



# Existential Crisis in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's Oleander Girl

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## Abstract:

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is an internationally acclaimed poet, novelist, and short story writer who holds a prominent place in diasporic literature. She traces the struggle, anxiety, and lack of footing in the Indian diaspora, as well as the adaptation and assimilation of foreign cultures. Divakaruni has investigated the diasporic cognizance in Oleander young lady proficiently "Oleander Young Lady" is a work of fiction set in India and America. The novel's main theme is the protagonist's identity search. The primary focus of this paper is on Korobi Roy's search for her identity and her father. It also shows how Korobi was shown at the beginning of the book and how she changed at the end. Oleander Girl focuses on Divakaruni's use of women's liberation as a means of empowering the characters. When she goes to America to find her father, she has to deal with social tensions as a worker. It shows how she investigates her personality and finds her father following a couple of actual encounters.

**Keywords:** Footlessness, Foreign Culture, Identity, Liberation, Social Liberation.

Indian-American author Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is her name. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is one of the most well-known English-language contemporary Indian women novelists. In her works, she addresses the feminine emotions of both Indian and immigrant women. In contemporary diasporic literature, her stories highlight social issues like racism, gender bias, and the generation gap. She features diasporic female heroes, living in two societies, her distance, segregation, exile, mental injury, dispersing, and separation at the degree of diasporic awareness specifically. Her subjects incorporate ladies, movement, the South-Asian experience, history, legend, supernatural authenticity, and assortment. The plight of modern women is brought to light in the

writings of Divakaruni. Arranged Marriage (1995), The Mistress of Spices (1997), Sister of My Heart (1999), Queen of Dreams (2004), One Amazing Thing (2010), The Palace of Illusions (2008), Oleander Girl (2012), and Before We Visit the Goddess (2016) are among her most significant works. This paper aims to show how Divakaruni's most recent novel, Oleander Girl, inspires young people to fight for the right things in life and to describe the issues facing today's youth. The topic of the novel likewise advocates the way that we ought to leave our usual ranges of familiarity and support what we put stock in. Divakaruni hopes to convey to today's youth the message that we ought to have the courage to accept the reality of our identity through her portrayal of Korobi. Oleander Girl, written by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, is about Korabi Roy, a 17-year-old girl who lost her mother at birth. She was raised by her grandparents, Bimal Roy and Sarojini, after that. Bimal Roy, a retired barrister of high social standing, is a powerful individual. His wife, Sarojini, is also from a well-to-do family. They have a rich cultural and historical heritage and are respected in their community. Anu is their only child. Throughout her childhood, Korabi Roy yearned for the affection of her parents. Korabi's inspiration and guide into the unknown are Anu, whom she had never seen or met before. Anu inspires Korabi to embark on adventures that she could never have imagined in her sheltered boarding school education.

Korabi was raised by her grandparents in their town, giving her a way of life as a grandkid of the Bimal Roy family. She has been given consideration and never allowed herself to get some information about her folks. She finds a sort of murkiness in her brain and feels total detachment in her life. There is a quietness that drives her life, whether they are alive or not. The main proof of her folks is the letter that Korabi gets from her mom's book. The demise of her granddad, Bimal Roy, during her commitment to Rajat totally dispersed her life into pieces. She says to Rajat, "I'm so confounded. All the things I was so grateful for, my family, my legacy, they're just half-valid. The other portion of me-I knows nothing about it. Then again, actually, all this time my dad was alive and in America" (Oleander Girl 66). Sarojini feels scared about the passing of her husband. Sarojini opens with the reality of Korabi's folks saying her mom Anu kicked the bucket and her dad is an Afro-American named Rob, who is as yet alive in America. Consequently, Korabi has made a solid choice to go to America, keeping her marriage and looking for her dad. Her energy and interest in thinking about her dad drives her in her search. Huge numbers of pundits acclaim Korabi's choice at the most youthful age all by herself. At first, Rajat doesn't need her to go alone. In the wake of understanding her solid and decided self-discipline, Rajat is prepared to help in her search. Mrs. Bose advises holding the wedding as soon as possible, but Korabi prefers to consult with her father first. She denies it, but she realizes Rajat is a wonderful person and that if she marries him, she will have

a wonderful life. She has a women's activist decided psyche. That is the reason she has chosen to look through her dad first.

Korobi remains steadfast in her decision, despite his explanation that he is less bothered by the past and more interested in the present and future and that his love for her will never end. Rajat, you don't get it! I don't believe it should disappear. Yes, I'm shocked and hurt, but I'm also excited. Can you see? I now have a father! I can meet the man whose love for my mother was so great! I have always longed to comprehend my parents. I've been given a chance by fate. 67 (Oleander Girl)

Korobi has discovered a heartfelt, never-sent letter from her mother to her father. Korobi sets out on her own search for her father as a result. Regardless of every other person's recommendation, Korobi chooses to look for her dad, and with her assurance she tracks down her dad, and alongside him, reality with regards to her folks. Her parents never got married, and her father is an Afro-American. She is shocked, but she quickly regains her composure. She makes the decision to tell her in-laws the truth about her birth. But before she can tell her in-laws, they discover the truth. Her honesty is questioned by them. She returns to her residence and devotes herself entirely to household and academic tasks. Korobi is accepted by her in-laws and fiancé as soon as they learn the truth.

Korobi encounters numerous challenges on her journey to locate her father. She has encountered the harsh real world. She is in control and only cares about finding her father. When she is confronted with challenging circumstances, she exhibits a confidence and inner strength. She initially finds it difficult because her grandparents have always protected her, but she regains her composure and moves on. Korobi's power is neither western nor current, yet her capacity fixes her status in her family and at home.

Korobi is determined despite having little to pursue. Desai gives her three leads: one in Boston and two in California involving people with the name Rob, who were in the same class as her mother at the University of Berkeley. She doesn't surrender when he is shy of cash in New York. Korobi is not discouraged by the lack of funds. She travels with little money and stays with Mitra, who is unfriendly. She has no fear; She has responded to the circumstances as they arise. She has made it a priority to learn the truth about her father; She has traveled such a long distance from her own people. She decides to sell her hair to fund her search when she runs out of money. She has altered her point of view. She acts in accordance with her quest and thinks like an immigrant. At the point when she really wants cash, she chooses to sell her hair. She feels more liberated and confident as a

result of the hair loss. I feel discombobulated, untethered. But once I have the money, I feel a little better. I currently have enough for California; I have accomplished it without begging anyone.” Oleander Girl is a story about a simple girl who discovers who she is as she seeks the truth about her life (177). It's about a person's fundamental beliefs and values that guide their actions in difficult situations. They propel, inspire, and maintain a person's progress. When Korobi is at a crossroads in her life, her actions are determined by her education and core values. She is aware that her future is in jeopardy, but she is unwilling to give up her morals for happiness. She is unafraid to take a stand on her own, despite the counsel of Sarojini and Rajat's coercion.

In *Oleander Girl*, Korobi Divakaruni conveys the message that the most important thing in life is to live with the truth, and in order to attain this truth, one must be brave enough to face life's challenges. Instead of giving up hope in the face of unmanageable circumstances, one should find the strength to turn things around. Korobi has been portrayed by Divakaruni as an image of today's youth. The youth of today have a practical outlook on life. They need to roll out an improvement in their lives yet miss the mark on mental fortitude to do as such. They frequently become quite agitated when discussing their predicaments and the attitudes of society, religious, and political issues. In any case, it would appear that the discussion is not the means but rather the end. Evidently, these verbal outbursts do not result in any actions. They just surrender in despair over what they can't endure. They are aware of everything; They know that things are wrong, but they don't care because they don't do anything, and they don't feel guilty or bad for not doing anything. Being vocal about some unacceptable things isn't sufficient. We must take action to bring about the necessary change right now. The characters in Divakaruni have the fortitude to leave their ideal life for the greater good in search of the truth.

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