

**Demystification of Women – ‘Self ’: A Study in the Select Novels  
of Bharati Mukherjee**

Thesis submitted to Bharathiar University in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the award of the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy in English**

By

**M. Divya**

Under the Supervision of

**Dr. R. Sumathi M.A., Ph.D.**



**Department of English (Aided)**

**Kongunadu Arts and Science College (Autonomous)**

**[Re-accredited by NAAC with 'A' Grade 3.64 CGPA (3rd Cycle)**

**College of Excellence (UGC), Star College (DBT)]**

**Coimbatore - 641 029,**

**Tamilnadu, India**

**July 2019**

## *Chapter VI*

## *Conclusion*

---

## **Chapter VI**

### **Conclusion**

Bharati Mukherjee's fictional world presents a pathetic picture of the various experiences of women immigrants, their cultural and psychological conflicts, struggles, traumas, trials and tribulations and the heavy price some of them had to pay in their efforts to become successful immigrants in America. The analysis of Bharati Mukherjee's fictional world from a cultural and psychological perspective demonstrates that she has addressed herself to all the issues associated with expatriate experience. By choosing her protagonists from all parts of the world, she has attempted to explore the multiplicity of this theme which is centred in their struggle to outgrow inherited values. With her evolving creative vision the canvas of her thematic concern enlarges and the complexity of cultural assimilation acquires a new dimension.

The beauty in much of her fiction lies in its being informed by her personal experiences. A peculiar sense of identification with her character lends her novels a flavour rarely found among expatriate writers. It is clearly observed that because of the discrimination of culture, way of thinking and understanding, Bharati Mukherjee's, women characters become victims of cultural and psychological conflicts. In spite of all the unpleasant shadows, she is hopeful for a harmonious assimilation. She has tried to set harmony between the mainstream majority and the immigrant minority.

The objective of this thesis is to show the dynamics of identity and to highlight the multiculturalism, transformation, post colonialism, Americanization, traditional values and immigration. The thesis took as its hypothesis the imperative of cultural reconstruction and demystification of women's identity in the society by the immigrants in the new country of relocation. This research aims to illuminate the fluidity of culture and mutation of transformation followed by the female Protagonist's to expose their existing identity in the society.

Besides, it describes how 'The third world' post-colonial immigrant is interacting with the first world in the new circumstances of the information technology revolution in the age of globalization and its consequents. Additional objective is to reveal how the immigrants come back to their mother and either knowingly or unknowingly reinvent their culture after encountering circumstances and undergoing experiences in the society. Everything related to the research appears in this context. To fulfill this objective, the study has taken the select novels of Bharati Mukherjee; *The Tiger's daughter* [1972], *Wife* [1975] and *Jasmine* [1989].

These particular literary works in the field of novels take into account the female characters sufferings and collaboration of their identity through violent encounters and differences which build a strong empire. Owing to the fast tract advancements, the new world will be in a strong foundation to welcome global flows of culture. As they belong to new world, they have the opportunity to encounter new frontiers and valorize the third world because it is an ideal for every woman's

individual fulfillment of attaining liberty, dignity, equality and identity against the male dominance in the society because the thought of the powerful woman is very part of the culture that has devised ways to channel their superior energy. These chapters collate the woman issues in the role of the female protagonists discussed in this thesis in an attempt to highlight the findings and lay foundation in addition to direction for further research.

This study attempts to explore the narratives of the female protagonists in Bharati Mukherjee's fiction exemplifying the different stages of the acculturation in the multi-culturalism, transnation, transformation, immigration, alienation and Americanization with which they entangle for the reconstruction of the identity of course, the female characters are engaged in between two worlds(old and new world) under the diasporic circumstances. Meanwhile, the advent and impact of post colonialism gave a great change in the mind of spirit of the immigrants too. The post colonialism gives a direction which encourages them and makes them aware of facing the difficulties in the society. Certainly power of post colonialism in the age of globalization stands cause for creating as well as celebrating the multi-culturalism.

Bharati Mukherjee suggests the inevitability of transformations as necessary requisite for serving the 'unhousement' in the process of immigration. It is true that Bharati Mukherjee's concept of immigration – acculturation has undergone many changes during this period. Most of the women establish themselves in

various fields to run their life. In her novels, Bharati Mukherjee, being an Indian American novelist takes much effort, interest and energy to conceptualize the image of immigrants particularly the woman who celebrate right for their self-identity by means of striving to reinstate themselves successfully in a new world. The novelist considers the immigration as an opportunity to reflect her experience through her female characterization and seizes the same opportunity to voice her belief and right that the woman like protagonists would have ultimately release from constructive social, cultural, traditional, civilizational and religious constraints.

Most of the contemporary woman authors have opted and depicted these relationships with horror but Bharati Mukherjee celebrates and entices the women's relationship with their exotic glamour against traditional male domination. Ahmed stresses that "Mukherjee is one among others who represent Indian writing in English as the representative of everything that is Indian" (343). There is no anti-imperialist in Bharati Mukherjee on the other hand, the novelist, having involved with immigrant literature, creates third world of the protagonist's.

As Ahmed suggests that "immigration has its own politics, the combinations of origins, professional ambitions and the absence of a socialist agenda cause the immigrant intellectual to seek a politics of "third-worldism" as opposition" (30). Third world heralds that either man or woman may not be obliged either to aspire or to expose his or her individuality, identity, liberty, dignity and equality in the modern society because of the multiculturalism and transnationalism. They want

to be independent in action and thought. It is a naked truth that the woman of the third world is suffering from patriarchy and oppression. From the view of the post-colonial work, one could come to know pretty well that Bharati Mukherjee's literary work makes us aware of the collusion with western feminist's perception of the Indian woman. She portrays the third world women characters that are the symbol of the third world regression and suppression. So, literary critics insist that the complexities within "third world" have to be taken into account: class, caste, gender and injustice. Neither western feminism nor fast track racism can pull down the woman.

Bharati Mukherjee regards the U.S.A. as a new world which teems with technology, globalization, transculturalism and broad outlook. The new world positively holds a promise of new selfhood and new battles against marginalisation of the women. Post colonialism focusses the women issues of the third world so styled new world. Involving with the vicissitude of the post colonialism, Mukherjee has become an American novelist of Indian origin. One can understand that the post-colonial is defined by Bill Ashcraft, Gareth Griffins and Helen Tiffin.

To cover all the cultures affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonialization to the present day. This is because there is a continuity of preoccupations throughout the historical process initiated by European imperial regression. (67)

This study makes us to come to a conclusion that Bharati Mukherjee can be remembered in the history of fiction as a strong voice of diaspora. Her contribution to the diasporic tradition of the contemporary world is not negligible. Her continuous experimentation from *The Tiger's daughter* leaves a body of south Asian literature thoroughly enriched by new and admirable qualities which forever delight men of the post-colonial diasporic literature. Mukherjee is a writer who faces the issue of nostalgia for one's native country and culture in the transformed globalized and civilized world squarely exploring the contradictions in her own native culture and presently delightfully a revised vision of India America, the world and the new immigrants in her fiction, the novelist describes what she calls the "hybridization" of the new America whenever she is inclined to focus through character. In this correction she proudly and defiantly announces to her American readers I an interview 'I am one of you'. She declares herself as an American in the immigrant tradition.

There is another interview with Bharati Mukherjee conducted by Bill Moyers which brings her view into our knowledge that she has immense immigrant attitudes and insight into the literature of immigration.

The U.S offers the opportunity to dream big and to pull it off actions that are not possible in a traditional society. Yet immigrants lead dangerous lives; they cannot take shelter in traditional values but neither do they know the rules of the dominant culture. Thus new corners to north America lead raw, raucous, messy lives the small crisis of settled suburban lives. (77)



The immigrant women in the new world attempts to get out of the oppression and regression of the enclosed atmosphere of the past cultures, exhaust energy 'self' is defined as 'fighting within solely'. It unfolds feelings of thinking. Otherwise it is said to be 'soul- stirring' too. 'Self' recurs in the mindset of a woman who is ambitious of attaining or achieving something or fulfilling one's inner urge. The ultimate aim of fighting within solely is to expose one's identity with integrity. It is absolutely a psyche spirit. As far as 'self' is concerned, her mind stands torn apart between two conflicts: to do or not to do. According to the environment 'self' helps psychological analysis. In these novels, confrontation of cultures and conflict of thoughts fight within one another. 'Self' motivates and stimulates thinking. It tries to reconcile itself.

In *The Tiger's Daughter* Bharati Mukherjee finds the problematic areas in life of the expatriate and conceptualizes Tara's split caught between her inner and outer worlds. The experience of the post – colonial elite is completely 'bicultural'. Biculturalism is an experience of detachment. The novelist projects Tara a woman of biculturalism. Mukherjee in this novel takes much pain "to reconfigure and restructure the concepts of shifting identity in the post modern global context" (54) says Dr. Rajb Bhaumilk. In the opinion of Vijay Mishra, Mukherjee characterizes her writing about migrants not as oppositional to mainstream of America but as representing the voice of New America. Ethnology is a mode of knowing in hyper reality by which Mukherjee names (real) America and reinvents a semiotics of America ethnicity.

Tara takes possible effort to reconcile these diametrically opposite worlds in her mind and heart. She is torn between her two socio – cultural identities between anchoring in an alien soil and her nostalgic for India, home country. Therefore, she fills her heart with foreignness of spirit in the process of the fast changing identity. Afterwards, she realizes that her future does not lie in it without expatriation through mutation and transnation. However, she is helpless to refuse her Indian self and is unable to remain strong in her newly discovered American self. She becomes sandwiched between her two selves.

Jasmine creates a new world consisting of new ideas and values.

Constantly unmarking her past to establish a new cultural identity by incorporating new desires, skills and habits. This transition is defined not only in the changes in her attitude but more significantly in her relationship with men. (Sankar and Soundarajan 17).

Dimple in *Wife* has romantic outlooks about life. Her heart is full of Whims and Fancies.

Her immigration brought fatal consequences in her life. She never comes out from her Indian idealness of a wife and at the same time she is unable to resist her from the openness of American life style. She lost the mental peace and become the murderer of her husband. She commits suicide (Nabasree Data and Verma, (77).

Mukherjee's protagonists are tossed at an environment of ambivalence when it comes to their identity, racism and other social regressions. While negotiating displacement, the characters are courageous to face the multicultural reality in the process of cultural differentiation and assimilation. Not only multiculturalism but also ethos with which they are involved, lead them to a struggle for a new life and divulge their 'Self'. The novelist admits that "My aim is to explore Americans to the energetic voices of new settlers in America" (Hancock, 129). The characters created by Bharati Mukherjee have undergone different psychological – social – cultural experiences related to the process of involving, negotiating and exchanging. Mukherjee has an uppermost concern and caution that the new identity should not suffer from marginalization and suppression from any society. For this purpose, she portrays the female protagonist with qualities such as individualism, independence, self-assertion, mental courage and decisiveness. To face anything is a feature of immigrant life.

In this connection, she characterizes her writing particularly about the migrants not as oppositional to the mainstream of America but as representing the voice of the New America. Circumstances which the female protagonist face as immigrant have left direct impact upon their lives and the consequences of immigration in the diasporic lives of Tara, Dimple and Jyothi are lead to demystify their identity, the women characters dauntlessly come out from the male – dominated society. The women characters shown as potential individuals face struggle but do not

become victim to the circumstances rather they are strong enough to adapt themselves to the new environment.

The multiplicity becomes a significant plight of the characters, according to their different consciousness which contradict each other but the women characters are left certain of the nature of their identity which they grow individually. The marginal and the mainstream meet each other to enact a liminal space with new significance in Tara's situation. Tara returns home land and searches for a final release which would perhaps help her choose and prove her identity, finally getting out of the ambivalent space of liminality. Like Jhumpha Lahiri's Mrs. Sen, Tara wants to return to her parent's home. She feels confidently that,

... being in India would completely resolve her confused feeling of alienation and acculturation of escape and avoidance through being more open to the realm of the other – what is definitely going to prove useful in crafting and negotiating her new diasporic identity and in encouraging her to embrace her new life in America.

(Bahareh Bahmanpour, 94)

The impurity of cultures makes Tara clear and clever to expose her own identity with integrity in mind and spirit. Their sojourn in U.S.A. gives Tara a chance to observe the cultural dichotomy of both cultures and also to choose the better one to maintain her identity because of Americanization and spirit to balance the values and tradition of the past culture with the present one. That is why Bharati Mukherjee

represents women who live in the age of globalization and recalls the words of Jonathan Raban about “her characters are levitators who float clean over their tawdry circumstances” (55).

The women characters of Bharati Mukherjee are shown as potential individuals who face the bitter truth of their lives as immigrant but do not fall prey to the circumstances rather they are strong enough to adapt themselves in the new environment (Ambika Sharma and Tanu Gupta, 15). Tara is no exception. She understands that “India has always been highly hierarchical society” (128) as Suma Chitnis suggests, “with the hierarchies maintained through customs and social behavioral codes” (61).

Dimple Dasgupta in *Wife* strives to establish herself in the American culture is her quest for identity as an individual. It comes true in the words of Renuka Singh that “western culture and our own culture about difference in life style about different situations adapt to where one is in a different environment” (234). The ghetto which surrounds Dimple seems to suffocate her because she totally wants to be free from the shackles of marriage. The marriage which gave hopes of freedom looks like bondage and to free her from this torture, she butchers her husband, Amit. She wishes to be more than what she was then and what she is now. She seems to be guileless in the fallacious world but her inner soul never leaves her free.

Human mind has to be compatible to change in order to maintain equanimity in life. Basic difference in U.S.A. is that life is full of mechanism and runs on the fast track and it stands counterpoised to the Indian life style. However any immigrant from different parts of the world is not at all in up taking and up keeping because it is a result of the split personality. The immigrants of the first generation for fear of losing their identity turns down to intermingle with the new culture that is to be endorsed. Although they maintain the same code of morals and decorum, they let the second generation merge into the new culture. Hence, it is possible for any woman to assimilate a new culture because the women are responsible for growing the next generation. Without fail, they are account for keeping up the culture code and traditions as they wish. Quite true, self – expression of Indian immigrant is a result of self – suppression. The modern society invites changes from the female characters. Any immigrant is subjected to adjust to any situation in a clever manner.

Tara's alienation is not only in Vassar but also she is marginalized in her own hometown creating havoc on her senses. It is too much difficult to face the expatriation in her home where she was brought up like a princess. She feels alienated in the company of her friends who treat her as an American born and bred in an Indian environment. Tara feels completely confused to embrace the foreign culture after her marriage. The state of Bharati Mukherjee that one change every moment has an essence of self – realized person. She blends the myth with reality to create an individual. It can be found in each of her characters whose

minds are filled with negatives and positives. Never the novelist fails to authenticate widely diasporic experiences in her writing because the characters are on the surface of ghetto and diasporic existence. Some of her characters who are fickle minded become varied. But most of the female characters decide their own future and establish their identity tremendously.

Through their action, they not only revolutionize but also prove themselves to be adventurous to build up future life style in the New World as they are fully aware of their past mingling with the present to form their future. In fact, they are to transformations and new experiences by means of which they change themselves.

Bharati Mukherjee openly admits in an interview: “several of my characters fail to move from expatriate to immigrant in the diasporic spectrum. Some of the characters don’t try, don’t want to. In my narratives I want to represent a varied set of responses to the experience of unhousement (17). The freedom of expression and release from the traditional attitude make the protagonists of Bharati Mukherjee surge forward to be exuberant in their Americaness. The initial hesitant moves either through self- inflicted violence as in Dimple’s case in *Wife or Violence* from outside as in *The Tiger’s Daughter* and in *Jasmine* pushes these individuals towards renunciation.

Themes of traditional transformations into self mutating heroines permeate the novels. It consecutively authenticates the theory of reinventing selves by rebirth. The heroines undergo pangs of rebirth to immense into the imperialistic

America which strongly believes in colonizing the immigrants and the aliens. Negating the notion of existing in the state of hypernation and hybridization Bharati Mukherjee establishes herself as a American writer. In order to balance between the beliefs of old culture which seems to be binding in the new environment and the new world which suffers new horizons to the enchained souls, the female protagonists take new course with their characterization.

Dimple in *wife* is unable to handle the pressure whereas Jasmine juggles through each new avenue with flourish. Although it is easy for Jasmine, she loses nothing. She enters the new world yet it does not have to grit to find a foothold for herself because she is always insecure and dependent on Amit Basu to offer freedom on the platter of marriage. When her husband fails to fulfil her fantasies, he becomes an adversary. One agrees with the view of John Holloway the events which happen one by one to Dimple creates a “constant stimulation of the readers’ curiosity or to outcome”(176). Dimple, the protagonist never follows the virtues of the legendary wife. The heroine commits adultery to the surprise of all. However she tries to be a traditional wife.

Meanwhile her psyche induces her to be a rebel. Meena Manvi comments the narrative technique of Mukherjee at this junction. Mukherjee’s narrative strategies are dictated by feminist ideology – “the use of tropes in binary oppositions appropriate by the careful sequencing of supposition and supersession” (34). Dimple, being one among the alienated characters has rootlessness and unreal existence. What



she dreamt about the marriage is: Marriage would bring her freedom, cocktail parties on carpeted lawn fund raising dinners for noble charities. Marriage would bring her lover. on contrast, marriage gives an opportunity to Dimple to bring out her identity in the society. According to the suggestion, Dimple in *Wife* is in conflict of culture and comes out of the examination with flying colours to prove her identity for liberty.

Dimple has never been able to relate herself to her tradition or to her tradition to understand it. All her actions are geared towards the future and this bespeaks of the main problem: the utter rootlessness of her life... the sense of time as it exists in Mukherjee's novel is important for understanding of Dimple's life. The present and the past do not interact in *Wife*. There is questioning of the Indian situation of how do the past-independence generations relate to their own country, how they get post the colonial experience and free themselves from western attraction. For example, however, there seems to be on way out; the distance covered cannot be retraced she is an immigrant both in place and mind, has is the foreignness of spirit.

While female characters like Dimple Dorgupta survive and revise, they stay for a while between two worlds until they chose between two so as to find a space to inhabit. The new worlds in which they must interfere and negotiate hold a promise of the new selfhood and new battles against marginalization. Self-assertion alone urges them to enjoy further. Jasmine, the eponymous heroine of Bharati Mukherjee's new world takes an effective and impressive role. One could understand that the

basic idea is self-empowerment which is essential for any human being. And one can equipoise between the characteristics and the blending can produce characters like Jasmine and Hannah Easton.

Juxtaposing, two idols of feminine goddesses in Indian culture, Sita and Kali, Bharati Mukherjee is trying to bring out the prominent elements of duality existing in each human mind. 'Sita' signifies as an embodiment of patience, love, sacrifice and total surrender of identity for the love of her husband. She is the ultimate virtue of incarnated in Hindu mythology. (232)

'Kali' being an embodiment of empowered 'self', a mother, protector, slays the demons and wears the garland of severed heads. Kali's anger is subdued only when she steps on her husband. Both signify the power of women and the intense rigor that is needed for a woman to have a life of her own. 'Goddess' is a term which protects idea that virtues are beyond the human race.

Although Bharati Mukherjee introduces the female protagonists in her novel, the male counterpart hardly come into any scene of novels. The novelist displays all types of temperaments in her work where one can find her working out the mental and physical interaction of female mind. Vividly the male counterparts are engaged as subordinated. The basic instinct of the male mind that is traditionally incubated is nothing but the feeling of superiority which the women aim eternity to break through their individual identity in the society in the modern society.

Characters undergo continuous process of transition. The transmigration not only covers but also exemplifies a vast periphery which is not purely national but transnational. Transition which is evident in each of her characters is her own self-portrayal in her characters, which face twists and turns, pros and cons, mishaps and pains. There are the intricacies where women delicately paint the right and make the readers feel painful. Which the immigrants sustain and inspire them to change their attitudinal problems and overcome hesitations so as to bring out their identity. Generally one sympathizes with each one of the characters, who struggle tooth and nail to create a new identity. Her protagonists rejuvenate in the new open atmosphere. Their exhilaration is infectious. Choice of being your own 'self' prevails over all the struggles and hurdles of life give out a new hope in their life.

One accepts the fact that the protagonist of her novels is mere shadows. Her novels can be said to be autobiographical. Her expressions are nothing but her deep rooted emotions. In the words of Meena Pillai,

The female protagonist in her novels too is preoccupied at the root of their psyche with the banalities of either cultures and a attempt to deny and subvert either cultural codes is caught in the nauseating dilemma of her essential rootlessness. (331)

Murdering her own husband with little mercy by Dimple Dorgupta, she thinks is a release from a complicated life. Dimple is immersed with difficulties. The part of Amit Basu aggravates the situation. The catastrophe to Amit is a significant

turning point for the women who like to bring out their identity. As for the Indian culture, women who fail to retaliate, succumb to their distress. In order to restore her emotions and release from commotions, she commits the crime. Success of Dimple's ultimate strife to establish herself in the American culture is her quest for identity as an individual. She moves away from the new world because of her gender limitations.

It is human beings' attitude that anybody will usually manifest unhappy feelings due to either detachment in the American society or new environment of the U.S.A. certainly lack of emotional attachment leads to hazardous consequences but excess of love smoothens the natural growth in the Indian culture. Hesitation with emotion and assimilation stand in Dimple in embracing the new culture and its ideologies which alone tend towards marginalization of 'self' and 'others'. The novel echoes the ideologies of Hinduism. But the American culture imbides a different facet to the infiltration of the peripheries. Jasmine's life is transformed with the murder of the husband. Quest for 'self' to transformation with difference in each of the characters of Bharati Mukherjee is a great phenomenon.

Her characters rarely lose sight of what Mukherjee calls very rightly their not-quietness. Through characterization, she brings into glimpse the psychic extremes and historical turmoil of India's present and past. Notwithstanding, they long for success and arability in their adopted homes, yet they are torn by the consequences of their new identities. Mahnaz Trphani observes,

the immigrant finely struggling to overcome racism and other forms of social distance while trying out compromise between the powerful traditional culture of its origins and the mores of its new home. (12)

Voice takes a major role in her novels. It has special place in her aesthetics, feels Sivaramakrishn who says,

to me there are no Indian themes and American Themes or English themes. What I am trying to produce is a voice perhaps is Passionate and intense, riveting urgent and cursive at its best and its worst. Her voice is too taut and brittle to certain credibility. She (the novelist) places an importance on voice and corroboration of identity. (29)

Each of Bharti Mukherjee's characters speaks for itself, be it major or minor or whatever it may be each one gives a new meaning to life. There is energy as well as force in their call and urge. Her characters reach beyond are real. Some of them are life-sized. The ethics governs the characters because it treats each of them individually and gives room to facilitate everyone's evolution.

Feminism in the characters of Bharati Mukherjee's is equipoise to make them vibrant and flamboyant. Each of the characters is treated as an individual. The power which exists inside the heart of each character is absolutely dominant at some point is forced out to make its presence felt. The passive existence of each character undergoes a dramatic change. The attitude of servility to treat men with veneration

is evident in the traditional Indian patriarchal set up but the protagonists in each novel by the act of violence, self- mutation and transformation seem to be successful at their identity exposition. In the explanation of R.K. Dhavan “feminism as a mode of existence in which the women is the force of dependence syndrome” (38).

Themes of transnational transformations into that occur in the novels deals with the theories demystification of the identity. Transformation is quite mutual because America not only adjusts but also adapts to the strength that infiltrated the peripheries of the First World. From 1890 to 1970, it becomes an internationalized culture. A notable recurrent feature of Bharati Mukherjee’s novel is that it describes the new-immigrant women who are forced to mutate, transforming themselves to become self-emancipated, self-confident members of the American Society. Brinda Bose opines to Tara (*The Tiger’s daughter*, Dimple (*wife*) and jasmine continuing to be Indian, concentrate to being the kind of daughter, wife and widow that tradition demanded of them- decorous, submissive and loyal but it seemed highly incongruous in the contexts of their present lives, becoming an American presented the possibility of power to change their fates.

Women never like to be the traditional role models. They no longer reconcile the models to their circumstances. What drives them to react with violence is nothing but frustration, suppression, alienation and immigration. They need an urgent charge. Being not confined to the social and cultural patterns of the past, women vigorously intended to enter into the (present) new world to claim their right of identity.

To credit, the female protagonists of Bharati Mukherjee is a blend of modern and traditional qualities and they believe in creating their own 'universe' and they find success to demystify themselves in the universe but the protagonists of Bharati Mukherjee cannot be judged as immoral individuals who have affairs because it is not prevaricated in the American Culture.

Regarding isolation, alienation and frustration of the female protagonists of these novels, Tara, Dimple and Jasmine, these novels demonstrate the autobiographical element consequently leading towards a complex personality of un-belonging state of mind. Mukherjee's early novels *The Tiger's Daughter* and *Wife* explore the conditions of being Indian expatriates in the U.S.A. however, they are geographically and respectively expatriates in mind and spirit. According to the suggestion of Emmanuel Nelson, Mukherjee shows the diasporic Indian as living in between two cultures constantly journeying into new meanings and fashioning new identities. It remains undenied, while focusing on the lives of characters that migrate to U.S.A., Mukherjee produces and provokes thinking over the cultural displacement as one terms the exuberant clash of immigrant cultures.

The novelist presents some of the most violent and grotesque aspects of cultural collisions. A close examination of her fiction reveals that the Western and Indian worlds give them an authentic and objective perspective with mixture of charm, and sympathy. They (worlds) push their protagonists to the edges of their worlds and liberate them for a new world order- demystifying their identity in the

society because they aspire to come out of their turbulent mind. ‘Third Space’ designed by Bharati Mukherjee occupies in every cultural encounter. She admits that in her novels *The Tiger’s Daughter* and *Wife* characters appear “caught in a crisis situation” (Mukherjee 34). Unless one considers the period and complexities of the cultural dynamics, no study about the immigrant culturalism can be done. Swami describes Dimple’s “lacerated and anguished spirit” (W, 88). Similarly Imandar calls both Tara and Dimple as “the troubled spirits belonging nowhere in the end” (77). Both critics notify the liminal phase of disorder, disturbance and disorientation.

In an interview with Bharati Mukherjee conducted by Hancock, the novelist asserts.

I do not want my characters to be seen as inventing their own Americans and Canada. The breaking away from rigidly predictable lives frees them to invent more satisfying pasts and gives them a chance to make their futures in ways that they could not have in the old world. We are talking then about relocation as a positive act. In immigrating my characters become creation. By creating they become more real to themselves instead of unread. (73)

One is sure of the fact that the post colonialism starts with the arrival of the ‘Third World’. Mukherjee positively accepts that “globalization is surely an extension, a more mischievous one in fact of colonialism and capitalism modernity



(Post Colonial Literature 32). What Chen and Gondie quote that to the sense of Bharati Mukherjee, Indian is a reposition of “an awful lot of cultural vices such as sexism, patriarchy, casteism, classism and above all, she succeeds at consolidating the West's orientalist perceptions.

Disjunction and dislocation become a psychic pathology. It reflects an objective reality. Mukherjee looks at India from the perspective of third world writers, expatriates and immigrants. Her India figures in her narratives as a third world place. Her protagonists cross geographical and psychological boundaries in an attempt to look for their roots remembering their ancestral ties with their homelands. On top of it, her novels deal with nostalgia for a lost home, disillusionment of expatriation, fragmentation of the self, exuberance of immigration, assimilation, cultural translation and negotiation.

Tara the role of the protagonist is effective. She wants to lead a life. She is ambitious of keeping her identity. Although she is not satisfied with the Indians in Calcutta who treat her badly and lose identity with them, she is confident of constructing her individual identity of an Indian woman with her American husband in mind and spirit. In this connection she gets success. Her *The Tiger's Daughter* makes a new trend in fictional writings. In these novels, leaving their native country for an alien land is meant that liberating themselves from the clutches of a convention-bound society.

Human relationships are fragile in these continents whether Europe or America. In India the human relations are stable to a large extent owing to the traditional virtues of the culture. Otherwise in the United States of America, Canada and other western countries, civilized matters tend to develop more in rational and materialistic way. Bharati Mukherjee's life and her transitions, her marriage to an American and her shift to Canada, her turbulent and sabbatical years turns her an immigrant. It stands for enjoying a pivotal moment in her life establishing her evolution as an individual and an author.

A notable recurrent feature of Mukherjee's novels is that these novels depict the new immigrant woman who is forced to mutate and transform themselves so as to become self emancipated self confident members of the American society. As for the male protagonists are concerned, they are left to dwindle between the two cultures and despite their patriarchal superiority, the female protagonists appear demeaned. Dimple in *Wife* and Jasmine in *Jasmine* more for India to America to be forced by violent action of self mutate. Ultimately with each transformation a new name is associated with the characters somehow or other sinister in essence mark the rebirth of each character. The novelist strongly believes in the Hinduism.

By interwing the philosophies of Hinduism and Buddhism into the structure of the novels, Mukherjee lays emphasis upon the fact that every death marks the new life. An oral teaching and clear narration about the Hindu mythological stories

make their way into the plots of each novel, and just a position of traditional Hindu culture gives a new outlook to each of her novels.

Tara in *The Tiger's Daughter* seems to be more balanced due to her education in England. Her ideal person in life is none other than her father and so she always feels safe and secure with him. While in India she starts to forget all the details of her husband who is in a distant land, she loses her sanity under pressure. However, she decides to return to her husband and joins him to lead a peaceful life, exposing identity and enjoying her liberty all along. She is very strong in such confidence that will bring her credibility from the American.

Dimple in *Wife* forges her way into a new culture and wants to avoid her native identity whereas Tara Banerjee wants to return her home country so as to trace her own inherited identity. Only way of Dimple in wife to freedom is by killing whereas for Jasmine, in Jasmine killing becomes necessary to maintain sanity. Jasmine takes revenge upon her rapist, reconciles and moves forward because the driving force before Jasmine to commit self-immolation. The intention is totally difficult because Jasmine loves her husband enough to commit sati (self-immolation in the fire). Prakash molded her a life which was different from that of life which she had in her parent's house. Only confidence given by her husband makes her lead a balanced life because she has already faced the basic realities of life.

Dimple in *Wife* is unaware of the realities because throughout the novel she lives in a world of dream and fantasy. She withdraws herself from reality. Each character of Bharati Mukherjee is endowed with innate qualities of humanity and duality in personality. Each plot is integrated with factor that can be visible in reality of each character, concept of dualism is purely an ideology extracted from *The Vedas* and *Bhagavad Gita* where each and every person has a duality in everyone's personality: one which is meant for one's own 'self' and the other for behavioural attitude.

*Bhagavad Gita* is the greatest holy book of the Hindu and it has stored valuable doctrines that have influenced Bharati Mukherjee very much in her life. Referring to it, she means that "the duality of the material world is felt in terms of heat and cold or misery and happiness" (Transcendental knowledge of *The Bhagavad Gita* 249). Dualism is a factor which exists in each and every mortal being and seems to be evident in each character (the protagonist) of Bharati Mukherjee be it Dimple, Jasmine, Hannah Easton or Devi or Tara. Thrown into psychedelic conditions, the female characters fight to get rooted and at the same time face the gender difference, the culture differences and the choices are theirs to make.

Jasmine would have reverted to her decision to commit suicide and after molestation, she behaved and did reasonably because her adoption, widow and remarriage, as for her as a village girl, are something alien, she is craving for surviving in the world and she thinks that she cannot leave with an unfinished

business, emphasizing the philosophies of *The Holy Bhagavad Gita*. The sole ambition of Jasmine to self-immolate takes her to America where she slays her rapist, adjusts with all types of all situations and conditions. She manages all with a brave heart, keeping her mind focused upon leading her life and possessing her own 'identity'. The 'Third Eye' signifies the opening of mind of knowledge as in Hinduism. Her marriage to Prakash leads her to transformation from a coarse village girl Jyoti into Jasmine.

*Pygmalion* was not a play I'd seen or read then but I realize how much professor Higgins there was in my husband. He wanted to break down the Jyoti I'd been in Hasanpur and make me a new kind of city woman. To break off the part, he gave me a new name: Jasmine. He said, "You are small and sweet and heady my Jasmine you'll quicken the whole world with your perfume. (J, 77)

Jasmine, the stone-hearted woman is supposed to forage through her destiny and keeps her deep-rooted to attain identity. She is guided by intuition and transformation. Each event is celebratory for her. She has little hassle in staying with Bud. She is pregnant with Bud's child but she leaves with Taylon to find new happiness. Neither hesitation nor non-tradition binds her at all. She flies to America which is a journey into flow of a peaceful life. Pleasure is hers, Jasmine who changes identities becomes victorious with every activity.

Basically and notably, the protagonists of Bharati Mukherjee's novels are a mixed bundle of Hindu feminism. Influences of incarnations of 'Sita' and 'Kali' come through forcefully into their beings.

These women (each female protagonist of each novel) are also bold enough on many perhaps be fool handy enough to make their dreams come true. Definitely they are meticulously idealists and romantics and so they are always becoming restless until they achieve aim of proving their identity. "who are they in the society?" anyhow each woman responds in their unique way to dreams for a better life and demystify their womanhood 'self' through their destiny and identity.

(Reading Group Guide 343)

Commonly anyone like these female characters who win the heart of the readers because of Mukherjee's characterization does not need to let go off their thoughts as well as beliefs but anyone can find changes in life which is the best and easiest way for a happy life. It is a philosophy of life: "Bounce Forward" each one of Bharati Mukherjee's characters seems to be precariously balanced on a right-nope in case they fall but they manage to travel pleasantly. In order to balance between the beliefs of old culture that binds in the new environment and the new world that show new horizons to these enchained 'souls' that expect a new course of life.

The fight to control 'self' to refrain and restrain the natural instincts of sensuality, dreams and expectations from marriage would not be much more difficult if they (the women characters live in India). In the event of facing America and its cosmopolitan society expedites the hunger in Dimple to refashion her 'self'. To raise voice to her suppressed feelings is not at all easy for her because the grooming of 'self' has been in rigid society which consider the act as an abhorrence and violence. The only way to gain freedom from the fight of duality (between her heart and mind) finds its way by stabbing her husband, Amit. She does and identity emerged successfully.

Mukherjee highlights the expansion of the identity during these cultural transactions and retains the collective identity through characterization. Characters of Bharati Mukherjee are constantly fighting in order to exist in a world of 'otherness.' The 'otherness' remains unlimited to the new culture of the new world but the constant fight is still vigorous within their own identity. Undoubtedly mutation triggers chain reaction within the soul of each character. The phenomenal problem of the female characters is nothing but "fighting within" because of the inevitable bonded position.

The postcolonial critics assert that Mukherjee yields to the hegemony of the west and therefore she tries to signify the importance of individuality. Mukherjee perceives the U.S.A. to be a land of challenging and promising in a stable condition where one's individuality, liberty and identity. At the same time, she points India in

the postcolonial society which prevents anybody else from fulfilling individuality. Referring to the words of Nagendra Kumar and regarding the fictional characters of Bharati Mukherjee, one could understand that the characters try to construct life at the midst of difficulties and so they never hesitate to “express this affirmation to life. In case of trying alternatives, they appear abnormal in their behaviour but they do not withdraw themselves from a living life on their terms” (56) at all events. It is proved that identity is everyone’s liberty of birthright.

Bharati Mukherjee sees America as the new world an account of the nano-technology, globalization, transculturation and cosmopolitanism. So, she claims to be an American writer of Indian origin, and her literary contribution brings a unique credit to the Indian woman novelist. There are other areas of interesting topics in her novels. There are many possible areas of research in Mukherjee’s novels. Mukherjee is considered as an eminent specialist is diasporic experience and a good novelist in dealing with immigrant problems.

The research has been an attempt to discuss identity. For both demystification and reconstruction of the immigrant character’s identity, it needs a basis of the post-colonial theory which is closely integrated with literary studies. Pertaining to the vast scope of the post-colonial theory which has both thought and energy which make the human beings attains experience and awareness in life irrespective of caste, creed, religion and nationality.



Although the woman-novelists pitch their voice for social dignity and liberal liberty and enrich the multi-culturalism, they concentrate on the importance of the female identity in the society. This thesis shows an excellent direction for the further exploration of the liminal identity in the transnationalism and post-colonialism. Cultural alienation is a world phenomenon today. The tremendous difference between two ways of life leads a person to a feeling of depression and frustration. This could be called “Culture Shock” when a person leaves his own culture and enters another; his old values come into conflicts with the new one he finds. The major literary works of Bharati Mukherjee have highlighted the immigrant anxiety. She invariably focuses upon sensitive women protagonists who lack firm sense of cultural identity and are natural victims of racisms, sexism and numerous forms of social oppression. The theme Bharati Mukherjee deals with in her novels is one of the significant themes of modern literature that is the depiction of cultural clash causing cultural and psychological conflicts. The subject has no doubt assumed great significance in the present world of globalization. Cross-cultural confrontation has received a pronounced impetus since the emergence of the modernist movement in the very opening of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The globalization of world economy can be looked upon as a natural offshoot of multiculturalism and intercultural interaction. Bharati Mukherjee has been widely acknowledged as voice of expatriate-immigrant sensibility. Hence the subject has assumed national and international status.

The objectives devised during the study are achieved. All human beings adopt their mother culture so that it becomes their identity. Immigration poses a new dilemma of cultural identity. There starts a cultural conflict between mother culture and adopted culture. Consequently this process leads to psychological crisis. Bharati Mukherjee's fictional world of women immigrants presents the traumatic experiences in the process of expatriation to immigration. Her women protagonists consequently suffer from sense of alienation, identity crisis, cultural shock and a consequent psychological conflict.