

A Key Issue in Bharati Mukherjee's Novels: Case study of Cultural Shock

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ABSTRACT: *Bharati Mukherjee is a Third World Feminist essayist whose main focus is on issues and concerns concerning South Asian women, particularly in India; yet, she claims that her views are more comparable to those of North American women. She differs from other authors in the way she handles her champions (Indian ladies outsiders), most notably with their social stun, which evicts them from life, either directly or indirectly. Tara Banerjee in 'The Tiger's Daughter,' Dimple in 'Spouse,' Jyoti in 'Jasmine,' Devi in 'Abandon it to me,' three sisters - Padma, Parvathi, and Tara in 'Alluring Daughters,' and Tara in 'The Tree Bride,' all demonstrate this. Despite the fact that the courageous women are portrayed as strong and assertive, they are nonetheless subjected to the 'culture stun' behaviour. They have a strong potential for adaptability; they are well-positioned to modify their lives for the better, if necessary, as well as to acknowledge the painful truths of their life in any event. This study aims to capture the core cause, the central notion that underpins the dilemma that so many fans of her works are experiencing.*

KEYWORDS: South Asian Women, Cultural shock, Women immigrants, Feminist writer

1. INTRODUCTION

Bharati Mukherjee, an Indian-born (Bengali) author, is one of the most well-known Indian writers in English in the United States. There are two types of immigrant writers. To begin, there are the "Willing Immigrant Writers" from Europe and Asia who have settled in America and made it their home. The "Unwilling Immigrant Writers" of American ancestry, whose ancestors were

transported to America in slave ships, make up the second classification. Despite this, Bharati Mukherjee has stated that she considers herself an American author, not an Indian ostracised essayist. In a meeting in 1989, Mukherjee stated in an interview with Amanda Meer: "I see myself as an American author first and foremost, and that has been my major battle: to understand that my foundations as an essayist will never again, if they ever were, be found among

Indian writers, but that I am expounding on the domain of emotions as a different kind of pioneer here in America. I'm the first Asian immigrant to recognise the distinction between immigrant and exile composition. Prior to this, most Indian writers still thought of themselves as Indians, and their scholastic drive came from India. India has served as both a source and a home. Although, as I've stated, those are great roots, my basic foundations and feelings are now in North America.

2. "REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Culture is such a vast and perplexing phrase that it is impossible to accurately characterise it in a few pages. Occasionally, a few humanists, anthropologists, historians, and men of letters have attempted to define culture. Regardless, T.S. Eliot, one of the most profound of innovator growth, provides the most far-reaching clarification. Indeed, he is unusual by all accounts, and his book is titled *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*. "My objective is to help a word, the word culture," says the key passage of the presentation. "Culture may even be depicted simply as that which makes life worth living," he says at the outset of his discussion of culture and its components. As a result, Eliot views culture to be a way of life that influences us in the same way that our activities do. In an ideal world, he believes that culture is an entire approach "forever, lived generally and variously by an entire people." In his attempt to define culture, N.A. Nikam quotes a deciphered Kathopanisad verse: 'In

the path of the enduring (the great), that one pick is his.' Thus, culture, according to him, is a nice mission, but it isn't fantastic if the mission isn't a free choice. Thus, the voyage and the decision are two parts of culture, and the convention is fashioned by hundreds of years of history, or custom might be defined as a "entrance in which there is both inventiveness and recharge." As a result, culture ideas are both old and new, traditional and contemporary."The process of relocating to other countries, which began in the mid-nineteenth century, has taken on a new significance in terms of population mobility over a one-hundred-year period. For a variety of reasons, people from all over the world are drawn to this country. Regardless of their goal, those who stay on eventually settle down and experience subjective societal change, which is appropriated by men of literature in their works. Bharati Mukherjee's inventive universe best exemplifies immigrant encounters that can be profitably dissected in light of her craftsman's creation.

The indigenous Indian customs and critical European origins are the two most effectively observed strands in the mind-boggling tapestry of contemporary Indian human advancement. Despite the fact that awareness of this pressure varies from person to person, almost every intelligent Indian today is the result of the convergence and compromise of two cultures. What is true for the most part for the Indian author, because an essayist is interested in the sources of human activity and the inspiration that drives human behaviour. In this way, he is more aware of the elements that make up

his identity than others. In the context of Indian history, an author's self-examination entails evaluating his own mentality regarding these two aspects of his being: one acquired via birth, the other assimilated through training.

➤ **Bharati's Heroines and Their Role**

Bharati's champions, on the other hand, are immigrants who are undergoing societal shock, yet who try to maintain their own unique identity or individuality. This could be why Bharati Mukherjee has gotten so much attention, receiving both favourable and negative responses from all corners of the abstract world. Despite the fact that she claims to write exiles with a North American sensibility, she has written all of her works from the perspective of transcendentally women's activist perspectives. She portrays female characters as victims of movement, but the troubles are not caused by the fact that they are immigrants, but rather by the fact that the female characters fight for their rights as ladies and later as individuals in the same way that other women's activist writers do.

This cultural conflict or blending, as the case may be, has long been expected as a key crucial for Indian authors who write in English for unclear reasons. The female characters in Mukherjee's work are tied to their Indian origins in the same manner that

the author is. They shed their outer problems with India, just as she did. They socially collapse from India, but they retain a core of convictions within the self against which all new experience is measured. Bharati Mukherjee's Indianness is shown in the ascribes she gives to her anecdotal characters. Participants scramble for a spot in a new but desired world through America's half-open gateway of mobility laws. Mukherjee's works are full of their crucial ploys, adaptability, and willingness to remove the old and put on the new. What aspect of Indianness is influenced by the receptive method remains to be determined. Furthermore, how, if at all, do immigrants broaden the horizons of American involvement is another question to consider. She says, "I see my 'immigrant' story being imitated in twelve American urban communities, and rather than seeing my Indianness as a delicate personality to be protected from devastation (or, even worse, a 'noticeable' distortion to be hidden), I see it as an arrangement of fluid characters to be commended."

The *Tiger's Daughter* (1972), Bharati Mukherjee's first novel, is a perfect example of social conflict. The *Tiger's Daughter* reflects the craftsman's personal experiences as a woman caught between two cultures. This is an intriguing story of a rich Bengali Brahmin young lady who travels to America to pursue further education. Despite her apprehensions about the mysterious techniques for America, she strives to adapt to it by entering into matrimony with an American. She returns to India after seven years to establish herself as a total outsider

in the acquired environment. She recognises that she is no longer Indian or truly American. She's absolutely perplexed and perplexed.

The Tiger's Daughter is the story of Tara, a young Indian-born lady who, like the author, returns to Calcutta to visit her family after spending seven years in the United States, and discovers a country that is nothing like the one she remembered. She turns out to be agonisingly aware that, while she has not yet assimilated into American culture, she will never again be nourished by the qualities and customs of her native place. New perceptions of neediness, hungry youth, and political turmoil supplant memories of a polished Brahmin way of life. "Tara's westernisation has opened her eyes to bay between the two universes that nevertheless make India the surrender all expectations surrounding the persons who run it," writes a Times Literary Supplement commentator.

Although her novels has shown a discernible trend toward Americanization in terms of style and hero's recognition of a country that allows them to shape their own rules, free from the inflexible and feudalistic customs of their native land, With the arrival in India of Tara, a twenty-two year old young girl of a prosperous and identifiable Bengali Brahmin, Bharati Mukherjee's novel The Tiger's Daughter takes a different path. Tara had hitched an American and had been away from home for a long time, according to Vassar. Despite the fact that she has always considered herself an Indian, she now feels more like an outsider than a native, concerned about India's complex and

perplexing web of government difficulties, poverty, welfare, and progressive energy and class systems. She has been anticipating her arrival for quite some time, but now finds herself imbued with the 'strangeness of soul' associated with both her American upbringing and her early education in Calcutta at a tuition-based school run by Belgian nuns. Tara's dilemma in this story is aptly depicted by Matthew Arnold's iconic phrases. I'm drifting between two universes/one dead, alternately feeble to be born/with no place to call home. Her seven years at Vassar transformed her perspective, but she was uninterested in America: "N "w York, she realised now, had been fascinating. Not because there were police officers with canines snooping about the tunnels. Because young girls like her, or at least women who looked like her, were being cut in lifts in their own loft complexes. Since understudies were more concerned with grounds spotters and away wars than with the cost of rice or the quality of end-of-year tests, they revolted. Because many were concerned about pollution. New York was a once-in-a-lifetime experience for her, and it had left her despondent."

The true start of the story can be traced back to a blustery night in the year 1879. It was the day of the grand wedding of Hari Lal Banerjee's daughters, the 'Zamindar' of Village Pachapara. "The shadows of suicide or outcast, of Bengali soil separated and surrendered, of specialists ascending against their managers couldn't have been divined by even an insightful man back then," he "didn't hear the stressing and detained phantom of progress," he "didn't hear the

stressing and detained phantom of progress," he "didn't hear the stressing and detained phantom of progress," he "didn't hear

Following the marriage of Hari Lal Banerjee's daughters, life in Pachapara continued to be pleasant, with several more relationship couplings and passings. Hari Lal Banerjee was killed by an inconspicuous professional murderer while intervening in a disagreement after two summers. He inherited the Banerjee family's prominence and influence. "Years later, a young lady who had never been to Pachapara would weep for the Banerjee family and strive to break down the purposes for its change," no one knew at the time. She'd sit by a window in America, dreaming of Hari Lal, her extraordinary grandfather, and marvelling at the bay that separated him from her. Tara's boyfriend, David Cartwright, is a total Westerner, and she is constantly concerned about this. She is unable to discuss the finer points of her family's history and existence in Calcutta with him. In their social opposites, her inability to do so is established. In India, a marriage is more than just a union of two people; it is also the coming together of two families. In any case, in Western countries such as the United States, a marriage is essentially a contract between two people. David is a threat to the parentages, and he usually confuses her love for her family with over-reliance. He asks harmless questions about Indian traditions and customs, and she feels completely vulnerable in an unfamiliar environment since "Madison Square was agonising" and "her better half went after each of the nonnatives." Following a seven-

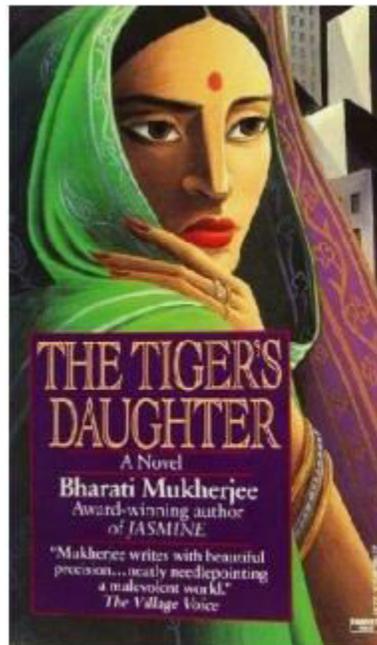
year hiatus, Tara plans a trip to India. She has awaited this arrival for a long time and believes that if she returns to Calcutta, all of her doubts, fears, and dreads about her stay abroad will vanish miraculously, but it never happens. Tara's new Americanized self fails to reclaim her old sense of observation and sees India through the eyes of an outsider. Her entire perspective has shifted. "An immigrant far from home glorifies his country of origin and appreciates nostalgic recollections of it," writes Shobha Shinde, "so does Tara in America, but when she comes to stand up to the changed and threatening conditions of her country of origin, all her sentimental dreams and beliefs disintegrate." She realises that the swarm of America has crushed her childhood memories. Her relatives greet her enthusiastically when she arrives at the Bombay airport, but she responds coldly and impartially. When her relatives refer to her as 'Tultul,' an epithet they frequently use for her, it sounds strange to her Americanized ears. "She had appreciated the house on Marine Drive, had thought them attractive seven years ago, but now their decrepitude appalled her," she said as she approached Vassar. Her attitude toward the railroad station is also one of disdain. "The station reminded me of a doctor's office," she said, "since there were so many withered and twisted guys sitting slowly on packs and trunks." She shares her compartment with a Marwari and a Nepali on the train. Both, she believes, will "demolish her trip to Calcutta."

➤ A Tantrum over Culture

Our goal is to figure out who Mukerjee's characters are, especially the heroines, and whether or not they have a fit about culture and its rules that discriminate against women. She (Bharati Mukherjee) has always aimed to build women who prepare themselves to be their own gravitational force, free of patriarchal dominance. Let us look at some of Bharati Mukherjee's novels that are based on this topic. (1993, Banerjee).

Bharati Mukherjee's first novel is *The Tiger's Daughter*. Tara Banerjee, the protagonist, returns to India after a long stint in the United States. The novel is about Mukherjee's own experience, but it may also be about her brothers who went to America to study. Tara is uncomfortable with her relatives when she arrives at Bombay airport because they are unable to accept a woman who is not accompanied by her husband, David.

➤ **The Tiger's Daughter**



According to Indian culture, a woman's significant other should drive her. He adopts a defensive posture. In many parts of India, travelling alone, living alone, and moving alone are all fresh ground. In Indian culture, it is customary to marry within one's own rank. On the other hand

If someone marries someone from another position, he or she will be treated as an untouchable or a heathen. Regardless, the hero Tara violates these norms by marrying a distant Jew. Through her relationship partnerships, she completely disregards her social standing and religion. Mukherjee, amusingly, blames the biased demeanour of Indians who are enamoured of foreign

objects and outfits yet oppose marriage with non-natives. Tara feels alienated when she sees her mother. Tara appears to be logically exasperated within herself, hastening her arrival in the United States. Following it, the sentiment alienation flourishes in Tara in the main story.

➤ **Wife**

Dimple, the heroine of the novel *Wife*, is a normal young Bengali girl who begins to fantasise about modern life in America as she is going to marry Amit Basu, a man who is about to settle in the United States. Because her husband expects her to be a typical Indian wife, Dimple believes she has lost her identity in this marriage. Her emotional anguish goes untreated, and she kills her husband and commits suicide as a result. She resents being the Basu family's wife and struggles against it in a variety of ways. One method is having a miscarriage and thereby freeing herself from her pregnancy, which she regards as Basu's property even while it is still in her womb. He solely requires her for sexual pleasure. She thinks it's a form of remorse. (1993, Banerjee)

➤ **Culture Shock**

On the topic of 'social stun,' these two brave women of the books mirror the clairvoyant vibration known as 'social stun.' It should be noted that the two brave women are probably ordinary Indians in their minds, but they prefer to continue in the western style. They fight against both internal and external pressures. Obviously, they succeed in their

mission, but it is only a half-measure because neither of them is willing to entirely change their ways. Tara seemed to be logically aggravated after Dimple confers suicide. If they had been ordinary western ladies, they would have gone about their business in a different way. Dimple would have won her divorce, and Tara would have mocked the relatives instead of being justifiably bitter (Banerjee, 1993). Every single one of Mukherjee's champions had Indian ancestors in some way. It appeared in several of her writings, including *Jasmine*, *The Holder of the World*, and others.

➤ **Jyoti in Jasmine**

Jyoti, a Punjabi rustic young lady, is the protagonist of *Jasmine*, her third most popular novel. Prakash, a feisty and eager young man, enters Jyoti's life as her boyfriend. "I'll run with you, and if you forsake me, I'll hop into a well," Jasmine, an ordinary Indian young lady who coexists with Indian custom and traditions, says as Prakash decides to go to America. A woman must accept her better half's way of life. Renamed Jasmine, she anticipated travelling to America, a place known for its circumstances, but her fantasy is shattered when Prakash is murdered on the eve of his flight. Dayal (1993). She decides to travel to America in order to fulfil Prakash's core purpose and perform "Sati." She seizes every opportunity to become unmistakably American, having worked out how to "Walk and Talk" like an American. Sukhawinder, the Khalsa lion that butchered Prakash, is finally put to death by her. She then travels to Iowa, where she will be given the name

"Jase." Dayal (1993). Jasmine as Jase plays a number of roles, and Jase mishandles a woman's energy. This power might be enormous, and it should have been channelled to destroy evil and combat all of humanity's evils. Jasmine has broken free from the chains of social status, sexual orientation, and familial obligations. She has learned to live for herself rather than her better half or her children. Jasmine is a fighter, a connector, and a survivor. She perseveres in the face of adversity, emerges victorious, and carves out a new life in a foreign land.

➤ **The Holder of the World:**

The Holder of the World, Bharati Mukherjee's subsequent novel, represents exile as a journey of the human personality. Hannah Estean's 'Voyage to the Orient,' like Jasmine's westbound journey, tells us about the hero's most recent pressures, aspirations, and desire. Hannah is a Massachusetts native who relocates to India. She becomes visibly associated with a couple of Indian darlings and, in the end, a lord who bestows upon her the evident 'Head's Tear' jewel. From Hannah's perspective, the story is recommended to the criminologists hunting for the treasure. The female legend's physical journey inspires her to examine herself and influences her to see another aspect of herself. She returns to her native home as a rebel living on the outskirts of society, rather than as a transformed American. In her next work, 'Abandon it to me,' Bharati Mukherjee tells the story of Debby Dimartino, also known as Debi, a young woman sociopath who seeks

vengeance on the guardians who abandoned her. Her ungrateful communication with loving new parents is revealed, as is a vengeful search for her true guardians (portrayed as a killer and a blossom tyke). Through the political and passionate association of the lead character in her goal for vindication, the narrative also looks at the conflict between the Eastern and Western universes, as well as mother-daughter relationships. (1990) (Pandya)

3. CONCLUSION

Women have experienced through marriage or possibly travel abroad, enormous physical and mental changes in their own lives. Regardless of the way that they give off an impression of being proper for adaptability in a pariah culture, the paralyze they experience at first is pivotal. The explanation is they all are conceived Indian and brought particularly lowered up in Indian practices to feel and go about as custom solicitations, but meanwhile they need to break out of it and live like western ladies, expecting it with an awesome and colored glass angle. They talk about lady's privileges and opportunity easily, but blunder in living something similar. This is seen to be the essential fight in the existences of most of Mukherjee's ladies.

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