

Longing, Belonging and Gender Relations in Bina Shah's Novel *Where They Dream in Blue*.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to analyse the quest for identity as revealed in Bina Shah's first novel "Where dream in Blue". South Asian reality is not static but dynamic. Shah's orientalist glamour and hybrid dialogue affirms her knowledge of the cultures and societies being depicted in the novel. This novel is significant as it discusses the ambivalent representation of her central characters. She focuses on the issues of immigrants living in USA and their collision and collusion with the culture of the country of their origin. This interaction of immigrants with their own culture and that of their acquired culture produces identity-crisis, displacement, differences with their parents and the ongoing battle within themselves. Karim and Afsar being the victim of double civilization learn to deal with their expectations, disappointments, aspirations and achievements. Unveiling the power relation between the genders, the representation of women is interesting as they adopt various courses of action to counter discrimination and bias. The hero also refutes fixed notions of the West and the standardized practices of the East. By challenging the set norms, the protagonists contest fixity and create safe third space for their survival.

Key Words: Identity-crisis, Culture, Belonging, Difference, Hybridity, Ambivalence