

***THE BONES OF GRACE :*****IDENTITY ISSUEE LIVING BETWEEN EAST AND WEST****Dr.RAMACHANDRA C G****Professor& Head,****Department of English,****Commerce****K.T.H.M College****Nashik****Dr.CHEN CHOU****Assistant Professor,****Smt.Kashibai Navale College of****Pune****Abstract**

"Cultural Identity and Diaspora" (1994) describing the struggle of women in postcolonial world as there are two kinds of identity, the identity of being and gradually in the process of being to becoming to support ,as Hall sees the temporary positions of identity as 'strategic' and arbitirity. This paper is articulated with Tahmima Anam's book, 'The Bones of Grace', the final novel of Anam's Bengal Trilogy and a revealing description of two other trilogy novels. It explores the complexity of Zubaida's life and her quest for identity and roots. It is an third novel of Bengal trilogy written after The Golden Age and The Good Muslim. The protagonist in the novel is Zubaida Haque, the adopted daughter of a Bengali family who finds herself lost between East and West. As she feels overwhelmed by all the choices she has to make for a different kind of loyalty towards her native Bangladesh and the United States, where she has completed her studies's. This paper will highlight the identity issue of women who are introduced as 'other' in society and culture, in the light of Homi K. Bhabha's concept of "hybridity" as discussed in The Location of Culture (1994).It also Scrutinize the issue of female role

in society as set by gender norms as in the case of Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949) It shows that although women are treated as subalterns but have words, it also explores the issue of identity by referring specifically to *The Bones of Grace* the point of "cultural identification". At the same time, It will bring to mind the concept of "cultural identity" based on the Stuart Hall, *Questions of Cultural Identity* (1996)

**Keywords:** Duality, cultural identity, cross-cultural identity, diaspora, Assimilation, hybridity.

## Introduction

*“The first word I ever said to you were: ‘When I was nine years old ,I found out I was adopted.’ And you replied: ‘Aristotle was an orphan.’ And I said: So was the Prophet Muhammad.’ That evening , the music and the heat of late summer had made me re call the day my parents had finally confessed the things that I had, even as a small child, always suspected. (Anam, 9).’*

Zubaida's odyssey portrays a quest for her identity viz. her underlying foundations. Here in these lines, Zubaida the hero is addressing to her lost sweetheart Elijah about the decisions she has made in her life by conflicting with culture and society, that she has at last in the wake of finding her foundations and character reaches the resolution that personality is never refined rather it is a persistent cycle which changes by time. Subsequently eventually, Zubaida can envision an elective idea of having a place, accepting her life not as a frozen element, rather as a continuum of things that are past and simultaneously, present."While Zubaida need no persuading of her affections for Elijh, she did , and the design makes this interesting: Zubaida needs to compose for us just as for Elijah. Their coded correspondence once she gets back to Bangladesh, in instant messages comprising just of tune titles - off-the-stake feeling - feels like Anam's work around as much as theirs".The guardians' account

of war and freedom is there, yet as a back-note. The forefront is currently contemporary, the age Anam's own, and *The Bones of Grace* has at its heart not in the war but the breaking impacts of clashed love "Taken alone, the storyteller's self-centeredness would be grinding, however her story reverberates intensely inside the adventure of three ages of ladies representing Bangladesh's development from the clearness of upheaval to the disarrays of Osmosis with the bigger world". "Anam composes a connection with story that draws a contemporary family experience in Bangladesh that inspects the issue of identity and living among eastern and western societies.

### **Living between East and West**

***“Diana is the reason I left this town, and Diana is why I have returned. I think of her as a spirit of comings and goings, a beacon that lead me across continents and through time. I live in hope that she will lead me back to you” (Anam, 8).***

The title Bone of the grace belong to an Cetacean of the Eocene epoch (Diana) – a distant ancestor of the whale, that had fore and hind limbs and could walked on land. ‘It was an intermediate species,’(34) Anam explains. Whales are the only animal that came out of the sea and went back to the sea. It’s symbol things happening in the novel *Zubaida* is herself trying to decide whether to stay on land or to swim in water. The periodic image of the remnant, Diana ,and the allegory of digging, wholly, function as a cue that *Zubaida's* odyssey encompass a search for her identity and her roots. Here in these lines, *Zubaida* the protagonist is addressing to her lost lover *Elijah* about the choices she has made in her life by going against culture and society.

Here, Zubaida the ultimate sufferers of the life between the western culture and demand for freedom and East traditions moreover, women are in “dual identity” in the Transnational age. As migration makes a confusion about all the rights of the free self, similarly, women are forced to live a life of the country they belong even in the western countries by patriarchy. They are caged in the age of colonialism and they are still caged in a new way by the men in power in postcolonial era. Thus, they are “double colonized,” but, women have proved themselves by their heroism. This study illustrates the struggle of Zubaida as well as her perpetual quest for her roots and identity by analyzing Anam's *The Bones of Grace*, the rise of Zubaida is related to her suffering and her quest for her roots, and how she finally decides to find solace in her adopted land where she feels more belonged than home as a paleontologist, that Anam highlights in her work.

***E. M. Forster's A Passage to India. E.M. Forster says - "East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet" (1924)***

We don't want to neglect E.M. Forster's view. But in ‘Bone of grace’, Zubaida heart and soul endeavor are to mingle east and west into one unit “Western cultures value independence and tend to promote individuals who are task orientated and individualistic.” Eastern and Western cultures have a distinct perception of power wherever Western cultures are unit additional egalitarian. Despite the very fact that there have been writers like Virginia Woolf or Adeline Virginia Stephen who favoured the psychological and experimental approach to literature as it had been this mixture of the traditional mode of presentation with themes like sexuality, senselessness or a destroyed communication which prevailed the fact that isolation, urbanisation, diaspora or class problems were still of literary concern. English novels had tremendous problems while concerning about the developments like Ibsen's dramatic concept of existence, French naturalism or symbolism. The proximity of aestheticism and morality that was typical for the Victorian novel fell apart and also the ancient patriarchal structure of society was freshly discovered by replacement and

radical changing idea of feminine writers nonetheless matters of a replacement idea of the feminine were still within the hands of male authors like Shaw, Hardy, Lawrence and Oscar Wilde before Woolf or Lessing may bring a radically new feminine outlook.

### **Cross-Cultural Identity issue in *The Bones of Grace*:**

Identity is vital and always in a vogue of changing. The issue of cultural identity actually comes from exile and belongingness of the soul at the same time. Similarly, the depth of identity is rooted in culture, nationalism, religion, and most importantly, in individual self. However, religion, culture and nationalism impose the aspects of identity on a person where the true fact of the self gets suppressed by all these. Anam's *The Bones of Grace*, despite of being a postmodern text still focuses on the issue of cultural identity in the context of postcolonial time and not only the protagonists but also other characters suffer from different complications to fit in the world by establishing their identities. Through Zubaidas, Vyoage Anam oversees the struggle of women in patriarchal society with the invisible suppression of culture and society. Though identity originates in a place of belongingness but the postcolonial world has connected it with nation, society and religion. Thus, Anam brings out the sufferings of women through their struggle in establishing their identities in a postcolonial world.

Changeability is a factor affecting identity. It shapes the thought processes of individuals and it changes the minds simultaneously. Anam reveals the issue of identity in a postcolonial world by the character Zubaida, though her belongingness to her root, works differently in *The Bones of Grace*. Zubaida's cravings for her root, makes her a new person and, thus, her identity is also reshaped in a continuous process. Hall states: identity is not an accomplished fact rather it can be thought as a "production" that is never complete and always in a process. The view of identity process creates the issues of authority and authenticity that is to be related to "cultural identity." So, "cultural identity" causes the problems among the authority

and authenticity. In other words, it can be said that “cultural identity” creates the hierarchy and superiority among the masses. This view problematizes the very authority and authenticity to which the term “cultural identity,” lays claim (110).

Cultural identity, in the expression of one's shared culture, a kind of collectiveness of one's true self, is an activity within the numerous different, additional superficial or by artificial means obligatory ‘selves’ which with a shared history and ancestry hold in common.

Hall asserts that in the name of “cultural identity,” one true self, remains hidden behind many feigned ‘selves’ and it is connected to the common shared history and ancestry. In the Novel *The Bone of Grace* Anam portrays the character of Zubaida's search for the identities in different places and reveals how the process creates a beam of hope among the searching souls. In *The Bones of Grace*, the search process of the walking whale, metaphorically indicates palaeontologist, Zubaida's searching process of her root as well as her own self.

Anam utters:

I don't believe you'll ever go back. I don't believe you'll create [global] movements and stay unchanged. I don't suppose it's simply the condition of the migrator. It's the condition of recent life. therefore few folks are unit born, get older and die in one place. Those movements basically alters.

Thus, Anam shares her view on identity and apparently, it goes with all of her protagonists in the trilogy. After the unpleasant incident with her colleagues in Baluchistan, Zubaida comes back to Bangladesh and marries Rashid. Although she is in love with Elijah, who is a Native American, but she was compelled to marry Rashid on the request of her foster parents. Her marriage with Rashid does not work out and she goes beyond the mainstream social belief by divorcing Rashid. Though this situation has made her wrong in the eyes of her foster parents and society, but she takes the decision willingly. Thus, her identity turns into a different direction and she goes to Chittagong for making a documentary in the unfamiliar beaches on the lives of ship breaking labourers and finds out the most important

truth of her life through Anwar. Zubida grimace the reality of her life by knowing about Fatema Ansar her biological mother, and her twin sister surprisingly what she was searching for since she gained her sense. Thus, Zubaida's identity moves in a continuous process to find out her root.

Identity bears the testimony of the past and Anam's *The Bones of Grace*, underlines the combination of past with it from a new perspective. Zubaida, bear the truth behind her past and it is correlated with her identity. According to Hall: "Not an identity grounded in the archaeology, but in the re-telling of the past?" (111). Hall questions identity's process of re-telling the past. In this point of view, it can be said that as identity is related to one's own self so that it speaks about the past in several ways. In *The Bones of Grace*, Zubaida says: "If Anwar hadn't worked on that building site, he might never have gone looking for Megna, and if he hadn't done that, I might still be in the dark about my past" (Anam, 75).

Zubaida comes to know about her past from Anwar and it happens because of her face. She bears the same face like her twin sister and Anwar gets shocked seeing her. After wards, the story of her biological mother and twin sister is revealed by Anwar. Thus, identity retells the past, she finally discovered that her roots and identity and comes to the conclusion that identity is never accomplished rather it is a continuous process which transforms by time. In the end of the novel Zubaida is able to imagine an alternative assumption of belonging, as a notion of her life not as a frozen entity, but a continuation of things that are past and at the same time, present.

Anam, through the character Zubaida, brings out the conflict and crises of her identity. On the issue of identity crisis, Bhabha underlines that hybridity belongs in between third space and it is real and psychological. It intends to analyze the cultural eccentricities within the postcolonial condition. Bhabha asserts: My contention, elaborated in my writing on

postcolonial discourse in terms of mimicry, hybridity, sly civility, is that this liminal moment of identification – eluding resemblance – produces a subversive strategy of subaltern agency that negotiates its own authority through a process of iterative ‘unpicking’ and incommensurable, insurgent relinking (The Location of Culture, 265).

**Conclusion: identity is a continuous process and it transforms by time:**

This paper try's to bring out the realities of women's life by analyzing their struggles, survival and accomplishments in the light of Anam's *The Bones of Grace*. The idea is borrowed from Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's essay entitled, "Can the Subaltern Speak" (1998) and Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949). This paper have proven the point by discussing that although women are treated as subalterns but they have voices, then this paper have relied on Homi K. Bhabha's concept of "hybridity" as discussed in The Location of Culture (1994). Simultaneously, the idea of "cultural identity" focusing on Stuart Hall's essay, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" (1994) defining the battle of woman in the postcolonial and contemporary era. Thus, Anam shares her view on identity and apparently, it goes with all of her protagonists in the trilogy. An autobiographical elements has been brought in the novel, by Anam through Zubaidas character Anam has said about her soul, trying to fit in the world. Anam shares her thought about writing the third novel and depicts how it is related to her. Zubaida's exile is connected to her exile from Bangladesh in a sense. Therefore, to conclude this paper finally, I want to say that women can speak and accomplish her dreams by breaking age old norms, and identity is a continuous process and it transforms by time Zubaida's identity shows her cravings for her root and changes by time and makes her a strong woman in the postcolonial world.



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