



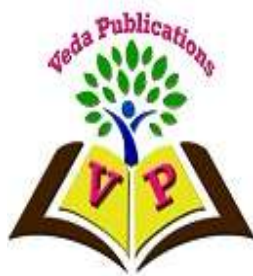
IDENTITY CRISIS IN SUNETRA GUPTA'S "A SIN OF COLOUR" AND "MEMORIES OF RAIN"

B. R. Lakshmi^{1*}, G. Hampamma², V. B. Chitra³

^{1*}(Research scholar, JNTUA, Anantapuramu.)

²(Vice-Principal, (Academics), MITS, Madanapalli.)

³(Asst. Professor, Dept of English, JNTUA, Anantapuram)



ABSTRACT

Sunetra Gupta in her fiction shows how a diasporic individual is in an irresolute position and can't put oneself under a uniquely elite meaning of self. The hyphenated nearness between two characterizing selves highlights the personality emergency making it a natural normal for diasporic life. Most importantly, the self is seen both as local and outsider under conditions. These evidently conflicting positions do cause sentiment uneasiness in diasporic life. However, the condition can be continued through self-moulding. An investigation of a range of works of Sunetra Gupta, indicates not just how the vagrant Indians are progressively being acknowledged by the West yet additionally how this diasporic Indian adapts to such a moving plane of acknowledgment through the unending procedure of production of identities.

Keywords: Identity, Diaspora, Estrangement, Outsider, Homeland.

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Characterizing selves is the procedure that prompts the development of identities. When a kid is conceived, he/she is now characterized by certain physical qualities like size, weight, gender et cetera. Part of the kid's self-definition, like nationality and religion, is obtained by righteousness of parentage and the place of birth. Then the kid gets certain identifications like name and birth testament. As the child grows up, conduct, actions, and practices, qualifiers such as character, morality, relationships, social status, culture, financial condition and educational qualification to the individual's self-definition. The entirety of all these attributes, that signify characterize the self of an individual, constitutes the personality of that individual. It is to be noticed that one's personality isn't settled and is always showing signs of change claiming numerous attributes that assistance to build that character, for instance financial position or weight, are themselves variable in nature. Therefore, characterizing selves is a consistently changing procedure of self-designing and it is this dynamism that causes an emergency of personality in the person when considered with regards to disjoined existence.

The movement of exiles, refugees, or migrants demand such individuals to characterize themselves over again. It isn't only adjusting old characters however making new personalities. Stuart Hall in his essay *"Cultural Identity and Diaspora"* defines identities as "the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past" (236). Hence, when the migrants don't have a shared history, shared past, with the host country, it turns out to be for all intents and purposes difficult to characterize their selves newly. It turns into a procedure seeped in simulation where restorative personalities are made as a facade to shroud their longings, devotions and ethnic leanings. If the migrants share a part of their historical past with the host country, it is perpetually tormented with slave/mater, colonizer/colonized binarizes. These binarizes generate inclinations, either racial or religious or in some other form. The migrants' response against a biased, hostile society is to naturally grip at their ethnic characters in

insubordination and for comfort. This intuitive response of the migrants characterizes them as a matter of course as far as their old personalities yet made unbending and impermeable claiming the new definitions have begun as a guard against hostility. In this way there appear to be two dominating routes by which dislocated populaces can characterize themselves - either defensively or cosmetically.

The post-globalization, postmodern world, in its expect to become a worldwide town, has progressed toward becoming very accepting, accommodating and facilitating and has some way or another given a new meaning to character by supplanting "shared past" with "shared present" in its definition. Migrants are slipped into new meanings of their selves as far as a mutual present by the host society itself. Shared present being genuine does not leave space for any phony and the general nonappearance of any threatening vibe does not require any protective response by the migrants. Therefore, in this unique circumstance, the migrants neither characterize themselves in corrective terms nor in cautious terms, but they characterize themselves in new terms. This marvel of characterizing selves happens in globalized terms.

These three methods for characterizing selves in various circumstances isn't elite to first generation migrants and is required by their offspring as well. The offspring of the migrants are born and reproduced in the nation of their parents' adoption and hence actually they are not migrants but rather despite everything they must characterize their selves since they acquire from their parents the feeling of non-belonging, displacement and alienation. The migrants in characterizing themselves don't dispose of their unique personalities. The second era diasporic people acquire, such as everything else, the root personalities of their parents also. This causes the diasporic populace to juggle with numerous personalities and in that emerges the crisis.

The second era like Sunetra Gupta has demonstrated that the diasporic characters in her fiction rethink themselves by anticipating this condition of "modified nativity". Sunetra Gupta's novel *Memories of Rain*, also has romantic thoughts of Englishness. Before she becomes hopelessly



enamoured with Anthony, she is as of now infatuated with an England as portrayed in the writings of that land. The England to which Anthony brings her does not coordinate the England of her creative ability shaped by the study of English writing. She takes her failure like any of her disillusioned literary women. Indeed, even in the distortion in her association with Anthony, caused by Anthony's progressing undertaking with Anna, she hopes love blended with torment from a separated heart. It isn't really by unfaithfulness yet rather by detachment to Moni's circumstance that Anthony betrays her and denies her sense of pride. Shorn of the decoration of anguished enthusiasm, Moni, the endless sentimental, makes her escape back to India with her daughter. Moni's diasporic status benefits her the ethical decision to come back to her country. The arrival isn't a characteristic of any disappointment yet the upkeep of sense of self-respect by Moni through her romantic aching, but not for her country but rather for her love. Her protective response of backpedalling to India causes antagonism that appears to cure the curse in her love. Estrangement is similarly critical in another Sunetra Gupta novel called *A Sin of Colour*. Here Debendranath utilizes alienation to spare himself from stooping to his forbidden love for his elder brother's wife, Reba.

Debendranath leaves India, goes to Oxford, and weds Jennifer, without having the ability to reduce his yearning in any way. He has uprooted himself physically from his forbidden love however is wracked by the wrongdoing of his longing. To make up for himself he needs to influence his relocation more to finish - an escape into obscurity, into insensibility. A long time later his niece Niharika does decisively a similar thing. Niharika and the married Englishman, Daniel Faraday, love each other and to relieve their outrageous issue they first look for estrangement and ultimately, they also enter a punt on the Cherwell River in Oxford never to return. They have escaped away into new identities were not even the shadow of their old personalities will pursue them. Niharika has left Mandalay, the ancestral house in Calcutta, since it remains for stasis and subsequently is in ruins. assisted by Daniel, she has settled on her decision for the

stream of the waters, a sign of the propensity of the world - the universe of movement, migration, change, and the never-ending procedure of self-definition. If Moni and Adit took choices to self-form themselves towards their roots, Debendranath and Niharika took choices to self-mould themselves, not far from their roots but rather far from their past personalities. This reactionary self-moulding without anyone else nullification is best shown in the dwarf whose life and death was the subject of research for Niharika. Niharika had come to Oxford to "research the life of a pygmy who had been kept in the same cage as an organ utan in the Bronx Zoo in 1905, who had eventually been released but then had committed suicide in Virginia" (*A Sin of Colour* 71), in a house where he was at last living as a human. The pygmy in the zoo was without volition however the pygmy who executed himself completed a demonstration of volition. The pygmy ends his life and this act shows his human personality. By denying his reality he makes his own identity, rather like the courageous woman of Tagore's famous short story 'The Living and the Dead': "By biting the dust, Kadambini had given verification that she was not dead".

In Sunetra Gupta's novel *Memories of Rain* the hero Moni is the quintessential romantic who "had loved Heathcliff before she loved any man" (*Memories of Rain* 177). She finds in Anthony a hero make sense of straight of the books of Jane Austen or Thomas Hardy. Anthony is to protect her from India - "a bizarre and wonderful land" - to England - "this island, this demi-paradise" (*Memories of Rain* 6). By chance, John of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster, in Act 2 Scene 1 of William Shakerpeare's play, King Richard the Second, formed in the 1590s and managing the topic of the mid thirteenth century, talks in fundamentally the same as words ("This other Eden, demi-paradise"). This reverberate of lines talked over 750 years previously Moni, and before Sunetra Gupta, demonstrate that for some middle-class Indians, England is a spiritual and cultural state as opposed to an unimportant physical space. Britain is a space in Moni's subconscious mind. Moni has, as Amit Chaudhuri suggests, "the vague, intense longings of the feminized, adolescent imagination" (Chaudhuri 583). In this way, when Moni touches base with



her English spouse to an England that is inconceivably not quite the same as the England of her English literature class, she is in for a rude shock. Moni's mind is formed by an existence of sensation and when experienced with the depressing reality of a quick paced modern England her sensibilities are brutalized. It is the hopelessness of the life of activity with the life of vibe that aggravates Moni's exilic condition. Indeed, even the romantic relief in tragic recollections has denied her by the impassion appeared to her by her husband who is having an affair with another lady. Anthony is no Heathcliff and her fantasy of "wandering as a spirit with her beloved upon English moors" (*Memories of Rain* 177) remains unfulfilled. It was in the downpours of 1978 Calcutta that Moni's sibling had brought home his English companion Anthony. Anthony had been fascinated by Moni, the second-year college student of English. Later he had recounted from John Keats' "Ode on Melancholy" - "No, no! go not to Lethe, neither twist wolfs bane, tight rooted ..." (*Memories of Rain* 17) - and afterward to Moni's absolute shame he had approached her to interpret for him the Bengali tune that she had been singing in the morning. Many years after, clustered in the forsook tin mine on the Cornish drift, she translated a similar melody for him, gazing into the sheets of rain that kept running by like solidified ghosts over the disintegrating passage, and he sat back against the mildew covered dividers, paying just half notice to her enthusiastic, apprehensive interpretations, entranced rather by the two part harmony of the tempest and the ocean, until, similar to the sudden shower it hit her that he was not tuning in, he was not tuning in at all [...] (*Memories of Rain* 10) Anthony is lost in his passionate insights of lovemaking with Anna and is unmitigatedly detached towards Moni. It is the disavowal of even the "Magnificence that must kick the bucket", the "Delight [. . .] saying goodbye", and the "throbbing Pleasure" that bars Moni from entering Melancholy's "sovrain shrine". The mental imperative of being denied of the aesthetic reaction that one aches for in torment makes Moni's outcast intense. In this way, when Moni chooses to come back to Calcutta seven days before Durga puja, she thinks back how "every

autumn she had watched the city burst into joy to welcome the Goddess Durga to her father's home" (*Memories of Rain* 173) and realizes that "this year she will return with the Gods, a daughter come home" (*Memories of Rain* 174). Moni returns to her native spirituality as a comfort for her condition.

In Sunetra Gupta's novel *A Sin of Colour*, physical migration from India to England turns out to be too simple a type of outcast to deliver any kind of separation. Debendranath needs to banish himself from his musings of taboo love for his elder brother's wife Reba. A long time later Debendranath's niece Niharika ends in a comparative problem when she confers the wrongdoing of loving a married man Daniel Faraday. Niharika also ousts herself however, dissimilar to Debendranath, not far from the person of her adoration yet rather with the person she loves. In both the cases their outcasts are not simple physical separation but rather oust from society, banish from relationships, oust from a well-known world, banish from a previous self, and an outcast into anonymity. Following twenty years when Debendranath returns to Mandalay, the relatively abandoned house, Niharika summarizes his nonappearance accordingly: "You were able to reinvent yourself entirely" (*A Sin of Colour*. 134). This self-banish from one's personality, reverberating the "agyatavasa" that the Pandavas endured in The Mahabharata, rises above the idea of material uprooting and takes outcast to a metaphysical level. Exile turns into a panacea for the spirit debilitated from existential alienation. It isn't just the possibility of the world yet additionally, the possibility of one's exceptionally will that puzzles. Debendranath and Niharika need to separate themselves from the universe of activity because to demonstration is to declare one's will. Subsequently, by faking death they by one means or another remove themselves from the wrongdoing of their desires. The psychology behind their uprooting turns into more critical.

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