

Expatriate experience and feminism in the selected novels of Bharati Mukherjee

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Abstract

Bharati Mukherjee an Indian-born American novelist. She has received considerable critical attention from almost all quarters of the globe. An examination of the works of Bharti Mukherjee reveals a movement from expatriation to immigrant. Bharti Mukherjee flaunts the Indian ideologies in her style Indian myth is like and embellishment on the western Canvas All her character possess several facts of feminism. Everything falls apart, as if a void has been lifted and everything seems to be in propinquity with a single theme, and that is, adaptation into alien situation and move forward. Extreme cases of feminism are detested by Bharati Mukherjee.

Keywords: Immigrant, feminism, assimilation, migrate, under statements, canvas

Introduction

Bharati Mukherjee is one of the well-known feminist writers. She reveals the problems of women. She is an Indian born American writer. She was born in 1940 in Kolkata. Mukherjee passed her Bachelor's Degree with honors from Kolkata in 1959 and Master's degree in Ancient Indian culture and English from Baroda in 1961. She completed her Ph.D. in English and comparative literature from the university of Iowa Bharati Mukherjee's characters follow the path of renunciation, reaching it by performing their action with a detachment that shocks the readers into feeling that violence is Justified and advocated by Bharati Mukherjee as the only path for ethnic women to retrieve their lost selves. Born to a life of servility to the superior male in order to assert she has the weapon of tears which she was to destroy. The slicing of tongue by Jasmine. It more like serving all ties with the old traditions. The act of burning the white sari along with Praksh's suit it, symbolic of Jasmine's renouncing the past which she leaves. Traveling light has a metoghical ring to it. In order to transcend. One has to be pious, and lesson the karmas quicker he/she attains transcendence cutting of the tongue before killing is symbolic of the pioussness of Jasmine, revenge. Throughout the novel her actions name an essence of pioussness. Her relationship it with Wylie and Bud are congenial. Even her extravagant act of disappearance it marked with recriminations. Devi in "Leave it to me", a true American individual, it more of a taker than a giver. The two characters are juxtaposed to bring out significantly the ideologies represented them, though Jasmine is a character balanced by retaining the values of both by cultures. Bharati Mukherjee analyses the various social issues through feminist approach in her works. Jasmine faces various advance circumstances as immigrant and tries to adjust in these. Painful condition. But finally she traps in identity crisis and violent.

Feminism: Though the human beings have been divided into numerous classes but God. The nlmighty has divided them only two classes – men and women. Women are an integral part of human civilization. No society can progress without the active participations of women in the developmental

activities with men. But since. Immemorial women are being neglected and have never been considered the equal of men. They are being exploited and oppressed. The injustice and exploitation against women made some thinkers conscious and they raised their voice for her political. Social and educational equality of women with men. This conscious voice for women's emancipation is known as feminism. Feminist theory is the expansion of feminism into theoretical and philosophical ground. Many women writers involved feminism in their piece of writings either it is a prose or poem fiction includes feminism as one of the major subjects. Indian feminists like Anita Desai, Dayanara Sahgal, Kamala Das, and Bharti Mukherjee have evolved as prominent writers in there last, two decades. Bharati Mukherjee has become very popular where her themes indudealienation, immigrant experience, expatriation, clash of cuture, multiculture alism. Racial discrimination. Transformation of women. Attitude of revenge, sense of new morality men women relationship. Women in new land.

Violence of Dimple in the Novel Wife

Wife' is the story of a young Indian woman dimple disrupt, who attempts to reconcile the Bengali ideal of the perfect passive wife with the demands of real life. Dimple is married to Amit Bose ambitious engineer. About to immigrate to the United States. Dimple finds the adjustments to marriage more difficult than she had expected. The move to New York leaves her in state of shock and despair. There she watches television, sleeps, studies Better home and gardens and ananomusly meets people she keeps contemplating ways commit suicide in fact this alien environment and Dimple's inherent instability are two combined forces which prompt her to contemplate suicide or murder. She develops insomnia and eventually stabs her husband to death. Dimpled is an extremely immature girl who constantly dream of marriage as she hopes that it would be freedom and love. Mukherjee shows through the novel wife how Dimple under goes transformation from a simple girl in Barllygunge to Amit Basus wife. She makes several efforts like dressing up differently trying new hair style to please her husband

Dimple took to wearing bright colours. Red orange and purples. Amit even compliments her on the different. Looks. In the same regard Mukherjee herself states that the kinds of women she writes about are those who are adjusting Indian daughters have been raised to please, trained to be adaptable wives, and that adaptability it working to the women's advantage when they come over as immigrants. The attitude of revenge an element of feminism it also seen in the novel wife Dimple is shown as a sadistic woman. Sometimes she was feeling so much loneliness that it made her hysteric. Dimple was always living in apprehension and depression due to the news about mugging and rape. She is disillusioned an all places physical, mental and emotional. Freedom from the ponds of caste, gender and family instead of turning her hilarious, leaves her utterly lonely and desolate. The world liberation has different connotations in the novel: wife, if we look at it from American culture point of which is one of the prime elements of feminism in the novel.

Transformation of Jasmine

Jasmine, the protagonist, leaves India seemingly to fulfill her husband's last wish of studying at the American University by burning herself like a Sati on the heap of his clothes and certificates. Like her narrator Jasmine chameleon-like, transforms herself with increasing rapidity and bravado she is Jota, Jasmine, Jose, same quickly easily and uninhibitedly. Transformation certainly is its major theme. The defiance that the seven year old Jota shows to the curse of widowhood and exited foretold by the fortune-teller, turns into her acceptance of the new name Jasmine given by her husband Prakash. Surrendering to Prakash's way and views of life, Jasmine realizes the change herself. In the white lamplight ghost float towards me. Jane, Jasmine, Jyoti. Indira talks about this in an explicit manner with healing touch of people like lilion Gordon, Kat and Taylor, who treated her Jasmine blooms from being a different alien with forged documents into adventurous Jesse living only for the present. A woman has to accept the path of revolution to change from Jyoti to jasmine, Jasmine to Jase and Jase to Jane is not an easy process she survived hideous times that involved rapes and murders, terrifying challenges and unimaginable crises. She is not sentimental about her Indian identity. nor does she suffer from no nostalgece longing. Instead, she has used all her strength and resolve to forge new alliances in the friendly soil of the adopted homeland. The fusion between the east and west pleases her and she rejoices that her journey to America has unfolded her affirming self. While Jasmine is triumphant that her transformation has been genetic. On, her adopted son reonaing condifidant immigrant who refused to assimilate. Unlike her, he has tried to develop contact with the other. Jasmine is an exile in flight from the old - world of India and old cultural values. Her sense and senibilities are actively engaged with the world outside her. Leaving no time to reflect on the probelems whether life is meaningful or why on should think of east, west north or south when one can be a singular self as culture and history world shape on. But in creating such a character in attempting to relocate the character in a desired but alien enviroment. Mukherjee does not probe the inner consciousness of the protagonist nor does she depicts the deeper layers of values there. The novel looks at American expenence of the immigrants, their legal and illegal entry into their country

and its consequences this though Mukherjee refered to Kali, Genapati, Lord Yama and elpecially the pitcher theory of Hindu belief she does not widen in any way the American experience since she doest not explore the Indian cultural and philosophical images. Jasmine was very much transformed into American culture. But still she was a vagabond and searching a permanental place in an alien land. Jasmine was suggested to move New York to have a suitable job because Gordon's daughter lived there. Garden also gave her an introductory letter when she reached there, she was eager to visit Divider Adhere. His home was a part of Punjabi immigrant's ghetto. They rarely came out of their building. Jasmine wanted to remain free and she could not adjust with the conservative Adheres who were Indians. She becomes an American on apartment on Claremont avenue across the street from hence Bharati Mukherjee's Jasmine is the movement of Jasmynes' life towards achieving true identity.

Feminism Mystique in the Tiger's Daughter

The Tiger's Daughter reflects the confrontation between illusion and reality. But the Tiger's Daughterhood adapted the technique of documentation to bring out the contrast between the two worlds and two attitudes. There is a strange fusion of the Americanos and Indianans in the psyche of Tara and they are always at a note of confrontation with each other. Sometimes she makes futile effort to establish her American self. But it clashes with the pulse of Indian life on her visit to Calcutta. Neither can she take refuse in her old Indian self nor in her newly discovered American self. The outcome of this confrontation is her split up psyche The protagonist being depressed and disgusted with the deteriorating situation of India and her new personality finds herself difficult to adjust with the situation and finally wishes to go back to the U.S.A. to her husband but she becomes a victim of violence in India. During those moments when she is caught up in the violence, her mind is preoccupied with her husband David in America. The most important cause aggravating her discomfort and unease her marriage which hangs on her heart as a burden. In India she felt she was not married to a person but to a foreign and this foreignness was a burden. It was hard for her to talk about the adjustments she had made. Tara's is mind is constantly at conflict with the two personalities - one of an Indian and the other of an American. During such moments she feels to go back to her husband David because she feels that she would be more at ease there caught in this gulf between the two contrasting worlds, Tara feels that she has forgotten many of her Hindu rituals of worshipping icons which she had seen her another performing since her childhood. The following incident throws light on this aspect. Tara's negative, reaction at the changed social situation and deterioration of Calcutta makes her friend Reena to comment about her that she has become too self centred and European. for Tara, It is violence and ghettos in American life that matters, but her friends do not accept the facts about American life. They want to be told about their fantasis of that life. The foregoing interpretation of the term culture and its components deomstrates that there is absolutely no possibility of reaching at uniform tangible pattern in this respect. Diversity of cultural assumptions and complications provide little scope for total assimilation. In case where cultural dissimilarities are much sharper in terms of ethnic, racial linguistic and religious determinants. The issues get

irredeemably complex for the immigrant to cope with. No Doubt America is the crowing glory of our time and so it has become a sole dream of people around the world. The young ambitious personel, especially from third world countries, where they cannot get enough to do are making an unabated flow to America. These aspirants to the new world are dead set even in there, own country to blindly imitate American habits and American culture. They feel more American than their native counterparts in all respects and obviously their cultural, shock.

Feminist view in the holder of the world

The holder of the world can be read on several levels of interpretation. Hannah Easton arrives in India from puritan Massa chutes and translate harse if into the salem bibi the mistress of Raja Jadav Singh. The novel also of the emperor's tear, the diamond which Aurangzeb hung in his war tent and which Hannah steals. In the Holder of the world, she suggests two advantages of women liberation which she thinks is not just a twentieth century phenomenon. It was prevalent in the epic period as well as in the seventeenth century) one it allows them to realize their potential as individuals in the holder society and two. It is only way by which they could achieve the personal recognition and identity – Her character Dimple in wife, Jasmine in Jasmine and Rebecca, Hannah and Bhagmati in the Holder of the world recurrently defy estrangement in the society they live and get the answer in rejecting cultural stereotypes they develop the life of their own outside the home. More they learn about themselves more individualistic they become. Like Hannah all are self-possessed, intelligent and desirable." irrespective of their time and place. As far as their sense of assimilation is concerned Hannah is dissimilar to all of them Dimple is perturbed and her migration to USA proves disastrous to her hyper. Sensitive nature. She remains unadaptable to her new environment. Jasmine is initially unable to adopt American Culture but soon adjusts herself to the new way of life. The way Bharati Mukherjee has inter coded and reworked the study of feminism in her writings Justifies the restoration of globalization to American culture. Feminism in her works has something of what card smith Rosenberg argues is the emotional segregation of woman and man, which brought about, lid to the development of specifically. Female world. Comes to us not only in Mukherjee's novels but also in her collection of short stories like Darkness and The middleman and other stories. She advocates many facets feminism encompassing agitation for equal opportunity, sexual autonomy and right of self-determination. This brings her closer to her contemporary women writers. Like Anita Desai, Kamala Maranda, Sasha Deshpande, Dayanara Sahgal, Furth Prewar Jabil and Gita Harahan. The Holder of the world can be read on several levels of interpretation. If one the one hand it is a feminist novel, on the other it in a historical one.

Feminism and Transformation theme in the Middleman

In many stories of Bharti Mukherjee the protagonists are women who are married or divorced and have an inclination to form relationships which terminate in sexual misadventure. Can these female characters be called the liberated women? They pick up and mix with men so freely and satisfy their just for sensibility and then instead of stopping there move on to form new arrangements. The

traditional view of seeing these love relationships terminating in marital unions or well established love affair is now where distinctly conceived. On the contrary their disorderly conduct and promiscuity raise doubts about their notions and dream of immigration and settlement in the USA. The complexities of the story built up in the early part are suddenly resolved in the second part by winding it off on a scene of love and the resultant transformations. Again while her past was rich and gorgeous the married life of the Indian woman had been disgusting. The husband never knew any such things as a couple going out together for shopping. This because he never recognized her as a person. Only after he comes to the US does he come to know her as a district person, as one who has her own identity. In India, hers had been a life, crushed under the weight of tradition of obedience to husband and mother in law. There she did not even know calling him by his first name. His sick mentality is revealed in her ironic of her situations and people and character is typically American. She places her immigrant characters in real American settings. In fact one might say that her representation of the cross section of immigrant population she has chosen to deal with is drown in a realistic vein. Only the romantic endings have been somewhat fantasized. Her characters are real, modern, life like. The are typical representatives of young men and women particularly of the third world countries who cherish the dream of emigrating to America for higher eduucation and higher wages, and then after their arrival, there aspire to settle there permanently, Their situations and the difficulties they face are also realistically portrayed in reality, however, the people go abroad to earn more money than anything else. The difficulties in for instance getting visas and travel documents or foreign exchange are drawn with great fidelity of detail – Bharati Mukherjee's pre-occupation with the underground activities of the guerrillas suggests that she is inclined to reveal the underworld of the smugglers the middlemen, and other agencies which because of their undercover operations ordinarily escape notice. Bharati Mukherjee's stories ultimately present a fascinating a picture of what constitutes modern America and the modern experience. With the transformation of men, there has also been the transformation of places but the trnsformation of places has a negative aspect. The stories discussed so far have been analyzed with the perspective of inter-ethnic relationships among white and Asian characters. The stories also have been observed with a view points towards the portrayal of women characters and role played by them. Most of the diaspora writers write about dislocation and displacement in geographical terms and in socio- cultural sense. Mukherjee's short stories are narratives of displaced immigrants who are from other Asian countries especially Indian. But peculiarly, the immigrants in her stories are detached from their roots, have no self-identity, do not wish to come back to their native country and continue to face the challenges of being an immigrant.

Conclusion

Mukherjee invariably focused upon sensitive protagonist who lack firm sense of cultural identity and are natural victims of racism, feminism numerous form of social oppression. The beauty of much of her fiction lies in its being informed by her personal experiences. A peculiar sense of involvement bordering on total identification with the characters lends her novels a flavor rarely found among

expatriate writer. She achieves a dispassionate objectivity through understatements and ironic observations. She feels for her suffering protagonists, at times emphasizes with them but seldom fails to underline their human vulnerability. Though she has undergone the traumatic process of the acculturation. She has not allowed here prejudices to infect her act, her fictional writings from a cultural stand point signify that she has addressed to all the issues associated with expatriate experience. Her novel express the nomadic. Impulses of Indians who, in their deliberate search for a materially better life, migrate to the west and consequently face the tensions of adaptation and assimilation. She chose her characters from all parts of the world having innumerable ethnic. Religious and cultural preoccupations. She has tried her best to take out the multiplicity of the theme which depict their struggles to outgrow inherited values. The canvas of the thematic, content and complexity of cultural assimilation enlarge and acquire an innovative facet. The thorough analysis of her novels reveals that they follow a sense of direction, growth and evaluation on her writing.

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