

Cross-Cultural Confrontation in Bharati Mukherjee's *The Holder of the World*

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Abstract

Literature reflects not only the social reality but also forms the complex ways in which men and women arrange themselves, their interpersonal relationships and their insight of the socio-cultural reality. Of all the literary forms, the novel is measured to be the most socially-oriented because it portrays human relationship in its varied aspects. It is commonly agreed that novel is the readiest and most tolerable way of embodying experience and ideas in the context of time. Bharati Mukherjee's Fiction truly reflects the personality and mood of the present American society as experienced by immigrants in America. One of the important themes of modern literature is the representation of cross-cultural crisis and it is a subject which has implicit a great implication in the present world of globalization. She is one of the best examples of this kind of writing. This paper focuses on the familiar situation of an Indian in America to one of an American in India so that we may discover an approach to cross culture conflict that has a worldwide application. This paper releases consciousness from the shackles of Time and Space and brings a sense of global connectedness.

Keywords: immigration, colonialism, cross-culture, identity.

Being Masters is a narrator of the story and she is an American married to an Indian, Venn Iyer the work gathers its momentum and meaning from a hunger for connectedness, a belief that with sufficient passion and intelligence, we can reconstruct the barriers of time and geography. It is what has led her indirectly to her marriage with Venn, a computer engineer from Madras, to her investigate for the truth about Salem Bibi and to her obsession with the tangled lines of India and New England. The world that is approach animate within the pages of the books turn between three time zones simultaneously - past, present and future and it is contain vast stretch of space within and between colonial America, Mughal India and the twentieth century. The supreme technological wonder, the computer and its latest data base program X2989, that have the capacity to animate information and translate all input into virtual reality, reconstructs the cosmos to enlarge into the true index of global consciousness. The ability of such technology to create it possible for one to put in oneself anywhere, anytime on Time -space continuum and knowledge history at any

chosen moment and location transports a dimension of innovative possibilities into this cross- culture vision.

She has approach to comprehend as a result of her research that nothing in the universe is ever lost, no gesture is ever fruitless. Her present obsession is to find out all she can on anything to do with Salem Bibi, a Boston woman of colonial times who lived several years in India, not as an unconnected westerner interested only in commercial profits, but as one who could translate herself into that different culture reality. She even had an Indian lover, Maharaja Jadav Sing of Devgad and as Salem Bibi, she was known even to Aurangzeb, the Mughal emperor. She left behind several memorabilia that stay scattered in various museums and collections and she has reasons to consider that Salem bibi, otherwise named Hannah Easton, had even got hold of the 'Emperor's Tear,' the precious jewel that Aurangzeb always carried in his palm. she also finds that Hannah is related to herself in the remote family past and all her energies and present are directed to path down everything related to Hannah Easton. Thus the novel moves at different levels with Beigh working in the present

even as she untangles Hannah's story from the past through proof that survives the present Venn's computer is also being nourished with millions of information bytes on Salem Bibi/ Hannah Easton as Beigh is manage to lay hands on more information.

There is nothing past about the past as presented in the novel. All that is allegedly past makes up the practical actuality in the computer with which one can actively correlate. Beigh has consulted five hundred books, endless number of paintings, engravings, trade records, journals, pictures, artifacts and what not to get the truth of Salem Bibi, her secret heart prearranged in multiple proofs and Venn's program x2989 has ingested all this information to reanimate and remake the sensory and instant world of virtual reality. She can go into the world and be virtually recognized with Hannah and knowledge the colliding worlds in which Hannah lived.

In the Museum of Maritime Trade in Boston where Beigh has approach across many of the old items creates from those Mughal time, she has noticed how these Indian items distinctly conflicted with some other items from the puritan past. Although the Mughal were contemporaneous with New England puritan, what difference did they indeed exhibit in terms of taste and spirit on the proof of these items Mughal richness versus puritan practically - nephrite jade wine cups, inlays of rubies and pearls, kingdom of tropical birds and heavy skillets, kitchen pots and pothooks from a sparse and practical world of puritan pragmatists. These colliding worlds have slump each other when they met in puritan of trade and commerce, and Hannah must have been undertakes with these and learnt to live with them as she travelled to those greatest shores from Salem to the coromondal coast of India along with her seafaring husband. How was she able to administer it, regulate herself to these difference worlds and come away after several years with that honorific title, "Precious as Pearl" awarded by the emperor himself.

As the feminist historians today have increasingly come to understand the truth about a women's life does not lie down in history books but in the living proof she herself has left behind. As Beigh starts pathing down the Salem Bibi memorabilia through the pages of auctions and achievements she obtains admission to Hannah secret life byte by byte. Finally when she comes to obtain the Mughal miniature titled *The Ravished Bride* that portrays the

terrible tableau of Jadav Sing's suicidal attack on the fort of Aurangzeb, she sees the picture of Hannah - the Salem Bibi of Jadav Singh who seems to her only a woman lacked in time. She could go into the depths of Hannah's mind and differentiate herself with her 'the blonde women in a sari, garish Mughal jewels, the diamond merged into the cupped hands of Aurangzeb who stood with a look of wild satisfaction watching the obliteration, the fiery sky the wounded, dying Jadav Singh, Hannah Indian lovers, on whom he was stanch to take revenge'. Hannah must have been compulsorily taken there to eyewitness the death of her love. Beigh tries to pierce the barrier of time, space and personality by plunging herself into the world of virtual reality being reconstruct in the computer.

In this paper seems to be discovered and determine how Hannah could cross the culture barriers and hold together the colliding worlds in which she found herself. There was no word correspondent to 'tourist' in the vocabulary of those days when people travelled only in chase of material gains and her ever for any increase in cross cultural understanding. But for Hannah the benefits of voyage were mostly center. She was alert to novelty but her voyage was mental interior. Getting there was important but savoring the comparing with London or Salem and watching her life being transformed that was pleasure. She did not hold India up to inspection by the lamp of England or of Christianity nor did she aspire to return to England upon the completion of Gabriel's tour.

Beigh is different from others put down in her ability for establishing connectedness across cultural boundaries. Exclusion released unwallled worlds for her. She felt incomplete, shapeless until she had answered to the reality around her and she disclosed herself in several ways through her embroidery, stealthily-penned memoirs and gift transmitted home. There was of course, something in her past that might account for her difference from other westerners. She was American although married to a Britisher and she had heard the cry of the primordial jungle as a child when her own mother disappears into it when their pioneer settlement came under one of those overpowering Indian raids. Those memories of the dark woods of Salem seemed somehow to transport her closer to India. Although brought up as an orphan under the rule bound strictness and security of a Puritan household she was still alter to the power of the primordial on human life.

As a child she had witness her own mother being carried away by a Nipmuc Indian, she had vanished into those native jungles impoverished to a horse along with her Indian lover. This was a memory that was ever present in her mind and after the trauma of that event she had never again felt any fear of the unknown or the uncharted. She could still narrate those stories of Wigwam burnings in Hopewell swamps that uncomfortable other westerners who wished to treasure only memories of a homogeneous and cultured home country. Hannah was diverse because she was still associated to the emotional realities of human life at all levels and places. For her an Indian or any other person was above all a human being with whom she could readily search for a link. It was this directness to experience and connectedness to human beings that enabled Hannah to materialize with the title, 'Precious as Pearl' even as she played the role of Salem Bibi in an alien land.

Lastly the novel conveys Hannah/ Salem Bibi back to Salem as pearl. As she spends the rest of her life eking out a living mostly as tend she has patrons of miscellaneous men who come to her for the wealth of her story telling. We have also Beigh telling us about historical evidence that transports a distant connection between Salem Bibi Indian experience and the writing of Nathaniel Hawthorne. Hawthorne's morbid introspection into fault and subjugation in his now famous books harks back to the need for directness and understanding already stressed in the story of Salem Bib.

This novel makes it introducing a set of new factor in Bharati Mukherjee's cross-cultural vision. She converses

through it a new kind of global the barriers of time and geography. An important role in ushering such a consciousness is owed to new software programmed in a computer that aids us to revive History and interrelate freely with a virtual reality remake from loads of information. This technological miracle has also to be finished by a primordial consciousness on the part of the participant who is fully willing to translate themselves to a new obtainable reality. The world in the holder is one in which the metaphoric freely combines with the literal and India becomes there a highest example for such integration of realities to suppose that status of a work of art.

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