
**NEW TRENDS IN FEMINISTIC THINKING IN BHARATI
MUKHEJEE'S SELECT NOVELS**

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Abstract

Feminists today believe that the traditional realm of women provides the basis for the articulation of a human world view, one which can operate to change the destructive masculine ideologies that govern the public world. But there is a need to systematize cultural feminist ideology and to teach it. Tara realizes the Indian, traditional and cultural belief will look at her with disrespect as her body has been defiled, but it won't be the same in the American culture. Tara decides to make America her home where she will be accepted. It drives her to self-realization in the form of self-purgation of old traditions. The era of massive diasporic movements, to lead an honorable life, it requires curiosity, and compassion, a letting go of rigid ideas about the purity of inherited culture. Anjali initially fails to establish herself in the alien culture, but soon she rises up to acquire a job with the influence of Girish Gujral because she realizes that her education will fetch her a decent job and gradually she would rise to a position. She knew the job will bring her money, respect, and identity in the society, so she refuses to become a private prostitute of Girish Gujral. Anjali initially fails to establish herself in the alien culture, but soon she rises up to acquire a job with the influence of Girish Gujral because she realizes that her education will fetch her decent job and gradually she would rise to a position. She knew the job will bring her money, respect, and identity in the society, so she refuses to become a private prostitute of Girish Gujral.

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Feminists today believe that the traditional realm of women provides the basis for the articulation of a human world view, one which can operate to change the destructive masculine ideologies that govern the public world. But there is a need to systematize cultural feminist ideology and to teach it. Feminist today, therefore bypass the nature versus nurture question by assuming that revolution is a matter of transforming ideology and that all humans are ultimately educable. Feminism remains one of the most important traditions of Feminist theory of

somewhat more sophisticated in form and political consciousness in the lives of people migrating frequently from one place to another for various reasons.

The present global scenario reveals that many people migrate mainly for empowering their economic status, thus they move in search of employment, business and trade, also they take their family along with them. The modern concept of immigration has become the center story in women's literature because the men go to the west for economic fulfillment but the women after living in the West the especially the U.S.A. undergo a cultural transformation and they enjoy the freedom which is deprived to them in their native soil.

Bharati Mukherjee, a diasporic writer, had resided in the U.S.A. in her novels, she has focused on her women characters having a new trend of feministic thinking and who try to create various, cultural ethnic and political identities to meet the challenges from their native lands and their adopted homeland. The author states; that immigrant and migrants have fascinating tales to relate, many have lived in a newly independent or emerging countries or big cities, where they have come either by choice or out of necessity. The author's aim is to expose the energetic voices of new settlers especially women in the foreign land and the big cities of the native land.

In her first novel "The Tiger's Daughter" (1971), Tara makes her decision to get married to an American, after marriage, she felt caught between two worlds (America and India). To search for her identity, she returns back to India, the transformation in her could not connect her back to the motherland, and she fails to adjust to the changes in Calcutta. Tara hides the misfortune incident of her rape from her friends and relatives. She survived the racial hardship in a foreign country but becomes a victim in her native soil

“The freedom of expression and release from the traditional attitude of regarding one's own body as a banal topic, the protagonists of Bharati Mukherjee, surge forward, exuberant in their Americanness” (Singh, 238)

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In the novel “Jasmine” (1990), Bharati Mukherjee presents the hybridization process of a real survivor, Jasmine, her commitment to survive, her inquisitiveness to know about the socio-cultural values of the alien country and her determination to face the trials, her ability to deal with the uncertainties of the host country with her adaptive nature. Born as Jyoti, and the fifth daughter, she is doubly marginalized by gender and ethnicity. She battles against her ethics and feminine sensibility. Despite the circumstances, she enthusiastically adopts a series of survival strategies in the process of amalgamation. Jasmine does not straddle between her inherited cultural values and her self – actualization.

Nevertheless, she develops an admiration for American society. To root herself into the new world, she accepts the job as a "day mummy" in Manhattan to Duff, the child of Wyile and Taylor, then she becomes a "Caregiver" to Bud, a fifty – year old crippled banker in Iowa.

Slowly Jasmine becomes the cultural city of the adopted land by casting away her cultural, spiritual, ideological and psychological identity. Jasmine realizes that in the host culture nobody will look at her as a window or a raped victim. She mingles with the "melting pot" by acquiring a "fluid identity" in her new American lifestyle, her dressing, her language and her attitudinal behavior with the trend of the western culture. The novelist drives home the message that change and flexibility form a vital point in the life of any survivor. One believes that “things do not change, we change”.

Tara Chatterjee of “Desirable Daughters” (2010) being born in a rich Bengali traditional Brahmin family, settle in America, with all the luxuries of the material world. Though Bish was a successful international businessman and personifies the American dream, he was deeply rooted in the Indian tradition but failed in keeping his family happy. Tara was not happy with her husband Bish, so she walks out of his life, and her traditional bonding and adapts to the American adventure by living with a live-in partner Andy, a Hungarian Buddhist. She actually; “lived off a generous divorce settlement from one man while playing around with another” (DD275)

The western culture always had great influence since the beginning of the 19th century. The aspect of the lesbian feminist theory that became established early in the 1970's states:

“She is the women who, often beginning at an extremely early age, acts in accordance with her inner compulsion to be a more complete and free human being than her society cares to allow her” (The women...)

Meena Melwani, Tara's coffee-shop companion gets transformed with a reading of the American magazines and becomes the only women in their little community of South Asian wives of Silicon Valley, to walk out on her husband and son for another woman. She adapts to lesbianism.

The Padma, the sister of Tara knew that her native tradition and culture will demand from her to serve her in-laws and relatives, if she settled in India so, she decides to settle in the host country. She establishes herself in America as a celebratory, often seen and known in the company of the Rich and the Famous. The Padma marries Harish Mehta, who could not re-establish himself successfully; he lived under the shadow of his wife's success. He stayed at home and did all the cooking, while the Padma worked out of a home.

"No men would consent to be a woman, but every man wants to exist"
(Singh, 199).

Harish knew his limits and enjoyed all that he could get. He gets habituated to pay a compliment on Padama's beauty and stamina. The novel "Desirable Daughters" throws light on feminist thinking in terms of relationship, education, and economic pursuits.

In "Miss New India" (2012), Bharati Mukherjee employs a classic plot of a village girl who goes to a big city, Bangalore and throws off the old traditional values to discover her new identity as a modern girl with an American accent. The transformation is represented through the change in her name from Anjali to Angie, this makes her feel that she is a part of bold India, in which a lot of global opportunities are available for a woman to grow and make some space and identity for herself in all walks of life.

"Materialistic feminism is a movement in the late 19th century to liberate women by improving their material condition.....and the historical approach to patriarchy."
(Tandon, 65)

Anjali determines herself to succeed in her goal by taking tips from the boarding girls working in the I.T. field. She corrals around Hussein and Girish Gujral to obtain some benefits in terms of material, job and with a hope of getting married. It is observed that men and women in the city culture and lifestyle, their friendship didn't seem to lead into marriage. The instability of the new society pushes the migrants to keep up pace leaving them drained of all emotions.

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"Free economy and liberalization exposed people to not only dogged materialistic concept of life but it also brought flexibility in a man-woman relationship"

(Dominic ed.302)

It is observed that in the lives of the young men and women working especially in the I.T.sector, their lifestyle and relationship rarely resulted, in marriages.

Sharmita Lahiri States: "The psychological change in women that Mukherjee refers to is the development of the desires of being independent of conventional Indian feminine expectations." (122)

Conclusion:

Of course, the seductive pull of life in the new India does not come without a dark side. It sets for freedom beyond the confines of class, caste, and gender; It is not only about the struggle of women, but also about re-inventing of the self. The picture of social change in India provides food for thought.

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