



The Trauma of Immigrant Experience in Bharati Mukherjee's *The Tiger's Daughter*

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to enlighten the position of the immigrant protagonists, they try to adjust, assimilate and adapt to the system of American society and how they feel themselves rootless culturally, culturally and historically. Consequently, it results in confusion, confessions, and depression in the characters. The people have to keep themselves away from home and create a new home in a new system, new society, and a new culture. Ultimately, it is a conflict or dilemma. As an emigrant novelist, Bharati Mukherjee has experienced sweet and bitter consequences and has tried to portray such lurking, fluctuation, rejection, revision, isolation or alienation, and assimilation with the values of both cultures-from instability, sacrifice, and modification, isolation and separation, and assimilation with the importance of both cultures-from one is uprooted, and another one is assimilated.

1. Introduction

Indian English literature was cherished in women authors' hands after a lot of work. They were mainly concerned with female subjectivity, domestic space, and personal misery. In recent years, these female authors have made successful attempts to play with different genres, allowing them to stand out as distinct individuals. Their writings



explored a wide range of subjects, giving readers a sense of diversity and uniqueness. For years, many notable people like Jhumpa Lahiri, Kiran Desai, Arundhati Roy, Amrita Pritam, and Salman Rushdie worked diligently to lift literature to its new place. These novelists have created works in different literary genres. Women's literature is now generally recognized as a solid and influential modernist form. It is because of the popularity of these authors that women's literature is now seen in a new light. These authors address a wide range of topics and delicate issues, including the search for one's identity and the feminine sensibility, as well as bridging the gap between tradition and modernity.

As a result, a slew of prominent female authors has emerged in recent years, attempting to exert influence over the general public through their work. Women in the modern world are no longer confined to home or the workplace; they now play an essential role in society, politics, the economy, and higher education. Male-dominated civilizations, women's hardships and trauma, sexual abuse, and other themes have been addressed by several authors in a wide range of genres. Bharati Mukherjee, among others, is widely regarded as one of India's greatest novelists, and her works have been translated into English by many other authors. Laxmi Debi, Attiya Hossain and Santha Rama Rau are among the many women authors who have contributed to the growth of Indian English writing.

Mukherjee was born in India and now lives with her husband and two children in the United States. As a result, we will only consider images of Indian and American society in her works. Mukherjee portrays Indian and American culture in her novels. Mukherjee's protagonists sleep in another world, but they have access to specific land and embrace the adopted country's culture and society. They struggle to stay alive in their new home. Mukherjee is a migrant writer, and her sensibility reflects that in all her novels. Mukherjee's characters seek independence and a true sense of identity inside the adopted country, ultimately adapting to the new social system. Mukherjee's art explores various characters and pays keen attention to the local world. Her female protagonists are too confident and oblivious to understand the novel's disorientation. Mukherjee's characters are victims of a life that lacks vision due to a lack of speech. Her characters are rarely Indian or exotically Westernized;



instead, they are fundamentally honest, primarily feminine insensibility, and plagued by original contact forms.

Bharati Mukherjee has projected cultural turmoil that she felt in the West. She felt like she couldn't make up her mind between the East and the West. This has become the primary concern of her writing. She admits adjusting to the Western way of life was not easy. For the first, she encountered racial prejudice in Canada. Bharati Mukherjee's female protagonists share the immigrant experience of her own life. This study deals with the problem of displaced persons in America as well as India. Bharati Mukherjee has demonstrated a dual cultural shock. This cultural dilemma is often resulted due to the disparity between countries. Two different ways of life create a sense of depression and frustration. This sense can be put under the head cultural crisis. When a person leaves his native land's culture and enters another, conflict-old values come into conflict with the new ones. It also sounds like rootlessness or alienation. This alienation has become a world phenomenon today. Bharati Mukherjee does not glorify the native country and degrades the adopted country. She has tried to explore the inner psyche of a displaced person in America and India. She considers the American experience as fusion during immigration, a two-way process. Both the immigrants and the whites grow by interchange and understanding.

Via her books, Bharti Mukherjee effectively depicts a woman's journey with intense sensitivity. Her protagonists undergo a process of maturity, self-discovery, isolation, and generational tension as they move from simplicity to experience. In the novel 'Tiger's Daughter,' a Brahmin girl named Tara Banerjee goes to America for higher education, which is an incredibly infectious and intriguing study of her. Tara's ancestry goes back further than her father's. As the tiger's daughter, Tara is shown to embody all of these traits, and she is put to the test, both physically and mentally, as she builds her cage due to her analytical prowess. Bharti Mukherjee's books are an accurate depiction of the expatriate mentality. By looking at this alone, we can understand the ambiguity of the characters and the author's psychology and the satiric interludes, ironic juxtapositions, shifting of perspective, and the final disintegration.

2. The Tiger's Daughter

Bharati Mukherjee is the third Diaspora female author. Her novels focus on protagonists who cannot cope with an alien world. Others were forced to face the harsh realities of society, while others achieved success. They struggle mentally due to the upheaval in their culture, and this stressful condition has an internal impact on them. Tara, the protagonist, works mentally searching for her identity in an alien world. Isolation from family, cultural shock, alienation issues, and integration play a role in migrant literature. The degree of alienation, which is fundamentally individualistic, is decided by several variables, including the immigrant's experience, history, nation, and culture and the host country's receptive ability. Cultural transplants that fail to forge new bonds in place of those broken become perpetual aliens [4]. Tara's circumstance starts to deteriorate as she splits between two cultures, one as an Indian Bengali woman and the other as an American wife. She abjectly sacrifices her Indian roots to become more American. Tara's subconscious contains an unusual combination of American and Indian influences constantly clashing. She tries to develop her American identity, which often annoys her Indianness. Tara's character shows her struggles with adapting to a different world and the traumas of her torn personality [5].

Tara felt disconnected and homeless in India. In this way, her visit to India has become a search for self and her migrant psyche, which continues to be overwhelming and ultimately leads to delusion, loneliness, despair, and a tragic end [6]. Tara feels completely isolated; everywhere she travels, she is compelled to face her inner world, divided into two cultures and philosophies that are worlds apart. She cannot see how those two communities will unite because she realizes it is unlikely [7].

The biggest tragedy of Tara's life is that she is plagued by the same emotions of strangeness and rootlessness she felt in America, her native country, and she becomes more of an alien than a full foreigner. Tara's demeanour has evolved due to her long time overseas, which has become a barrier in her efforts to rehabilitate with her family, former friends, and relatives. Tara's character suggests that if one crosses the border of one's native country, it is tough for that individual to regain their roots and reputation. Such a situation creates a traumatic effect on the individual [8]. Bharti Mukherjee's intimate knowledge of Western and Indian cultures allows her to depict



Tara's life and emotions accurately. She guides Tara on a journey of self-discovery and reconciliation of her transcultural roots through a series of adventures and misadventures [9].

For the two communities, Tara is suffocating. Since marrying an American, she has found it challenging to connect with her family, city, and culture. Her Western education is evidence enough that she is an 'alienated' westernized citizen. Marriage is merely a deal between married couples in Western society, such as America, and Tara is well aware of this harsh fact. She could not convey him the complexities of her family's history and Calcutta society. She has lived a duality tension, attempting to find equilibrium in a wedding devoid of trust, shared love, and a sense of place [10]. Mukherjee's westernized Indian women return to traditional beliefs for ease and ultimately find it cold, so the quest for a new identity persists [11]. Her life in the diaspora is most likely characterized by immigrants holding an "internal small space" between the country they migrate to and where they reside [12].

When a person leaves his own culture and meets another, his old beliefs clash with the new ones he encounters. The impossibility of confronting the situation perplexes and alienates him. The Tiger's Daughter by Bharati Mukherjee is about Tara, an alien who cannot integrate into American society through her best efforts. Returning to her hometown after a seven-year absence, she feels much more rootless and alienated. The unusual convergence of Americanism and Indianness in her subconscious results from her deep sadness and anger over the massive gap between the nations [13]. Tara knew she had lost her roots and felt out of place in India and America. Tara was outraged by this seemingly innocuous knowledge, which resulted in a traumatic experience of displacement [14]. Tara shares her distressing trauma. She had hoped to return to India for years. She had assumed that all hesitations, all shadowy doubts from her time abroad, would be magically erased. However, the return has only resulted in wounds [15].

Tara is torn between two socio-cultural situations: rootlessness and a sense of loss. She has the sensation of being both minimized and surrendered at the same time. She won't find refuge in her old home and won't be able to adopt a hostile attitude [16]. She has lost her name in India, and with her strong attachment to India, she feels alone and lonely. Through Tara's character, Bharati Mukherjee's painful past and



pricks of remembrance are revealed, and the cultural dilemma splits all of her psychological and emotional essentialities [17]. Since people migrate from one country to another, there are a variety of relationships in various cultures. The East and the West have vastly different lifestyles. Tara is an authentically Indian woman expressing her Indian identity in a Western setting. Although she lives in the West, she still considers certain East-inspired ingredients that are now inextricably linked [18].

This paper will contain my observations to explain how Tara feels disconnected and marginalized. Tara's travel to India highlights her quest for roots and her migrant psyche, which shows agitation, and how this agitation leads to delusion, loneliness, despair, and, ultimately, a tragic end.

3. Discussion and Analysis

In 1989, Bharati Mukherjee said in an interview with the Times of India newspaper journalist:

"We immigrants have fascinating tales to relate to. Many of us have lived in newly independent or emerging countries placed by civil and religious conflicts.....When we uproot ourselves from those countries and come here, either by choice or out of necessity, we suddenly must absorb 200 years of American history and learn to adapt to American society." [19] [21]

This rootless self is depicted through the protagonist of 'The Tiger's Daughter.' It reflects the confrontation between illusion and reality. Contrast is to be seen between two different worlds and attitudes.

3.1. Summary of the novel

The novel can be divided into four parts-First part deals with the past, her family background and the setting in New York. The second part deals with Tara's arrival in Bombay, her return to Calcutta after seven years of her stay in the U.S. and her return to India. The third part shows her lifestyle of Tara at Calcutta with her friends, looking at things from a different angle. It refers to a new way of perception because of her diasporic consciousness. While the fourth part portrays her visit to Darjeeling with her friends to spend the summer, her feeling of alienation finally presents a cultural



dilemma for Tara. She is torn between the American and Indian activities of life. The alien Western culture, which has become a second self to her, is constantly in wrestle (clash) with the culture of her native land. This is explicit when she returns to India after seven years in America. These two cultures are very different for Tara, who finds it hard to get along with her relatives and friends in India. What an irony that she feels lonely in her native land and finally decides to return to America as she is incapable of adjusting to the values of her native land 'INDIA'.

Tara, the novel's chief protagonist, is a pampered girl forced to go to America by her father for her studies. She is torn between two cultures being homesick, and all her efforts to adjust to the system proved futile. She tries to adjust to a new environment. She adapts to new ways of American society. Therefore, she rejects Indian modes of life. It can be said that her efforts to adapt to American society are to be measured by her rejection and dislike of the Indian lifestyle. She tries to wear the glasses of American culture to assimilate and maintain her existence there. She does not like the Indian style after returning to India from America- a stay of seven years. Tara feels disgusted with the places of India, especially Calcutta. Nothing allures her and makes her happy she seems to return to America soon. A feeling of Escapism is developed in her. Now the Catali Continental Hotel has no fascination with her.

Tara finds nothing in India of her liking. Now she looks at things from different angles. Seven years ago, this Tara admired "the houses on Marine Drive", but her attitude towards Indian life has changed during her stay at Vassar. The things which appealed to her stay at Vassar. The things which appealed to her previously now appalled her. Her new self-American Attitude to life is, no doubt, responsible for the disruption of her pleasure. Her American attitude to life is sensed by her relatives too. Before moving to the United States, she was content with her life and native country. She praises everything that surrounds her. When her relatives call her "Tul-Tul," she does not mind. However, when she returns from the United States and her relatives call her "Tul-Tul," the name sounds weird to her Americanized ears. It reflects her American Attitude to life:

"They attributed Tara's improprieties to her seven years in America" p.19

But the deteriorating social changes and her new perspective on poverty and dirtiness in India aggravate her disgust. Again, it is the impact of America that her return to India would bring satisfaction and remove her displeasure of staying abroad:

"For years she had dreamed of this return to India. She had believed that all hesitations, all shadowy fears of the time abroad would be erased quite magically if she could just return home to Calcutta. But so far, the return had brought only wounds. First the corrosive hours on Marine Drive, then the deformed beggar in the railway station, and now the exorable train ride steadily undid what strength he had held in reserve. She was an embittered woman....." p.25

She begins to feel a sense of alienation in Calcutta (India). She is obsessed with the city:

"That the misery of the city was too immense and blurred to be listed and assailed one by one....." p.131

Even David Cartwright, her husband, concludes after coming to know about Calcutta:

"The collective future in which garbage, disease and stagnation are man's estate..." p.83

Homesickness troubled Tara in North America. But she finds out:

"Except for Camac street (where the parents lived), Calcutta had changed greatly...." p.12

She feels a sense of repentance, "confusing my fear of New York with homesickness...

"Tara's rootless self makes the scenery, outside "merely alien and hostile". The word of Mathew Arnold suits the mental-up she finds herself. "Wandering between two worlds one dead, the other powerless to be born with nowhere to rest my head' Her friends comment her "too self-centred and European." This disgust, loss and nostalgia show that Tara has imbibed. American Culture half-heartedly. Coming to India, she makes a comparative picture of New York and Calcutta:

"How much easier she thought to live in Calcutta. How much simpler to trust in the city's polish inspector and play tennis with him on Saturday..... How humane to accompany a friendly editor to watch the riots in town New York, she confined was a gruesome nightmare...." p.69



So, all the charm is gone, and Tara finds herself a misfit everywhere she goes. She is forced to probe into her inner world consisting of two cultures and two different worlds' ideologies. In this case, she is not only away from her home country but also has a mental condition that makes her feel out of place everywhere she goes. Now, she does not have both an Indian and an American identity anymore. This clash affects Tara's mind deeply, and she finds it hard to fit into both cultures. The Indian dream of Tara is shattered:

"The newspaper was full of epidemics, collusions, fatal quarrels, and starvation, stretching before her was the vision of modern India" p.177

Tara is caught between antithetical tensions:

"Seven years ago she had played with these friends done homework with Nilima briefly fancied herself in love with Pranab, debated with Reena at the British council" p.43

But after coming back to India from America, "she feared their tone, their omissions, their aristocratic oneness." The traumatic experience of India makes Tara split personality. On the one hand, she does not find any appreciation from any corner of Indian society. Her marriage is considered with suspicion "an emancipated gesture." While on the other hand, David does not give her credit for "Cleaning the bathroom". It is obvious that dreariness, vacuity and desperation are the outcomes of her living the American life:

"New York...had made exotic.....New York was certainly extra-ordinary and it had driven her to despair" p.34

While the Indian trip was "so vague, so pointless, so diffuse". At last, she reconciles:

"Tara's Calcutta was disappearing. New dreams occurred with each new bulldozer incision in the green romantic hills. Slow learners like Tara were only victims" p.199

She has made "peace with the city, nothing more was demanded" p.202

4. Conclusion

To conclude, an experience of both the worlds-the Western and the Indian gives an objective perspective to Bharati Mukherjee. She presents the predicament of the protagonist, Tara returning to her homeland after a period of seven years-self-



imposed exiles. But "the return" had brought only wounds. While in New York, she had dreamed of coming back to India:

This traumatic mental state Tara results in bewilderment and cultural crisis. It also delves into the tormented diaspora consciousness of an Indian expatriate cut off from her roots. An exploration is made by Bharati Mukherjee- the evolution of an Indian expatriate into an American immigrant. This dilemma is needed to be resolved but remains ambiguous. It can be said that Tara remains a troubled spirit, a splintered personality, and rootless self-belonging nowhere at the end of the novel. Unable to fit into the Indian culture-i.e., the culture of Calcutta where she grew up, she finds that she is as alien at home as she was abroad. Her decision to return is not a positive realization but an escape from the present. This is not the way to find out roots away from home.

Ironically, Tara's trip to India, her birthplace, turns out to be a disappointment. From then, Tara descends into estrangement, melancholy, and her awful end. Tara's greatest irony is that she has lived through the racial challenges of surviving in a strange nation, but nothing bad has ever happened to her. The dreadful conclusion comes to her in the land of her birth. Accordingly, the novel is intended to represent the cultural clash of a person's return to their birthplace after having lived abroad. If one's home has become unrecognizable, then exile in a foreign land or expatriation may seem preferable.

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ئەزمونی کارەساتی کۆچکردن لە کچە کە ی پلنگ بهاراتی موخیرجی.

پوختە:

مەبەست لەم نووسنە تیشک خستنه سەر بارودۆخی پالەوانەکانی (کەسایەتییه سەرەکییەکان) چۆن هەول دێدەن بۆ چاککردن و گۆڕین و لە ئەستۆگرتن بۆ سیستەمی کۆمەڵگای ئەمریکی، هەرۆهە چۆن هەست بە ناجیگیری خۆیان دەکەن لە رووی کەلتووری و میژوووبەو، بەم شیوەیە ئەنجامەکی شیواوی و دواکەوتنی کاراکتەرەکانی دەبێت. خەڵک پێویستە خۆیان لە نیشتمانی بەدوور بگرن و دەست بکەن بە دروست کردنی مالى نوێ لە سیستەمی نوێ، کۆمەڵگایەکی نوێ، هەرۆهە کەلتووریکی نوێ. لە کۆتاییدا ئەمە مەملانییە وەک ئەوێ لە رۆمان نووسی ئاوارە (کۆچ کردوو) بهاراتی موخیرجی کیشاویەتی لە تالی و شیرینی، دەرەنجام هەولێ داوێ بۆ وینا کردنی ئەو هەلکشان و داكشان و رەتکردنەوێ لەلایەن کۆمەڵگا و بەخۆداچوونەوێ و خۆ بەدوورگرتن لە خەڵک هەرۆهە دەستبەردار بوون لە مولک و مال و هاوئەنگی لەگەڵ بەهاکانی هەردوو کۆمەڵگاکە، ئەوێ کە لێی هەلکەنداوێ و ئەوێ بۆی هاتووێ

المخلص:

الغرض من هذه الورقة هو تنوير موقف الأبطال المهاجرين كيف يحاولون التكيف والاستيعاب والتكيف مع نظام المجتمع الأمريكي، وبذلك يشعرون بأنهم بلا جذور ثقافياً وفي القيام بذلك، كيف يشعرون بأنهم بلا جذور ثقافياً وتاريخياً. وبالتالي، فإنه يؤدي إلى الارتباك والاعترافات والاكتماب للشخصيات. يتعين على الناس إبعاد أنفسهم عن المنزل وإنشاء منزل جديد في نظام جديد ومجتمع جديد وثقافة جديدة. في النهاية إنه صراع أو معضلة. كروائي معترب، عانى بهاراتي موخرجي من عواقب حلوة ومريرة وحاول تصوير مثل هذا الكامن والتقلب والرفض والمراجعة والعزلة / الاغتراب والاستيعاب مع قيم كلتا الثقافتين - من التذبذب والرفض والمراجعة والعزلة / الاغتراب والاستيعاب مع قيم كلتا الثقافتين - من واحدة يتم اقتلاع