
**A Study on Cultural Divergence in Ruth Praver Jhabvala's
*A Backward Place***

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Abstract:

The protagonist in Ruth Praver Jhabvala's book *A Backward Place* goes through a cultural transition, and the purpose of this research study is to illustrate that cultural difference from the protagonist's perspective. Additionally, it wants to address the crisis that was brought about in the life of the heroine as a result of the divergence of cultures, and it will attempt to defend how effectively the protagonist has managed the problems by taking a constructive approach and, more importantly, it will explain how she was able to achieve success in her life. Following her marriage to a Parsi, Ruth Praver Jhabvala, a Jewish lady who was born in Germany, resided in India from 1952 to 1976 before relocating to New York to settle down. Because Ruth Praver Jhabvala herself is a member of the diaspora, she was able to brilliantly portray the inner workings of both Indian and Western women through the characters she created.

Keywords: Traditions, Disturbance, Disagreements, Disaster and Existence

Introduction

The problem of cultural disconnection is intricately woven into the fabric of the storyline in Ruth Praver Jhabvala's novel "A Backward Place." Through the use of a wide variety of people and locations, Jhabvala investigates the collision and synthesis of several cultural domains, specifically within the context of post-colonial India. By studying how characters deal with the obstacles of tradition, modernity, and the struggle between Eastern and Western cultures, this research investigates the multiple cultural contrasts that are shown in the novel. Through the examination of the complexities of cultural differences in "A Backward Place," the purpose of this research is to disentangle the intricate relationship between identity, tradition, and change in a culture that is undergoing fast cultural change. We want to do this by conducting a thorough examination of Jhabvala's narrative strategies

and thematic concerns. Our objective is to get a more profound understanding of the persistent significance of cultural differences in modern discourse.

Statement of the Problem

Ruth Praver Jhabvala's book "*A Backward Place*" presents a narrative environment that is rich in detail, and one of the most significant thematic concerns that arises from this setting is ethnic diversity. On the other hand, a complete investigation into the complexities and repercussions of this cultural diversity inside the novel is still mostly undiscovered. Since this is the case, the research challenge that this study is attempting to explore is :The purpose of this research issue is to investigate the many ways in which the book depicts cultural differences, including how it is shown via the relationships between characters, the locations, and the parts of the theme. Furthermore, the purpose of the research is to investigate the ramifications of this difference not only for the construction of individual identities but also for social hierarchies and the larger cultural landscape of India after it gained its independence. The purpose of this research is to shed light on the intricacies of cultural dynamics and their relevance within the setting of the book and beyond. This will be accomplished via an in-depth examination of Jhabvala's narrative methods and thematic themes.

Research Gap

Despite the fact that "*A Backward Place*" is predominantly situated in Delhi, there is a lack of study that investigates how the cultural dynamics within the story are influenced by the presence of regional differentiation. Extending our knowledge of cultural differences beyond the constraints of metropolitan environments and communities of expatriates might be facilitated by doing further research on regional identities, customs, and socio-economic inequalities.

There is a study vacuum in assessing the present relevance and influence of "*A Backward Place*" on concerns of cultural divergence in post-colonial cultures, despite the fact that the book was written in the 1960s. It would be helpful to have a more nuanced view of the book's continuing relevance if it were to further investigate how the novel continues to connect with current readers and how it influences ongoing discussions on globalization, identity politics, and cultural exchange.

Critical Analysis / Discussion

Jhabvala recounts the story of an interracial marriage that led to a happy and successful union in the pages of her book, which is titled *A Backward Place*. Judy and Bal, two of the protagonists in the story, come to the conclusion that they should be married, and they go on to create a prosperous life together as a married couple. There are both parallels and differences between Judy's cultural identity and that of her husband, who is of English origin. Judy is well aware of both of these aspects of her cultural identity. Both parties are aware of and prepared to accept the disparities that exist between them. As a result of this, Judy is able to transcend her ethnic identity and investigate the prospect of exploring the potential of finding happiness in her marriage and even with the family of her husband. In spite of the differences that exist between her and other people, Judy is able to find pleasure in her life. Through the use of her native senses in a productive manner, she is able to effectively create a life in a new location. In point of fact, Judy is satisfied with her married

life, which is a big contrast to her upbringing in England, where she was raised during the course of her childhood. Throughout her childhood, Judy often suffered emotions of alienation and rejection. She had also been neglected.

Judy has experienced a significant transformation that has allowed her to integrate into Indian culture. This transformation is brought about by her complete and total acceptance of the cultural customs of the region. As part of her efforts to assume an Indian identity, she diligently educates herself in the art of draping a saree and becomes familiar with the subtleties of Indian cuisine. Clarissa, an English expatriate who now resides in India, observes that Judy has effectively accepted the unique manner of living in India, which requires adapting to the position of "a genuine Indian wife." (Clarissa). Despite the fact that she is adaptable, the relationship she has with her spouse is rather difficult. There is a clear correlation between her husband's actions and demeanor and the fact that she experiences challenges and disappointments. The result is that Judy holds her husband accountable for the situation. Judy hopes that he will also possess a strong sense of reality and practicality despite the fact that he has attributes that are idealistic and fanciful. Jhabvala describes Bal as someone who has idealistic inclinations yet still exhibits immaturity and recklessness. Bal is a person who shows these characteristics. Bal has the capacity to demonstrate these characteristics. In spite of the fact that he is a father of two and has spent the last 10 years pursuing a career in film acting, Bal continues to indulge in delusions of becoming a movie actor and wastes his time while others are engaged in useful work.

Jhabvala has portrayed Judy as a figure who is experienced and knowledgeable. Despite the fact that she is unhappy with her marriage, she continues to assert that she is solely responsible for the upkeep of the home. Due to the fact that Bal is unable to provide for the family, Judy makes the choice to enter the workforce and take on the duty of being the primary provider for the family. Judy is a tough female heroine, and Jhabvala has skillfully fashioned her in a manner that is comparable to the other female characters that she has produced in previously published works. R. S. Singh is of the opinion that Judy has the characteristics of foresight, tenderness, and understanding and that she is always prepared to make concessions about her position. On the other hand, he maintains that her compassion with her husband, who has been jobless for ten years, should not be recognized. In addition, this causes tension in the interpersonal dynamics that exist between the husband and the wife inside the relationship. Bal is reluctant to ask Judy to go to work because he is under the impression that doing so will negatively affect his reputation. "It is appealing to you." Nevertheless, I strongly think that you have never considered the impression of others about the fact that I, your married partner, support your capacity to participate in work; this circumstance is quite insulting to me. Similarly, Shanthi is a firm believer in the customary views that exist around the attributes that constitute a good wife, despite the fact that she herself defines these qualities. "With us, the situation is such that one is confined to staying at home all day and night, engaging in activities such as cooking, cleaning, and taking care of children." Judy is unwavering in her determination to continue working in order to provide for her family, regardless of the condemnation she receives from her relatives. She is determined to work because she wants to provide for her family. At one particular point in

time, Jhabvala claims that Judy has an inner power that she possesses. Despite the advice of her Hungarian friend to distance herself from her husband, Bal, Judy chooses to continue to be in his company instead of following his advice. Judy seems to be a reasonable person who avoids forming hasty judgments despite the fact that the Western conception of marriage does not include the same kind of profound connection that is present in the Indian marital system. With the exception of his responsibility and his desire to become a movie star, Judy has a general appreciation for all that Bal and his family have to offer each other. Because of this, Judy does not believe that she should give up her family. She demonstrates her responsibilities in a prominent role in the home by working full-time and providing for her family on a constant basis. Consequently, Judy comes to the conclusion that she should enroll in a part-time position at the Cultural Dais and take on the responsibility of being the primary source of income for her family. R.G.G. Price makes the smart observation that Bal's English wife is working hard to provide for her husband despite the fact that Bal is trying to impress his friends at the café with his accomplishments in the film business. Judy derives a great deal of satisfaction from the fact that she is an English woman, and she is certain that no other English lady would ever act on that which she desires. "English individuals did not exhibit such behavior, as they did not abruptly abandon all their possessions and embark on a journey with an uncertain purpose."

Judy has a self-assured understanding of who she is as an English lady, and she takes great pride in her ability to keep her family together from generation to generation. The efforts that Judy is making to change herself into an Indian lady are characterized by an unyielding drive throughout. Through the process of completely embracing and adopting the ideas that are inherent in the Indian family structure, she goes through a change and ultimately becomes an Indian. In addition to this, she is able to gracefully embody the role of an Indian wife while also developing a rising feeling of unmistakable Indianness. At the conclusion of the book, Judy has come to a complete and sincere acceptance of the philosophical reality that serves as the basis for the Indian way of life. Due to the fact that God is an all-powerful deity, it is an irrefutable reality that he would be responsible for caring for each and every human without any exceptions. As a consequence of this, Judy makes the choice to leave her work and the feeling of security she had in order to accompany her husband to Bombay, where she would be confronted with unpredictability. A major improvement in the relationship between the family and Bal may be attributed to Judy's choice. The choice has left Bal feeling really content, and he is filled with a profound sense of pride in his wife. From that point on, you will see a discernible shift in my manner whenever you come into contact with me. No one will ever attempt to assert that I am unable to provide for my own family, and I promise you that this will never happen. I solemnly swear that I will never again put up with such insulting comments being directed against me. It is Jhabvala's belief that Judy has the essential quality of being able to effectively adjust to the new surroundings and the cultural traditions that are prevalent there. The author, Jhabvala, believes that in order to live a good life in India, one must possess a number of characteristics, and Judy has some of these characteristics. The author makes use of the words of Ronald Shepherd in order to provide a reflected mirror that shatters her self-image into a number of identities that are in conflict with one another. This is an example of a plain and

obvious explanation of what may otherwise seem to be a consistent authorial identity. Through the character of Judy and her successful integration into an Indian family structure, Jhabvala demonstrates that individuals of all cultures within the family institution are willing to make concessions. This is shown via the character of Judy. Through the adoption of a strategy that sits between the two extreme Western responses to Indian culture, Judy has shown that it is possible for a Westerner to successfully immigrate to India and integrate into Indian society. The vibrant environment that is characteristic of an Indian joint family structure is something that Judy finds enjoyable. This is due to the fact that she was brought up in a home that was reserved and not very loud. Judy has the capacity to modify her behavior in response to fresh circumstances. It is at this time that she begins to develop feelings of love for an Indian man called Bal, and she is given the chance to live with his family. It is not difficult for her to have a peaceful connection with Shanthi, who also happens to be her sister-in-law. After joining her husband, mother-in-law, and sister-in-law in their Indian family, Judy comes to the realization that she has achieved a state of ecstasy where she is completely content. For the purpose of successfully navigating the complexities of the Indian cultural system, Judy utilizes the tactic of establishing an Indian identity for herself as a method.

Conclusion

When compared to the guidance that Jhabvala offered, this is somewhat similar. In order for a person to flourish and finally achieve success, Jhabvala acknowledges that the family unit and the values that are linked with it are very important. Jhabvala, a professor of sociology, has used a constructive way to emphasize the lasting family relationships that support the social structure. This is shown by the relationship that is represented in the work that was selected. Families provide individuals with the power and support they need to build a productive living, which in turn helps them to realize their goals. Because of the ongoing changes, which inevitably lead to the family being subjected to a variety of types of societal pressure, adaptations are absolutely necessary.

When doing comparative research, it is possible to investigate how cultural differences are portrayed in other literary works by Jhabvala or by writers who come from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Comparing and comparing storytelling styles, thematic concerns, and socio-cultural commentary across a number of different texts has the potential to shed light on recurring themes as well as different points of view about cultural dynamics. Given the novel's investigation of cultural hybridity and globalization, it is possible that future studies may investigate the ways in which transnational movements of people, ideas, and money impact cultural dynamics within the story. In order to give innovative insights into the book's depiction of cultural differences, it could be beneficial to investigate topics such as diaspora, cosmopolitanism, and transnational identities.

Perspectives from Different Regions and Languages: In light of the fact that India is home to a wide variety of linguistic and regional landscapes, it is possible that future research may study the ways in which the novel brings together cultural differences and regional identities and languages. Through the examination of characters hailing from various

geographical areas, linguistic origins, and cultural traditions, it is possible to bring attention to the wide variety of Indian society that is shown within the tale.

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