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IDENTITY CRISIS AND CONFLICT IN BHARTI MUKHERJEE'S *JASMINE* AND *DESIRABLE DAUGHTERS*

ANIL KUMAR SAINI

Research Scholar

Department of English, University of Rajasthan



ANIL KUMAR SAINI

ABSTRACT

The present paper entitled, "Identity crisis and conflict in Bharti Mukherjee's *Jasmine* and *Desirable Daughters*" explains how Asian American immigrant and its effects are present in the novels of the writer. The article further seeks the portrayal the journey of the central character from Jyoti to Jasmine in *Jasmine* and an arrival of new Tara in *Desirable Daughters*. The dilemma of characters in adjusting two opposite cultures is the main theme of the paper.

Both the novels of Bharti Mukherjee determine the multiple consciousness and identities of central characters. The effect of American feminist movement is clearly seen imbibing in the theme of these novels. Racial discrimination and multiplicity leads to the arrival of many psychological change in the protagonists. The free feel of the society and the freedom is the main gist of these novels. Transnational women and its diasporas effect are the main theme of these novels. Post colonial texts are often linked with immigrants and their rootlessness. Physical and emotional conflicts have been given their due in these novels. Further, these novels tell us about alienation, identity crisis, discrimination and the transplantation of a new culture. Cross culture identities are their conflict is the main concept of this paper. Together, the novelists and characters deal with their native past, their present which seems alien to them and the future which is unknown to them. The psyches of the character are together weaved with a web of history and geography in an intricate manner. How these characters prosper in such a situation is the main idea of this paper.

"One time you mentioned the loneliness inside of marriage and I did not understand what you were saying. Two people are together; they have come from the same place; they share the same values, the same language. Practically speaking, they are the two halves of one consciousness. They eat the same food; they have a child; they sleep in the same bed, how can they be lonely." (36) — (Bharti Mukherjee, *Desirable Daughters*)

Bharti Mukherjee is one of those writers who depict immigrant experiences in various countries of the world. The basic concept of her novels is the identification of aftermath of colonies and their people getting liberation. Her writing highlights the activity of women who witness the dilemma to adjust between two cultures. This interaction of central character between past and present leads to crisis and bridge the gap created by situations.

The novel 'Jasmine' presents the journey of a girl changing from 'Jyoti' to 'Jasmine'. She becomes a new kind of city woman who is independent and thinks critically of her future. This lady knows what she is and what she is composed of. The novel illustrates the importance of environment in identity crisis. The two names referred above explain two different environments.

Jasmine also finds herself a prey to racial discrimination prevalent in America where she is seen as an object of fulfillment of someone's sexual desires and her rape leads her to gather an violent identity by which she kills her rapist and dons a new identity Jasmine. She assembles herself to become an American who has shed the shackles of the past and is ready to dawn a new identity.

She gets transformed in every bit of situations. With some specific references in the text one finds that all her old identities are not completely erased. They are with her and occur in some or other parts of the text.

Residing in New York, she is leading a life close to her basic South Asian community. After her marriage with Bud Ripplemyer, She gets a new identity Jane. This responsibility infuses a self confidence in her and imbibes a boost for herself.

This new personality has new emergence and she learns the lesson that change is essential and vital components of survival. Her locations and also the multiplicity of thoughts creates tensions and also the consequences to complete disruption of new identity.

Another novel by Bharati Mukherjee dealing with South Asian Immigrants in America is Desirable Daughters. The main theme of the novel is about the clash of two cultures. It depicts the fresh air of American Feminist Culture peeping into the traditional Indian customs.

The novel presents the difference of two societies. In Indian Society a woman has submissive roles whereas American Society gives independence to women and treats them as individuals giving them their own identities. It shows about how the women are influenced by American Culture. The crisis of the culture leads to the embracement of opportunities provided by American culture and also the imbue ment of freedom in protagonist areas.

Protagonist Tara leads her to a new world of bonding and she finds a new self of here where she finds soothing comfort and solace. The two men in her life symbolizes two different cultures. The protagonist relying on her past has lead to her own downfall as past has the greatest ability to affect one's present. This exhausts her old modes of thinking and paves the way for the beginning of new forms of consciousness of the character. Although she is mixed in the values of India as well as America; she feels herself as a part of progress and its capacity. She finds solace and ease in her ancestral roots in India and tries to understand Indian Heritage.

She peeps into the life of her homeland with a new insight. Her experience takes her to a new world where she reinvents her identity. This consciousness and multiplicity of situations leads to a new world where they become assimilated persons.

Both of them assimilate their Indian and other identity to create a living space of their own which keeps changing and evolving according to circumstances created.

Both of these novels symbolize different stages of her life. This stream of consciousness relates to the life stated in the eastern and western countries. America is the school of her life. She considers herself to be free in the society and can take decisions of her life alone.

The opening phrase of 'Jasmine', " life times ago ..." shows the way of the future progress of the novel. A different layer of psychological identity is presented in the novel. This migration produces a hybrid location and cultural identity of its own.

Both central characters have multiple consciousness and identities. In short, the real experiences of Jasmine and Tara make them new id inventors.

"The world is divided between those who stay and those who leave." (65) — (Bharati Mukherjee, *Jasmine*)

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