

A Treatise of Culture Conflict in Bharathi

Mukherjee's the Tigers Daughter

C. Bhoomika, M. Muthu Lakshmi, M. Sasikala, G. Suba Sree Devi

MA English

Sri Sarada College for Women (Autonomous), Tirunelveli.

bhoomika5826@gmail.com

Abstract: *Multiculturalism stands as a challenge to liberal democracy. By distancing the common identification of citizens from the actual social, cultural, political, and economic situations and identities of actual members of society, liberal democracies aim to ensure that all citizens are treated equally under the law. The idea of multiculturalism is dynamic and has the power to inspire people to look for real self- and group-portrayals. More radical multicultural theorists have asserted that certain cultural groups require more than just acknowledgement to preserve their unique identities and contributions. The phenomena of several cultural groups coexisting in one society is known as multiculturalism, and it is mostly the result of immigrant populations. Every facet of their lives work, friendship, leadership, religion, education, social justice, etc reflected their respective cultural identities. In several western civilisational nations, multiculturalism has emerged as the prevailing theory due to international migration. Multiculturalism thus emerged as a major issue in several literature. The first book written by Bharathi Mukherjee, "The Tiger's Daughter" is the subject of this essay's critical study. It paints a beautiful picture of what immigrants go through. The difficulties associated with cultural relocation are well described. Her story is open and emphasises the tension or dissonance brought on by a cultural mismatch. It conveys the psychological toll that immigration has had. It's challenging to adapt to the new culture and let go of the old, just as it's challenging to let go of the past and merge with the present. Thus, there is plenty material for a whole account provided by the distinct and intricate experiences. It examines the protagonist's cultural encounters in a foreign nation.*

Keywords: Culture, Multiculturalism, English Literature, Cross Cultural Conflict, Diasporic Writing

I. INTRODUCTION

Indian-born American author Bharathi Mukherjee began her writing career in 1970. She is a learnt individual. Originally from Kolkata, she moved to the United States in 1963 to pursue her MFA in Creative Writing. At the University of California, Berkeley, she now holds a professorship. The experiences of women immigrants are the primary subject of Bharathi Mukherjee's works. Her experiences as an exile and then as an expatriate, suffering from hostility in Canada, are reflected in her writings. She eventually became a permanent resident of the US. In the field of Indian Diasporic writers, Bharathi Mukherjee is unmatched due to her emotive works that speak to a wide range of social groups. The Middleman and Other Stories, a collection of short stories, was honoured with the prestigious National Book Critics Circle Award in 1988.

Multicultural Literature:

Multicultural literature is grounded in realism, with a focus on themes of race, class, and gender. It has some topics in common with the works of writers from other cultures, such as creating a personal identity within the community that defines multiculturalism and personal and cultural values, family dynamics, kid's games, cultural folklore, and society constraints, incentives and penalties, and religious environmental background adaptations that came about from socioeconomic shifts, historical variables, interaction with other ethnic groups and formation of developing familial ties



and other personal relationships marriage roles, recognising gender roles, and creating social circles, friendships, and role playing based on age. The study of multicultural literature examines and challenges social injustice as well as cultural disputes among individuals from various racial, religious, and socioeconomic origins. In multicultural literature, a feeling of community or collectiveness connects the diaspora to their home country. The tone of modern literature is shifting because of individuals travelling freely across borders and the world becoming a vast global community. The influence of diversity on modern Indian writing has been sluggish to emerge as India, in contrast to Australia, America, and Britain, does not have a rainbow population. It has just recently started to become noticeable.

Cross Cultural Conflicts:

The Tiger's Daughter by Bharati Mukherjee delves deeply into the themes of diversity, identity, and the conflicts that result from the intersection of several cultures. The protagonist of the book is Tara, a young Bengali lady who, after living in America for several years, returns to her native India. The intricacies of cross-cultural identification are emphasised by Tara's voyage return to Calcutta, where she struggles with her sense of identity and her emotional separation from the culture, she formerly called her own. Fundamentally, The Tiger's Daughter explores the challenges faced by people torn between two worlds one traditional and the other modern and the challenging task of navigating identity in the face of these disparities. Mukherjee critically examines the notion of diversity via the painful prism of Tara's experience as an immigrant in America. Mukherjee reveals a more complicated reality, even though multiculturalism is sometimes hailed as the happy mingling of many cultures. Tara's absorption into American society distorts her senses and makes her insensitive to the customs of her own Indian culture. Tara's identity as an American and an Indian is merged when she goes back to Kolkata. Her cultural hybridity causes her to struggle within rather than being a source of strength. The difficulties that many immigrants have balancing the expectations of their new life overseas with their historical background are reflected in this dichotomy. Tara finds the multicultural experience disorienting since she finds it difficult to reconcile her Westernised worldview with the traditional beliefs she is exposed to at home.

The book also exposes the shortcomings of cultural integration, casting doubt on the idea of a cohesive, harmonious multicultural life. Tara has been estranged from the people and world she was formerly a part of due to her American schooling and marriage to a white guy. She finds it difficult to adjust to the political unrest, social injustices, and obvious changes that have occurred in India when she returns. Calcutta's colourful, chaotic atmosphere makes her uncomfortably conscious of how much she has changed. Even though she shares their ethnic and cultural heritage, her friends who have stayed in India see her as a stranger. The book makes the argument that, even in one's own country, cultural displacement, and the sensation of residing between two different worlds can lead to feelings of loneliness and alienation. Mukherjee highlights the intricacies of diversity beyond polite tolerance via Tara's experience. Although tolerance and inclusion are sometimes linked to diversity, the book examines the more profound psychological and emotional challenges people face when juggling numerous cultural identities. Tara's incapacity to completely reintegrate with her roots upon her return to India highlights how cultural dislocation may result in an internal disintegration of the self. Neither America nor India provide her with a feeling of total belonging. The story by Mukherjee illustrates the paradox of multiculturalism although people might live in several cultural contexts, they could not feel completely at home in any one of them, which leads to a shattered sense of self.

Clash of Traditions and Modernity:

The conflict between modernity and traditions is a recurring motif that represents the personal conflict of the main character Tara Banerjee Cartwright and the larger social unrest in postcolonial India. Born into a rich Bengali family, Tara returns to her native India after living in the West for a number of years, where she wed an American. When she comes back, she finds that the nation has changed, struggling with issues of modernisation, political upheaval, and the disintegration of long-standing customs. Her return trip to her own country brings to light the tension between the contemporary, liberal ideals she has adopted in America and her upbringing in a traditional, hierarchical culture. Tara's



personal troubles and her views of a quickly changing India are two ways in which this friction between cultures is depicted. Because of her upper class, Brahmin upbringing, Tara has been reared with a strong feeling of superiority based in her family's traditional ideals. Her early years in India were characterised by a strong feeling of community inside a closed-off, privileged society that strictly upheld caste and class hierarchies. But Tara's exposure to the individualism and liberal philosophies of the West after living in the country for a while causes her to become more detached from the ideals of her upbringing. She has more freedom in America, especially when it comes to gender roles and personal preferences, which is very different from what is expected of her as a woman from a traditional Indian home. After returning to India, Tara experiences a sense of cultural dislocation because of this exposure, finding it difficult to completely identify with the contemporary, individualistic ethos of the West or the traditional ideals of her past.

Tara returns to an India that is likewise caught in the conflict between tradition and modernity. There is constant political unrest, social change, and conflict between the elites of the former colonial era and the burgeoning socialist movements that support equality and reform. Tara looks around and sees that the country she left behind has changed. The privileged status of families like Tara's is directly threatened by the socialist beliefs that are gaining traction in India and opposing the inflexible caste and class structures. The manner that these political and social forces are altering Indian society unnerves her since her once revered class rank is now considered a thing of the past. The book illustrates how, in the process of modernising, India is rejecting some components of its long-standing social structure, a transformation that is neither seamless nor universally accepted by the populace. The larger conflict between tradition and modernity is symbolised by Tara's isolation. Her background was characterised by conservative and patriarchal norms, and she has experienced liberal and progressive ideas overseas. As such, she epitomises the challenges of managing a bicultural identity. Her failure to completely fit in with either culture represents the challenging juggling act that many foreigners and immigrants go through in an attempt to balance their traditional background with contemporary Western ideals. Thus, "The Tiger's Daughter" depicts a striking image of a country undergoing social and political upheaval in addition to highlighting the psychological discomfort associated with cultural hybridity.

Alienation and Belonging:

The protagonist, Tara Banerjee Cartwright, who returns to India after seven years in the United States, encounters a significant cultural shock. This novel by Bharati Mukherjee delves extensively into the concepts of alienation and belonging. Tara feels alienated from both her Westernised identity and her traditional Indian background since she cannot seem to settle into either one. Tara is expected to follow the traditional duties that her culture has assigned because she was raised in a strict upper class Bengali household. Her viewpoint has changed due to her years spent overseas, which also included getting married to an American, making her relationship with her own country more difficult. Tara expects to feel like she is home when she goes to India, but she feels alienated instead. Her comfortable history has become disturbing due to political turbulence, social upheavals, and uprisings in the India she once knew. She realises quickly that her standing has changed and that she now exists in a state of cultural liminality, neither wholly Indian nor totally American, when she makes contact with old friends and relatives.

Tara is estranged on a political and personal level. India's internal upheaval is reflected in the country's political difficulties, as the nation grapples with identity, postcolonialism, and transformation. Tara's homecoming serves as a metaphor for the larger sensation of dislocation that many people who cross cultural boundaries experience, according to Mukherjee. Tara is privileged, yet she is unable to participate completely in the social battles going on around her. She feels even more alienated from the reality of modern India because of her affluent background, which contributes to her feelings of shame and powerlessness. This leads to a terrible disconnect she lives in a nation that is changing, yet she can't really relate to its hardships because of her Western upbringing. Her experiences in the West and her sense of dislocation in India are paralleling at the same time. Tara found it difficult to completely integrate since she was always reminded of her otherness while in America due to ethnic and cultural disparities. However, she is horrified to discover that her motherland no longer provides the sense of security and belonging that she had come to connect with India



upon her homecoming. Her American way of life is both praised and criticised, and she is regarded like a stranger. The experience of the immigrant or expatriate, who frequently finds themselves straddling two cultures but not entirely accepted by either, is highlighted by this dual alienation. As a result, Tara feels that she doesn't belong and is stuck in a transitional state between two different civilisations for eternity.

II. CONCLUSION

Mukherjee's novel *The Tiger's Daughter* explores the lives of an American immigrant and an Indian expat. It offers a strong new voice in diasporic writing from an Indian woman who relocates to the US and reinterprets her relationship with her homeland. Like her creator, Tara dangles between her newfound country and her resting place after being ripped from her own soil due to an unintentional affair with a man of other origins. It's similar like choose the better of two eyes. Tara struggles with this situation for a while before becoming lost and realising she is in a foreign territory. But having lived on both continents, she is able to exercise the greater part of her judgement and, for well-known reasons related to duty, security, and pragmatism, she ultimately decides to go to her new motherland.

