my goodness, is it that late already? Look at that black sky. It is so nice to be talking to someone about home that I am forgetting the time completely" (Divakaruni, 1995). Jayanti's aunt Pratima bears her husband's abuses and also she feels frustrated. One day Jayanti insists her aunt to go for a walk. Unexpectedly, some of the boys follow them and throw slush on their faces. The story expresses the obsessive burden of the life of migrants. Aunt Pratima also shares all her mental anguish to her niece. Somehow they escape from the boy and reach their home. When Jayanti moves outside the apartment, they are humiliated by the strangers with the comment, "niggar, niggar". They feel very frustrated, fear and depression. Aunt Pratima starts sobbing. But her uncle is very angry when he comes to know the news. Her husband warns them. He thought that the white children might have harassed them because of the cultural variations. In this story Bikram represents as a figure of male authority.

Jayanti's dream and her vision about America are totally changed. She dreams to marry her husband from alien land. Now she gets a new vision of American life. Her uncle Bikram expresses grief in his voice. "This damn country, like a dain, a witch—it pretends to give and then snatches everything back" (Divakaruni, 1995). Magnusson and Marecek states the condition of embracing western culture roots to depression. "The configuration of feelings, thoughts and bodily states that we call depression is specific to western, high-income countries" (Magnusson & Marecek, 2012). Jayanti feels suffocated and restless. She cries out to go back to Calcutta. Home I whisper desperately, 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've slept as long as I can remember the comforting smell of sun-dried 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 (Divakaruni, 1995). Immigrants seek shelter to reconstruct their cultural identity in their comfort zones beyond the heat and dust of India. The author Divakaruni reflects the dimension of the psyche of the immigrants in a beautiful manner.

3.4 *The Word Love*

The story "The Word Love" explains the story of a young Indian girl. She is a Ph.D student at Berkeley. She lives with an American named Rex. He lives in the same apartment where she lives. She has not at all married him. In a concept of living together manner, they lead their life. Her way of modern life is very shocking and it is quite unacceptable in Indian society. But in America, her life is an ordinary and accepted one. Her mother is a widow. She leads a simple and traditional life. She used to teach her daughter the traditional values of Indian culture. When she finds out that her daughter has fallen in love with a strange American man, she stops communicating with her daughter and refuses to answer her phone call. The young girl feels terrified of her mother that she will not understand her feelings. She also hopes that her mother will not forgive her because she has sinned in the name of love. Her way of life is totally changed. "She lives in a different world. Can't you see that? She's never traveled more than a hundred miles from the village where she was born; she's never touched cigarettes or alcohol; even though she lives in Calcutta, she's never watched a movie" (Divakaruni, 1995).

The young girl is torn between the motherly love and her youthful love. She is unable to share her love with her mother in Calcutta because she falls in love with an American not with an Indian. She is afraid to face the interracial problems. She blames the circumstances of America, which paved the way to fall in love with him. She knows that her mother cannot adjust and adopt the new culture, custom and traditions. So she is not ready to share her relationship with her mother. She maintains confidentially. "So don't tell her," "that you are living in sin with a foreigner, no less someone whose favourite food is a sacred cow steak and Budweiser" (Divakaruni, 1995). The Western and Indian attitudes and feelings are the same, but there are many cultural variations in food, clothing, language, custom, belief, and marital relationship. Magnusson and Marecek rightly say that "There are racial, ethnic, and class-based differences in cultural meanings of the body, food and eating in these countries" (Magnusson & Marecek, 2012).

The young girl totally forgets the Indian culture and the behavioural pattern of traditional Indian woman. She entangles herself in the word love. Divakaruni has an apt title for this story "The Word Love". She knows that she is doing everything against the will of her mother. She voluntarily entrapped with the relationship of the American. Even though she knows that she is doing wrong thing, she cannot come out of that. She can hear the voice whispering in her ears that it is a mistake in her mother's tone in her conscience. She engages herself fully in love with Rex. She loves to fall in love with him again and again, immersing herself fully by cherishing his love and memories. "So you leap in with that magic word. Love, you tell yourself, love love love. But you know, deep down, that words solve nothing" (Divakaruni, 1995). The young girl's mother has a note in her hand. She has mentioned in that letter that it is better to have no daughter at all than to have the one who brings shame to her family. "Better no daughter than a disobedient one, a shame to the family. Her mother voluntarily changes her mobile number and also moves to new location. All her daughter's letters were returned to her unopened by her mother because of the address unknown. Her mother is very cruel and anger towards the irresponsible behavior of her daughter. She has come to the position of disowning her daughter. When her phone number is changed, her daughter cannot accept the pangs of separation. She has experienced the psychological trauma and turmoil in her life. The young girl remembers the story that her mother once told when she is growing up. Her mother is very strict in telling moral stories to her daughter, which paved the way to change her daughter's life. But quite contrarily, her daughter behaves in real life. The stories which she hears go vain in her practical life. The story is an unhappy ending tale and also cautionary moral story of her mother. The story is the best example of the cultural shock between Indian livelihood and the American way of taking it easy policy. Indian people are afraid to cross the cultural and traditional boundary. If they are pushed into such suffering by destiny, they are not ready to face the life challenges shamefully waiting for them by the Indian society. Divakaruni has portrayed the cultural differences and interracial relationships in an exciting manner with the example of the story "The Word Love". In the Western culture, most of the parents allow their children to fall in love with someone and get married. Then there will be no longer participation of the parents. But in Indian culture, falling in love with an unknown person and getting married without knowing the caste and creed is not accepted by majority of the parents.

According to India, Parents role is much more important than any other relationship. They like to move hand in hand relationship with their children. Their participation in growing up the grandchildren is inevitable. Unlike the westernized people, the Indian people care their children throughout their life. Most of parents sacrifice their whole life for the betterment of their children (Hariharasudan & Gnanamony, 2017). They live with silent pain without

sharing their worries and familial problems to others. They ignite the lamp of marriage without being extinguished by any other problems. But in Western culture, this kind of belief is quite contrary and they break the family chain often whenever their wishes are not fulfilled. They are not pampering their children like Indian. That is why the young girl's mother cannot accept the western culture and belief. She has come to the level of abandoning her child. Almost she has thought that her child has died. This is the pathetic level of women in the stories and the present status of most of the Indian women. Thus, Divakaruni has depicted the pain of immigrants and cultural as well as their mental dilemmas through the women characters in a crystal-clear manner.

3.5 A Perfect Life

The story "A Perfect Life" deals with the protagonist Meera's relationship with her boyfriend Richard. She is an Indian-American professional woman. She feels happy when she gets a chance to meet her dream boy or desirable men in America. She feels more comfortable with his culture. She feels as a true American when she was with him. "Richard was exactly the kind of man I'd dreamed about during my teenage years in Calcutta. . . . When I was with Richard I felt like a true American (Divakaruni, 1995). As an introvert, she is thinking. In the words of Magnusson and Marecek, "It is difficult to imagine daily life in western industrialized countries without psychology" (Magnusson & Marecek, 2012). She spends her precious time with him in a joyful manner. Unlike Indian culture, she has no barriers to go anywhere for her enjoyment. She loves to go for jogging, film, restaurant and drinking wine with him. She also recollects about Indian culture, where freedom is restricted and cannot be imagined. "We tried wild and wonderful things that would have left me speechless with shock in India had I been able to imagine them" (Divakaruni, 1995). Richard has allowed Meera to choose her own decision, including their marriage decision and agreement. Unlike an Indian man, he does not ask her to follow rules and regulations after getting married. He allows all her desires to be fulfilled. He has given her special space. At first Meera is afraid of him that he will pressure her to fulfill all his desires. From her point of view, that kind of male domination prevails in Indian culture. But in Western culture, as a true American man he does not expect her to be a slave and submissive. He permits her to attain all kinds of pleasures in the world. He doesn't put a full stop to her enjoyment. Meera likes that kind of attitude in Richard. "What I liked most about Richard was that he gave me space. I'd been afraid that after we slept together, he'd either lose interest in me or start pressuring me to marry him. Or else I'd get pregnant. That was what always happened in India" (Divakaruni, 1995).

Meera's mother criticizes about her idea regarding marriage. "She decried my crazy western notions. "I should never have given in and allowed you to go to America," She wrote, underlining the *never* in emphatic red" (Divakaruni, 1995). Meera's opinion about Indian marriage is different from others. In the notion of Magnusson and Marecek, "Modest clothing and demeanor were also a necessity if a girl hoped to be viewed as suitable for marriage" (Magnusson & Marecek, 2012). Meera mentions that becoming a wife of an Indian is just an introduction of their family. To become a mother is little more responsibility. She insists that she is not against to get married but at the same time she is against to have a child. She moves her life perfectly and thanks God because her boyfriend Richard has fulfilled all her desires. Meera imagines how it will look like if she bears child for Richard. She cannot picture the child. The cultural variations confuse her. She starts thinking whether the child looks like Indian baby or pink and bald like American babies. She imagines the eyes colour of the baby. She has the perplexed state of mind. Excitingly, she imagines each and every part of the baby. It reveals her anticipation of begetting a child. At the same time she is aware of her household duties such as changing diapers and quiets the baby's cry throughout the night. She wants to enjoy her life a lot with the company of Richard than getting children and doing all household responsibilities.

3.6 The Maid Servant's Story

In "The Maid Servant's Story" Divakaruni has set the story in two kinds of cultural backgrounds that is Calcutta and California. The story is a narration of cultural dynamics. The story explains about Manisha, a young Bengali girl. She visits California in order to stay with her aunt. She has fallen in love with Bijoy. He is a professor at the University of California. Her aunt and her mother worry about her relationship with the boy Bijoy. She convinces herself that she wishes to be sexually liberated like the Americanized Bijoy and free from all kinds of prudish notions which are inculcated in India. The culture plays a predominant role in this story. She is cherishing her college days and her behavior has changed a lot because of the impact of Western culture.

For a while in college I'd tried the opposite, cutting classes and running around with a wild crowd, smoking cigarettes (an absolute taboo for an Indian girl of good family) and even ganja a couple of times, letting boys hold my hand in broad daylight in the Maidan park, where it was certain someone would see us and report the facts back to my mother (Divakaruni, 1995).

Magnusson and Marecek aptly say that, "The cultural traditions of western societies and most of the psychological theories in those societies presume that people have an inner character or personality that largely determines how they will act throughout their lives" (Magnusson & Marecek, 2012).

Manisha's mother feels sad on seeing her. Her relationship with her mother is a strained one. There is always an invisible wall between them that separates them from sharing their love and personal life. She also asked her to be careful in the alien land. She consoles Manisha. Deepa Mashi fills the absence of maternal love in the life of Manisha. Deepa Mashi plays the role of her mother in the alien land. Manisha finds Bijoy as a gentleman who is untainted by the filthy American customs and traditions. She feels that her fiancé is far better and more liberated than her mother's relationship. She wonders that why she should ruin her life because her mother seems to be saddened by the behavior of Manisha. She is reserved on seeing her mother's behavior because it is a mystery to her. She reveals that her mother is not excited of her decision to go for America. The wife is in need of a maid. Then she permits a stranger woman to work as a maid. Her sister is not in favour of this maid and she discourages her sister. She advises that these kinds of maid are either thieves or prostitutes. But the wife takes the responsibility to handle her. She gives her a respectable name 'Sarlah'. The maid soon learns all kinds of work such as embroidering baby diapers and mixing medical oils. The wife has given her training like that. The maid develops emotional bonding with the wife. She starts to call her as 'Didi'.

3.7 *The Disappearance*

The story is written in the point of view of a husband. The story "The Disappearance" describes about the disappearance of the protagonist's wife. The wife is a traditional Indian woman. She does not wear any American clothes and all. "She was in that blue salwaar-kameez, yes, she never did wear any American clothes" (Divakaruni, 1995). The protagonist is recollecting the memories of his wife. He asked the police to investigate her whereabouts. "How could a young Indian woman wearing a yellow-flowered kurta and nice walking shoes just disappear?" (Divakaruni, 1995). The policeman is enquiring him about their fights. He replied that he is an honest person and there is no fight in-between them. Her son is also worrying a lot about her disappearance. The protagonist is facing mental trauma. He was cherishing the nostalgic moments that he shared with her. "You look so much prettier in your Indian clothes, so much more feminine" (Divakaruni, 1995). Magnusson and Marecek exactly reveal their point that "Once a girl was no longer a child, the code of femininity required her to wear clothes that would not arouse men's desire and would not compromise her honor" (Magnusson & Marecek, 2012). The wife is considered as a well-bred Indian girl. "She was, after all, a well-bred Indian girl. He didn't expect her to behave like those American women he sometimes watched on X-rated videos, screaming and biting and doing other things he grew hot just thinking about. But her reluctance went beyond womanly modesty" (Divakaruni, 1995). When the years roll on, he is busy in doing other works of his life. The shock of her disappearance is less acute. But she has taken utmost care to look after her little boy. He thinks that his wife is a careless woman. So that she disappears from him. He loses his peace of mind. He realizes that he fails to understand the likes and dislikes of his wife. She used to spend her inordinate time for the purpose of reading. He is thinking that he is doing the duties of a husband and she has to obey him in all his ways.

Arranged marriage is a customary one. She might have suffered physically or mentally or else she should not have taken such a decision. She is exploited in this patriarchal society. She spends her lot of time in a lonely manner. She is confined herself within the four walls as she is expected to live a cultural and traditional Indian woman. She wants to lead her life as an independent woman. She is not at all leading a happiest life with him. In the words of Magnusson and Marecek, "It alludes to the notion that women are not interested in sex for its own sake, but agree to sex as a means to get a man to agree to marriage or lasting relationship or to have children" (Magnusson & Marecek, 2012). In the name of love, family, and marriage, the wife does not expect her husband to dominate her. She has escaped from the clutches of her dominative husband. In the name of marriage, she doesn't want to abide by her husband's rules. She wants to fly from the cage in which the society has given a name of 'home' and 'family'. The author slightly attacks the oppression of the male domination. She is patiently enduring all such troubles in her life, when the time comes, she moves out of her home with her wings. Divakaruni has satirized the marital issues and how women are treated as a material of commodity. The author Divakaruni has portrayed the cultural issues and dilemma, the difference between Indian and Western ideologies in an apt manner in this short story.

3.8 *Doors*

In the story "Doors", Divakaruni exposes the issues of marriage and cross-cultural conflicts. Preeti is the protagonist of the story. She is a westernized Indian and her lover Deepak is an Indian-American. The story conveys the conflicts of two opposing worlds—the Eastern and the Western. Preeti is warned against marrying Deepak because he lives straight out of India. He has a set of prehistoric values. Preeti's mother knows that marriage in South Asia is a

relationship between families. Marriage is seen as an essential institution which defines a woman's social status. The cultural and social pressure not only applies to first generation immigrants but also it applies to the second and third generation immigrants. Indian family values and cultural norms are expressed through marriage. Preeti's mother wishes her daughter to marry a handsome and nice Indian boy. But Preeti wishes to get married with Deepak. She is also aware of the fact that Indian men expect their women to be obedient and adjusting and forgiving. Preeti loves to live beyond the boundary and traditional constraints.

At the initial stage, their marital life runs in a smooth and happy manner. The young married couple lives in perfect and harmonious life for a few years. Both of them adjust to each other's needs and desires. Deepak tells that he is proud of Preeti's independent spirit and appreciates her decision-making power. Then slowly there prevails a gap in their lovely relationship (Hariharasudan, 2020). There is a break and bitterness in their relationship during the entry of Deepak's friend Raj. Door is the symbol of this story which represents the issues of their private spaces. Raj is a man of easy-going type. He doesn't like the idea of door. He wants to lean an informal life in the family. Preeti is discouraged in her family life. She tries to change and she is confident of modifying the ways of Deepak. Preeti and her mother converse a lot about her marital life. "It's never too late to stop yourself from ruining your life", her mother said. "What do you really know about how Indian men think? About what they expect from their women?" (Divakaruni, 1995).

Preeti is living in America at the age of twelve. So she doesn't know much about Indian culture. She thinks that Raj has brought unhappiness in their marital life. She is one among the fellows whom Indians call the ABCDs-American-Born-Confused-Desis. Deepak's vision about woman is very generous. "Women aren't dolls or slaves. I want Preeti to make her own decisions. I'm proud that she's able to" (Divakaruni, 1995). Cathy considers them as perfectly matched couple. On hearing this comment, Preeti's face glow with pleasure. Deepak has grown up in a different kind of environment. So he doesn't bother about the opening of the door. He has lived in a more open manner. Preeti used to close the doors in her study hall, bedroom and bathroom. Deepak likes to leave the door open. Preeti liked them to be closed. He doesn't like the privacy of Preeti. Magnusson and Marecek point out the difference between culture and society. "The point is that culture and society continually impose distinctions by sex category in both private life and public life" (Magnusson & Marecek, 2012). Preeti's friend Cathy can understand her stubborn nature. Deepak ridicules Preeti by saying that there is not anyone else in the house. "Are the pots and pans from the kitchen going to come and watch us making love?" (Divakaruni, 1995). According to Raj, he gains the real happiness in the company of Preeti and Deepak. Raj feels disgusted with the formalities of his friend Deepak. He blames him. "Have you become an amreekan or what? Come along and help me carry the bedclothes down. . . ." (Divakaruni, 1995). Quite contrarily Preeti feels disgusted to adjust with Raj. Whenever she tries to open the door of the house, she hates to hear the loud burst of filmi music. When Deepak spends his precious time with the company of Raj, he feels his world has changed a lot by watching old videos, enjoying the beauty and joy, reviewing the memories of golden and olden memories. Deepak's Indian cultural background role has brought new vitality in the life of Raj. This kind of tremendous change in his personality impacts a lot and it is a threatening challenge to Preeti.

Preeti refuses to live with him. The westernized values of Preeti are disgusted by Deepak's Indian friends. They have already warned Deepak. They have alerted him that a love match between an Indian and an American does not work out in real life. The story defines the Western and Eastern ideology. The doors are considered as a symbol of their conflicting approaches. Preeti is struggling with her bicultural identities. She is trapped in a dilemma of tensions between Western nurture and her traditional constraints as an Indian wife. Their cultural identity represents different sensibilities that clash in assimilation and acculturation. Divakaruni expresses Indian family values and cultural norms through marriage. She also describes how the couple meets cultural clashes and conflicts in the process of acculturation.

4. Discussion

The researcher discusses the idea with other literary piece of work to compare, contrast, to find similarities and dissimilarities in order to highlight the result of the present study. Jhumpa Lahiri's collection of short story *Interpreter of Maladies* deals with the same theme. Her stories are not just about the problem between their spouses, but also it concerns with broader social issues (Hariharasudan & Pandeewari, 2020). The cultural difference between the first generation and second generation migrants' problems are portrayed in that collection. The stories depict the life of all ages of women. *The Arranged Marriage* deals with the sufferings of young women. It also depicts the cultural knots in the name of arranged marriage, how they get affected physically and mentally, how they are undergoing the traumatic condition of their life. To compare all the other writers like Jhumpa Lahiri, Bharati Mukherjee, Rohinton Mistry, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's characters are blended in the life of the readers. It roots

strongly in the minds of the readers as it is a mixture of poetic style and cultural psychology.

5. Conclusion

The present study investigates and traces out the aspects of the gender and cultural psychology. The theme is intertwined in this study. The suppression and oppression of women in the patriarchal society, how culture plays a predominant role in all the stories of this text, because of the culture how the people get affected psychologically, how the women characters feel and think, how they lose the respect in the society, how they get alienated and isolated from the society as well as from their familial ties and knots in the name of 'Arranged Marriage'. The limitation of this study is only focused on the aspect of the psychological suffering because of the gender and cultural issues. Even though the author and text *Arranged Marriage* has got its zenith of the glory and fame, it will be a turning point in the life of the researcher. There may be so many researchers conducted research in the field of feminism, cultural diversity, post colonialism, no such study has conducted and focused on all the stories in the area of gender and cultural psychology aspect. Still there are a lot of spaces for the buddy researchers to focus in the text. Further researches can be done in the aspect of reader response theory in the story of "disappearance" and Intimate partner violence theory can be applied in the story of "Bats". Postmodern issues can be analyzed in this collection of short stories.

Acknowledgment

I wish to record my deep gratitude and profound thanks to my research supervisor Dr. C. Jothi, for encouraging me to do a tremendous task in the field of research. Also, I would like to thank my family and friends for their endless support.

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