

FEMINIST APPROACH IN TWO WRITERS: BHARATI MUKHERJEE AND MANJU KAPUR

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Abstract

This paper analysis the concept of feminism and age old traditions in the male dominating society through the novels of two writers, Bharati Mukherjee and Manjukapur. It highlights the trauma and situations the woman protagonist undergoes in the works of these two writers. For the purpose of comparative study the paper deals with the novels *Desirable Daughters*, *Difficult Daughters*, *Jasmine* and *The Immigrant*. In the field of Indian English Literature, feminist or women centered approach is of major development that deals with the experience and situation, from the feminist consciousness. There is a transformation in the image of women characters in the last four decades. Contemporary writers moved away from traditional role of enduring self sacrificing women, towards women searching for identity, no more a sorry figure or victim.

Keywords — Trauma, feminism, transformation

1. INTRODUCTION

Feminist is not the recent innovation in the field of English literature. However, it is still a topic which fascinates the contemporary women writers. Modern Indian fiction develops an approach of women centered, that seeks to project and interpret experience, from the point of a feminine consciousness and sensibility. As Patricia Meyer Specks remarks,

There seems to be something that we call a women's point of view on outlook sufficiently distinct to be recognizable through the countries. (48)

This paper analysis the concept of feminism and age old traditions in the male dominating society through the novels of two writers, Bharati Mukherjee and Manju kapur. It highlights the trauma and situations the woman protagonist undergoes in the works of these two writers. For the purpose of comparative study the paper deals with the novels *Desirable Daughters*, *Difficult Daughters*, *Jasmine* and *The Immigrant*. In the field of Indian English Literature, feminist or women centered approach is of major development that deals with the experience and situation, from the feminist consciousness. There is a transformation in the image of women characters in the last four decades. Contemporary writers moved away from traditional role of enduring self sacrificing women, towards women searching for identity, no more a sorry figure or victim.

Bharati Mukherjee is a Indian born writer, had comprehended much early in her life when she joined the Creative Writing Programme in the United States in 1961. Here entering into matrimony with an American of Canadian novelist Clark Blaise, her migration with her husband to Canada, becoming a Canadian citizen, then their emigration to America and final settlement in the States. Her works deals with the transformation of Indian women in

alien land; she highlights the plight and experience of her protagonist through her own autobiographical experiences.

Manju Kapur, Professor of English literature in Delhi University. She entered the field of writing novels at a very late age of 42 where Mukherjee dreamed of to be a writer since childhood. Like her Kapur too writes about woman situations and conditions through her own autobiographical experiences. Kapur hates to be called as a feminist writer through all her fictional works projects feminist concerns. Her two novels which are been analyses in this study, *Difficult Daughters* (1998) and *The Immigrant* (2009) are about Virmati and Nina both are middle class educated urban Indian women struggling to establish themselves with their own independent identities in the patriarchal setup of which they are part and parcel.

At the heels of Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters* comes *Desirable Daughters* (2002), by Bharati Mukherjee, both deals with the progression in the fictional recasting of gender. Both the books are a search for roots and gender identities. Kapur reverts to Lahore as her culls her mother's past in the historical background of pre-partition Punjab. Mukherjee imbues the typical diasporic yearning for her motherland, her Bengali culture, and a vital component of literary consciousness. These writers struggle hard to break the barriers of conservative norms to create a world which offers sharp resistance to modernistic desires.

The reason I have chosen works by Bharati Mukherjee and Manju Kapur is that both the writers were born in India immigrated to the United States of America, deals with the urgent negotiation and renegotiation of the problematic of gendered, ethicized and national identity.

Identification means becoming the same or alike. Mukherjee's works show these aspects of identity and alienation. In her novel *Jasmine* (1989), the protagonist narrates the ideas on Indian womanhood undergoes several

transformations as she evolves from the rural background of her Lahori jat peasant family in Jullundhar district. It is a story of dislocation and relocation as Jasmine the main protagonist, continually sheds lives to move into other roles, moving further westward while constantly shedding pieces of her past. She gradually expands herself by the journey to America and by changing names: Jyoti- Jasmine-Jazzy-Jase-Jane-Jasmine. Every place she goes to and each name she has piece together to create a new Jasmine. Here writer's description of Jyoti presents an epitome of Indian society, woman's issues and immigration.

On the other hand Kapur's *Immigrant* (2009) deals with Nina a lecturer, 30 years old, unmarried and staying with her mother in Delhi. She gets married with a N.R.I doctor Ananda and went to Canada as a newlywed wife. Here writer deals with the life of a married woman all alone in an alien land. In the culture where individualism and pragmatism have often remained alien ideas and marital bliss and the women's role at home is a central focus. At the end readers find a complete change in the personality and mental status of Nina. She develops a new attitude towards life and was moving ahead with a new career and job.

Gender, marriage and transformation of protagonist's deals in all the novels. The female characters that these two writers create, are from different castes of Indian society, and they subvert the doomed fate they are in: Virmati, Tara, Jasmine and Nina all decide to make a life of their own. Their born sex brings them the duty to obey the patriarchal authority and their arranged marriages reveal that they cannot hold their own subjective because there is another power from their husbands they need to obey. Their life and expectation; therefore, making them move to a new place to free from the Indian traditional oppression of their sex and marriage rules, which also represents their duty to the society and to their family.

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