

Pluralism in the Select Novels of Bharathi Mukherjee

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Abstract:

Identity development for diasporic South Asian women is influenced by a variety of elements, both individual and societal, personal and communal. As a consequence of living between the push and pull of competing cultural pressures, these women experience an identity crisis. This new identity does not require the abandonment of one culture in order to appropriate another, but rather provides for the potential of owning modified components of both cultures at the same time. The lives of Indian immigrant women are not one-dimensional depictions of befuddled traditional ladies adrift in the United States. Their experiences are not simply linear conversions from Indian to modern western civilization. Indian women's lives and perspectives differ greatly, often along with class and traditional lines. Notably, a few women are ready to discard cultural customs for American social patterns and ideals outright. Rather, the sense prevailed, and they were confronted with the difficulty of reframing their traditions and duties in the context of migration. Identity is not so much the process of selecting between cultures as it is the ability to reinterpret the language of cultural practises and conventions to match one's own experience. As a result, diasporic Indian identity becomes unclear, with self-perception shifting as one's opinions on the surrounding environment and emerging culture change.

Keywords: Identity, Culture, Class, Women

Identity formation appears as a constant process in Bharati Mukherjee's *Desirable Daughters*, continuously altered and never fully completed. Tara, the female protagonist, was born and reared in Calcutta but went to San Francisco at the age of nineteen when her parents arranged for her to marry Bishwapriya Chatterjee, an Indian young man studying computer science at Stanford University. Tara quickly embraces American culture, seizing the chances it provides and integrating as best she can into the new society around her. Tara and Bish had one kid, Rabindranath, before divorcing yet retaining a strong connection. Tara also maintains strong connections with her two older sisters, Padma (nicknamed "Didi") and Parvati (the former married and living in Montclair, New Jersey, and the latter in Bombay with her husband and two children). Despite their separation, the sisters (all born on the same day, but three years apart) interact often. Both Didi and Parvati remain Tara's ties to a history she has started to unravel and forget.

The mystery starts when a young man called Christopher Dey, who claims to be the illegitimate son of Tara's sister Didi by her old boyfriend, a Bengali Christian named Ronald Dey, pays Tara a visit at her house in San Francisco. Tara is taken aback by this claim, as she does not think her sister would have had a kid during her adolescence in India. Christopher, on the other hand, is adamant, and tells Tara facts that only Didi's genuine son would know. When Tara confronts her sisters about her concerns, Padma denies it, and Didi is irritated. Tara's concern eventually leads her to contact the police in order to learn the actual identity of Christopher Dey. Tara and her partner Andy are initially apprehensive about the ramifications of studying the past, since it has the potential to rule their whole present. Andy is concerned that he may injure himself by attempting to lift every boulder and throw open every door. It's healthy for him to find his origins, but not if they come back to strangle him. But Tara persists in her search, and as the mystery develops, Tara is forced to confront her family, her history, and a society she has separated herself from, culminating in a confrontation between ancient patterns of thinking and newly generated forms of awareness. She discovers that she is made up of numerous selves, each with their own mind and impulses. Tara sees herself through the ever-shifting prism of culture, her identity and awareness depending on whether she accepts or rejects specific components of both Lidian and American society. Tara learns to realise that she will never be simply American or Lidian, but rather distributed across both categories of identity as she develops new identities throughout her life. Tara is the most proud of her individuality among the characters in the other literature examined. Tara does not battle her diversity, but rather accepts it as a part of her evolving identity.

Bharati Mukherjee has long been famous for her characters as well as her graceful, evocative words. Her characters are inspired by historical conventions and traditions, yet they are also firmly rooted in modern times. Tara Chatterjee, the story's narrator, is a modern literary figure, a twenty-first-century pioneer entrenched in the India of her ancestors, with its ghosts, visions, and rituals that guide her future as much as they have moulded her past. The author's goal, presumably, is to demonstrate the impact of history on people, and to demonstrate the patterns of love, betrayal, and redemption that recur from generation to generation. The argument Ms. Mukherjee wishes to convey contradicts the ones she has made in her previous works. This time, she believes that the opportunity to start a new life afforded by America will always be limited by family imperatives, religious and cultural stereotypes, and more primitive underground forces referred to as destiny by her characters. Ms. Mukherjee's plotting skills have never been

especially excellent, and the plot of this work is particularly ridiculous. It all starts with Tara and Bish standing on the veranda of their upper-level home on a balmy November night in California, hoping that they never meet Abbas Sattar Hai has returned. Meanwhile, their fifteen-year-old son, Rabi, came racing up to them, telling them that he had heard several noises. And that was all Tara could remember until she found herself in the back yard of her house, surrounded by a shower of blazing splinters and balls of burning tar. Her hair was charred, and flames burned pits in her cheeks and arms. Bish lay alongside her, his cotton pyjamas scorched into his flesh and his feet charred from carrying her through the coals and flames that had been the back steps and lower deck. Rabi was the first to fall, leaping over the terrace and railing. He wasn't wounded, but he was shivering and whimpering in the heat. They realised that their lives would be in danger until Abbas Sattar Hai was captured. The narrative tries to make tangential links between Tara and a slew of historical characters she's never heard of. There are extensive, suppressed depictions of life in India during the Raj, and even longer, stifled explanations of the British imperial misdeeds.

Bharati Mukherjee, like other Asian American women authors, has made significant contributions to the United States' multi-ethnic literary fabric. Her essays, as a writer who has travelled from one physical and cultural area to another, from India to the American continent (first Canada, then the United States), speak of the unavoidable changes that occur throughout such transitions. There is a re-visioning of ideas and notions from two distinct universes separated by immense oceanic distances. There is also a re-examination of biases and prejudices, as well as the deconstruction of social, cultural, and national stereotypes.

The book makes the Indian aspect of the story's legendary component abundantly clear, but not the Grecian aspect. Every scene and character in the book reflects Bharati Mukherjee's fervent interest in the concepts of globalisation and transnationalism. Fascinated by these notions, she may call on all the resources of her craft, including her tremendous wit, humour, and legendary imagination. The protagonist constructs her existence in the midst of multinationals, multi-colors, races, cultures, and languages. She is completely lost while building her life. She looks into her history in order to discover her true identity. She is having an identity problem while doing so. As we move toward a more globalized society in which distance means very little, individuals travel freely to other places in search of the life they want, and the idea of "permanence of place" is continuously challenged. The superpower nations encourage intellectual enslavement in order to obtain dominance; favourable economic circumstances entice the brains, who gladly accept what is not theirs for a relatively small intellectual shift in lifestyle. The ongoing migration of individuals from their home countries abroad is distinguished by a growing emphasis on identities.

Culture is a distinguishing aspect of any individual's or society's identity. Culture has a major impact on how individuals see themselves and the groups with which they identify. Every community has its own set of social values, beliefs, morals, ethics, and ways of life that are passed down from generation to generation. Food consumed, clothes worn, religious ceremonies, and political actions and blending them into just nature, tradition, music, dances, and diverse languages spoken are all aspects of a person's cultural legacy or identity handed down from their forefathers. Psychologically, a person wants to keep the identity bestowed on them by birth. As a result, cultural identity is a mental and emotional condition. Individuals' sense of identity is based on their cultural background and ethnic integrity. Culture identification determines who we are and how others see us.

When culture is a distinguishing aspect of identity, language becomes crucial to cultural identification. Language is a means of expressing one's cultural background. It is significant as a means of communicating societal ideals, beliefs, and conventions. Because people's cultures are conveyed via their home languages, it is crucial to stress that individuals in the diaspora should preserve their native languages. What might one infer about their own identity if we say so? When are they confronted with a clash between their original languages and English? Is it true that using a foreign language fully undermines our identity? Language is a tool for conveying societal ideals, beliefs, and practises. It is crucial in developing an individual's, a community's, or a nation's identity. We must recognise that the loss of ethnic languages equates to the loss of identity. Languages perish, and civilizations die with them; as a result, ethnic identity is lost. As a result, it is essential that people feel free to explore and define the distinctiveness of their ethnic identity via an appreciation of the cultural variety that exists in their surroundings. This information not only teaches our future generations about their predecessors, but it also teaches them about themselves and how they connect to the world around them.

Over the years, numerous immigrants from many nations have arrived in the United States of America. There is little question that these immigrants have made significant economic, social, and political contributions to the United States. Their ethnic distinctions have enhanced their history, intercultural activities, knowledge, and living styles, having migrated to the country for a variety of reasons, including seeking liberty, work opportunities, and better living conditions. Diaspora individuals anglicise their names and hide their original accents in order to have an American identity by eliminating their native identity. A handful of them even go so far as to alter their physical appearance by dyeing their hair and getting cosmetic surgery in order to remove any visual indication of their ethnicity. The cruel irony is that the people of the Diaspora who desired inclusion were never embraced by America's white culture. When we analyse Bharati Mukherjee's works against this backdrop, we see cultural difficulties in her protagonists.

Bharati Mukherjee confesses to experiencing racial prejudice in Canada. While her husband's artistic abilities were acknowledged, hers were neglected and unrecognised due to Canada's antagonism towards Indians and the non-recognition of her writings in Canada. These are the obsessive themes that occur in Mukherjee's early works. She saw herself as a psychological expatriate in Canada, clinging to her ethnic identity. In truth, many who have left their ethnic cultural counter have not lost their affection for their homeland. Furthermore, there has been so much cultural mixing that it has given rise to a new culture, hybrid culture. This problem disproportionately affects the highest class or so-called "A" class people or elites in every nation.

Mukherjee's outlook on life and its challenges stems from her Indian heritage. Mukherjee's novels deal with western ideas and locations, as well as people that are westernized or bicultural. Nonetheless, she is obliged to recognize that the fundamental

form of her imagination is Hindu and moral. Her OVM theorist and role model are Bharati Mukherjee. She emphasizes her American citizenship while downplaying her Indian origins and associations. Several times during her 1987 tour in India, she declined to answer queries regarding her "Indianness." People saw her in a sari, dark-eyed and dark-haired, with an unmistakable Bengali-Brahmin name, and heard her employ Indian material in the excerpts she read from her novels. Mukherjee dismisses her own Indianness, claiming that her immigrants are moving away from their roots in India. Nonetheless, one can clearly detect traces of Indian English and Indian sensitivity in her compositions. Bharati Mukherjee's Indian protagonists seeking American citizenship preserve enough Indianness to be fascinating while gliding joyously into American materialism. By presenting her persona in this manner, she emphasizes her rejection of Indian culture and literary influence.

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