



Kavya Setu

A Multidisciplinary Open Access, Peer-Reviewed Refereed Journal

Impact Factor: 7.2

ISSN No: 3049-4176

Myth, History, Nation, and Cultural Memory in the Fiction of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni

Ajay Kumar Yadav

Research Scholar, Department of English, Malwanchal University, Indore

Dr. Rafique Khan

Supervisor, Department of English, Malwanchal University, Indore

Abstract

This paper examines the intersecting registers of myth, history, nation, and cultural memory in the fiction of the Indian-American novelist Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, with particular attention to *The Palace of Illusions* (2008), *The Forest of Enchantments* (2019), *The Last Queen* (2021), and *Independence* (2022). Reading these novels as a continuum that moves from epic retelling to historical reconstruction, the study argues that Divakaruni employs the female first-person voice as a narrative technology for revising the grand narratives of Indian civilisation. Drawing on feminist revisionist mythmaking, partition historiography, memory studies, and diaspora theory, the paper demonstrates that her heroines—Draupadi, Sita, Rani Jindan, and the Ganguly sisters—function simultaneously as characters and as custodians of collective memory. The analysis shows that myth in Divakaruni is not an escape from history but a means of interrogating it; that her historical fiction recovers voices silenced by colonial and nationalist archives; and that cultural memory, transmitted through women, becomes a mode of resistance and of imagining the nation anew. The study concludes that Divakaruni's fiction constitutes a sustained feminist counter-archive of Indian civilisational memory.

Keywords- Myth; revisionist mythmaking; history; Partition; nation; diaspora; cultural memory; gender; Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni; Indian English fiction.

1. Introduction

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni occupies a distinctive position in contemporary Indian English writing. Born in Kolkata and settled in the United States, she began her career with narratives of immigrant womanhood before turning, in the second phase of her career, to the epics and to the historical past of the subcontinent. This trajectory—from *The Mistress of Spices* and *Sister of My Heart* to *The Palace of Illusions*, *The Forest of Enchantments*, *The Last Queen*, and *Independence*—maps a movement from the diasporic present to the mythic and historical origins of Indian identity. The Indian novel in English has long negotiated between the inherited narratives of the epics and the disruptions of colonial modernity (Anjaria, 2015), and Divakaruni's later fiction stands squarely within this negotiation. Her novels retell the Mahabharata and the Ramayana through women's eyes, resurrect the forgotten queen of the Sikh empire, and dramatise the Partition of Bengal, thereby placing myth, history, nation, and memory in continuous dialogue.



Kavya Setu

A Multidisciplinary Open Access, Peer-Reviewed Refereed Journal

Impact Factor: 7.2

ISSN No: 3049-4176

The study pursues four objectives: first, to analyse how Divakaruni reinterprets Indian myth from a feminist standpoint and what such reinterpretation does to the authority of the source texts; second, to examine the historical consciousness of her fiction, especially its engagement with colonialism and the Partition; third, to investigate her treatment of the nation, national identity, borders, and diasporic belonging; and fourth, to explore cultural memory—familial, collective, and migratory—as the connective tissue that binds her mythic and historical imaginations into a single artistic project.

The study adopts a qualitative, interpretive methodology grounded in close textual analysis of the four primary novels. The theoretical framework is eclectic but coherent: feminist revisionist mythmaking supplies the lens for the epic retellings (Sow Mondal et al., 2024); partition historiography and oral-history scholarship inform the reading of the historical novels (Butalia, 2015; Khan, 2017); and memory studies—particularly work on cultural memory, trauma, and implication (Assmann, 2016; Bond & Craps, 2020; Rothberg, 2019)—frames the discussion of remembrance. Secondary criticism on Divakaruni is used comparatively to situate the argument within the existing scholarly conversation.

Most existing scholarship treats Divakaruni's mythological novels and her historical novels as separate undertakings: the former as feminist retellings, the latter as postcolonial recuperations. This study's significance lies in reading them together, as one continuous meditation on how a culture remembers itself. By demonstrating that the same narrative strategies—female focalisation, domestic detail, embodied memory—organise both the mythic and the historical texts, the paper contributes an integrated account of Divakaruni's poetics and adds to broader debates on gender, nation, and memory in South Asian literature.

2. Myth in Divakaruni's Fiction

2.1 Reinterpretation of Indian Myths

Myth in the Indian tradition has never been a closed book; it survives precisely because each generation retells it to answer its own questions (Pattanaik, 2015). Divakaruni situates herself within this living tradition while altering its centre of gravity. The Palace of Illusions re-narrates the Mahabharata from Draupadi's point of view, and The Forest of Enchantments—which the novelist herself frames as a 'Sitayan'—does the same for the Ramayana through Sita. In both cases the events of the source epic are largely retained, but their meaning is transformed by the shift in perspective. What the grand narrative records as the war of the Kuru princes becomes, in Draupadi's telling, the story of a woman's humiliations, ambitions, and complicities; what tradition celebrates as Rama's triumph becomes, in Sita's voice, an inquiry into the price women pay for masculine honour. Critics have noted that this revisionist selection of marginalised characters gives voice to figures 'unheard or unspoken in the Grand Narrative' and reflects a broader postmodern turn in Indian mythological writing (Variyar & Prajapati, 2018).



Kavya Setu

A Multidisciplinary Open Access, Peer-Reviewed Refereed Journal

Impact Factor: 7.2

ISSN No: 3049-4176

2.2 Women's Voices in Myth

The most consequential of Divakaruni's interventions is the granting of narrative voice. Draupadi opens her story with her fiery birth and her resentment at being an afterthought to her brother; Sita begins hers by demanding of Valmiki the right to write her own version. Saha (2019) observes that Divakaruni's Sita assumes responsibility for the many women pushed to the margins of the epic—Urmila, Kaikeyi, Ahalya, Mandodari, Surpanakha—who ask that their stories, too, be written. Voice here is not ornament but argument: by making the epic pass through a woman's consciousness, Divakaruni exposes how the ostensibly universal values of dharma, honour, and sacrifice were calibrated to male experience. Sow Mondal et al. (2024) read this strategy as feminist revisionist mythology in the fullest sense—a deconstruction of narratives 'written mostly by men' that simultaneously demonstrates the adaptability of myth to contemporary ethical challenges.

Voice, moreover, alters the epic's scale of values. Episodes that the tradition treats as narrative machinery—the swayamvara arranged for political advantage, the staking of a wife at dice, the whispered slander of a washerman—become, in the women's telling, the moral crises of the story. Divakaruni's Draupadi weeps at a swayamvara that is a contest of alliances rather than of hearts, and her question in the assembly hall—whether Yudhishtir had the right to stake her after staking himself—remains the Mahabharata's one unanswered question. By dwelling where the source texts hurry past, the retellings redistribute the epics' attention, and attention, in narrative as in ethics, is a form of justice.

2.3 Myth and Identity

For Divakaruni, myth is also a technology of identity. Her Draupadi is engaged throughout in the labour of self-definition—Panchaali rather than Draupadi, queen rather than pawn—and her palace of illusions becomes a metaphor for the selves women build within structures they do not control. Sita's identity, likewise, is forged between earth and court, forest and palace, devotion and dignity, and her final refusal of a second trial by fire is an act of self-authorship rather than surrender. Because these figures are foundational to Indian cultural imagination, rewriting them rewrites the models of womanhood a culture transmits. Myth thus functions in Divakaruni's fiction as a mirror in which both individual and collective identities are examined, contested, and re-formed—an insight that prepares the ground for her later, explicitly historical novels.

3. History and Historical Consciousness

3.1 Fiction and History

In *The Last Queen and Independence*, Divakaruni moves from mythic to historical time, yet her method remains recognisably the same: she selects a vantage point that official history has neglected and rebuilds the record around it. *The Last Queen* reconstructs the life of Rani Jindan Kaur, the youngest wife of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and regent of the Sikh empire, who resisted British annexation of Punjab and whom colonial administrators feared enough to imprison and



Kavya Setu

A Multidisciplinary Open Access, Peer-Reviewed Refereed Journal

Impact Factor: 7.2

ISSN No: 3049-4176

exile. Independence follows three sisters in a Bengal village through the convulsions of 1946–1948. Historical fiction of this kind does not compete with historiography; it supplements it, restoring interiority, affect, and the texture of daily life to events that archives record only as administrative fact. The Indian novel in English has repeatedly performed this supplementary labour, mediating between public history and private experience (Anjaria, 2015), and Divakaruni extends the tradition by insisting that the mediating consciousness be female.

The choice of Jindan is itself historiographically pointed. Colonial records preserved her chiefly through hostile epithets, while the durbar chronicles that might have honoured her were dispersed with the kingdom itself. Divakaruni works in the gap between these archives, using the licence of fiction responsibly: major public events—the treaties of 1846 and 1849, the annexation, Dalip Singh's removal—are kept intact, while the novel imagines what no archive recorded, the queen's inner life. The result is what may be called reparative historical fiction: it repairs not the past, which is beyond repair, but the record.

3.2 Partition and National Memory

Independence addresses what Divakaruni has identified as a conspicuous silence: Partition literature in English has concentrated overwhelmingly on Punjab, leaving the Bengal experience—Direct Action Day, the Noakhali violence, the long haemorrhage of the eastern border—comparatively unwritten. Historians have shown that Partition was not a single event but a prolonged process of displacement, violence, and redefinition that made and unmade over twelve million lives (Khan, 2017). The novel translates this macro-history into the micro-history of the Ganguly household: the father killed in communal rioting, Deepa's love for a Muslim man and her passage into the new East Pakistan, Priya's medical ambitions colliding with social expectation, Jamini's compromises. National memory, the novel suggests, is assembled from precisely such domestic fragments, and any commemoration of 1947 that celebrates freedom without counting its costs is incomplete (Butalia, 2015).

3.3 Historical Trauma

Both historical novels are studies in trauma—personal, familial, and collective. Trauma theory emphasises that catastrophic experience resists straightforward narration and returns instead as repetition, silence, and belatedness (Bond & Craps, 2020). Divakaruni renders this formally: in *Independence*, the sisters' story is punctuated by losses that cannot be spoken within the family, while in *The Last Queen* Jindan's separation from her son Dalip—taken to England and converted—functions as a wound that time never closes. Importantly, Divakaruni avoids reducing her characters to victims. Following Rothberg's (2019) notion of the implicated subject, her fiction shows ordinary people entangled in histories of violence as beneficiaries, bystanders, and reluctant participants, not merely as sufferers; Amit, Raza, and even the revolutionaries of *Independence* are implicated figures whose choices carry moral weight. Trauma is thus historicised rather than aestheticised.



Kavya Setu

A Multidisciplinary Open Access, Peer-Reviewed Refereed Journal

Impact Factor: 7.2

ISSN No: 3049-4176

4. Nation and National Identity

4.1 Idea of Nation

Across the four novels the nation appears not as a given but as a construction perpetually under negotiation. In the epic retellings, the proto-national imaginary of Bharat is embodied in dynastic struggles over land and legitimacy, and Divakaruni's women view its wars with disenchanted clarity: Draupadi watches Kurukshetra consume the very order it was fought to preserve, and Sita questions whether a king's duty to his subjects can justify injustice to his own household. In *The Last Queen*, the nation-in-waiting is Punjab, a sovereign polity dismantled by treaty, annexation, and the confiscation of the Koh-i-Noor; Jindan's resistance articulates an indigenous sovereignty that colonial narrative erased. In *Independence*, finally, the nation is born—but as twins, India and Pakistan, delivered in blood. Divakaruni thereby stages the full arc of the national idea: imagined, colonised, and partitioned.

4.2 Diaspora and Belonging

Although the four novels are set in India, they are written from the diaspora, and this location shapes their vision. Diaspora scholarship has argued that distance from the homeland intensifies rather than dilutes the labour of cultural transmission, making the diasporic writer a custodian and re-inventor of tradition (Hegde & Sahoo, 2018). Divakaruni has described her mythological and historical turn as possible only after she had written through the immigrant present; the epics and the freedom struggle are, for her, the deep archive that the diaspora carries. Her retellings therefore address a double audience: Indian readers renegotiating their inheritance, and diasporic readers for whom Draupadi, Sita, or the Partition are memory at one remove. Belonging, in her fiction, is never simply territorial; it is narrative—one belongs to the stories one retells.

This double audience also explains the novels' pedagogic texture—the glossing of rituals, the careful staging of festivals, kitchens, and courts. What might read as exoticism is better understood as transmission: the diasporic writer cannot assume the reader's prior immersion in the memory-culture and therefore rebuilds it inside the text. In doing so, Divakaruni converts the novel itself into an instrument of cultural memory, a portable substitute for the grandmother's storytelling that migration interrupts (Hegde & Sahoo, 2018).

4.3 Borders and Identity

Borders in Divakaruni's fiction are lines drawn across bodies and affections. The Radcliffe line in *Independence* severs Deepa from her family when love takes her across the new frontier into East Pakistan; her clandestine rescue dramatises how arbitrarily the border converts neighbours into foreigners. In *The Last Queen*, the borders are imperial: Jindan is moved from Lahore to Chunar to Kathmandu to London, each displacement a redrawing of what she may claim as hers. Even the epic heroines live under borders of a kind—the lakshmana rekha that Sita crosses, the boundaries of propriety that Draupadi tests. In every case identity is shown to be border-sensitive: it hardens, splits, or reinvents itself as the lines move, anticipating the insight



Kavya Setu

A Multidisciplinary Open Access, Peer-Reviewed Refereed Journal

Impact Factor: 7.2

ISSN No: 3049-4176

of Partition historiography that the boundary made identities as much as it reflected them (Khan, 2017).

5. Cultural Memory

5.1 Collective Memory

Cultural memory, as memory studies conceives it, is not the sum of individual recollections but a socially organised system of texts, rituals, and images through which a community stabilises its identity over time (Assmann, 2016). The epics are the paradigmatic Indian instance: recited, performed, and domesticated for centuries, they constitute a memory-canon. Divakaruni's intervention is to enter this canon and alter its transmission. When Sita insists on dictating her own chapters to Valmiki, the novel literalises the politics of cultural memory—who records, who is recorded, and in whose interest. Similarly, *The Last Queen* contests the colonial memory-archive in which Jindan survives mainly as the 'Messalina of Punjab,' replacing calumny with testimony. The novels thus perform memory-work: they do not merely depict remembering; they revise what the culture will remember.

5.2 Family and Tradition

In Divakaruni's imagination the family is the primary institution of memory. Recipes, songs, saris, jewellery, blessings, and bedtime tales carry the past into the present along female lines of transmission. Independence is exemplary: the sisters inherit their father's idealism and their mother's kantha-stitching, and the quilt—stories sewn into cloth—becomes the novel's emblem of tradition as something simultaneously preserved and re-patterned. In the epic novels, too, memory is domestic before it is monumental: Draupadi's most durable inheritance is her sorceress-companion's counsel and her mother-in-law Kunti's formidable example; Sita's herbal knowledge, learned from Sunaina in Mithila, sustains her in exile. Tradition, so conceived, is not a prison but a repertoire—usable, revisable, and, crucially, owned by women. The gendering of this transmission is deliberate. Official memory—chronicle, treaty, gazette—belongs in these novels to men and to empires; unofficial memory—lullaby, recipe, quilt, oral tale—belongs to women, and it is the unofficial channel that proves durable. When kingdoms fall and borders move, it is Jamini's stitching and Sita's herb-lore that cross intact. Divakaruni thereby inverts the usual hierarchy of sources: in her fictional epistemology, the domestic archive outlasts and corrects the state archive (Assmann, 2016).

5.3 Memory and Migration

Migration reorganises memory, and Divakaruni—herself a migrant—renders this with particular sensitivity. Jindan in exile curates Punjab in miniature: language, prayer, and the remembered geography of Lahore become portable homeland. Deepa in the new Pakistan must decide which memories may be spoken aloud and which endanger her. For the diasporic writer and reader alike, the epics function analogously, as memory carried across oceans (Hegde & Sahoo, 2018). Migration in these texts produces what might be called anticipatory nostalgia—characters archive the present even as they live it, aware that displacement will soon convert



Kavya Setu

A Multidisciplinary Open Access, Peer-Reviewed Refereed Journal

Impact Factor: 7.2

ISSN No: 3049-4176

experience into memory. The result is a poetics in which home is less a place than a practice of remembrance.

6. Interplay of Myth, History, Nation, and Memory

6.1 Narrative Techniques

Divakaruni binds her four registers together through a consistent repertoire of techniques. First-person retrospective narration converts epic and history alike into testimony; prophecy and premonition (Draupadi's foretold marriages, Sita's inner voice, Jindan's dreams) fold the future into the present, mimicking the way cultural memory always already knows the ending; and the embedding of songs, letters, recipes, and tales-within-tales models the transmission of memory inside the narrative itself. The novels also share a structural rhythm of palace and exile, possession and loss, that makes the mythic pattern legible beneath the historical one. Variyar and Prajapati (2018) note the fusion of traditional mythology with modern sensibility in her retellings; the same fusion, this study argues, governs her historical fiction, where archival fact is voiced with novelistic intimacy.

A further technique deserves notice: the dialogic frame. *The Forest of Enchantments* opens with Sita reading Valmiki's completed manuscript and objecting to it; *The Palace of Illusions* has Panchaali narrate against the versions 'the bards would sing'; *The Last Queen* is told against the calumnies of the British record. Each novel, that is, contains the official version inside itself as an antagonist, so that revision is dramatised rather than merely performed. The reader watches memory being contested on the page—an education in critical remembrance.

6.2 Gender and Identity

Gender is the hinge on which the interplay turns. Myth, history, nation, and memory are all, in their dominant forms, patriarchal genres: epics glorify heroes, histories record rulers, nations imagine themselves as brotherhoods, and archives preserve what men wrote. By routing all four through women's consciousness, Divakaruni exposes their gendered construction. Draupadi's question—whether the war was fought for honour or for her humiliation—rewrites heroism as accountability; Jindan's regency rewrites politics as maternal strategy; Priya's struggle to become a doctor rewrites national progress as women's access to it. Sow Mondal et al. (2024) rightly describe such writing as amplifying voices relegated to the periphery; the present study adds that the amplification is systematic, spanning mythic, historical, and national narration alike.

6.3 Memory as Resistance

Finally, memory in Divakaruni is agentive. To remember differently is to resist: Sita's *Sitayan* resists Valmiki's monopoly; Jindan's testimony resists the colonial dossier; the sisters' remembering of Direct Action Day and Noakhali resists a national commemoration that prefers triumph to grief (Butalia, 2015). Memory-work of this kind aligns with what trauma scholarship calls the ethical turn in remembrance—memory oriented not toward nostalgia but toward justice (Bond & Craps, 2020; Rothberg, 2019). Divakaruni's heroines are rememberers



Kavya Setu

A Multidisciplinary Open Access, Peer-Reviewed Refereed Journal

Impact Factor: 7.2

ISSN No: 3049-4176

in this strong sense; their narration is their politics. The interplay of myth, history, nation, and memory in her fiction therefore resolves into a single project: constructing a feminist counter-archive of Indian civilisation.

7. Analysis of Selected Novels

7.1 The Palace of Illusions

The Palace of Illusions (Divakaruni, 2019b) retells the Mahabharata as Panchaali's autobiography, from her birth out of fire to her final ascent of the Himalayas. The novel's governing image—the magical palace built for the Pandavas and lost at dice—condenses its themes: women build the interiors of worlds whose exteriors men gamble away. Divakaruni humanises the epic's absolutes; dharma is interrogated through Draupadi's unanswered question in the dice-hall, and desire enters the canon through her lifelong, unspoken pull toward Karna. Critics have read the novel as the epic's missing 'stree parva,' the woman's chapter, and as a paradigmatic act of feminist revision (Variyar & Prajapati, 2018). For this study its importance is archival: Panchaali narrates so that, as she says, the tale will not be told only by men—myth is reclaimed as memory.

The novel's texture rewards attention as much as its argument. Divakaruni fills the epic's abstractions with sensory and psychological detail—the sabha's game of dice rendered as slow-motion catastrophe, the years of exile as a study in marriage under strain, the disrobing as trauma remembered in the first person rather than miracle reported in the third. Panchaali is allowed flaws the tradition denies her: vanity, ambition, a temper, and a capacity for grievance that helps kindle the war. This refusal of hagiography is itself feminist method; the heroine earns her authority as narrator by being fully, fallibly human.

7.2 The Forest of Enchantments

The Forest of Enchantments (Divakaruni, 2019a) frames itself explicitly as counter-writing: handed Valmiki's manuscript, Sita resolves to write her own. The novel keeps faith with the Ramayana's events while transvaluing them—love, not war, becomes the epic's subject, and the agnipariksha and banishment become the ethical centre rather than embarrassing appendices. Saha (2019) emphasises how the narration gathers the epic's marginal women into Sita's chorus, converting a solitary heroine into a collective voice; Sow Mondal et al. (2024) read her trajectory as a quest for identity and space within patriarchy. The ending is decisive for the argument of this paper: asked to prove her purity a second time, Sita returns to the earth—refusing the terms of a memory-culture that demands women's self-erasure, and bequeathing instead her own text, the Sitayan, as revised cultural memory.

Formally, the book is framed as a meditation on love—Sita organises her account around love's varieties: filial, conjugal, maternal, and finally love of self-respect. The frame matters because it relocates the Ramayana's centre from the battlefield of Lanka to the interior battlefield where devotion contends with dignity. Divakaruni researched multiple Ramayana traditions, including the Adbhuta and Krittibasi versions, and folds their variants into Sita's telling,



Kavya Setu

A Multidisciplinary Open Access, Peer-Reviewed Refereed Journal

Impact Factor: 7.2

ISSN No: 3049-4176

reminding readers that the tradition was always plural (Saha, 2019); the Sitayan is thus less a heresy than a homecoming.

7.3 The Last Queen

The Last Queen (Divakaruni, 2021) recovers Rani Jindan Kaur, the kennel-keeper's daughter who became Ranjit Singh's queen, regent for the boy-king Dalip, and the resistance the British called the 'rebel queen.' Structured in four movements—girl, bride, queen, rebel—the novel follows her through the court intrigues of Lahore, the Anglo-Sikh wars, imprisonment, escape to Nepal, and a final reunion with her anglicised son in London. Divakaruni's Jindan articulates a sovereignty that colonial historiography defamed and nationalist historiography, centred elsewhere, largely forgot; the novel thus performs a double recovery, of a woman and of a region. Read through postcolonial and memory-critical lenses, it reinstates female agency and indigenous resistance within the story of imperial conquest, transforming an archival footnote into national memory—and pointedly ending with the Koh-i-Noor, memory's most contested jewel.

7.4 Independence

Independence (Divakaruni, 2022) completes the arc by narrating the birth of the nation from within one Bengali family. The three sisters embody three relations to the new India: Deepa, whose love crosses the communal line and the new border; Priya, whose vocation tests the nation's promises to its daughters; Jamini, whose piety and sacrifice measure tradition's costs. Around them Divakaruni arranges the documented catastrophes—Direct Action Day, Noakhali, the assassination of Gandhi—so that public history and family story interpret each other. The novel answers the historiographical call to record Partition's long shadow in ordinary lives (Butalia, 2015; Khan, 2017), and it does so in a Bengali key that mainstream Anglophone Partition fiction has neglected. Freedom, the novel insists, must be remembered together with its price; the sisters' survival, and their storytelling, constitute that fuller memory.

8. Conclusion

8.1 Major Findings

The study yields three principal findings. First, Divakaruni's mythological and historical novels form a single continuum governed by one strategy: the re-narration of authoritative pasts through female first-person testimony. Second, in her work myth and history are not opposites but collaborators in cultural memory—myth supplies the deep patterns through which history is felt, and history supplies the urgency through which myth is revised. Third, memory itself is her fiction's true protagonist: transmitted through families and especially through women, it operates as identity, as inheritance, and, most powerfully, as resistance to the erasures of patriarchy and empire.

8.2 Contribution of the Study

The paper contributes an integrated framework for reading Divakaruni that existing criticism, divided between studies of her retellings and studies of her historical fiction, has not supplied.



Kavya Setu

A Multidisciplinary Open Access, Peer-Reviewed Refereed Journal

Impact Factor: 7.2

ISSN No: 3049-4176

By aligning feminist revisionist mythmaking with partition historiography and memory studies, it shows that the 'Sitayan' and the Partition novel answer the same question—who is authorised to remember the nation—and it proposes the concept of the feminist counter-archive as a description of her oeuvre. The framework is portable and may be applied to other South Asian women writers who move between myth and history.

8.3 Future Scope

Several avenues remain open. Comparative study of Divakaruni's retellings alongside those of Pratibha Ray, Volga, Amish Tripathi, and Kavita Kané would clarify the field of contemporary Indian mythopoesis. Her earlier immigrant fiction could be re-read through the memory framework developed here, testing whether diasporic remembering anticipates her later archival turn. Reception studies—how Indian and diasporic readers, classrooms, and adaptations take up these novels—would illuminate the actual circulation of the revised memory they propose. Finally, ecocritical and translation-studies approaches to the Sitayan promise further insight into how Divakaruni's counter-archive travels across languages and media.

References

1. Anjaria, U. (Ed.). (2015). *A history of the Indian novel in English*. Cambridge University Press.
2. Assmann, A. (2016). *Shadows of trauma: Memory and the politics of postwar identity* (S. Clift, Trans.). Fordham University Press.
3. Bond, L., & Craps, S. (2020). *Trauma*. Routledge.
4. Butalia, U. (Ed.). (2015). *Partition: The long shadow*. Zubaan.
5. Divakaruni, C. B. (2019a). *The forest of enchantments*. HarperCollins India.
6. Divakaruni, C. B. (2019b). *The palace of illusions* (Anniversary ed.). Picador India.
7. Divakaruni, C. B. (2021). *The last queen*. HarperCollins India.
8. Divakaruni, C. B. (2022). *Independence*. HarperCollins India.
9. Hegde, R. S., & Sahoo, A. K. (Eds.). (2018). *Routledge handbook of the Indian diaspora*. Routledge.
10. Khan, Y. (2017). *The great partition: The making of India and Pakistan* (2nd ed.). Yale University Press.
11. Pattanaik, D. (2015). *My Gita*. Rupa Publications.
12. Rothberg, M. (2019). *The implicated subject: Beyond victims and perpetrators*. Stanford University Press.
13. Saha, S. (2019). Review article: Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Forest of Enchantments*: A saga of duty, betrayal, integrity and honour. *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 11(2). <https://doi.org/10.21659/rupkatha.v11n2.13>
14. Sow Mondal, K. C., Sivapurapu, L., Raj, Y., & Raju, M. (2024). A feminist revisionist study of Divakaruni's *Sitayan*. *International Research Journal of Multidisciplinary Scope*, 5(1), 699–713. <https://doi.org/10.47857/irjms.2024.v05i01.0344>
15. Variyar, A., & Prajapati, A. (2018). Myth and modernity in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Palace of Illusions*. *Veda's Journal of English Language and Literature (JOELL)*, 5(1), 304–307.