

INDIAN CHICK LIT: AN EXPLORATION OF SUPERMORDENITY AND CULTURAL CONFLICTS

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Abstract

The paper initiates to study of cultural displacement in Amulya Malladi's *The Mango Season*. Malladi's *The Mango Season* determine the all common ideas of cultural displacement and cultural dilemmas by examine the conflict Priya faces when traffic with cultural clash in her country. Cultural displacement and cultural dilemma are primarily the results of two living experiences, which develop conflicting ideologies in the mind of the protagonist. The cultural clash is also seen in the living styles in America and in India. It is important to study a psyche which is affected due to cultural displacement and a newly adapted culture. It is also essential to note that serious misunderstandings can and do occur not just in cross cultural interactions and encounters but also within one's own culture, among its own people. *The Mango Season* is very realistic in its presentation of cultural displacement and dilemmas experienced by Priya, who studied in the west whereas her family is stuck in the Eastern culture. This relation between adaptation to the new and an adaptation to the old is undoubtedly related to individual differences.

Keywords: cultural displacement, cultural clashes, cultural dilemma.

Introduction

As to how Malladi came up with the title and names of the characters from *The Mango Season*, she said in an interview that unless she has a title of the book she is writing, she cannot move on. Same is the case with the names of her characters from her works of literature. Most of the influences on her characters came from her Hyderabad connection, which she corroborated by saying, "I think it's easier to write about a place you've lived in. The research element definitely shrinks and you can write more confidently. I also feel I have an obligation to write about a place I've lived in. I have moved a lot in my life, as a child and even as an adult, and I just feel that it would be such a waste if I wouldn't write about the places I have lived in." She said that writing this book was like taking a trip to Hyderabad. Some introduction of text all the commonplaces of culture clash are on display in this second novel by Malladi *The Mango Season*, about an Indian woman who hides her engagement to an American man from her traditional Brahmin family. "I had escaped arranged marriage," begins Priya Rao, "by coming to the United States to do a master's in Computer Sciences at Texas a&M, by conveniently finding a job in Silicon Valley, and then by inventing several excuses to not go to India." At 27, having run out of excuses, she returns to her home city of Hyderabad and runs headlong into a dizzying array of parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. Tormenting Priya is a secret: Nick, her American fiancé. She is afraid to tell anyone about him, fearing she will be disowned, and even agrees to meet an Indian man her parents would like her to marry. Malladi succeeds in giving a vivid sensory impression of the south of India, its foods and climate and customs, but Priya's family falls

neatly into stock types: the overbearing mother who wants Priya to marry within her caste; the hip younger brother who represents the next, Westernized generation of Indians; the catty aunt who constantly criticizes her niece. Awkward prose ("lethargy swirling around her like an irritating mosquito") is a distraction, and melodrama takes the place of nuanced plotting—a final twist is particularly egregious.

Indian Diasporic writings are a supreme network which connects the whole world. Diasporic literature aids the spreading of information and to find out many problems. Consider at it encouragingly, diasporic literature composes good will, an affectionate relationship and helps in extensive values, faithfulness and universality.

The contemporary diasporic Indian authors can be grouped within two distinct classes. The first class composed of those that one have spent a part of their life in India and have drifting the baggage of their inborn land to a foreign land. The other class composed of those that one have been produced up since childhood from outward India. They occupy a view of their country as an extraordinary place of their origin. The authors of the ancient group have a literal displacement whereas those things of the modern group which finds they rootless. Both the groups of authors have produced an desirable collection of English Literature. These diasporic authors live on the edge of two countries and initiate cultural theories.

The Indian Diasporic authors, especially women writers, who stay foreign country and write about Indian culture and beliefs, have chased for themselves a place in Indian English Literature. They have searched their powerful feeling of immigrant emotion through their fiction

with the aid of different manner of life. In the previous, Indians were capably fed on the thoughts of Dickens, Scott and the like. Today, common people all over the world are being encouraged by the authors of the Indian Diaspora namely Amulya Malladi, Jhumpa Lahiri, Anne Cheria, Meena Alexander, Chitra Banerjee and Githa Hariharan etc. Such authors have lead about Indian life and culture to the world outward. Among these authors, Malladi has concentrate on several of the major diasporic issues. She examines the observation of being caught between two cultures with cultural conflicts, cultural displacement and dilemmas. As women authors, she outlines gender from a woman's point of view and thus increases the boundaries of human experience from different aspects and dimensions.

Malladi's novels generally focus on the arguments like the family tension, the changing contingency of memory and the difficult to describe the nature of mind, the misunderstandings between two formations, the clash between modernity and traditional ideals and the dynamic position of women from traditional roles to clashing women characters. The major problems reflected in her works are associated to women, their self-actualization, psychological alteration, problem of oneness, cultural displacement, problems of gender and culture.

Culture is the conditions in which a person lives, thinks and feels. It is the gathered oneness of which applies to all integral part. Displacement is a key term in post feminist theory which assign to all migrant locations. It is linked to both physical displacement and a sense of socially or culturally "out of place". Immigrant people face a lot of issues when they try to adjust to a new culture. The immigrants unexpectedly guzzle the host culture when cultural displacements arise. Such cultural displacement can be traced in the novel *The Mango Season*. Cultural displacement is a transfer or disorder of a home culture when an immigrant faces an inflexible situation and constantly obtains the host culture. It also apparatus the turn of the home culture as a result of association with a different culture. Cultural displacement can be capable by an immigrant who is shifted from the inborn country to any foreign country.

In the novel *The Mango Season* is narrated that how Priya is culturally displaced by the host culture. After 7 years in the US she to her arrived to her home country India. She fumbles like a semi foreigner when she enters to India in her native city Hyderabad. She went to Monda Market with her mother to borrow raw mangoes after borrowing the mangoes; they wait for auto rickshaw for

very long time. Finally, an autorickshaw stops in front of them and Priya and her mother sit in the autorickshaw. The road is knobby and the auto rickshaw moves very slowly. She realizes that she cannot drive in India as there are no hard and fast rules for driving and traffic margins. Anybody could make a U-turn anywhere and crossing a red light was not a crime and penalty for general public. If a traffic policeman caught a person without his registration papers and driver's license, twenty to fifty rupees penalty would solve his problem. Priya compares her present life with before leaving the State and says "Everything that had seemed natural just seven years ago seemed unnatural and chaotic compared to what I had been living in and within the United States" (*The Mango Season* 14).

On Priya's return from the United States to India, it is very difficult for them to readjust and adopt Indian culture. Her parents think that she is still single and want her married soon. It is very hard for her to hide herself to seem unmarried. She is twenty seven now and her fear is that sometime soon her mother would find out that the reality about her that she had married to a foreigner. She thinks that life would have been easier if she had fallen in love with a nice Indian Brahmin boy – even better if she had not fallen in love at all with Nick. She knows very well that her parents disagree; especially her mother would never accept her marriage with a foreigner because he is away from the Indian traditions and culture.

Priya thinks deeply of how she had fallen in love. In fact, she had not planned to fall in love with Nick. They both met at friends place. Sean was a college friend and his sister was Nick's ex girlfriend and now "Just a good friend" (*The Mango Season* 17). As soon as Nick said, "Hello" to her, she had fallen in love with him. She had never before found an American so attractive in her life. She thinks before those only Indian men attractive. She even assumes that it may be something to do with centuries of brain washing from elders and well wishers in the Indian society: "I was of course flattered that Nick was attracted to me as well, but I didn't expect him to pursue a relationship. And I really didn't expect that I, even in my wildest flights of fantasy, would be amenable to dating him. But he was, and I was. Before I knew how it happened, and before I could think of all the reasons why it was a really bad idea we were dating, we were having dinner together. As if things were not bad enough, we started to have sex and soon we moved in together and after that everything really went to the dogs because we decided to get married" (*The Mango Season* 17).

The Indian warmth is terrific to Priya and now she sweats in her parents' home even more, shudders having to tell them about Nick. Her present stay at the Monda Market years ago had never made her sweat richly like this. She feels as if she has never been through an Indian summer before. To erase her sweat and the two layers of dust that have been deposited on her skin after her trip to Monda Market, she takes a swift bath, puts on a yellow cotton *salwar kameez* to conciliate Ma and looks up at herself in the mirror: "I winced; I was doing that complaining about India thing that all of us America returned Indians did. I had lived here for twenty years; the place was a hell hole. Guilt had an ugly taste in my mouth. This is my country, I told myself firmly, and I love my country." (*The Mango Season* 18)

Priya's family believes that all Indian distrust foreigners, foreigners distrust Indians. Any negative affection in an Indian immigrant is regarded as due to American influence. Malladi characterize how the American pressure culturally displaces the Indians. Though they love each other for years and get married when they go to foreign countries, the immigrants imbibe the presenter culture and gradually displace their home culture: "Manju and Nilesh were classmates from engineering college in India. They started their romance in the first year of college and survived as a couple through four years of engineering college, two years of graduate school in the US and a year or so of working in *Silicon Valley* before getting married. But happily ever after had escape them. They had just now divorced and Priya thinks that she made the big mistake of telling Ma about it. Ma immediately says that it is because of the evil American influence." (*The Mango Season* 80)

Priya is culturally displaced. The constitutional conflict inward her and the take out of her born place results in more contention and inconsistency. Finally her love for the American boy makes her decide her going back to the presenter country and she informs this to her family. Though she has been Americanized she shows her respect and love towards her family like a typical Indian: "I didn't want to go. I had to go. I didn't want to go. I had to go. The twin realities were tearing me apart. I didn't want to go because as soon as I got there, my family would descend on me like vultures on a fresh carcass, demanding explanations, reasons, and trying to force me in to marital harmony with some nice Indian boy. I had to go because I had to tell them that I was marrying a nice American man." (*The Mango Season* 3)

Priya thinks about the last time she had slept on their house terrace, when she had been twenty years old, ready to face the world with the strength of the innocent. She was gearing up to go the United States; she had gotten her *F1* student visa and her bags were packed. She was spending a last weekend at Amamma's house before heading over across seven seas to the land of opportunities. She had been so eager to leave, so excited that she had never thought that when she came back everything would be different to her. Priya experiences the feel of a 'semi foreigner' in her own country because of the cultural changes and this makes her uncomfortable: As she thinks "This was not home anymore, Home was in San Francisco with Nick. Home was whole Foods grocery store and fast food at KFC. Home was Pier her and Wall mart. Home was 7-Eleven and star bucks. Home was familiar, Hyderabad was a stranger; India was as alien, exasperating and sometimes exotic to me as it would be to a foreigner." (*The Mango Season* 134)

When she was a child, Priya used to visit her grandparents. Her hands would smell of turmeric and stay yellow for days. She had not done this for so long and she was stung by the loss. She feels she has lost so much since she has left India and she has not even thought about it. She has become so much a part of America that the small joys of dunking pieces of mango inside gooey paste are forgotten and not even missed. She assumes "It was as if there were two people inside me: India Priya and American Priya, Ma's priya and Nick's Priya. I wondered who the real Priya was" (*The Mango Season* 69).

The effects of cultural displacement can be indicated while Priya probes into her family with an American view. Like all expatriates, it sounds as if the western culture forms a part of her intellectual make up whereas the Indian culture is a part of her emotional make up. Nostalgia for a mango and the happiness are associated with her longing for India but living in India on a day to day basis has become almost impossible to Priya.

Priya asserts that she has to start living her own life on her own terms and knows for certain that she can achieve her goal easier in the United States than in India for being in her home town stifles her sense of self and independence. The intelligence of Americans ideas makes her think that America is a better choice for her future.

Priya finds it impractical to taste a slice of mango in the Monda Market, though she was take some raw mangoes in her childhood days and eat those mangoes with salt and chilli powder. When her mother picks up a mango and asked the mango seller to cut a slice, Priya

looks shocked, at the slicky piece of raw fruit thrust under her nose: "Was she out of her mind? Did she expect me to eat that? My Indian friends who visited India after living in the United States said: "Everything will look dirtier than it did before". I never thought myself to be so Americanized that I would cringe from eating a piece of mango that had languished in that man's basket where he had touched it with his hands and I shook my head when the man scratched his hair and used the same hand to find a piece of food between yellow teeth, while he waited for judgment to be passed on his mangoes." (*The Mango Season* 6)

An identification of Priya with either the Indian or the American life is a frustrating experience. Though she regrets at the separation from the culture of home, she likes to adopt the host culture due to her love for Nick.

Conclusion

The Amulya Malladi's novel *The Mango Season* explores the gap between cultures conflicts and between

two generations. The gap has been filled by cultural displacement. Malladi shows that how India moves slowly into modernity, and the cultural displacement and the problems are rises between two generations. Cultural displacement is the reason for Priya's social changes and her rational changes which makes her to argue with her family. As Priya is Americanized in her view her father's compassionateness and her grandfather's manipulation are the sights, sounds and smell of India, the India that is foreign, yet familiar to Priya

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