

Literary Exploration of Women by Bharti Mukherjee in Desirable Daughters

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Abstract – India has a strong voice in the world of literature through the writers. The women writers have achieved distinctions through their writing by voicing out the concerns of a woman to create her identity in a male dominated society. One can see immense possibility of literary exploration in the work of Bharti Mukherjee who acclaimed internationally.

Key Words – Literary, Distinctions, Voice, Identity.

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The English poets from Shakespeare to Southey glorified the image of land which they had not seen and this image of India however incompatible with the image of India projected by English men and women who knew India intimately. A new tradition of writing evolved as a consequence of this intimacy. This tradition manifested itself most powerfully in the genre of fiction and come to be called expatriate or Anglo-Indian. The tradition not only survived but also evolved a complementary that is commonly known as Indo-Anglian fiction or the novels in English by Indians authors.

Bharti Mukherjee is distinguished voice in contemporary literature. A fairly large number of books, articles, and reviews stand as an irrefutable evidence of her massive creative talent. She received prestigious literary awards Bharati Mukherjee is the influential literary figure of diasporic Indian English literature. She is best known as an Indian Diaspora writer, today.

Though a housewife, her mother Bina Mukherjee made sure that her daughters would receive the best possible education. The parents had shaped Bharati to be a writer and greatly influenced her. Bharati Mukherjee had the experience of living in a joint family until the age of eight.

Sudhir Lal Mukherjee, her father, hailed from the district of Fridpur, from the family of Policeman who alone received education and wanted to be a professional man. He studied chemistry and nationalism. He went to London to finish his doctorate and to work on a Pharmaceutical company. In 1939, he returned to Calcutta and the next year Bharati was born. He started a small

Pharmaceutical factory. He lived in a joint family and life went on absolutely as usual.

In 1947, he went to London with his family when Bharati was only eight years old. Here begins her series of displacement. Sudhir Lal was interested in the research but his partner apologized and he returned to the company to London.

The partner wanted Sudhir Lal in Calcutta and they returned India in 1951 and started to live in the Pharmaceutical factory in Calcutta. Bharati completed her masters of arts in English from the University of Baroda. From childhood she wanted to be a writer and it was her good luck that she joined the writer's Workshop at Iowa, USA. She got scholarship from University of Iowa, USA.

Bharati met Clark Blaise at the writers Workshop, only two weeks before they got married, during a lunch hour, in a law office, in 1963. Bharati's marriage is really an exception and very much different from Bengali traditional marriages of Brahmins. Like her father, Bharati also shifted from place to place. In 1966, when she got married, she migrated to Canada. They lived there for 14 years first in Toronto, then in Montreal. She found that life was really impossible in Canada being non-white and non-European, Canadian citizen of Indian origin.

Being complex creative works of highly refined and matured minds, these texts communicate a number of issues. However, this paper confines itself to the socio-psychological and emotional conditions of the first-generation migrants, the problems of their children, and the alternatives available to them in

the context of the fictional world. *Desirable Daughters* is the story of three sisters- Tara, Padma, and Parvati. The three sisters make their separate exits from the orthodox and patriarchal Brahmin family of Calcutta in the late fifties. Nineteen years old Tara's marriage was quickly arranged by her father. Within three weeks she marries Biswapria Chatterjee, migrates with him to America, and settles at Atherton where Bish makes a fortune in the Silicon Valley. However, once in America the husband-wife relations acquire a new dimension as individuality and freedom has not sacrificed here for family honor as has happened in India. After the divorce she lives independently, sleeps freely with men and has a sort of live with lover Andy. The son, Rabi, has been admitted to a school and visits his father occasionally on weekends. The father-son or the parent-children relationship in American cultural context appear both amusing and appalling to the Indians. This also suggests how the new culture affects and changes the attitudes and responses of migrants.

The first-generation migrants find it very difficult to raise their children. They wish them to retain their native cultural heritage but the American born children neither have the first-hand access to it nor do they care to know it. Migrant couples want them to fulfil their expectations.

This tension acquires a momentum when a stranger comes to Tara's house with Rabi tries to check out his history. Rabi shows a letter on confess to be a gay. The appearance of the fake Chris Dey gives rise to many complications, revealing the past and the present of the sisters as well as their love affairs, flirtations, and hypocrisies. Tara is bewildered. As she deals with these complexities, we see how tradition and family stories have an effect on her inner world. It gives shape to her responses. She has been constantly in touch with her parents at Rishikesh and her sister Parvati at Bombay, making occasional visits to them with Robin.

Now her past memories and her urge for the search of her roots constantly hangs on her. Angered by her decision to contact the police against his advice, Andy leaves her permanently for good. Tara visits Padma and the mystery of Chris is solved by the police officer Mr. Jasbir Singh Sidhu, revealing the plot of the gangsters and the murder of the real Chris Dey who was the actual illegitimate son of Padma by Ron Dey. The threat to the lives of Robin and Bish, who have been away on a vacation to Australia, is also communicated. Tara returns to her house informing them about the danger.

When Bish comes to drop Robin there, Tara tricks him into staying for meals, prepares special dinner, and have sex with him. The Indian values have always been haunting Bish who feels remorseful due to the break of their marriage. There is a sudden explosion in the house when they were in the midst of a serious discussion on the deck in the early hours of the morning. Bish saves Tara from burning but is

badly injured. He is admitted to the hospital where he is often visited by Tara who informs him of her plans and her urges to write about her experiences, about her past memories, about her roots, and about the Tree-bride.

The tree-bride was Tara's great grandmother Tara Lata who was married to a tree at the age of five back in 1879 at Mishtigunj, West Bengal to protect her honor and the honor of her father. The last brief part of the novel shows Tara Chatterjee and her son Robin at Bombay with Parvati and then at Rishikesh where her old and dying parents are spending their last days. When we see her last, she is in the remote parts of Mishtigunj, exploring the history and searching with Robin the monument of the Tree-Bride. Her search for the monument is symbolic of her search for cultural heritage and her roots.

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