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The treatment of the theme in the novels of Bharati Mukherjee

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ABSTRACT

The present study and honest attempt to examine how in her novel as well as sort stories. Bharati Mukherjee has made a concerted effort to present the true image of immigrants of in the USA as well as Canada. She has shown convincingly through the portrayal of sensitive protagonist that all of them have to grapple with various prejudices of racism, sexism and various kind of exploitation and discrimination of the new countries.

Keywords: Bharati Mukherjee, Novels, Immigrant, America

Bharati Mukherjee is usually described as a diasporic writer and she belongs to the second generation of Indians settled abroad. It is well-known that she moved to the United States after obtaining her M.A. in 1962 and has never looked back. In her case the problem of immigration acquires a different perspective because she moved to Canada, married there and worked for some time but her experience left a bitter taste in the mouth and she finally moved to the United States and settled there with her husband even though retaining her Canadian citizenship. This biographical for a proper understanding of Her status of a true chronicle of the immigrant's experience of recent times. Infact, the present study and honest attempt to examine how in her novel as well as sort stories. Bharati Mukherjee has made a concerted effort to present the true image of immigrants of in the USA as well as Canada. She has shown convincingly through the portrayal of sensitive protagonist that all of them have to grapple with various prejudices of racism, sexism and various kind of exploitation and discrimination of the new countries. However in her Novels immigration is also viewed both as a kind of opportunity and challenge for the immigrants to survive with dignity without losing their individual identity and cultural background completely. Infact she presents a kind of double vision in her novels. Where she treats America both as a seducer which lures the immigrants towards and bitter life and also as a sucker or siren which deprives them of their cultural strength and mooring.

Another aspect of her treatment lies in the fact that it had shades of personal experiences. This has, however, not affected the quality or the authenticity of her presentation of the Complex problems discussed in a fiction as an Indian critic has rightly pointed out. "Though she has herself undergone the traumatic process of acculturation, she has not allowed her prejudices to infect her art."

As is known to all, America consists of a large number of immigrants who came to the land because of various reasons and belong to various nationalities and cultures and America as a nation benefitted to them and eventually a national American consciousness evolve as a result of transformation or fusion over a long periods. In other words the present status of America as a multicultural and Multi-racial nation is a result of a long process which has involved struggles, aspiration, alienation, pain and trauma.

Bharti Mukherjee's fiction makes a very violent attempt to chronical struggles of the immigrants and their sincere effort at attempt to assimilate themselves in the melting pot. Her portrayal of her characters in the novels shows that she has projected a convincing portrait gallery if various Asian immigrants in general and Indian immigrants in particular. In her very first novel "*The Tigers Daughter*", she explores the condition of an Indian expatriate in a new country with lot of detachment even now the satirical tone is quite pronounce. Here thought the portrayal of Tara she presents the dilemma of a young Indian expatriate not fully accustomed to the American setup or milieu with rare candor and sympathy. Here she seems to be following Jane Austen's method of ironic modes and visions. The heroin's problems as discussed in the novel are well documented initial dilemma of its female protagonist who suffers from nostalgia as well as discomfort in the new situation. The female protagonist analysis the frailties and and contradictions in the traditional middle class Bengali family home in Calcutta enjoying the wealth of luxury. On the on hand she is suffering from various taboos and restrictions and, on the other Tara however emerges as a survival of a new situation. In spite of initial handicaps, in the next novel "*Wife*" we have the extension of the same problem but here as cyclonical case study of an ex heroin. Dimple is made with remarkable insight. Once again credit goes to the writer that Dimple manages the win the reader's sympathy in course of the struggle. In the novel there is a better treatment of the slandered theme of immigrant's fiction. Namely Failed Quests and Sour Dreams.

Dislocation and isolation demands a new and hostile cultural environment at the cost of replacement of an earlier identity. In spite of all these problems, Dimple manages to survive and overcome a serious crisis in her life. There is a violence in the novel and the protagonist Dimple takes the extreme step of killing her husband Amit; obviously a desperate act but also symbolically suggestive of the American dream of survival in the midst of chaos. Critics have noted in the novel a definite advancement and Progression in the novelist's technique, style and vision. The period between *The Tiger's daughter* and 'Wife' was followed by the publication of shorter fiction in the form of two story collections, Namely, *Darkness* and *The Middleman and Other Stories*. In these two volumes "one finds the writer's movement from aloofness of expatriation to the exuberance of immigration." The stories with the *Darkness* underline the pathos in the life of south Asian African and Caribbean immigrants. Some of the stories with the background of Canada deal with the power of politics and society which hurt and affect immigrant life. Credit goes to the fiction writer that she is saved from taking a blatant offensive tone with respect to white characters some of which break norms. Most of these stories have Personal background of racial discrimination as Bharati Mukherjee has herself observed.

"I see my 'immigrant stories' replicated in a dozen American cities, and instead of seeing my Indianness as a fragile identity to be preserved (or worse, a 'visible' disfigurement to be hidden). I see that now as a set of fluid identity to be celebrated"

The beauty of the stories lies in that they are written in the language which is quite American in their Innovativeness and experimentation. These stories are notable for irony, understatement, sharp comment and authorial intervention at times. Sometimes they are written in first person narrative device and sometimes in the mode of 'dialogic' discussion and on rare occasions

Even through the mode of direct address to the reader. As for the next volume '*The Middleman and Other Stories*', the tone undergoes a change from bitterness to tenderness and the clever mix of fables, fairy tales of the cruel city. Occasionally, we also have cases of a happy ending and it seems that the writer has completely forgotten in the old wound of immigration in the present "*The Middle Man and other stories*", there is softening of violence and there is a greater realization of coming to terms of America. Many of the characters are trying to balance their life.

Finally, in her last novel '*Desirable Daughters*', the theme of quest for identity is tried once again to the Portrayal of heroine Tara who is quite self-possessed and curious about her roots and identity in this novel. We once again come across the portrait of a female protagonist! Who has achieved quite a lot in life on her own? The writer has presented her as a personality who combines beauty and brain, wealth and privilege but that does not deter her from taking her own decision in rejecting her husband who is brilliant and prosperous.

To conclude, she has no hesitation in living with the lover without marrying him. She is also preparing for the small son to pursue his career as an artist even in this novel. The heroine Tara takes a risk and has no regrets: "I am free to make a mess of my life" in other words almost in every novel of Bharati Mukherjee, the female protagonists are on the move and are allowed to think.

Whatever enhances her, the quality of her novel is constraint refrain that her major characters are not able to wipe out of the memory of their past: roots cultural background and their numerous bitter sweet experiences the technique of memories revise of journey all these make her novel as a very powerful document of the lives of India diaspora.

By Dr. Amrita Kumari