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THE CONTOUR OF "ALIENATION" IN BHARATHI MUKHERJEE'S *THE TIGER'S DAUGHTER*

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ABSTRACT:

This research paper is an effort to explore Bharathi Mukherjee's sense of alienation in Canada where life as an immigrant was unbearable, the forced her to make an effort towards the process of economic, social and cultural adjustment. This will study her desire for cultural fusion in the new dwellings and feeling of in-betweenness for them the problem of trying to maintain a balance between their dual affiliations. In the case of immigrant women it is more pronounced and prominent. The female character Tara carries the burden of cultural values of their native land with her to her new country, thus making it more difficult the problematic for her to adjust.



KEYWORDS: *Voyage of alienation, suffering, hard try of adjustments.*

INTRODUCTION

Bharathi Mukherjee herself being an expatriate and immigrant has felt the pangs of disintegration and her hopes an expectation in the process of the emergence of a new life; therefore alienation has become a popular theme in her works. Her writings largely reflect her personal experience as a woman. Caught between two cultures, Bharathi Mukherjee, an Indian born American novelist has received considerable critical attention from almost all the quarters of the globe in a relatively short period of twenty years. Bharathi Mukherjee was born

on 27th July 1940 in Bengali, Brahmin family of Calcutta. Her father Sudhir Lal Mukherjee was a pharmaceutical chemist and her mother Bina Banerjee Mukherjee was a housewife. In 1951 the family returned to Calcutta, and Mukherjee joined the English Speaking Loretto Covent School, run by Irish nuns. She lived with her parents in a fairly comfortable circumstance since her father was a co-owner of a pharmaceutical factory. In view of her privileged childhood, Mukherjee and her sisters were chauffeured to school, which was a quite characteristic of high class Bengalis. The family was westernized in the sense that

English education was valued, and literature, philosophy, social principles got transmitted through the language. Bharathi Mukherjee completed her B.A. (Honors) in English from University of Baroda in 1959 and her M.A. in 1961. Sudhir Mukherjee got to know about his daughter's creative work and then he encouraged her to join creative writing program in the United States. She obtained Ph.D.; in English and Comparative literature in 1969. It was during her stay at the University of Iowa that Mukherjee met Clark Blaise, the Canadian novelist, professor and journalist and she married to him in September 1963. In 1966,

the couple moved to Canada and lived there as Canadian citizens, till 1980, first in Toronto, then in Montreal, a period that Mukherjee looks back with pain and anger. There she feels outsider and found herself expatriated. They took a decision to leave Canada and move to USA in 1980 and since then they have been living there as US citizens. After moving to Canada and before setting down finally at the University of California, Berkeley, where she started working as professor of English then she worked as a lecturer in Mc Gill University in Montreal from 1966 to 1969, where she was elevated to Assistant Professorship in 1969 and to Associate Professorship in 1973. She passed away on 28th January, 2017 at the age of 76 at Manhattan, New York, U.S.

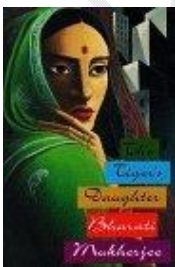
Her novels honestly depicts the issues of her own cultural location in West Bengal in India, her displacement **alienation** for her land of origin to Canada where she was "simultaneously invisible" as a writer and "overexposed" as a racial minority and her final re-location-assimilation to USA as a natural citizen.

Alienation: According to the theory of Karl Marx the separation of the things that are naturally belong together; and the placement of antagonism between things that are properly in harmony. The preamble of the term 'alienation' by Karl Marx in the last decade of the 19th century has been invigorated in the mid of 20th century with the progression of migration to America which has reached to the new high in terms of émigré populace. In the social sciences, 'Assimilation' is as approach towards incorporation and amalgamation, through which, not only immigrants but also other marginalized groups- African-Americans in America, women in society, schedule caste in India- are "wrapped up" into an integrated conventional society. Indian Diaspora, today had emerged with the "multiplicity of histories, variety of culture, tradition and a deep instinct for survival". Indian Diaspora, though counting more than 20 million members world-wide, survives in between 'home of origin' and 'world of adoption'. The process of survival of the diasporic individual/community in between the 'home of origin' and 'world of adoption' is the voyage undertaken in the whole process from "alienation" to final "assimilation" with holding on to the past. Diaspora is a journey towards self-realization, self-recognition, self-knowledge and self-definition. There is an element of creativity present in the diasporic writings and this creation stands as a compensation for the many losses suffered.

The Tiger's Daughter:

The economic and cultural globalization exiled millions of people from their native land and all of them are trying to settle down in the adopted land. They take along with them their culture, language, values, rituals, emotions for the native country, memories of family, friends and relatives. The fragrance of soil is in their hearts and when they try to settle down in the adopted land, new land where everything seems to new the new culture, language, surroundings, rituals, style of living, emotion, food and many more. All these changes from one place to another place slowly and gradually brings isolation, failure in settling down, alienation, sufferings, quest for real identity etc.

The *Tiger's Daughter* is Tara Banerjee, Bengali Brahmin of Calcutta and daughter of an industrialist known as Bengal Tiger, schooled at PoughKeepsie, New York and married to an American named David who is writer. After her marriage Tara becomes Tara Baneerjee Cartwright. Tara Banerjee Cartwright is an autobiographical representation of the autor herself who is also married to an American. The protagonist's habit of retaining her maiden surname after marriage symbolically reflects her subconscious mind which is still deeply rooted in her native land and has not been able to forget it in spite of the changed identity of a European adopted by her. There is a strange fusion of confrontation with each other. Tara Banerjee Cartwright makes a trip home to India after being there for seven years. She visits India at the age of twenty-two-year old; the alien western culture which has almost becomes a second self to her is constantly in clash with the culture of the native soil. Tara finds it difficult to adjust with her friends and relatives in India, and sometimes with the traditions of her own family. She feels loneliness in her own native land. She feels loneliness in her own native land where she grown up, she even forgot the normal words of her mother tongue, rituals of her own culture. She is change her perspective is change towards



poverty and dirtiness in India. For her the journey from Bombay to Calcutta is disgusting experience.

"they drove her from the airport to their apartment on Marine drive which seemed to Tara run-down and crowded. Seven years earlier on her way to Vassar, she had admired the houses on Marine Drive, had thought them fashionable, but now their shabbiness appalled her."(p.22)

For years she had dreamed of this return to India. She has 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. Relatives used to call Tara 'American wali' and her husband a 'mleccha.' Tara's mind is at the conflict with the two personality one of an Indian and the other of an American. Many times she craves to go back to her husband David. Deep in her heart she feels that America is better place where she would be more at ease. Tara's journey to India proves as a quest for self and quest for immigrant psyche which proves frustration slowly leading to her illusion, alienation, depression and finally her tragic end. This novel emphasizes the need to reinvent and redefine the notion of 'home' and the notion of 'identity' from an immigrant perspective. Mukherjee attempts to find her place in the family, to reconnect with the past and her frustration at being taken to be a foreigner makes her disappointed. When Tara was in America she holds Indian cultures but as she visits India she holds America where she is more connected now.

Bharati Mukherjee tries to vivify the image of those women who have tried to assimilate the alien culture and have tried to accept the changed identity, over throwing the Indian cultural heritage in which live from their birth breath. Initially the new land makes them happy and allows feeling like cloud nine. They try to adjust in new surrounding but then it creates tension and feeling of rootlessness and alienation.

CONCLUSION:

Mukherjee's affinity to Indian soil and culture is rooted in her fiction. Nevertheless, through her characters she explores the ways in which many heritages are combined into a new singular bowl in this age of globalization. In the process immersing them in the present and looking forward to the future, her characters have to discover for themselves the social, religious, historical and political forces that have shaped them. Tara's journey to India, in her own native land brings all disgusting, frustration, sufferings and alienation. All her depression, loneliness and alienation leads to final tragic end in the native land India.

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