



Dream, as a Thematic Study of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Sister of My Heart*

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Abstract

This paper is a sample study of how women of different ages, different classes, different tradition, culture and custom, have dreams. The protagonists, who are typical Indian women, of Sister of My Heart, try their best to fight till the core, in their battlefield, but they realize their selves by sacrificing some other thing. Hence it is about, what they gain and what they lose, in order to make their dreams or wish fulfillment true.

Dream as a wish Fulness

What is a Dream?

In the late 19th century, the psychotherapist [Sigmund Freud](#) developed a theory that the content of dreams is driven by unconscious [wish fulfillment](#). Freud called dreams the "[royal road](#) to the unconscious". He theorized that the content of dreams reflects the dreamer's unconscious mind and specifically it is shaped by unconscious wish fulfillment. He argued that important unconscious desires often relate to early childhood memories and experiences.

Freud (1900) went on to propose that a major function of dreams was the fulfillment of wishes. Freud distinguished it, between the **manifest content of a dream** (what the dreamer remembers) and the **latent content**, the symbolic meaning of the dream (i.e. the underlying wish).

[Sigmund Freud](#), who developed the discipline of [psychoanalysis](#), wrote extensively about dream theories and their interpretations in the early 1900s. He explained dream as a manifestation of one's deepest desires and anxieties, often relating to [repressed childhood memories](#) or obsessions.

Dreams are basically stories and images of a mind which are created during his [sleep](#). They can make one feel happy, sad, or scared. Dreams can occur anytime during [sleep](#). But most vivid dreams occur during deep, REM ([rapid eye movement](#)) [sleep](#). The present paper is an attempt to explore the dream of Anju and Sudha, the two cute protagonists in the novel *Sister of My Heart* and the flight of the lives of these women.

Why does one dream?

Sigmund Freud has believed dreams are a window to peep through, in order to know the contents of subconscious mind. He believes that they reveal a person's Unconscious desires, Thoughts, Motivations. Freud proves that dreams are a way for people to satisfy urges and desires that are unacceptable by society.

Dreams work hand in hand with sleep to help the brain sort through everything it collects during the waking hours. During sleep, the brain works to plow through all of this information to decide what to hang on to and what to forget. There are many theories about why anyone dreams, but no one knows for sure. Some researchers point out that dreams have no purpose or meaning and are nonsensical activities of the sleeping [brain](#). Others say dreams are necessary for mental, emotional, and physical health. Here in this novel, the two sisters dream a lot about their life. One wishes to go to America and other wishes to marry the boy she has admired the most.

Dream of Women in Different Ages

Women have different types of dreams when they grow up. When they are at school they dream of getting good marks, becoming a popular girl at school and in society. When they get matured they dream of being a woman by seeing their mother. They even like to live a life as their mother who would unquestionably be their role model. After schooling some would dream of doing their higher studies and some may dream or wish to get married to handsome gentlemen, well settled, exceedingly paid and who would take care of them as their father. Here in this paper the wishes or dreams of Anjali (Anju) and Basudha (Sudha) are beautifully portrayed by the author Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni

Dreams of Women in Different Countries and in Different Culture

Women have different wishes when they start their life. In India, when women are young, they wish to study well and wear colourful dresses and ornaments. Normally a girl child would not be sent out of her house alone till she gets married. She can enjoy being independent most probably after her marriage. But in America and other Western countries women can learn and earn, spend as they wish, live as they like and marry anyone whom they love. But in India a girl of tradition, cannot decide herself to marry someone and her parents take this as their duty to find a suitable groom for their daughter. Hence dreams of women become different due to many factors like culture, family background, environment, ages, lifestyle, etc. Living independently in India for a woman of any age seems an offence in Indian societies, whereas it is not at all botheration of societies in European countries.

Dreams of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni.**Dreams of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni and has She Expressed through her Characters?**

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni has been influenced by Maxine Hong Kingston and Bharati Mukherjee and she has many ideas and concepts like recreating identity, immigration, family stories and so on which she portrays through her characters.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni might have expressed her dreams in this novel through the words of Anju and Sudha. Divakaruni was born in Calcutta and lived in her homeland for years. She then moved to America and did her higher studies there and finally became world known

popular writer, she got married and settled in America as what Anju dreamt of doing after being settled in America and finally Anju becomes a writer. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni often thinks of her home town Calcutta and wishes to come and spend some time. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni writes with the memories of the import, to unify the old and the new, about the truthful and the definitive wishes.

Dreams of Anju and Sudha

Since the day Anjali (Anju) and Basudha (Sudha) were born they have been acquainted in ways even their mothers cannot figure out and regard themselves as sisters though they are cousins. They are from a high caste in India, and Sudha is startlingly more beautiful than Anju. Inexplicably and viciously—they have been sisters of the heart. When they were at school, a handsome man, Ashok who was from a lower caste met Sudha in a market and later fell in love with her, this incident made Nalini (mother of Sudha) to take a decision that Sudha must be married after she completed high school. Anju and Sudha used to draw pictures of their dream. When Anju drew pictures of adventurous travel and exotic jobs, Sudha only drew the same picture over and over. Sudha's spirits were only kept prominent by feelings of Ashok. All Sudha wanted was, a husband and several children. Anju asked Sudha whether there was anything else she might want for herself beside a family. To Anju's surprise, Sudha told her that she wanted to be a costume designer.

Anju's dream is to attend college and go abroad preferably America and tries a lot to fight for Sudha's higher studies also. Sudha wishes not to hurt the feelings of her mother and live a life as her mother has wished. In spite of her love for Ashok, she comes to a decision to marry Ramesh whom her mother has selected for her. As Anju wished she is married to Sunil a computer programmer who works in USA. Both the girls get married on the same day.

Anju's dream of getting married to an American boy has come true but Sudha's dream of creating designer-label clothes has not come true as she is not allowed by her mother-in-law, to step out for her career. Her mother-in-law says quite outspokenly, that she desires a beautiful daughter-in-law so she will have beautiful grandsons. So she keeps her dream buried because of her reluctant love for her mother. Anju soon notices that Sunil is acutely attracted to Sudha which pains her a lot. Sudha on the other hand feels a bunch that she could not hold hands with Ashok. She knows that her dream will not come true and she cannot love Ramesh, by keeping Ashok in her mind and soul.

The Dreams of Anju and Sudha get Shattered

From the words of sudha....

“when I close my eyes, unrelated images flash across them. Ramesh drinking tea as he leafs through a paper, a stray cat I used to feed as a child, the Shiva temple where Ashok presses his marigold-scented lips on mine, the back of Singhji's turbaned head as he drives Anju and me to school, the way a fugitive sorrow flits across Anju's veiled face as she watches Sunil watching me

at our wedding. So much unfulfilled desire in this world".pg.no.235. Her desires go down unfulfilled.

Anju and Sunil depart to America, and Anju wishes to complete her studies and then go for a baby but this does not seem right as she becomes pregnant but at last, she loses her baby. Sunil does not allow her further to continue as per her desire. But Sudha lives as a typical Indian wife taking care of the family. Her mother-in-law is not happy because the foetus is a girl baby. She commands Sudha to deliberately terminate her pregnancy, but Sudha denies her words but to give birth and live for her baby. Anju's dream of her higher study and earning huge wealth gets shattered. Sudha's dream gets shattered as she is asked to agree to a break up from Ramesh.

After parting out from Ramesh, Sudha travels to America with daughter Dayita and decides to live with Anju. Now their dream of living together comes true but not as they have wished. As [Sigmund Freud](#) points out the deepest desires and anxieties are the reasons for dream, the dream of the girls is not fulfilled.

Dream and Reality:

Does their Dream Come True?

Sudha's dream does not fancy as she is forced by her mother-in-law to agree for a split-up believing the first child should be a son. Her longing for a baby and a carving life is not factual. Finally becoming a designer is a passing cloud to her. Anju on the other hand, despite the fact, is living in America and it does not actually turn out glowing. Sudha is restrained to be a traditional Indian housewife when Anju concentrates on going to university and has more sovereignty.

Do They live in Reality?

The sisters when at school have lived in reality; According to Anju, their only option is to leave out of their school to see the film, which they do achieve. Not only do they tiptoe out of school, they also purchase new dresses and makeup. Inside the theater, the sisters go to the restroom to change their clothes and apply the lipstick. The makeover they see in the mirror is beyond belief. They are becoming women, they recognize. The new outfits show off their womanly figures and maturing features. But later they were caught and their lives take an unusual twist. They are separated by their marriage and Anju moves to California but Sudha reconciles in Calcutta by marrying a wealthy man named Ramesh.

Anju's love for Sudha is definite and firm as she speaks for both when she says,

"In spite of all my insecurities, in spite of the oceans that'll be between us soon and the men that are between us already, I can never stop loving Sudha. It's my habit, and it's my fate."

From the words of Anju

"How quick and eager I was to come so far from my family, not knowing how much I was giving up and how little I would gain" pg.no.226.

This shows that she has desired more from America but got less.

From the words of Sudha

“for the baby I must have, the baby who is waiting inside me like the dream of a furling leaf” pg.no 220 .says she would do anything to charm for the baby. But her husband’s family is not contented with her decision.

From the words of Anju

“Sometimes I Think of Leaving Sunil and returning to Calcutta.....I never will” pg.no.209

She is not satisfied with the American life and wished to go back to Calcutta.

How they live an independent life.

Sudha’s love for her sister does not falter, and she even rejects to elope with Ashok for a fear that would damage Anju’s status. Sudha always has a pure love for her sister even after knowing their family secret. Anju and Sudha have lived a complete life when they are young schoolgirls. Anju though in her life experienced vision, the state of being alone without her loving sister near her. She has lived an independent life without her mother and sister.

Sudha’s life is so miserable that her decision to runaway with Ashok would not be comfortable for her family due to his social standing and she is determined that she will not be the source of any more suffering her mother must endure. In India mother-in-law is considered as mothers, but Sudha has to go through a painful life in her husband’s family which she never wishes to happen to her. Finally she is forced intentionally to destroy her fetus that the baby inside her is a girl child. In Indian culture a boy baby is treated and valued more than a girl baby. Sudha gets divorced and leaves for America to live with Anju, her “Sister of Her Heart”.

Conclusion:

When these girls fail to live a happy life, they decide to establish a life independently. Anju accomplishes something in living a decent life through her creative writing and Sudha becomes financially self-contained by accepting to work as a nurse for an aged man. Here Divakaruni portrays that a woman can live an independent life.

Dream is Different from women to women. Herein this novel Anju has dreamt of living big in California and is not contented with the end of it. Sudha has a dream of marrying her lover Ashok, which does not happen and she is asked to end her pregnancy by her husband’s family and finally gets separated and lives an independent life in America along with her sister. In foreign country women don’t worry about living independently because their culture is different from Indian culture, where a woman is to live only with her husband and she should not remarry any others.

Life is not common to all women it may differ from individuals. Here Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni brings out a typical life style of both the sisters. Ashok the dream boy of Sudha, after knowing that Sudha has broken up her relation with her husband he is willing to marry her but she does not accept his proposal. She lives her daughter Dayita. Sudha tells the story of the Queen of Swords that

“I tell her the tale to make her heart strong, to graft her life onto” and believes in “we’ll be happy even after,” pg.no.340.

The dream life of women who move from their native place to other country after their marriage becomes dreadful and painful.

Scope of Study:

The same approach on women can be extended in the other works of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, *Sister of My Heart* (1999), *Queen of Dreams* (2004), *The Vein of Desire* (2002), *Oleander Girl* (2013) and *Arranged Marriage* (1995)

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