

**Diversified Voices, Unified Sense: A Focus on Dissolving
Boundaries with Reference to *One Amazing Thing***

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Abstract

The expression “Dissolving Boundaries” bears adherence to the annihilation of boundaries which are generally created for the purpose of division and separation. Such divisions of boundaries can be created on the basis of national, cultural, regional, geographical, ethnic, racial, economical, class, caste and even attitudinal differences. These are the differences on multiple aspects of lives and societies that restrict the total assimilation of people from various backgrounds to the crossroad of sameness. Prevailing the soul heterogeneity, writers across the world have expressed their solidarity in their literary creations to connect people with a unified sense of being.

In *One Amazing Thing* Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni has brought characters of diversified backgrounds to a single platform with the objective of giving them a distinct voice. In the novel, man-made boundaries are dissolved by interaction, cross-cultural communication, sharing of views, and more importantly by human solidarity.

This article is an attempt to explore the Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's indulgence with the theme of borders and boundaries and the relative redundancy of the boundaries in human existence.

Keywords: Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, *One Amazing Thing*, borders, dissolving boundaries, human solidarity, diversified backgrounds, distinct voice

The expression "Dissolving Boundaries" bears adherence to the annihilation of boundaries which are generally created for the purpose of division and separation. Such divisions of boundaries can be created on the basis of national, cultural, regional, geographical, ethnic, racial, economical, class, caste and even attitudinal differences. These are the differences on multiple aspects of lives and societies that restrict the total assimilation of people from various backgrounds to the crossroad of sameness. Prevailing the soul heterogeneity, writers across the world have expressed their solidarity in their literary creations to connect people with a unified sense of being.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is an Indian American writer whose writings range from children literature to mythical and historical works to diasporic writings. In *One Amazing Thing* Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni has brought characters of diversified backgrounds to a single platform with the objective of giving them a distinct voice. This article is an attempt to explore the writer's indulgence with the theme of borders and boundaries and the relative redundancy of the boundaries in human existence. "Voices" in the title of the article connotes the views and experiences vented out by the characters who are immigrants in the United States of America and who had to adjust with adverse circumstances in their place of settlement at different stages of their lives. In one of her essays, "Dissolving Boundaries" which had been written by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni after the publication of her first novel *The Mistress of Spices* (1997), Divakaruni says, "I mused a lot about the boundaries as I lay in bed recovering over the next few months, learning to live again... the art of dissolving boundaries is what living is all about" (Bold Type, Dissolving Boundaries 2).

The notion of boundaries or border had created much concern during the colonial era when colonized people were hardly allowed to voice their views even in literature. The postcolonial period sees the emergence of many literary creations that seek to discover the strategies by which the colonial literatures and cultures have side-lined and silenced the voices of the marginalized people. The postcolonial literature, is therefore, designed with the colour of resistance. However, the postcolonial resistance now seems to proceed towards postcolonial solidarities giving rise to the concept of globalization of cultures. There is an

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exchange of views, opinions, and socio- cultural belongings among people of diverse roots to obliterate the rigidity of borders and boundaries.

In order to give the characters from the once colonized nations a voice of their own, Divakaruni in her novel *One Amazing Thing* (2009) has brought all the characters to the same platform. She hopes:

...if enough boundaries are crossed through writing and reading, ultimately boundaries will become less important. If understanding and interest and knowledge is created among different ethnic groups (include White America, which is after all a conglomerate of different ethnic group), ultimately distinctions such as “mainstream” and “minority” will become less meaningful. The marginalized will move to the centre of the page (Ling 138).

Technically, the concept of border includes the existence of the insider and the outsider under its purview. The insider, however, holds the more privileged position in comparison to the outsider. In her portrayal of the characters, Divakaruni has not focused on any single character as of prime importance and the others as marginalized. K.K Sunalini in her article “Journey of Journeys in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni’s *One Amazing Thing* maintains, “No character seems to outshine the other and this makes the journey of all lives universal irrespective of the cultural differences” (7). Characters from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds are brought together with the purpose of presenting a polyphonic voice. With this attempt, Divakaruni problematises the notion of boundaries that obstruct the vision of integration.

About the notion of border, Avtar Brah in *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* maintains,

Border: arbitrary dividing lines that are simultaneously social, cultural and psychic; territories to be patrolled against whom they construct as outsiders, aliens, the other; forms of demarcation where the very act of prohibition inscribes transgression; zones where the fear of the other is the fear of the self; places where claims to ownership – claims to “mine” “yours” and “theirs” – are staked out, contested, defended and fought over. (194-195)

With reference to Avtar Brah’s critical overview on the concept of border, it can be said in the context of Divakaruni’s novel that the immigrants gathered in the visa office are separated from each other with a psychic border other than the social and cultural ones as none of them is willing to penetrate into the private space of other’s life initially. Although in the broader location of the United States the immigrant characters are all outsiders for having their roots in some other lands; they all share a common identity as diasporic subjects and this common affair offers them a unified sense of belonging.

Since the 1980s, the world has seen a rapid increase in migration across all directions in the globe. The reasons that work as impetus behind such migration are multiple – “Economic inequalities within and between regions, expanding mobility of capital, people’s desire to pursue opportunities that might improve their life chances, political strife, wars, and famine...” (Brah,175). In *One Amazing Thing*, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni deals with some of these issues that provide the ground for the characters’ migration to the United States of America, and this becomes evident when each of the characters shares one amazing story forgetting all the restrictions of his/ her respective boundaries.

In a lucid language the writer has addressed the complex issues that frame up the lives of people. The characters share their stories in a conversational tone that is relatable in an informal exchange of views and ideas. However, even in the descriptions of the direst of the situations in novel, there runs poetry: “I didn’t realize – until this earthquake, until today – that my withholding was a worse kind of betrayal, a betrayal of the self. It was time for me to change” (Divakaruni, 206).

In documenting the stories in her text, Divakaruni has chosen a natural calamity of earthquake as the backdrop. This backdrop is inspired by the writer’s real-life experiences of volunteering the victims who had sought refuge in Houston after the disastrous Hurricane Katrina. Even the writer herself faced devastating effects of Hurricane Rita. The frenzy and fear she had endured at that point of time had made it evident that every person has a unique way to react to a disastrous situation. This realization has been instrumental in formulating the kernel of *One amazing Thing*. While registering this phenomenon, the novelist speaks of framing up survival strategies that address the basis of a sense of integration. In doing so, the fictional characters gradually come in terms with the boundaries of difference and distance.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni’s novel *One Amazing Thing* apparently seems to be a simple story of human effort to survive at the teeth of the most challenging condition of natural disaster. But, beneath this simple theme runs some complex issues of the globalized world. She records the outstanding stories of nine individuals gathered at a place with the same purpose. They are trapped inside the basement of a visa office of the Indian consulate situated in an American city. Divakaruni has not mentioned any particular name for the American city. In her novel, the visa office which is peopled with a group of individuals from diverse backgrounds to secure their visas to visit India signifies the world as a whole, where people of diverse communities, religions, ethnicity and cultural backgrounds live, interact and face constant challenges for their existence. In the writer’s own words, “The venue is (deliberately) claustrophobic – the world of these characters shrinks to a room in a basement and has to be enlarged through story” (Piel).

As it is revealed, everything goes on usually in the visa office until an earthquake hits the town severely, making all the people present in the office shattered to their bones. Other than the two employees of the visa office i.e., Malathi and Mangalam, and Uma – the initial

observer of the group, there were four sets of people who are trapped— a Chinese woman Jiang with her granddaughter Lily, a Caucasian couple Mr. and Mrs. Pritchett, a Muslim American of Indian origin named Tariq and a veteran African American named Cameron. Though none of these nine strangers talk in a friendly way with each other earlier, the earthquake becomes the reason to bring them together in their attempts to survive that unpredictable yet unavoidable fatal situation. They try to “rise above the challenges of circumstance” (Divakaruni, 2) by being together. Though they share their foods, drinks, support and sympathy for each other, there arrive moments when clashes, conflicts, differences in opinions and the lust for power and superiority overtake their practical outlook. However, they gradually regain mental composure and become familiar with each other dissolving the boundary of unfamiliarity and emotional stiffness. It is the revelation of the deepest secrets of their lives in the form of stories that integrate them to a bonding. Through their stories, they voice their feelings, opinions and aspirations. Each one has been given a chance to articulate their innermost feelings and the amazing things that have crafted their lives with significance.

Divakaruni interweaves the ancient method of storytelling within the structure of her novel. It is probable that oral storytelling has been around us as long as human language. In ancient time, people used to tell stories to heal themselves from the hurdles and pains of everyday life. The stories were a way of sharing feelings. Those stories told orally used to connect the storyteller and the listener with a magical bond. The typical way of delivering the stories required a particular sort of sitting arrangement where the story tellers did not only get physically close to each other, but mental and emotional proximity was also taken into consideration. This tradition has been revived by Divakaruni in *One Amazing Thing*.

Storytelling is projected as the only way of overcoming the pain and disaster by generating a sense of togetherness when the characters of the novel stand at the extreme edge of life and death. Each of the nine characters, starting from the youngest to the oldest one in the novel, tells her/ his story. The tone of storytelling is set in the very beginning of the novel itself where Uma is seen to be busy with Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*. This reading may have given Uma the idea of offering every surviving character the idea of telling one amazing story from their lives: “‘Everyone has a story’ said Uma, relieved that one of them was considering the idea. ‘I don’t believe anyone can go through life without encountering at least one amazing thing’” (65). The first person to give her consent to tell and share her story is Jiang and every other character, as per Uma’s advice, agrees not to interrupt, ask question or recommend anything during the course of the story. “They arrange the chairs into circle”, and thus conform to the traditional pattern of storytelling.

Precisely, the novel *One Amazing Thing* captures some common human experiences shared by each of the trapped persons that appeal to the sensitivity of the listeners as well as the readers. The story of Jiang echoes the pain of unsuccessful love where racial boundary becomes the reason for her failure in the pursuit of love. Mangalam’s love life collapses due

to the distinction based on class boundary which ultimately destroys his married life. Cameron's love life slips from its emotional height when he tries to cross the boundary of segregation imposed by both his own people and others. In all the three stories depicted in the novel, the characters have to yield to the boundaries but ultimately the boundaries prove to be pejorative before the basic emotion they share. The relationships do not turn into successful wed locks, but the boundaries get dissolved when they find an outlet to their emotions in some other forms.

Interestingly, along with the timeless theme of love and affection, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, in *One Amazing Thing* dwells on the concept of nation which is a problematised one even in the age of globalization. The notions of belonging, collectivity, and sharing of mutual senses by individuals or a group of people are integral to the idea of nation. Such individuals may perform certain rituals and take help of some narratives to concretize that sense of belonging. The performance of national and traditional activities connects the nation's past with the present and unites the common origins of its people. Attachment with particular attire of a nation as a representative of that nation's tradition and cultural habit is one such performance which endows a person with a sense of belonging and gives a chance to exhibit her national identity, despite being away from the country or origin.

Malathi's sensitive attachment with her sari in *One Amazing Thing* is mention-worthy in this connection. When Uma breaks her hand, Cameron in his attempt to soothe the pain, requests Mangalam for a long strip of cloth to bandage her arm. That long strip of cloth to be used for this purpose is Malathi's sari. But Malathi retreats from the proposal folding "mutinous arms across her chest" (34). She is even reluctant to wear the sweatshirt offered by Uma. Sari as a traditional Indian costume becomes the representative of Indian culture in Divakaruni's narrative on Malathi's attitude. Although settled in America, Malathi is basically from a south Indian village, and she fails to feel free to get away with her Indian attire. She rather embraces it heartily and feels embarrassed with the request to change it for a sweatshirt. Divakaruni writes, "She maintained a sulky countenance and kept her arms crossed over the GO BEARS! Sweatshirt she was wearing... it is ironic, the sweatshirt covered far more of her body than the midriff-baring blouse and thin sari had. But the ways in which cultural habits operated were mysterious" (34). In such contexts, the rigidity with cultural habits appropriates the perpetuation of the existence of boundaries between different cultures.

With the rise of globalization, there are hardly any restrictions on an individual to migrate to a nation of her choice and live the rest of the life there. But the longing for returning to the mother land and a yearning to keep intact the regional, religious, and ethnic identity influence that person invariably. The conflicts that the immigrant characters face in the host society, culture and politics manipulate them to negotiate their national and cultural identity. The story of negotiation is told in the novel by the Muslim immigrant character Tariq.

Tariq's story in *One Amazing Thing* focuses on the problem of negotiating his ethnic identity with that of his adopted identity. After the terrible incident of 9/11, the Muslim immigrants in America were marginalized and treated violently in the European states. The violence was not only confined to the territory it directly hit but the violence, as Jana Evans Braziel notes it, reached beyond those whose lives were directly impacted through death and injury, however, with the entire country and all of its people – fervent “patriots” and patriotic dissenters alike – entering a nervous and volatile period of “terror”, war and “war on terror” (Braziel 196). This attack, on the other hand had impacted the diasporic community and international migration to a great extent; especially the South Asians suffered from immense discriminations by the military and security forces as well as by the natives of America. “It was a bad time for Muslims in America” (Divakaruni, 131). They were treated with one fixed point of view. The situation might have instigated individuals to re-establish their ethnic identity. During the crisis after 9/11, Tariq is not concerned with asserting his multiple identities but only his identity as a Muslim. In doing so, he moves away from the ambiguity or ambivalence imposed due to a sense of “double consciousness”. He embraces the fixed affiliation offered by his religious and ethnic identity.

In the story, Tariq's father is detained for three days by the US officials without any explanation and then released in an equally inexplicable way. Tariq's own situation is no less tension-ridden than that of his father: “I was having problems of my own: everywhere I went, people seemed to stare at me. Once or twice, I thought a black van followed me off the freeway into our neighbourhood” (132). Post 9/11 was the time when civil rights of the immigrants were disrupted on the basis of mere suspicion as Jana Evans Braziel points out in his book *Diaspora: An Introduction*:

The U.S.A Patriot Act has indeed had deleterious effects not only on U. foreign policy, but also on the nation's domestic policy, allowing for unprecedented and modes of surveillance as well, as well as broadly and loosely defined latitude with respect to detention, interrogation and prosecution of U.S citizens and immigrants within the U.S. (201)

Braziel's observation finds critical space in *One Amazing Thing* too. Before the incident of 9/11, Tariq hardly paid attention to his identity as an Indian or particularly as a Muslim. Growing up in America, Tariq has cultivated the habits and styles of Western life. His mother, though tried hard persuading him to get more serious about his religion, has failed in her attempt. But the irony of fate is that, when Tariq changes his attire, lifestyle and maintains distance with everything that is American and starts nurturing habits keeping conformity with his own religion, his mother becomes more anxious. Because, by that time, “America had changed too: It was a time when certain people were eyed with suspicion in shopping malls and movie theatres; when officials showed up at workplaces or even homes to ask questions” (27).

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As a result of the discriminations with the Muslims, Tariq's father's business does not only run in loss but fails miserably. The Americans are not comfortable with the Islamic cleaners for cleaning their offices. A good and satisfactory service for a decade by a man turns out to be unsafe after the horrific incident of 9/11. Like many of the Muslims, Tariq's father Jalal Miah is also detained without any specific cause which affects him psychologically, shattering the family-unity pathetically. At this juncture of his life, Tariq feels a sort of pull towards the people of his own community. He starts gathering information about "what Muslims really believed" (28) so that he can argue with his friends, most of whom are whites: "He visited websites with strange names and seemingly baffling views and stayed up into the small hours of the morning trying to decipher them. He started e-mail conversations with people who held strong opinions and presented him facts to back them up" (28).

Although Tariq comes in touch with the people of his community more than ever before and starts performing the daily rituals of prayer, he cannot do away with his attachment to America totally. To Tariq's family, the idea of returning to their original homeland, India, seems to be the most appropriate way to get rid of the unwanted troubles in America. But Tariq finds difficulty in accepting this idea as he considers America as his own country and himself as an American. He will undoubtedly find it difficult to adjust in a new place, which ironically is his ancestral land: "Apart from lifestyle differences, it was another issue. This is my country. I was an American. The thought of being driven from my home filled me with rage" (28). His vision about India is limited to his "duty visits" there. Because of his insensitivity to Indian culture, art or the artists and his intention to associate all the objects of hate with India, Farah, his beloved, wants to know from him: "It is easy to see the problems India has. But do you even know what America's problems are?" (30). Tariq could have had an experience of all the problems of living in America as an immigrant after the terrorist attack of 9/11 only. The unconditional hospitality that he and his family were enjoying for so long, irrespective of religious identity, suddenly gets reversed. His experience, perhaps, enables him to groom over the situation faced by Jiang and her family who were forced to leave India.

Jiang and her brother were born and brought up in India. Her family had migrated to India generations ago for which they failed to even remember the name of their ancestral village in China. Tariq could associate Jiang's story with that of his own as Jiang's father was also placed under house arrest. This understanding insinuates him to question the nature of Government: "How they could not be trusted. How they turned on you when you least expected it, when you had been a law-abiding, good-hearted citizen, and looked you up as a criminal. Why would anyone want to live in a country that did that to their father? (82).

It is interesting to note that the reliefs from the calamity-stricken situations in the host land are twofold in Divakaruni's narratives – escape from the host land and endurance. Both

the circumstances have been described in the narrative structure by the writer prudently. Whereas some show panic and find it unendurable to cope with the calamitous consequences of racial, ethnic, and religious segregation, some exhibit the heart of staying steady and fighting tooth and nail against the forces that pose threat for existence in the land of settlement.

It's worth mentioning here that Rakhi in *Queen of Dreams* questions her identity – who she is, an Indian or an American and realizes that though there will always be a longing for her ancestral land, the hostland in which she has been born and brought up and has tried her best to inculcate the habits and customs that suit the American lifestyle, will keep on influencing her existence. She chooses the path of endurance with the belief that time will heal the wound.

In tune with Rakhi, Tariq too tries to embrace his host land despite the hostilities he faced. He represents the South Asian Muslim Diasporic Community who were the worst of the sufferers in post 9/11 America. His religious identity along with his national and ethnic identity intensifies his suffering. Such circumstances propagate the victim of racial segregation to retrieve his racial, ethnic, and religious identity by observing all the performances that essentially determine his identity as a member of that group. These also instigate him to discard the cultural habits of the host land. However, the attachment that he has grown for his land of settlement resides intact. That is why, characters like Tariq, although choose the path of escape; the escape is only a temporary refuge for them. Once the hostile situations are over, they expect a return journey to the host land. These incidences point at the unfavourable conditions that trigger negative impacts on inter-communal, inter-racial, inter-religious and international relationships in the era of global communication.

The circumstances of arrival and settlement in the new nation are as important as the circumstances leading to leaving the home. Such circumstances may force people to encounter an unwilling journey from one land to the other. Avtar Brah argues: “Diasporic journeys are essentially about settling down, about putting roots ‘elsewhere’.... The question is not simply about *who travels* but *when, how, and under what circumstances?* What socio-economic, political and cultural conditions mark the trajectories of these journeys?” (179).

The journeys taken by each character beyond the respective boundary of each one's nation is prompted by varied circumstances as it is revealed from the stories told by the immigrants. About such Journeys, Divakaruni says in an interview that “No journey is commonplace. Each person's journey is unique and changes the person in a special way. I hope, I am able to show that through my different characters” (Zupancic 86).

In Divakaruni's novel, Jiang and his brother had to migrate from India to America and Australia respectively. The Sino-India war has brought drastic changes to their lives, shattering their dreams to pieces. Jiang lands in America, but her heart aches for her birth-

land. Similarly, Tariq and his family plan to go back to India due to the uneven circumstances in America. This type of movement is coercive and driven by hatred. Dissolving boundaries in the wake of globalization and its associated notion of accepting people from all community and nationality to the same global platform is interrogated under such circumstances as the critics of globalization has pointed it out. However, in the context of the novel, it is seen that, despite ethnic hatred, they desire to live with the differences in the host nation. To substantiate this view, Gabriel Sheffer can be cited as he says, “despite many instances of racism and anti-foreigner policies and actions around the world, in recent years there have been no instances of alienation between ethnic diasporas and host countries that have led to total breakdown of communication between two sides” (Sheffer 192). Divakaruni’s fictional representations also do not show a “total breakdown” between the host nation and the immigrant others.

The hostile predicaments in the host land lead individuals to think of the ambiguity of their situation within and outside a particular nation. Bill Ashcroft, in his essay “Beyond the Nation: Post-colonial Hope” argue that the “nation has become an ambiguous phenomenon” even after post-colonial era and the era of globalization and cosmopolitanism (12). The forceful migration of Jiang and Tariq can be said in Bill Ashcroft’s term “melancholic plight” which they had to or would have to endure “either as economic or political refugees, or as subjects oppressed in some way by state power” (13). Such a movement which is basically transnational, may be said as a movement “within and beyond nations” (13) that does not prove to be privileged or hopeful all the time.

However, looking at the context of the stories of Jiang and Tariq’s lives, it can be said that Jiang, after moving across the physical boundaries of India, has flourished in her business in America. The initial hurdles are overcome with positive efforts. So, her decision to re-visit India is not an imposed one, but it is the haunting memory and nostalgia of her birthplace that is igniting her desire to return there.

Similarly, Tariq’s father is a successful businessman in America. Undoubtedly, the outbreak of troubles for the Muslims in America has forced them to change their decision of fighting back the unwanted circumstances and expect a safe and better life in India. But, Tariq, the young boy’s decision to go back to India is intensified with his love for Farah and he is eager to come back to America. He can’t do away with the memory and influence of America which is inscribed in his mind with an irremovable ink. Such type of situation makes us repeat after Bill Ashcroft that “The concept of borders is disrupted in many ways... but most powerfully in the relationship between place: memory rather than nostalgia and place rather than nation” (17).

Critics of globalization maintain that English is the only language of globalization where English has become the language of management, trade, business, and economy. The importance of English as a global language is portrayed in *One Amazing Thing* also. When

Malathi decides to leave for America, she is given proper training in learning English. Even Jiang while living in India, a land of multiple varieties of language, communicates with her lover Mohit in English. So, English is represented as a common mode of expression between the people of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Divakaruni interrogates the notion of English as the one and only means of communication through the character of Jiang again. Jiang starts speaking her mother tongue all the more in America than in India and confines her communications only with the Chinese people. Depending on the demand of the situation she switches over to English. To her granddaughter's surprise, she speaks English during the time of storytelling, "'Gramma', Lily began, 'You can't even speak English'. Jiang blinked in the ray from the flashlight that Cameron had trained on her... Had the old woman pretended, all these years, not to know the language of America?" (66). Jiang thus chooses to make her voice heard in the language of her own preference.

The appropriation of English finds expression in diasporic fiction as the diasporic writers settled in the western nations mainly write in English and Divakaruni is no exception in this case. In her novel, some of the characters despite their ambiguity for the English language choose this very language to share the stories of their individual struggle.

Chinese American, African American, Indian Americans, and White Americans share the same platform in *One Amazing Thing*. Even the person who leads the group is Cameron, an African American who by his own people is thought to be destined as a marginalized being. Assembled in one single place, they don't only tell their stories, but these stories are heard with equal attention. In spite of being shut inside a small room, they make their voices heard and hope for a feeling of integration keeping their individual tastes and likes intact. The falling of a part of the ceiling that opens a way towards the outside world making passage for the entry of light inside the dark room is indicative of new hopes – hope of getting connected to the world as a whole, hope of extending aspirant hands to the broader world. Such hopes can extend the horizon of solidarity between the characters from different corners of the world and thus attempt to dissolve any psychic, physical and political boundary.

In *One Amazing Thing* the man-made boundaries are dissolved by interaction, cross-cultural communication, sharing of views, and more importantly by human solidarity. The boundaries presupposed by the concepts and binaries such as "core and periphery, centre and margin, rural and urban" (Brah 199), familiar and unfamiliar, native and immigrant although persist in a larger scale in the world till today, they are interrogated too. Divakaruni, through this text has told the tales of several such binaries and has tried to dissolve the boundaries that draw the line of difference. It is only when the nine characters dissolve the boundaries of diverse identities, emotional stiffness, superiority complex and misunderstanding that they come close to each other and unite in their effort to find out survival strategies. Divakaruni's avoidance of any particular name to the city of America where her protagonists are stuck

seems intentional, because in the era of globalization all cities are alike with their cosmopolitan structures.

In summation, it is evident that all the differences – social relation, national and religious identity, subjectivity and experience – that the characters have in the novel in their own individual space have been contested and problematized as they deliberately yield to the circumstance hostile to them and dissolve the boundaries of difference. Divakaruni has shown the annihilation of several boundaries with the help of the stories narrated by the immigrants and thus, has given them a voice through her text for global audience.

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