

A study of Culture Shock in the Fiction of Bharati Mukherjee

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ABSTRACT

Bharati Mukherjee is one of the true authors of the Indian Diaspora, having achieved a fortunate position within a relatively brief creative journey. She has captured the Indian immigrant involvement in her works and two collections of short fiction as an exile in the United States. She is an author, short story essayist, verified essayist, and writer who was born in India. The vast bulk of her writings are about the lives of Indian immigrants in the United States. She investigates the topic of movement and change in her books. Immigrants, too, have one desire: to live in America for the rest of their lives. As a result, as immigrants, they go through a process of transition and identity transformation. She passes through distinct stages, such as exile, progress, and migration. Her paintings reveal her conflicts with the ethos, cultures, and people of the country where she was born (India) and the one to which she emigrated (Canada) (America). In all of her works, the nature of societal conflict causing mental urgency forms the core of her achievement as a creative craftsman. She is succeeding in portraying societal conflict between the East and the West as a mental crises in her heroes' own psyche. Mukherjee focuses on sensitive female protagonists who require a stable sense of personal and societal identity. She is concerned about her hero's survival in the new surroundings. She is concerned in conveying a clear and interesting picture of Indian life to the American audience.

KEYWORDS: *Bharati Mukherjee, novelist, cultural identity, India, American readers, Culture Shock.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, there is a sizable body of fiction written in English by Indians. Anita Desai and Bharati Mukherjee, two female writers, have received

widespread acclaim in the last two decades. Other female authors include Kamala Markandaya and Ruth.

Although Pravar Jhabwala, Nayantara Sahgal, and Shashi Deshpande have all taken amazing walks, the level of basic concern shown to Anita Desai and Bharati Mukherjee is unmatched. Bharati Mukherjee is a diasporic novelist who leaves her homeland and settles in another country, where she has mixed feelings towards the location or group. In general, the diasporic author exhibits professional national, expert group, or star religion learning.

Edward Said defines diasporic as (I) filiations, i.e. a special tie with one's homeland, and (ii) association, i.e. a change in the host nation's culture. In a little more than a quarter-century, Bharati Mukherjee, an Indian-born American author, has earned widespread critical acclaim in every corner of the globe.

Bharati Mukherjee, an Indian-born novelist, aspires to be recognised as an American author, to fit in with the standards of the country where she was raised. She doesn't want to be labelled an outcast or an exile because 'culture integration' is a critical process for her that has the opulence of recognition or osmosis rather of the agony of difference, rejection, or estrangement. Her earlier works reflect the agony of breaking down, and her later works portray the ability to create a persona while also being accepted by the new social milieu.

Bharati Mukherjee was born in Calcutta, India, on July 27, 1940. Sudhir Lal Mukherjee, her father, was a refined scientific expert who had evaluated and

conducted propelled research in Germany and the United Kingdom. Bina Mukherjee, her mother, was not particularly well educated, as were most Bengali women of her day, but she and her husband made certain that their three young daughters had the best possible education. Mukherjee and her two sisters all went on to do postgraduate work and become scholastics as a result.

The Mukherjees were Bengali Brahmins, which means they belonged to the highest caste among Bengali Hindus. Sudhir Mukherjee's ancestral home was in Faridpur, and his significant other's was in Dhaka, both districts of Bengal that became a part of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) when the territory was divided after India's independence in 1947. Their families, along with a large number of other educated, high-ranking Hindus, had relocated to Calcutta in the first of several diasporas associated with Bharati Mukherjee's life. In Calcutta, she grew up among a more distant family, surrounded by uncles, aunties, and cousins, as one of roughly 40 tenants of the joint family home on Rash Behari Avenue in Calcutta's white collar class.

Her father had a strong influence on Mukherjee's early years. Sudhir Mukherjee, who died in 1985, was a vibrant and gregarious man who became the inspiration for the 'Tiger' in her debut novel, *The Tiger's Daughter*. In a meeting given to Canadian Fiction Magazine, Mukherjee recalls that he was "a rare man... especially the kindhearted father" who "wanted the best for his

daughters." Furthermore, he regarded the 'best' as implying psychologically fulfilling lives "..

Sudhir Mukherjee had established a pharmaceuticals business in Calcutta upon his arrival from England, where he had earned a Ph.D. from the University of London, with the help of a Jewish immigrant from the Middle East. Their firm thrived until the partners got into a fight not long after India gained independence in 1947. Sudhir Mukherjee then travelled for London alone, accompanied by his significant other and two daughters, to conduct research. However, the accomplice tracked him down in England, apologised, and requested that he continue his research venture in the West for the sake of the organisation until further notice. As a result, Bharati Mukherjee spent some of her childhood in London and Basel, Switzerland, where her father also performed some logical work.

Sudhir Mukherjee returned to Calcutta in 1951 to take on a more active role in the company, which was now booming thanks to the success of the treatments he had created. He chose not to take his family back to the joint family house, a decision Mukherjee described as a release from the "startling collective holding" in *Days and Nights in Calcutta*, the book on her year-long stay in Calcutta, which she wrote with her better half Clark Blaise. Instead, he built a chateau for his family in the processing plant area, complete with a swimming pool, a lake, furnished guards, and a staff of workers. The wonderful years of Bharati

Mukherjee's youth were made possible by her father's success as a specialist and researcher. Nonetheless, the years spent in the West and the life the family led inside the walled compound indicated that the sisters were becoming increasingly separated from the white collar Calcutta of their youth. According to Mukherjee, the family had now "declined to converge with the city," having opted to embark on a path that would eventually lead them all to depart it and settle in a faraway location.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the case of Bharati Mukherjee's mother, she was a constant presence in the lives of the little daughters. Mukherjee describes Bina Mukherjee as 'one of those special case Third World women who 'consumed' all her life for a training that was denied to well-raised women of her age,' a mother who 'ensured' that her little girls 'never endured similar needs' in a meeting published in *Canadian Fiction Magazine*. In *Days and Nights in Calcutta*, Mukherjee describes her mother as a "skilled storyteller" who "did not think about exact insights, only about energy." Bharati Mukherjee also admits that, while she respected her father, she was physically and irritably closer to her mother. She then began to resemble Bina Mukherjee, and she is, like her, "an authority of feelings of disdain and affronts, and persistently unforgiving." Perhaps this aspect of her personality manifests itself in the severity that still hurts her when she thinks back on her time in Canada. Bina Mukherjee played an important role in her daughters'

childhood on numerous occasions. Her desire to see her daughters free and protected from the humiliations often experienced by white collar class women in conventional Hindu relationship marriage, for example, motivated her to 'guarantee they're achieved so nobody can encourage them to endure.' Bina Mukherjee made the decision to send her daughters to an Anglicized Bengali school instead of schools where the main medium of instruction was the vernacular dialect, Bengali, and to supervise their reading and writing as a result of this determination, unwittingly inducing in Bharati Mukherjee a loss of faith in Calcutta and a fantasy of making 'an outside landmass' her 'battleground for substantiating self-esteem

Bharati Mukherjee grew up in a family that was unusually close-knit. The Mukherjee young ladies felt 'sacred and distant' as a result of this, as well as the lives they drove inside the processing plant's gated compound. Despite the fact that her parents were traditional and universal in the majority of their convictions until recently, Bharati Mukherjee believes in the Hinduism that they instilled in her—in various ways, they had cultivated in their little girls qualities that would lead Bharati to drift away from family and country. Their desire to inspire their young daughters to have an Anglicized education, seek careers outside of the family, and pursue free, inevitable lives suggested that Bharati Mukherjee would eventually forsake them and India for a life abroad and the calling of a scholastic author.

➤ Education:

Bharati Mukherjee was sent to a multilingual school operated by Protestant evangelists when she was three years old. Although the medium of instruction was Bengali, there was a greater emphasis on English than at other Bengali-medium colleges in the city. Mukherjee and her sisters were enrolled to a small tuition-based school in London after the family migrated to England in 1947, where they quickly became proficient in English and distinguished themselves by "carting away all of the trophies." When they were accepted into a German school in Basel, they began their Western education. The family had now settled in a chateau walled off from the city, but the young ladies were also set in the selective Loreto Convent School, which Mukherjee has depicted as a school kept running by Irish nuns who respected the "walled-off school compound in Calcutta as a corner always green and tropical of England."

The fact that the sisters were from home in a car with a protector and occasionally an escort vehicle in front of it to protect them from the brutality that was becoming all too common in Calcutta at the time implied that Mukherjee was now living at a further exclusion from ordinary Calcutta life and Bengali culture, which the nuns were showing her to 'debase,' implied that Mukherjee was now living at a further ex This was, without a doubt, a situation ripe for "difficulties." Bharati quickly transformed into a piece of 'a class that did

not live in its local vernacular' after unlearning Bengali traditions and figuring out how to be English, acting in Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, and practising English rhetoric classes. To put it another way, the process by which Mukherjee would inevitably be expelled from her country began when her family moved to London and accelerated during her secondary school years.

Bharati got a B.A. (with distinction) in English from the University of Calcutta after graduating from the Loreto Convent School in 1959. She then ran to Baroda with her father. She earned a master's degree in English and ancient Indian culture from the University of Baroda. She now realises that the training she received in Baroda, which included a focus on her country's history, was invaluable, as it helped to balance the very Anglicized tutoring she had been receiving up to that point and fortified the religious rules instilled in her by her parents, both devout Hindus. These principles are still important to Mukherjee, and she has tried to use Hindu beliefs like the possibility of resurrection in new ways in works like *Jasmine*.

Mukherjee had wanted to be an essayist since she was a child, and she had even written 60 or 80 pages of a novel about English youths while still in her teens in London. She had written short stories for the school magazine, *Palm Leaves*, at the Loreto Convent School, in which she romanticised situations from European history. She had decided to become an essayist rather than a

researcher like her father when she was in school. Sudhir Mukherjee embraced the choice, and it was he who, in 1960, looked for a meeting American scholastic to find out where he might send his small girl for formal fiction preparation. He wrote a letter to the artist Paul Engle, who was enrolled in Iowa's Creative Writing Program at the time, on the advice of the American educator. Bharati Mukherjee received affirmation and a funding to undertake graduate work in the United States as a result of the letter and a referral from another meeting American researcher. As a result of her desire to be a writer and her father's wish to leave her country for a North American education, she enrolled in the University of Iowa Writer's Workshop in September 1961. Although she had come to live in the West before, this was the first time she had done so without the assistance of anybody else, and she had no intention of returning to India. In 1963, Mukherjee received his M.F.A. from the University of Iowa. She had submitted a collection of short stories as part of her proposal. She had clearly impressed the English Department faculty, since she was accepted into their PhD programme (she earned a Ph.D. in English and near writing in 1969).

➤ Career:

Bharati Mukherjee has the ability to properly combine her job for composing with her English preparation and close writing. Her academic career began in 1964, when she relocated to Wisconsin to teach English at Marquette University and later at

the University of Wisconsin at Madison. She and her significant other began working at McGill University in Montreal in 1966. Starting as a teacher at this institution, Mukherjee rose through the ranks of academia at a breakneck speed, eventually becoming a full professor in 1978. She released *The Tiger's Daughter* (1972), *Wife* (1975), and the synergistic *Days and Nights in Calcutta*, as well as scholarly expositions, while at McGill. During this time, she also distinguished herself by serving as the director of McGill's composition programme and the executive of graduate English examinations. She also received stipends from McGill University (1968, 1970), the Canada Arts Council (1973-74), and the Guggenheim Foundation for her work (1978-79).

As a result, both as a creative writer and as a full-time scholar, Mukherjee has achieved amazing success. What impact has her instruction had on her writing? She acknowledges in an interview with *Canadian Fiction Magazine* that the responsibilities of university teaching have inevitably limited her: 'If I could afford to live solely on my writing, I imagine I'd be quite prolific.' She goes on to say that she enjoys leading fiction workshops because they allow her to "hone my theories about writing." While she has taught traditional literature classes and worked in administration, her published interviews and articles demonstrate that she is the type of writer who excels in an academic setting.

➤ **Marriage**

Mukherjee's marriage to writer and essayist Clark Blaise has had a significant impact on her career as a researcher and writer. Despite the fact that they have two children, they have had "a fairly abstract marriage," as Mukherjee describes it. As one might anticipate, a couple has shaped each other's careers in significant ways. Mukherjee, for example, moved to Canada in 1966 to teach at McGill University at his request, as he had believed about that time that he expected to backpedal to Canada to regain his basic underpinnings, despite her apprehension about moving north. Blaise, on the other hand, departed Montreal in 1980 because she needed them to start over in the United States. Blaise grew up in Gainesville, Florida, after being born in North Dakota in 1940. He met Mukherjee shortly after enrolling in Iowa's Writer's Workshop in February 1962, and they married in September 1963 during a lunch hour. From that point forward, they have lived separately more often than not, however the necessity to relocate where jobs were available meant that they had to live apart on occasion as well.

Blaise, a talented author and a fiction writer who has been anthologized on a regular basis, has published two collections of short tales.

A North American Education (1973) and *Tribal Justice* (1979), two works, and *Resident Aliens* (1986), a collection of short fiction and personal expositions. Blaise, like Mukherjee, has been fascinated by the magic of migration, the status of new

immigrants, and the sentiment estrangement frequently experienced by exiles, as the title of this final book indicates.

Mukherjee describes the process of collaborating with Blaise on abstract tasks as 'constantly energising.' The duo has written two full-length books together. *Days and Nights in Calcutta* and *The Sorrow and the Terror*—a longish exposition of the dubious writer Salman Rushdie's life after *The Satanic Verses*, as well as a screenplay based on *Days and Nights in Calcutta*. Obviously, the concept of cooperation has changed from task to task. In this regard, the book on their vacation trip to India is a collection of discrete records about covering knowledge, whereas the book about the live India airliner disaster was a 'more purposeful' effort in which the two writers took a shot at each single fragment

➤ **'Cultural Shock in Bharati Mukherjee's Wife:**

The novel's seed was sown in the mediaeval mood of a fantastic story of love and enterprise, which was derived from the melodies and fragments of epic sonnets sung by the wandering minstrel. Boccaccio's *Decameron*, a world-renowned collection of love tales in prose, was published in 1350. Short stories like these are collected in Italian 'novellas.' Bharati Mukherjee's female heroes are immigrants who face social adversity, but they are determined to build their character by embracing their brave journeys, which is why Bharati Mukherjee has received widespread acclaim

from all corners of the globe in a relatively short time of only a quarter century. Despite the fact that she has been acknowledged as a voice for marginalised immigrants, a close examination of her novels reveals that she has primarily written from the perspective of women's activists. Mukherjee's depiction of women and their various ties demonstrates the power of functional practises in traditional society, as well as the forms of freedom and empowerment available to women in their Diaspora situation.

3. CONCLUSION

Mukherjee's work is constantly centred on sensitive characters who lack a clear sense of social character and are frequently subjected to racism, misogyny, and other forms of social abuse. A lot of her fiction is excellent because it is inspired by her personal experiences. Her writings have a taste that is only occasionally found among exile writers, thanks to an unmistakable sense of inclusion that borders on identifiable proof with the characters. She achieves objective neutrality by presenting the truth in a simple and funny manner. She cares about her helpless heroes, sympathises with them on occasion, but occasionally overlooks their human impotence. Despite the fact that she has firsthand experience with the dreadful process of digestion, she has not allowed her personal preference to taint her work.

In her writings, Bharati Mukherjee attempts to conceive the image of immigrants who assert their claim to an American character

by working valiantly to acclimate themselves efficiently in a new social setting. They try to find a niche here in order to give themselves another chance to create their lives. She saw migration as an opportunity to redefine herself as an immigrant craftsman, rather than a repressed and broken exile essayist only interested in the subversive potential of life on the edge. Bharati Mukherjee regarded migration as an opportunity for the author in her to speak to the encounters while also lending her voice to her belief that it meant a release from the constrictive societal and social limits of her own country. America is a nation of immigrants, and movement is essential to the country's survival. Except for the native Indian, every American who has ever lived was either an immigrant or a descendant of an immigrant.

To fully appreciate Mukherjee's work, it is necessary to understand why America is described as a "land of nations" and how immigrant fights are absorbed into the mix. The commitment of the immigrant may be seen in every aspect of life. Religion, legislative issues, instruction, and expressions have all enriched the country's texture. Bharati Mukherjee's characters follow in the footsteps of previous immigrants, with the exception that the request of the moment is unique. She has touched the harmony in the hearts of the Americans with her interesting description of the immigrant experience of her characters; they recognise their own individual battles and feelings of despair being replayed and remembered. This is

why, despite her limited ability to focus time, she has found a position in the illuminatus cosmos of American essayists.

Bharati Mukherjee, an example of ostracised writing, was born in India and raised in the United States. She devotes the most of her writings on the lives of Indian immigrants in the United States. She strives to enliven the image of those ladies who have strived to embrace foreign culture and acknowledge the changed personality, overthrowing the Indian social legacy in which they breathed for the first time. What is most important in them is their soul, which allows them to overthrow their old culture and adapt to the new environment. Because of the tension created in the psyche between the two socio-social conditions, between the sentiments of rootlessness and wistfulness, the mind of an immigrant is continuously shocking. When a person travels to an unknown land, he finds himself as an outcast in a dead zone, where he must fight for his life. He cuts out another region and surrounds himself completely in the west's bait, defeating the new sentimentality. He transforms himself into a different persona and forms ardent bonds with the location he calls home. This steady exposure of a different self causes him to lose sight of his own unique local culture. When he returns to his native home, he discovers that his native taste and touch have turned him into an outsider. His intellect is once again torn between the social conflict of two conditions, and he is forced to fight his shattered identity.

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