CHAPTER TWO
The Tiger’s Daughter

2.1 Cross-cultural background: The Tiger’s Daughter

The novel The Tiger’s Daughter has four parts. The opening section of the novel is on the Catelli Continental hotel. The novelist has described the elite privileged class which is closely connected with Catelli Continental. It is the last resort that has remained for the elites of Calcutta. Catelli Continental Hotel symbolizes the colonial past and closed minds of the Indians. These few elites stand for new colonials who want to keep the past intact. New Colonialism begins in the third world countries after the termination of the British Raj there.

The Tiger’s Daughter gives an account of the ancestral history of Banerjee. Hari Lal Banerjee of Pachapara is presented supervising a marriage ceremony of his daughter. Harilal moved toward the sacrificial fire past lines of beautiful golden women, past mango leaves in copper pots, till he reached his weeping little girls in adult bridal ornaments and grasped his daughters around in his arms.

Harilal Banerjee was killed ten years after the marriage of his two daughters. Santana left Pachapara with her husband. Santana’s husband, a barrister, moved to Calcutta. In a year of colonial unrest he defended two teenage Bengali nationalists. This action was unfortunately construed as deliberate imprudence and the barrister was reprimanded. In aristocratic anger Santana’s husband withdrew from the bar, bought a lumberland in Assam and a tobacco factory in Calcutta.

‘The Bengal tiger’ Banerjee, a strongman, is a mediator between the divine and mortal fates. He remained powerful, just and fearless. The Bengal Tiger continues to inoculate himself against the city, improving and expanding the tobacco firm.
The Bengal Tiger wants to send his only child Tara, a girl of fifteen, out of India for her college education.

For Tara Vassar had been an almost unsalvageable mistake. She had been a Banerjee, the great granddaughter of Harilal Banerjee. She had been trained by the good nuns at St. Blaise’s to remain composed and ladylike in all emergencies. At Poughkeepsie, she thought of defending her country and her family. She became homesick and she wrote about her feelings to her mother. Her academic advisor suggested that she should go to the summer school at Madison.

Tara left obediently for summer school in Madison. Within fifteen minutes of her arrival at the greyhound bus station there, in her anxiety to find a cab, she almost knocked down a young man, David Cartwright. She did not know then that she would eventually marry that young man. After seven years stay in America, Tara came back to find her place in her home, friends and society. She looks towards the things from a foreigner’s view; the first part of the novel through its four sections presents the background of the Banerjees from Pachapara to Camac Street, Calcutta.

The second part, with its sixteen sections, is the longest part of the novel. The opening section presents Tara’s transition from the West to the East. The next evening all the Bombay relatives and their servants came to the railway station to see her off. Tara felt her journey from Bombay to Calcutta could effortlessly be ruined by the other two male travellers in the compartment, one Nepali, Prince Ratan and the Marwari, P. K. Tuntunwala. For years Tara 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. The Howrah station took Tara by surprise. The squalor and confusion of Howrah station outraged her.

About the Banerjee’s house on Camac Street, Tara was grateful to call this restful house a home. The house on Camac Street began to exercise its hypnosis on her. The palace like house of the Bengal Tiger, Tara would call it her own home. New York, she thought now, had been exotic. Tara’s visit is reported to the relatives.
From her arrival on Bombay station, Tara has undergone the series of disgusting disliking and despairing experiences.

In the fifth section of the second part Joyanto Roy Choudhary is introduced. Joyanto Roy Choudhary, the owner of a tea estate in Assam, was the link between the British Raj and Independent India. This daily visitor to the Catelli Continental Hotel is worried about his class and especially about the city.

Joyanto Roy Choudhary was sitting at his usual corner in the open air cafe of the Catelli continental, one day he saw six young men and women sitting close to him. He heard them speaking in English and occasionally in Bengali. Joyonto thought that these luminous Brahmin children must be saved. Joyonto knew that Calcutta would not be as kind to them as it had been to him.

The seventh section discloses the conversation carried on by the young men and women, after Tara has joined the groups. Joyonto Roy Choudhary marveled at their dedication to the trivial. He thought they deserved to die except the luminous girl, who sat like a wretched outcaste. Joyonto vowed to seek out this girl and preserve her from the others.

The eighth section is the prayer room incident. When the sandalwood paste had been ground, Tara scraped it off the slimy stone tablet with her fingers and poured it into a small silver bowl. She could not remember the next step of the rituals. It was not a simple loss; Tara feared this forgetting of prescribed actions: it was a little death, a hardening of the heart, a cracking of axis and centre. The prayer room incident makes Tara aware about her foreignness of spirit. She was alienated from her own cultural environment. Though she really wished to stay, she knew that she would not stay for bhajans.

The ninth section relates that there were many parties in honor of Tara’s return. At first Tara had looked forward to these parties. Then after the first round of parties the beliefs and omissions of her friends began to unsettle her. From the roof of the Catelli, Tara saw Calcutta squeezed horribly together; men, women, infants some scratching their crotches, others laughing like tourists in an unfamiliar section of town and always the heartbeat of the slogans “Blood bath, Blood bath! Blood bath!
” (Mukherjee, 1971:60). The chaos in Calcutta is revealed in this section as the protesters have dominated the entire landscape.

In the tenth section, it is shown that David of aerograms and letters was different, an unfamiliar one to her in India. She felt she was not married to a person but a foreigner and this foreignness was her burden. In the hall Tara was trying to compose a letter to her husband David. Her voice in these letters was inspired or shrill and she tore the letters.

In the eleventh section, Sanjay Basu, an assistant editor of the Calcutta Observer, was to speak to the British Council debate on English should be abolished as an official language in India. He spotted Pronob and his group in the far left corner of the room. He noted Pronob had brought a strange Tara, the Bengal Tiger’s daughter. Pronob introduced Sanjay to Tara who asked him questions about the protest march.

In the twelfth section Joyonto Roy Choudhary was troubled by the memories of his parents. Though he called them up often, he was restless throughout the night.

In the thirteenth section of the second part The Tiger’s Daughter presents the Ramraj Palace, the venue of the annual carnival of the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce. There she spied a small compact man at the other end of the road. She recognized him as the national personage she had met in the train on her way from Bombay to Calcutta. She tells him that Calcutta has not changed much. They moved from stall to stall and then Tuntunwala took her to the Tuntunco Mills Bootik stall.

The fourteenth section presents Tara coming to the Catelli Continental Hotel without her friends to read foreign newspapers and magazines. She found an old man in a blazer smiling at her introducing himself as her father’s friend, Joyonto Roy Chowdhary. She was assured. They passed the Kali temple in Kali ghat, the river and the funeral pyres.

The fifteenth section of the second part introduces another location, Kapoor’s Restaurant, the symbol of modern India. Since Tara’s trip to the funeral ghats a
terrible depression had overcome her. Standing outside Kapoor’s, Tara thought it best to return to New York. They decided to have a picnic in the factory premises of Banerjee and Thomas (Tobacco) Co. Ltd. The years away from India have made her self-centered and she took everything, the heat, the beggars as personal insults and challenges.

The picnic to the factory is set off in the sixteenth section. During the week of preparations for the picnic Tara felt very close to her father. The entire convoy stopped in the heart of Darjipura as one car ground to a halt with a flat tyre. Then the procession reached the guest house, the recreation club and the swimming pool. Tara sees a small water snake entering the swimming pool. She felt the floor moving and she was shaking all over. She thought it was the end and cried for help. The commotion brought all the picnickers together. The snake incident disturbed the mood of picnickers. The second part of the novel takes Tara through various experiences that make her more and more depressed which reminded her of her life in New York.

In the first section of the third part, Tara longed for the Bengal of Satyajit Ray in Pather Panchali. Tara was worried about beggar children wandering in the alleys of Calcutta. Joyonto Roy Chowdhary wanted to show Tara his Tollygunge place. He wanted to show them the real busttee (Slum). A little girl with leprosy depressed Tara suddenly without speaking a word. Tara goes to the car .Tara almost lost her head as she saw the girl with leprosy. In the second section, the Bengal Tiger’s letter to Tara about a prospective match and Tara’s letter to David are presented. In the third section of the third part P.K. Tuntunwala repeatedly says that hearts matters are for idiots and women. Tara heard him express that sentiment late one evening by the steps of the boathouse at Dhakuria club. The fourth section of the third part introduces Washington Mc Dowell, who was received by Reena and her parents with Tara. Mc Dowell sees Tara no more than as another Indian, which depressed her.

The second section in the fourth part of the novel records that Nilima’s family was the first to arrive in Darjeeling. Pronob’s father relieved him so that he could visit
Darjeeling and the Bengal Tiger took two weeks off to take them to the hill station. The group was accompanied by Antonia Whitehead, who came with Pronob.

The third section is devoted to the visit to the shrine of Kananbala Mata. Tara was worried about the contamination of the meal. She forgot her instinctive suspicions, her fears of misunderstanding and scenes; she forgot her guardedness and atrophy in that religious moment. Warm and persistent tears rose in Tara’s heart. “Ma, Ma, Mata” she shouted with the rest.

In the fourth section, Tara’s happiness is ruined by the horse riding incident in which some miscreants tried to photograph her, teased her, taunted her and harassed in different ways.

The fifth section is the trip to Nayaper. The Bengal Tiger reserved the guest house to which Pronob and group reached. At the Nayapur guest house they meet P. K. Tuntunwala, who had been staying there with his serious men in dhoti to discuss the new strategy for the forthcoming elections. Tuntunwala offered to show Nayaper to Tara. He takes her around and then takes her to a restaurant. Tara was not interested in eating as the food nauseated her. She felt sick and Tuntunwala took Tara to his only air-conditioned room. The spider trapped Tara in his net and seduced her tastefully. There were no apologies and no recriminations.

In Camac Street her parents found her bitterness inexplicable. She talked constantly of returning to David. On the first rainless day in August she reserved the seat on an Air India Flight to New York. She then decided to tell her friends at the Continental Hotel about her departure. Joyont Roy Chowdhary was fiercely beaten by the mob. Pronob tried to save Joyonto Roy Chowdhary but he was also seized by the mob and killed. Tara was locked in the car. She wondered if she could go out of Calcutta, and if she didn’t whether David would know that she had fiercely loved him.
2.2 Reflecting the East

Cross-cultural relations are relations between two cultures. The two major cultural groups in the world are the culture of the East and the culture of the West. The novel *The Tiger’s Daughter* presents the relations between these two cultures by reflecting the East and mirroring the West. The following examples show the description of the typical Eastern life styles, beliefs, conventions and all.

i. “Tara…. thought the station was more like a hospital. There were so many sick and deformed men sitting listlessly on bundles and trunks.” (Mukherjee, 1971: 19). The appearance of the railway station was hospital like. The shabbiness of the public building is a feature in the countries of the East. It was a noisy, chaotic scene, there were bundles and trunks scattered everywhere. That is the typical luggage carried by the travelers in the East. The men were sick and deformed. The travelers appeared like beggars.

ii. “He reads the names of the passengers on the reservation slip……..They are both men! he exploded. I can’t allow you to travel under such conditions.” (Mukherjee,1971:19). Her uncle’s anger is on account of the fact that Tara would be required to travel with two men. The Eastern mentality of this kind does not allow travelling under such conditions. Travelling of women alone is prohibited. Travelling of women with men is impossible. These are the tradition- bound conventions of the East. The backwardness is due to blind beliefs, superstitions, conventions, social rules and prohibitive stigma on injunctions to perform certain activities. This is the conventional view that reflects the narrow mindedness. It is on account of ignorance and lack of exposure to the realities of life that such views are expressed. It is sheer irrationality and therefore broad- mindedness is not noticed in these views. The Oriental, the Eastern, the Indian or the native culture is based and is groping in the darkness of ignorance as the light of knowledge is denied.
iii.“She had not seen a Tiffin carrier not even thought of one in seven years. She wondered if David had ever heard the word.” (Mukherjee, 1971:22). The description of a Tiffin carrier, suggests how such an item is essential for a traveller in the Orient, in particular in India, on account of notions of touching or not touching food outside. It is remarked that David Cartwright might not have ever heard the word. It is an Indian peculiarity. The brass water container and the brass Tiffin carrier are the peculiar cultural products for carrying homemade food and water during the times of travelling. The word itself is unknown to a Westerner like Tara’s husband David Cartwright. The contents in the Tiffin carrier are chapatis properly folded, vegetables like pumpkin, egg plant and cabbage, fried slices or curried. The lemon wedges and the homemade yoghurt are peculiar Indian items like the vegetables and chapatti preparations. The Indian cuisine and the arrangement of food items in the Tiffin carrier are the items that reflect the Oriental, Eastern and Indian culture. The mention of ‘humble food’ is the marked feature of politeness in conversation. The invitation to share food is another peculiarity of the culture from the Eastern countries like India.

iv.“Her suitcase had become part of a general irritability. In the end the question of luggage was resolved.” (Mukherjee, 1971:21). The two companions in the compartment started quarrelling about the luggage space. Tara’s suitcase became the bone of contention for them both. This irritability over trivial matters and the capacity to become angry on account of such trifles is the petty-mindedness. This irritability, this inflammable tendency, this high raising, boiling conduct is perhaps the result of the heated climate in these hot countries.

v.“She was frightened by the capacity for anger over trivial encounters. She stared out of the window to avoid watching the night ablutions of her companions.” (Mukherjee, 1971:21). This capacity for getting angry over trivial matters, this importance given to unimportant items, the significance accorded to insignificant encounters is again an Oriental or rather Indian
characteristic. She looked outside. She did not want to observe the way in which her two fellow travellers washed themselves. They coughed, they spat, they produced different noises, their washing ears, nostrils, eyes and all the parts of the oral and nasal cavity were quite irritating. These ablutions are habitual noise-producing activities by men and women in India. In order to avoid the irritation caused by these noises and actions, Tara watched outside.

vi. “Tara’s mother, Arati, was a saintly woman. At least she was given to religious dreams. Her religious dreams were not holy enough to turn her hair white overnight (as had happened to her grandmother once in Pachapara) but they were adequately religious.” (Mukherjee, 1971:47). The religious and almost saintly nature of Tara’s mother is revealed here. She saw religious dreams quite frequently. Her religious dreams used to be quite adequate. These dreams did not turn her hair white overnight as had happened to her grandmother at Pachapara. Even then, she was religious in nature, and this religiosity is an Oriental cultural peculiarity.

vii. “She could tell, for instance, through Kali or Mother Durga which pregnant relative would be blessed with a male child, which niece or nephew would pass the final matriculation examination, or which out-of-town acquaintance would suddenly arrive unannounced for a month visit”. (Mukherjee, 1971:47). Her religious, saintly nature gave her the power to make some predictions about the birth, the result of examinations or the arrival of a guest. The birth of a male child, the passing of an examination and the sudden arrival of unexpected guests were her prophecies. This power was gifted to her by the Holy Mother Goddess. This is another Oriental trait that is reflected to present the culture of the East.

viii. “Tara’s mother spent a great deal of time in the prayer rooms.” (Mukherjee, 1971:47). It was but inevitable because of her saintly nature that she spent a lot of time in the prayer rooms. She left something of her
religious practices in each of the room, such as the dressing room, the bathroom and Tara’s study.

ix.“Why three bathe a day for God’s sake?.” David had asked. “Would you like to touch God when you’re all horribly sweaty and dirty?” (Mukherjee, 1971:48). Arati’s daughter Tara has married an American named David Cartwright. Being a Westerner he does not realize the significance of having a bath three times a day as is the practice duly followed by his mother in law. He puts a question to Tara about this practice. Tara replies that with your body sweaty and dirty you are not expected to touch God. Cleanliness is next to godliness. It is not for personal hygiene but for religious pre-condition that this three times bath taking is practised. It therefore becomes a practice that has its own cultural and religious significance. It is truly an Oriental, cultural practice of the religious minded.

x.“I would hate to be an immigrant,” said Pronob suddenly. “I wouldn’t mind giving up the factory, but I’d hate to be nobody in America. How do they treat Indians Tara?” (Mukherjee, 1971:59). Pronob does not want to be a nobody in America. He believes that in America this treatment of being nobody is accorded to Indians. This remark is a product of extensive experience of American Occidental Western culture. He does not want to become a nobody in America and therefore he does not want to migrate to America. His insistence on remaining in India and his view that Americans treat Indians as nobody is based on his beliefs which are without any solid proof.

xi.“Tara started guiltily as if something she has hoped to hide has suddenly been forced out into the open”. (Mukherjee, 1971:59). The self-confidence and the passionate conviction of Indians like Pronob and his group is admired by Tara. The belief that they are always right is another trait of the culture of the East. Sticking to one’s culture and not being an immigrant is what the Orientals think to be the best course. They refuse to move out and get exposed to life’s experiences. Biased views are blindly held by them.
Thinking oneself to be always right is another belief of the Orientals. The culture of the East is predominantly controlled by biases and prejudices.

xii. “Oh dear! Right in the heart of Darjipara! Why did this have to happen? Darjipara was Moslem.” (Mukherjee, 1971: 88). Darjipara being an area populated by Moslems was considered a dangerous area. This was nothing but prejudice. The old picnickers recalled that the driver whose car was punctured was a Moslem. This increased their anxiety. Why did this have to happen in the middle of the Moslem dominated locality of Darjipura? This question haunted them continuously. These are all opinionated attitudes which have no rational basis. The punctured tyre was an accident, but fortune and destiny are involved by the picknickers. There is no rational ground for whatever notions are carried by them. Their views are colored by such irrational notions which have totally dominated their decision making and their action. Such prejudiced outlook is what the Orientals possess. These prejudices lead to ignorance and irrationality in their opinions.

xiii. “The Bengal Tiger saved the situation. “Just throw the bloody snake in the big pond. It’ll all be okay, And De Souza, don’t just stand there like a statue. Make tea for all of us.” (Mukhjerjee, 1971:100). The Bengal Tiger had done it again. He had removed the trouble to a safer place. He had not killed the snake. He satisfied those who had panicked. He satisfied the superstitions. The little harmless water snake caused the commotion but order was satisfactorily restored. The snakes take fair revenge is the superstition that is repeatedly uttered by the older women. This has no logical or factual basis. Like all superstitions, it is just what people generally believe without any verification or any scientific reason for the belief. Among the people of the East, the Orientals, and the Indians such superstitious strongly prevail. This is an illustration of the reflection of the culture of the East.

xiv.“The huts were made of canvas cloth, corrugated tin, asbestos sheets, bamboo poles, card board pieces and occasional bricks torn loose from
compound walls”. (Mukherjee, 1971:116). The link between the old and new world is shown here. Joyonto Roy Choudhary wanted to show a bustee (slum locality) on his estate in Tollygunge to Tara and her friend Reena. The slum locality was established by the squatters who had encroached on his property. The material used for the huts includes tins, canvas, asbestos, poles, cardboard and bricks, whatever was available were used by the slum dwellers. Posters were used as building material by the more desperate squatters. Saira Banu in ski slacks hung upside down on one wall. Deepak Ghose Liberates, Capitalism Enslaves’ announced handbills on many other walls. There were no doors to these hovels. The huts were fully exposed to the Vagaries of the seasons: Rains, heat and cold. The desperate conditions were transparent.

“Tara could imagine David asking quite naturally if he might go inside and take a look. But she did not dare look too closely at them herself. Though they were open, these homes seemed to her secretive, almost evil.” (Mukherjee, 1971:116). The reaction of Tara’s husband would be that of curiosity, inquisitiveness and he would go inside these huts. This reaction of a Westerner shows that such dwellings are peculiar to the East. Though open, these are secretive dwellings. This is a fact that characterizes the Oriental touch in the locality of squatters. This shows the difference between the inquisitive nature of the Occidents while the Orients are characterised by their superstitious nature.

“Reena’s father tried to establish a party note by reminiscing about his student’s days in the foreign”. He sang a few bars from ‘Chattanooga Shoe Shine Boy’ and stood up to do his Bing Crosby Imitation.” (Mukherjee, 1971:144). Reena’s mother was nervous but Reena’s father tried to entertain the American guest with his singing and mimicry of the famous comedian Bing Crosby. He began to tell of his student days abroad. These efforts made by Reena’s father and mother reflect the Oriental cultural trait of hospitality.
But Young McDowell appeared to be on the verge of a headache. Headaches were the plague of Camac Street society; Washington McDowell had gained some acceptance”. (Mukherjee, 1971: 144-145). Reena’s father made efforts to entertain the American guest by his singing and imitating the comedian Bing Crosby. Mc Dowell suffered from a severe headache and Reena’s father had to bring the pills for the guest. The guest became accepted in Camac Street society as headaches were common to that society. The differences between the Westerners and Easterners are brought out here. The trait of hospitality in the culture of the West is highlighted.

Tara found herself shouting, “Ma, Ma, Mata!” with the rest. She found it easy suddenly to love everyone, even Antonia Whitehead, who was the only person standing in the entire room” (Mukherjee, 1971: 173). The religious man worships the God or God like person. Godmother is what moves the men in the East. The Orientals are forever engaged in the worship of Godhood. The broad comprehensive all-inclusive encompassing love is possible through such devotion. To love humanity is to love God is what the Orientals believe. The Congregation was busy in chanting the name of Mother while Antonia alone was standing. The contrast between the Easterners and the Westerner like Antonia is clearly conveyed through the scene of rapturous devotion. The submission of faith characterizes the culture in the East while rational scepticism is noticed in the Western culture.

The woman did not move at all after taking up her position on the wooden bed. She did not look at her followers, who now seemed convinced they too had shared her radiance.” (Mukherjee, 1971: 173). Kananbala Mata the Godmother sat still in the same position. Though she did not look at them, the worshippers were confident of sharing her radiance. The enthusiastic sincere devotion is what the Orientals perform with their true faith. Except Antonia Whitehead, everybody in the assembly was engrossed in sincere
devotion. Even Tara Cartwright Banerjee was lost in her enthusiastic chant. The difference between the Eastern and the Western perspectives is noticed in the view expressed by Antonia Whitefield who remarked that India needed population control, economic reforms, social upheavals, improved farming techniques, tubewells and better equipped schools and hospitals with better trained teachers, doctors and nurses rather than this kind of religious excitement. The Eastern perspective reflects the culture of the East of rapturous excitement of religious worship.

xx.“Do you remember all that greenery? Do you remember Apu running through these forests?” Tara asked. (Mukherjee, 1971:207). The marchers and demonstrators had surrounded the Catelli Continental Hotel. A confrontation was shaping up outside the hotel. It was Joyonto Roy who declared that the age of snakes was about to come to destroy the universe. At this moment of terror Tara remembered the greenery, the forests around the village. She remembered the protagonist of the film by Satyajit Ray-Pather Panchali. She in particular remembered the greenery, the forests around the village. She remembered the protagonist of the film running through those green forests. Her memories of the greenery remind of the charm of the Oriental culture that sprang in the green trees, the dark and deep forests. Greenery symbolizes liveliness, life, freshness and the period of happy innocence as depicted in Pather Panchali. Pronob does not understand why Tara is putting such questions at a time, a horrible time, a time of terror like that. Tara’s queries are reminders of the charm of the old world, the value of the Oriental culture.

2.3 Mirroring the West

The following illustrations show the mirroring of the West in the novel. The Western life-style, colonial administration, urbanization, club culture are the characteristic features of Western culture. The differences between the Eastern and Western culture are presented through different episodes. Tara’s Americanization
has been totally accepted by her friends who come together to talk, to drink and to
eat at the Catelli Continental Hotel. In a sense, both the cultures, Eastern and
Western are mirrored but the lifestyle of the West has made a great impact.

i. “Santana, Hari Lal’s eldest daughter, left Pachpara with her husband
Santana’s husband, a barrister,……. Certainly the big city developed talents
and emotions that the barrister hardly suspected in him.” (Mukherjee, 1971:
7-8). The migration from the rural to the urban is the mirroring of the
Western culture. It was after the British Rule that the urban centres
developed in India. Harilal Banerjee of Pachapara had houses and lands in
Pachapara but his son-in-law Santana’s husband the barrister did not want
to exhaust his talent and strength in a village. He thought of his future
prospects in the city. This caused the family to move to the Urban Centre.
The barrister’s line of thinking and the decision of migrating to the city
mirror the life-style of the West. It was a rare honour for an Indian in those
days. Visiting clubs is a matter of prestige for the people in the Western
countries. The same is reflected here to mirror the culture of the West.

ii. “The barrister’s success led to one fateful act. In a year of colonial
unrest….. he defended two teenage Brahmin nationalists. This action was
unfortunately construed.” (Mukherjee, 1971: 08). Though warned by British
colleagues and Bengali gentlemen, the barrister, Harilal Banerjee’s daughter
Santana’s husband argued on behalf of the nationalist. This act was
considered to be an act of imprudence. His nationalist fervor is noticed here.
This is his protest against colonialism. This act is good but the colonial rule
of those times takes it as an unwise act on the part of the barrister. The
barrister did not take the reprimand lowly. He stopped the legal practice. He
purchased a Tobacco factory and a lumber land. The Tobacco factory was
ultimately run by the Bengal Tiger the Barrister’s son-in-law, Arati’s
husband and Tara’s father. The colonial administration and its strictness do
mirror the lifestyle of the West urbanization; clubs and reprimand for
imprudence are the characteristic features of Western culture.
iii. “Long after on homesick afternoons at Vassar, or after misunderstandings with David, or when things went badly….. she thought of Camac Street, especially of her mother”. (Mukherjee, 1971: 49). Tara remembered Camac Street and in particular remembered her mother praying to gods. She remembered home whenever she was upset on account of something either in Vassar where she was studying or in her other activities after her marriage with David Cartwright. At the age of fifteen she was sent for education to Vassar. During the vacation her friends went to their homes. Tara would be all alone in her hostel. This would definitely make her homesick. After her marriage with David, there were some occasions on which there were certain misunderstandings between her and David. The mood of restlessness after such misunderstandings with her husband led her to think of her mother or Camac Street in Calcutta. The Academic sessions and the hostel life at Vassar, the difficulties in her research work and her misunderstandings with her American husband David Cartwright cover a period of seven years of her life which Tara spent in America. These seven years mirror the cultural aspects of the Western culture through educational activities at Vassar, and her married life with David Cartwright.

iv. “It’s hard to explain,” she had said to the foreign student advisor at Vassar, I just can’t pray here. It doesn’t come. Do you know what I mean?” (Mukherjee, 1971: 49). At Vassar the atmosphere being that of the girls’ hostel was not suitable for saying her prayers. Tara says that prayers and the appropriate mood for that does not come to her at Vassar. Privacy, solitude and scope for meditative contemplation are needed for saying prayers. In the public and common places like the hostel that was not possible. The Western set-up is reflected here. It is emphasized that the mood for prayers in the way Tara desired could not be attained in that cultural set-up. The differences between the Western and Eastern culture are presented through the atmosphere.
v. “Her friends let slip their disapproval of her, they suggested her marriage had been imprudent, that the seven years abroad had eroded all that was fine and sensitive in her Bengali nature.” (Mukherjee, 1971:55). This is how Tara’s friend judged her now. The group that gathered at the Catelli-Continental Hotel assessed her personality now. In their opinions her marriage was not a wise decision and an appropriate act. Her marriage caused her to be separated from the lifestyle in the East. Her marriage with her American husband made her a thorough American, Westerner. She had become assimilated and acculturated in the American culture. She is a perfectly Americanized woman, an American wife. Her stay abroad has covered the period of more than seven years. In the opinion of her friends of the Catelli Continental Hotel elite set her seven years stay in America has deprived her of the charm and sensitivity of her Bengali nature. She has lost her old charm and sensitivity in these seven years. Her Americanization has been totally accepted by her friends who come together to talk, to drink and to eat at the Catelli Continental Hotel.

vi. “She described them in detail how she spent a typical day in New York, what she ate for breakfast, how much the subway token cost, how she washed and hung her nylons above the bathtub, what her thesis director looked like.” (Mukherjee, 1971: 58). Tara gave her friends from the Catelli Continental group of Pronob, Neelima, Reena and others the details of her daily routine in her home on 120th Street in New York. She reported the details of daily activities, the items prepared for breakfast, what was the fare of subway, how she washed her nylons and she dried her hanging above the bathtub, and also about the appearance of her Ph. D guide. These details of the breakfast, daily routine activities, the subway fare, the washing and drying of clothes and the appearance of the research guide reflect the Western lifestyle. The Western as well as Occidental culture is mirrored in these reports. Even Pronob was curious to know about the lifestyle in America in the West. Tara’s reports have mirrored the West, its lifestyle and culture.
vii. “Each aerogramme caused her momentary panic, a sense of trust betrayed, of mistakes never admitted. It was hard to visualize him because she was in India. Tara thought”. (Mukherjee, 1971: 62). David, Tara’s husband, wrote regularly but David of aerogramme was unfamiliar to Tara. He seemed like a figure in shadows or a foreigner with an accent on Television. She was terrified by each of the aerograms she received from her husband David. A momentary panic, a betrayal of a sense of trust and an admission of the mistakes committed resulted after the receipt of each of these aerograms from David. She panicked every time. She felt that foreignness is a burden and the ground for such a feeling was that she was in India and could not fully visualize her husband except in bits and pieces but no longer in his entirety. Though in India she has become panicky, Tara is more concerned about her husband David, her husband and David is attached to her. This mutual concern of both reflects their strong attachment. The Western lifestyle is reflected here.

viii. “It was hard to tell a foreigner that she loved him very much when she was surrounded by the Bengal Tiger’s chairs, tables, flowers, and portraits. She made several beginnings seizing the specific questions he had asked as anchors against her helplessness.” (Mukherjee, 1971: 63). Her commitment to her marriage is fast. She writes a letter to David trying to answer his specific questions. She just wants him to convey that she loves him very much. Her homesickness has brought her to India but her marriage is solid and steady. Both of them are equally devoted and equally concerned. The marriage of two cultures is successfully accomplished though they are separated by a long distance. They are close, near, attached. Both the cultures, Eastern and Western are mirrored but the lifestyle of the West has made both of them Westerners.

ix. “The thought a stranger, a bum from central park, a Harlem dandey, looking into her pocket book, laughing at the notes she had made to herself, observations about her life and times, old sales slips accumulated over
months for merchandise long lost or broken, credit cards, identification cards with unflattering pictures by which a criminal could identify her”. (Mukerjee, 1971: 69). The little encounters included a stranger, a bum or a dandy that caught hold of her pocket book, her notes, old sales slips, credit and identification cards. These notorious characters took hold of her possessions. These criminals can identify her through the identity or credit card photographs. They read her note and laugh at her. They searched through her pocket book. These little invasions are more troublesome than the violent attacks. The invasions are more dangerous than the muggings. The private life is exposed. The criminal incidence in the West is on the rise. The reflection of crime that is omnipresent is found here.

x. “They liked foreigners in movie magazines- Nat Wood and Bob Wagner in faded Photoplays, they loved Englishmen like Worthington at the British Council. But they did not approve of foreign marriage partners. So much for the glamour of her own marriage.” (Mukherjee, 1971: 86). The Catelli Continental Hotel group of Pronob, Tara, Nilima, Reena and others finally decided to go for a picnic to the Bengal Tiger’s factory. Tara then muses on this gesture. Their friends liked foreigners in movies or in the British Council. They liked the Hollywood films, the foreign books, the foreign actors and actresses and men like Worthington at the British Council. The friends have a double standard for foreigners. As actors and as individuals they like foreigners. They do not like foreigners as partners in marriage even in the case of Tara their friend.

xi. “So much for the glamour of her own marriage she had expected admiration from these friends. She had wanted them to consider her marriage an emancipated gesture. But emancipation was suspicious- it presupposed bondage”. (Mukherjee, 1971: 86). Even Tara’s marriage with David was expected to be admired and was to be considered as a gesture of liberation, freedom and emancipation. Yet Tara’s marriage too was neither considered admirable nor a liberating act. Tara realizes that it would be wrong to accept
admiration from her friends whose mental make-up was different. Her marriage with David reflects the Western perspective on life and culture.

xii.“In New York, she had often praised herself, especially when it was time to clean the toilet or bathtub. She had watched the bubbly action of the toilet cleanser and had confided to David that at home there was a woman just to clean bathrooms. There was no heroism for her in New York”. (Mukherjee, 1971: 86). Toilet cleaning was performed by Tara herself in New York. It was not something heroic in New York to do this. Therefore to accept admiration for her marriage in India was wrong. The mirroring of the Western life-style and culture is found in Hollywood, in toilet cleaning and in marriage of persons belonging to different cultures.

xiii.“But she needed incidents to make much of in letters to David. David was painfully Western, he still complained of her placidity”. (Mukherjee, 1971:112). David wanted her to communicate through her letter everything, even the trivial ones in minute what has happened. He desires actions and incidents to be communicated to him. Tara therefore needs incidents to be reported in her letters to David. It is clearly stated here that David has this peculiar Western mentality of getting actions reported in details. He complained about her placidity in this respect. Curiosity is the mark of Occidentalism while placidity is an Oriental feature.

xiv. “Things ‘happened’ only when they began and ended. He wrote her that he worried, she wasn’t doing anything”. (Mukherjee, 1971:112). David Cartwright, Tara’s husband, wants incidents and happenings to be reported to him in the letters Tara sent to him. Happenings are actions that begin and then end. Incidents are actions which have taken place, which have happened and the beginnings and the ends are essential for any incident to happen. His complaint was that she was not writing about any incidents. He was worried that she was not doing anything. She was not watching any action, any incident, and any happening taking place. His Western outlook is reflected in his comments.
xv. “He didn’t mean working on Katherine Mansfield, but just reading and thinking and getting the most out of her vacation. He said he thought she spent too much time talking to bigots, why didn’t she write him of things that really mattered?” (Mukherjee, 1971: 112). David admitted that his wife Tara was working on her doctoral thesis on Katherine Mansfield. She was just reading and thinking about her research. Perhaps she spent much time in talking to bigots at the Catelli Continental Hotel. She should write to him of actual incidents, events taking place around and happenings that mattered, David’s being Western in lifestyle and culture has repeatedly emphasized through his demand for actual happenings, action oriented events and incidents. The Occidental perspective of an American is mirrored here.

xvi. “Hi! Shouted Washington McDowell. He called Reena’s parents Mom and Pop from the first moment. The whole party was supplied with Cokes by the project officer, who explained that Tara lived in New York and would be of veritable and invaluable service to McDowell.” (Mukherjee, 1971:140). Under the exchange of students programme, an American student Washington McDowell happened to be an Afro-American student Young McDowell was handed over to Reena and her parents. He began calling her father Pop and her mother Mom from the very first moment. The project officer introduced Tara as an American who lived in New York and who would be of veritable invariable service to McDowell.

xvii.“She (Tara) tried to explain to Reena that young McDowell had been one of the others from the very beginning. Only his slogan, his outlandish appearance, his knowledge of music had deceived Reena”. (Mukherjee, 1971:154). Tara explained to Reena that McDowell was a gay from the very beginning but his appearance and other things did not give any indication of that, this desertion was but inevitable and natural in the circumstances. Tara told Reena that in America such pairs likes that of Reena and McDowell would have never met. His going away was therefore quite natural. Mc
Dowell’s peculiar tendency of being a gay mirrored the West, its style and culture.

xviii. “Antonia Whitehead led Pronob and the two girls out of the mall and the crowd parted again. They lingered for a moment near a bench where a cluster of Bengali children fell over each other trying to make room for them.” (Mukherjee, 1971: 164). Antonia was a big red headed girl. In green pants and turtle neck sweater, Antonia emerged like a tractor. Her athletic way, her brutal health, her outlandish size and her bulk made the crowds part. To make room for her, children tumbled and fell over each other; Antonia’s healthy physique makes her a true representative of the West.

xix. “Isn’t this place great?” The American girl said, raising her arms in an extravagant gesture that made her little breasts jiggle inside the green turtleneck” (Mukherjee, 1971:164). Her rising of the arms, her extravagant gesture, her little jiggling inside the green turtle neck emphasizes her physical bulk. Her dress, her manners, her physical appearance and her pose reflect the Western lifestyle in its true colours.

xx. “Ignoring the feelings of the people at her table, she (Antonia Whitehead) described in detail what she called ‘the exotic vagaries’ of Khajuraho and the Krishna legends” (Mukherjee, 1971:188). Antonia described the exoticism in the Krishna legends. That was a sign of the exoticism that got displayed in the open mindedness. It took Antonia Whitehead to the various groups that celebrated her exotic nature but the open minded gesture invited others to accept their claim to be a part of the celebration. The animation of Antonia’s playfulness, she appeared in her body almost bare and uncovered. The beauty contest was won by her bold playfulness. The Western way of life, the Western culture is mirrored through this act of hers.

2.4 The Phase of Alienation

Alienation is the process whereby people become foreign to the world they are living in. The concept of alienation is deeply embedded in all the great religions
and social and political theories of the civilised epoch. The idea that some time in the past people lived in harmony, and then there was some kind of rupture which left people feeling like foreigners in the world. In this novel, the characters feel alienated due to some reasons. The poor beggars have no access to the hotel and they cannot even dream of getting inside. This symbol of the European colonization is a far off distant place out of their reach. It is the spot that alienates the vast majority of the Indians. The cross-cultural relations are noticed in Tara’s life in Calcutta prompted by the culture of the East and her life in Vassar was regulated by the culture of the West. It was her alienation from her native Indian culture. That was the initial phase of the cross cultural relations. The cross cultural contacts brought her a sense of alienation.

i. “The Catelli-Continental Hotel on Chowringhee Avenue, Calcutta, is the navel of the universe. Gray and imposing….. Occupies half a block, then spills untidily into an intersection…..” (Mukherjee, 1971:01). The hotel is the center of the universe that is created as the fictional world of the novel The Tiger’s Daughter by Bharati Mukherjee. This is the place where Pronob, Nilima, Reena and Tara and others gather everyday and they represent the elite privileged group of the city of Calcutta. The hotel is imposing as it occupies half a block on the prestigious Chowringhee Avenue in Calcutta. This was the place that was frequented by the Europeans in the heydays of the Raj. What is remarkable is that the hotel is cut off from the life of the ordinary people that predominate the population of the city of Calcutta. It is the remnant of the colonial world and the rest of the people except the people from the elite groups and the daily visitors like Joyonto Roy Chowdhury who is the bridge between the colonial past and India after independence.

ii. “In the daytime this is a gloomy place; only a colony of beggars take advantage of the shade, they roll out their torn mats or rearrange their portable ovens and cardboard boxes” (Mukherjee, 1971:01). These are the people who move around the hotel taking advantage of the shade of its
imposing building. They are destined to be outside the hotel and would never be inside the hotel. They are on the periphery of this huge construction, this place of luxury and comforts. The poor beggars have no access to the hotel and they cannot even dream of getting inside. This symbol of the European colonization is a far off distant place out of their reach. It is the spot that alienates the vast majority of the Indians.

iii. “So slight were the initial changes among the families of Bengali zamindars, an imprisoned and gigantic spirit had begun to move, and all things on its body - towns, buildings, men-were slowly altering their shapes. The alterations were not yet impressive, none suspected. They might be fatal.” (Mukherjee, 1971:09). The barrister husband of Harilal Banerjee's daughter Santana moved from Pachpara to Calcutta for better prospects for his talents. The process of urbanization began in a slow but steady manner among the families of Bengali landlords. The movement of gigantic spirit had begun. The changes were taking place. The shapes of all things such as towns, buildings and men on the body of the moving gigantic spirit were slow. The alteration was the result of urbanization. The native culture was receding and the urban life-style changes were being introduced under the impact of the West. This is how the alienation from the native culture was slowly taking place.

iv. “Years later a young woman who had never been to Pachapura would grieve for the Banerjee family and try to analyse the reasons for its change. She would sit by a window in America to dream of Hari Lal, her great grandfather and she would wonder at the gulf that separated him from her.” (Mukherjee, 1971:09). The young woman sitting by the window in America would be Tara Cartwright Banerjee. Hari Lal Banerjee of Pachapura, her great grandfather was seperated from her because of the changes all around her. In Pachapura, Hari Lal Banerjee represented the old world, the Oriental culture, the Indian way of life. The Bengal Tiger's daughter was sent by him to study in America at the age of fifteen. She married David Cartwright, an
American. She has become thoroughly westernized. The two individuals from the same Banerjee family represented two cultures. The Bengal Tiger's daughter Tara Cartwright Banerjee represented the West while the old zamindar (landlord) of Pachapara - Hari Lal represented the East. There was a wide gulf that separated the two not only in space and time but in the lifestyle and cultural practices.

v. “As each atom of newness bombarded her, she longed for Camac Street, where she had grown up.” (Mukherjee, 1997:10). There were new pains at Poughkeepsie in America for Tara Banerjee. She could not disclose this to her parents; every new item that bombarded her at Vassar made her remember Camac Street, Calcutta. Her attention is totally at Vassar. The lifestyle in this education center in America had been absolutely different from the way she was brought up in Calcutta. She had to acquire new skills at Vassar and that made her remember Camac Street and her friends there. The cross-cultural relations are noticed in her life in Calcutta prompted by the culture of the East and her life at Vassar was regulated by the culture of the West.

vi. “These friends who had never left home envied her freedom. They asked for records and transparent nighties. They were ecstatic when she told them she had seen Johnny Mathis in person.” (Mukherjee, 1997:10) At Vassar and after Vassar in New York, her friends from Camac Street noted her freedom. They envied her for that. They demanded records and nighties from America. They asked Tara to send them these articles. When Tara told them that she had seen Johnny Mathis in person, they were overjoyed. These differences show how life in India and life in America were different. Tara now belonged to the West. It was her alienation from her native Indian culture. That was the initial phase of the cross-cultural relations.

vii. “She prayed to Kali for strength so she would not break down before these polite Americans.” (Mukherjee, 1971:11) The sense of alienation produced by the cross-cultural contact made Tara demand more and more strength
from the goddess of power, Kali. She desired mental strength from Kali. She constantly prayed to Kali to give her strength. She did not want to break down. She did not want to weaken before the America girls studying with her at Vassar. In order to face the ordeal of the sense of alienation, in order to defend herself from the onslaught of the Western culture, to protect herself, Tara prayed to Kali. She wanted to be mentally alert, psychologically strong and physically watchful in the new circumstances. The initial three weeks tested her capacity and as she felt alienated estranged, separated from her native culture, she desired to gain spiritual strength, psychological power and mental capacity to protect her from the waves of alienation.

viii.“She suffered fainting spells, headache and nightmares; her face took on the pinched and almost beautiful look of tragic heroines in Bengali dramas. She complained of homesickness in letters to her mother who properly prayed to Kali to save Tara's conscience, chastity and complexion”. (Mukherjee, 1971:13). When other girls left Vassar for summer vacation and went to their places, Tara remained alone. Her loneliness added to her sense of alienation. Being lonely in a foreign country made her nervous. She experienced nightmares, states of unconsciousness and continuous headache. These were the psychological signs of her acute nervousness. She became homesick. She resembled tragic heroines in her appearance. Her mother prayed to Kali to save Tara's conscience, chastity and complexion. These resulted on account of her sense of alienation from her native Indian culture, culture of the East.

ix.“Tara's academic advisor, who did not believe in emotions, watched with distance the sudden defoliation of Tara, and made it her business to keep the young woman occupied all summer”. (Mukherjee, 1971:13-14). The sense of alienation caused was the contact with the Western culture, a foreign culture made Tara's loneliness more terrible. Therefore, her advisor decided to keep her engaged in some or the other activity throughout the summer
vacation. She decided to send her to summer school in Madison in order to make her suffer less from her sense of alienation.

x. “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.” (Mukherjee, 1971:18). On her way to Vassar from Calcutta, Tara boarded the plane at Bombay. Seven years had passed after that, what appeared to be a fashionable house to Tara then, now shocked her on account of its shabbiness that had happened was that the location has not much changed. Her seven years stay in America had changed her view. Though she was an individual of Indian origin, her seven years had already made her adopt the Western perspective. She viewed Marine Drive from an American’s point of view. She was now alienated from India of the East. What was fashionable appeared to be shabby to her now.

xi. “But so far the return had brought only wounds. First the corrosive hours on Marine Drive, then the deformed beggars in the railway station and now the inexorable train ride steadily undid what strength she had held in reserve.” (Mukherjee, 1971:25). Her highly and eagerly awaited return to India brought nothing but painful wounds. The shabbiness of Marine Drive, the deformed beggars and other sites were the ulcerous wounds that troubled her. She was now absolutely alienated from her native past and the native culture of the East. Tara’s strength was her sense of alienation. The sense of alienation produced in Tara the fetching of embitterment. She thought herself old and cynical at the age of twenty two. She felt alienated from everything. The cross cultural contact brought to her this sense of alienation.

xii. “You think you are too educated for this, don't you?” Aunt Jharna laughed with a quiet violence, “you have come back to make fun of us, haven't you? What gives you the right? Your American money? Your mleccha husband?” (Mukherjee, 1971:36). Aunt Jharna did not take the question in the right perspective. She thought that Tara was making fun of her Aunt.
She thought it rude to put such a question by Tara to her Aunt. Was it her education or her money from America or her American husband? She questioned Tara's right to ask such a question. Though she did not intend it, it was pointed out to Tara that she was now alienated from her relatives like Aunt Jharna and her little club-footed daughter.

xiii. “How does the foreignness of the spirit begin? Tara wondered. Does it begin right in the center of Calcutta, with forty ruddy Belgian women, fat forehead swelling under starched white headdresses, long black habits intensifying the hostility of the Indian sun?” (Mukherjee, 1971:37). Aunt Jharna questioned Tara's right to ask a question about the treatment for the club feet of her little daughter, She mentioned that her being American deprived her of such a right. She is a foreigner in Aunt Jharna's view, Now Tara wonders what foreignness is and how and where the spirit of foreignness originates. Perhaps it is originated in St. Blaise school run by the nuns. The forty Belgium women suffered the hostility of the unbearable heat in India but continued to educate the Indian children. Perhaps the nuns teaching them and organizing the school management inculcate the spirit of foreignness among their Indian students like Tara.

xiv.“Did the foreignness drift inward with the winter chill at Vassar, as she watched the New York snow settle over new architecture, blonde girls, protestant matrons and Johny Mathis?” (Mukherjee, 1971:37). Perhaps the cold winter of Vassar taught her foreignness. She watched how snow settled over girls, architectural construction, matrons and Johnny Mathis the singer. This too brought the foreignness of spirit into her make-up. Perhaps her training at St. Blaise’s and at Vassar and her long stay of seven years in America and her marriage with an American made her alienated. One reason of alienation was the way food was approached by the people of the East, the Orientals and the Indians.

xv.“In New York she and David usually skipped lunch; David was given to fatness and dedicated to diets. Dinners were fixed on the run. David had
been amused by her parents’. Chronicle of birthday menus in aerogrammes. “How can they eat so much? It's obscene!” he had said.” (Mukherjee, 1971:96). Tara as well as David did not go in for food. Their diet was not fixed and usually they skipped lunch. The list of items of food for a birthday party in India surprised them. They questioned the propriety of such feasts. The difference in the consumption of food shows the contradiction in the approaches to food among the people from the East and those from the West. This alienated both David and Tara from the others, from India.

xvi. “She (Tara) longed for the Bengal of Satyajit Ray, children running through cool green spaces, aristocrats despairing in music rooms, of empty places.” (Mukherjee, 1971:105). Tara remembered the beauty of nature in Bengal as projected in the films of Satyajit Ray like ‘Pather Panchali’. The film depicted green trees, deep and dark forests and the growth of greenery everywhere. Though the films were in black and white, the green trees and forests dominated the landscape. The protagonist Apu and his sister ran through the groves, the forests, the green places. Tara longed for this Bengal and Satyajit Ray's film. That Bengal was not in existence now and she felt alienated. The aristocrat in despair turned to the listening of music in their empty places. The portrayal of the Nawabs of Lucknow in ‘Shatranj Ke Khiladi’ brings out this scene. That grandeur was lost forever. Tara felt alienated for this loss of music and this loss of greenery from her state of Bengal. The sense of alienation dominated her mood.

xvii. “How is it you have changed too much, Tara?” Reena asked, “I mean this is no moral judgment or anything but you have become too self centered and European. So it had to come at last, thought Tara. A quarrel was about to occur. And over such an issue, imagine calling her of all people European.” (Mukherjee, 1971:105). Reena’s remark makes the alienation clear and straight forward. She is called European. Tara longs for greenery but that is lost. The music in palaces is silent. Children eat rice and yoghurt
in the streets. Tara is called European, an alienated person. She senses her own alienation.

xviii. “I want that!” screamed the little girl, “I want a sari just like that! I want that! I want that! It is harder to damage others than to damage oneself. Tara, who had been carefully trained to discipline mind and body by the nuns at St Blaise’s, lost her composure at that moment, and had to be dragged quickly to the Rover. No one was sure what exactly had happened.” (Mukherjee, 1971:122). Joyonto Roy Chowdhury took Tara and Reena to the bustee at his estate in Tollygunge. A girl, who was bandaged having sores that oozed with bloody pus, screamed suddenly looking at Tara’s sari. The girl wanted a sari like that Tara, though disciplined to control herself, lost her composure. She was taken to the car. Tara could not digest the demand made by the girl and her attempts to touch her. Tara did not belong to the world of that bustee nor did she belong to her native land. She was an American, an alienated individual.

xix. “Had Tara fallen on the child in order to beat her to silence? Or had the child thrown herself on Tara and tugged at her dhakai sari with bloody, poisonous hands? Reena insisted she had heard Tara scream, Don’t touch me, don’t touch me!” (Mukherjee, 1971:122). Nobody knew what had exactly happened. Perhaps Tara had fallen on the child or perhaps the child had thrown herself on Tara. The girl tried to touch the sari with those bloody hands, Tara had screamed saying not to touch her. Tara did not like to be touched. She acted as an alien.

xx. “In the car, revered by smelling salts, the faithful chauffeur kept in the glove compartment for just such emergencies, Tara had worried about making a fool of her. I am sorry I ruined the trip for you people. I don’t know what came over me. I saw that girl with leprosy and I just lost my head.” (Mukherjee, 1977:122). Tara realized that she had ruined the trip. She lost her composure when she saw that girl with bandages; Tara had lost her balance, her presence of mind. She could not tolerate the girls demand
for the sari and her attempts to touch her. She is far removed from the world of that bustee, she is a stranger, a foreigner, an alien in that bustee. She does not belong to her native culture now, she has become totally alienated.

2.5 The Phase of Assimilation

Assimilation is a gradual process by which a person or group belonging to one culture adopts the practices of another, thereby becoming a member of that culture. Sociologists commonly distinguish between forced and unforced assimilation. In forced assimilation, a person or group is compelled to take on the practices of another culture, such as by adopting that culture's language and religious traditions. In unforced assimilation, a person takes on the practices of another culture but is not forcibly compelled to do so. Sociologists use the concept of assimilation to describe the way a person or group of a particular culture (such as immigrants) might respond to or blend with another culture, or how a minority cultural group might relate to a dominant cultural group. The following examples show cultural assimilation.

i.“And so…Tara left obediently for summer school in Madison. Within fifteen minutes of her arrival at the Greyhound bus station, in her anxiety to find a cab, she almost knocked down a young man.” (Mukherjee, 1971 : 14). Tara, because of her loneliness became upset. Her advisor advised her to join a summer school in Madison. Tara obediently followed her advice. She reached Madison and started looking for a taxi. In her anxiety to do so she knocked down a young man within fifteen minutes of reaching Madison Greyhound bus station. The man she knocked down was destined to become her husband. He was David Cartwright. The process of assimilation of culture is the process of coming together, merging of two different cultures. Tara of Indian origin, an Oriental and David an American were destined to be partners in life.
ii. “She did not know then that she eventually would marry that young man.” (Mukhejee, 1971:14). Tara knocked down that young man and here it is commented that she had as yet no knowledge of the eventuality that would lead her to marry him. Tara just responded with “Excuse me” After knocking down that young man, she wanted to take a cab and so continued to drag that offensive luggage of hers. She moved towards the taxi stand. Tara did not know then but in fact she had inadvertently dashed against her would be husband David Cartwright. Her joining the Madison summer school brought her close to David. This coincidence is an illustration of the phase of assimilation in cross-cultural relations.

iii. “But this time the train ride depressed her. She fretted about David as she sat in the hostile compartment.” (Mukherjee, 1971:21). Tara had thought that her train ride would be a thrilling experience for her. That was not going to be the case. She was sandwiched between a Nepali prince Ratan of photographs and the Marwari, industrialist, a national personage P.K. Tuntunwala the spider. She was thus in a compartment that proved to be hostile to her sensibility. Naturally she was reminded of her husband, David in this mood of depression and the set-up of hostility. Her assimilation into the Western culture is materialized through her getting married to David Cartwright. In this hour of depression and hostility, it is but natural for Tara to remember her husband David Cartwright who understands her temperament well.

iv. “Perhaps I was stupid to come without him, she thought even with him rewriting his novel during the vacation.” (Mukherjee, 1971:21). Tara now realized that she should not have come to India alone. She should not have come without David, her husband. She missed him and moreover she missed his company on this train journey, she felt that it was her stupidity to have arrived in India without her husband. He was of course busy revising his novel. He wanted to devote his time to rewrite some of the portions of his novel. In spite of the fact that David was pre-occupied with his revision
work his presence was felt to be essential now. To be alone in India, without David was nothing short of stupidity. In her haste to reach India, Tara had left David behind.

v. “Perhaps I was too impulsive, confusing my fear of New York with homesickness. Or perhaps I was going mad.” (Mukherjee, 1971:21). She mistook her fear of New York for homesickness and left for India alone without David. In fact she was afraid of mugging by a bum, or a dandy or a stranger somewhere in the central park or Harlem or in subway. The fear of being mugged or the waiting for getting mugged worked on her nerves. She became depressed, she became homesick, she became confused and nervous, she decided hastily and impulsively to return to India even without her husband David. This was perhaps her impulsiveness, her confusion, her stupidity, her madness and her craziness. This compelled her to start for India even without her husband David. Now David’s absence and her homesickness make it possible to face emergency like this. Her merger with her life partner guarantees her assimilation in David’s marriage with Tara.

vi. “After seven years abroad, after extraordinary turns of destiny that had swept her from Calcutta to Poughkeepsie, and Madison, and finally to a two-room apartment within walking distance of Columbia, strange turns that had taught her to worry over dissertation on Katherine Mansfield, the plight of women and racial minorities. Tara was grateful to call this restful house, home.” (Mukherjee, 1971: 33). Tara was sent to Vassar at the age of fifteen for her studies. From Calcutta to Vassar, to Poughkeepsie, to Madison and finally to New York she was swept through the extraordinary turns of destiny. After her marriage with David, she occupied a two-room apartment within walking distance of Columbia. These strange turns made her busy on her doctoral thesis on the short story writer Katherine Mansfield and the problems of women and racial minorities. After all these turns and twists in her life, Tara could call her apartment not just a house but home, sweet home, their joint nest, their shelter and their place of rest- a
peaceful, restful and comfortable residence of their own—that of the wife from East and husband from the West. It was a gratifying matter to get assimilated in such a place. Getting assimilated individually is to mark the assimilation of the Oriental and the Occidental cultures in this phase of acculturation.

vii. “New York was certainly extraordinary and it had driven her to despair. On days she had thought that she could not possibly survive, she had shaken out all her silk scarves, ironed them and hung them to make the apartment more “Indian”. She had curried hamburger desperately till David’s stomach had protested.” (Mukherjee, 1971: 34). New York was an extra ordinary place for Tara. At times she became depressed, and in the mood of despair she displayed all her silken scarves in the apartment. In New York she created an Indian apartment full of silk scarves. She preferred hamburger. This was her way of bringing together the two cultures represented by her and David. This was assimilation, the final phase in cross-cultural relations that blended the East and the West splendidly.

viii. “Then one chilly morning in the spring of 1967 David Cartwright had thrust himself through the closing doors of an elevator, “it’s been a violent day.” He had said and Tara had fallen in love with him before the elevator ride was over.” (Mukherjee, 1971:37). That is how the love story between Tara and David began. David Cartwright was a young man. Tara had knocked him down into her awkward luggage within fifteen minutes of her arrival at Madison Greyhound Bus station. She had come to Madison as instructed by her academic advisor. On a cold morning, David Cartwright entered the elevator rather forcefully, saying that it was a violent day and thrust himself on the elevator through its closing doors. It was almost love in an instant. It was love in an elevator. It originated in the few seconds that the elevator ride took. Tara’s heart now fluttered. David and Tara became instant lovers, without a long period of courtship, their love making was fast. Their affair began in the manner of love at first sight; they along with their different
cultures got assimilated, merged in no time. David Cartwright represented American life style, the Western culture and Tara Banerjee stood for the culture of India, of the East.

ix. “It was silly to ask oneself questions of the heart, Tara decided. There were no definite points of time that one could turn to and accuse or feel ashamed of as the start of this dull strangeness.” (Mukherjee, 1971:37). It was a matter of heart, it was love at first sight, it was instant falling in love, it was elevator ride love making. Lovers are not bound by physical dimensions and love is psychological blooming, flowering and happening. This dull strangeness that is love begins whenever the heart feels the click to do so, Tara and David’s heart clicked and they became instant lovers. Their coming together meant the coming together of India and America, the Oriental culture and the Occidental culture of East and West. East is East, West is West, and the springs of heart combine the twain. The assimilation of cultures had taken place through this phenomenon.

x. “She read of crises in foreign stock markets, ads for villas on Spain, presidential commission, the Mets hoping the foreign news would bring her closer to David.” (Mukherjee, 1971:78:79). Tara who was homesick in New York, came to her house in Camac Street in Calcutta. Though she was in India now at her father the Bengal Tiger’s house, she longed for being closer to her husband, David Cartwright. Therefore, she purchased and read foreign newspapers and magazines at the Catelli Continental Hotel. She was reading the Times of London, New Yorker and the other foreign journals. She felt that the news she read in these newspapers and magazines brought her closer to David, her husband. Tara is so much assimilated with David that she felt being closer to her husband by reading news from England and USA. The merging of cultures from the East and the West was symbolized in the marriage between Tara and David.

xi. “This May morning she worked carefully through Goings On About Town: in the New Yorker. She read of Mormom Art exhibits on Madison Avenue
and of sculpture by Archipenko during his Paris period. She had never heard of Archipenko, perhaps no one else in Calcutta had either.” (Mukherjee, 1971:79). In the New Yorker, she read the column on going about town. It informed about the exhibition of Archipenko sculptures. This too reminded about the merging of the two cultures. The culture of the East and of the West merged through the marriage of Tara and David.

xii. “In New York she had often praised herself, especially when it was time to clean the toilet and bathtub.” (Mukherjee, 1971:86). Tara told David that in her father the Bengal Tiger’s house on Camac Street in Calcutta there was a separate female employee just to clean the bathrooms. In New York or in America this would be a luxury, No such employees for such a work were possible or even available in America. Such a job was to be performed by the individual who used these facilities. It was a matter of self-reliance. Tara herself cleaned the toilet or bathtub. She praised herself for doing such a work. Tara is thus absorbed in the American life style. Her marriage with David has made this assimilation possible for her. This assimilation indicated the merger of the culture of the pair, the cultures of the East that of Tara and of the West that of David.

xiii. “There was no heroism for her in New York; it appeared there would be no romance, no admiration in Calcutta either. It had been foolish she knew to expect admiration." (Mukherjee 1971:86). She expected her friends to admire her marriage. In New York she behaved like a self reliant individual. She worked on her own; she even cleaned the toilet independently. It was no heroism but just plain individuality in New York to work independently. In Calcutta her friends did not approve of foreign marriage partners. She therefore felt that it was her foolishness to expect admiration from her friends in Calcutta. Her marriage is an indicator of not just the marriage of two individuals like Tara and David, but a marriage of two cultures of the Orient and of the Occident.
The letters (from David) seemed to Tara to make the same points. David was outraged. He accused her of “stupid inanities” and “callousness”. He thought the customs she praised merely degraded the poor in India.” (Mukherjee, 1971:131). David wrote his letters regularly and his concern for Tara would be quite transparent. He gave his reactions candidly. His concern was always for humanitarian compassion for the poor in India. In Tara’s absence, David had started to read a book on India written by one Segal. Tara had not heard of this book by Segal and did not know anything about it. She guessed that David might be having trouble with the fifth chapter of the novel he was engrossed in revising and rewriting. While reading Segal’s book David found details which made him shudder with shock and restlessness. David’s concern for Tara and Tara’s for David is mutually reciprocal. This is the sign of the merger of the selves into each other. This in its turn is the sign of the coming together and the merger of the two cultures represented by them.

There were also occasional lines of local gossip in David’s letters. Tara clung to them because they did not tax her conscience. She learned with some malicious pleasure, that Susie had separated from Phil and that Phil had taken an instructor’s job at Montana State; and Susie had a part in “The Tragedy of Motherhood” which Tara assumed was guerrilla theater.”(Mukherjee, 1971:131). David’s letters occasionally informed Tara about the local gossips. The letters reported how Susie Goldberg was separated from Phil, how Phil went to another state for a job and how Susie played a role in what Tara considered guerrilla theater. These reports did not try her moral conscience. She took these letters with malice and pleasure. David was a great believer in democracy. Such gossips and other reports he sent in his letter did not demand Tara sharing David’s faith in democracy. In the early days after their marriage, Tara sometimes argued that democracy was not always the right answer. She insisted on her argument that rituals were necessary. She had found that David was exasperated on account of such an argument. Then she stopped saying such
things. She accepted David’s genuine trust in democracy. Her surrender to David’s opinions is her acceptance of their mutual assimilation! This is not simply an assimilation of two marriage partners but the assimilation of two cultures they represented.

xvi. “David's letter during the monsoon also intensified her depression. He wrote that he had been reading Ved Mehta's journals on India, and that even in New York they brought home to him the dangers that surrounded her everyday.” (Mukherjee, 1971:201). Ved Mehta had written on his experience in his autobiographical works. These readings gave her husband David an idea about the danger that surrounded her every day. Even in New York, David could sense what trials and tribulations Tara was required to face in India. David read these books on India because his wife Tara was in India. Tara's depression was intensified by the letters which David sent to her. This shows their mutual concern. Tara's American husband David Cartwright read so much material on India in her absence that he could visualize what ever happened and was happening and was about to take place in future in the city of Calcutta in India. Garbage, disease and stagnation were to dominate Calcutta and consequently the whole of India. The lower forms of life such as insects and worms were going to survive. Mammoths are extinct but cockroaches survive.

xvii. “Tara told her parents that she was preparing to return to David and the United States.” (Mukherjee, 1971:201). Tara's father tried to protect her. Her parents wanted Tara to prolong her stay in India. Tara, was on other hand was now unwilling to stay on in India and longed to return to David. David and Tara share their views and they have already become partners in marriage. Their marriage indicates the assimilation of the two different forms of culture-the Oriental and the Occidental cultures.

xviii. “He (Pronob) got only two steps away when the mob seized him. A soda bottle burst against Pronob's head. He had no time to scream. Tara had not seen so much blood on a friend before: a fat man bleeds profusely. They
punched him while he was still bleeding. Pronob fell against the side of the taxi and they keep punching.” (Mukherjee, 1971:210). Pronob saw that the mob was kicking, scratching and tossing Joyonto Roy Chowdhary from side to side. Pronab could not tolerate an old man being troubled in this manner. He came out of the car but the mob now seized him. A soda bottle was broken on his head. He started bleeding profusely. Even then the mob continued to punch him. He fell down but the punching did not stop. This inhuman violence in the streets of Calcutta shocked Tara.

xix. “He would never know that his gesture had been useless, that "old popo" had rescued Joyonto before the crowd could kill him.” (Mukherjee, 1971:210). Pronob's generous heroic gesture brought him death but Joyonto was rescued by "Old Popo." Joyonto was saved but Pronob got killed in his heroic action of going to help Joyonto. Against this violent background, Tara has been trapped in a car surrounded by the blood-thirsty crowd. This makes her think of her longing for America, her husband and the Western life style there. This is her assimilation in the Occidental culture.

xx. “And Tara, still locked in a car across the street from the Catelli-Continental, wondered whether she would ever get out of Calcutta, and if she didn't, whether David would ever know that she loved him fiercely.” (Mukherjee, 1971:210). Against the violent lynching and punching by the unruly mob, Tara sat in the car in front of the hotel Catelli-Continental. She did not know if she would ever get out of Calcutta. If she did not go out of Calcutta, she wondered if David would know that Tara loved him intensely and fiercely. This is assimilation, true merger, real mingling of the partners in marriage. Their assimilation is not just a personal affair but an assimilation of two different life styles, two different cultures.

2.6 Summing up

In the cross-cultural relations the contact of two cultures is implied. Tara is a person of Indian origin. She goes to America for her studies. In her transition from
the Eastern culture of India to the Western culture of America, the phase of alienation occurs. There was an experience that Tara had to encounter as discriminating. On such occasions she prayed to Kali for strength. Slowly Tara gets estranged from the native culture. This separation gradually makes her alienated from her origins. Tara's encounters have made her feel to be an outsider and this is the phase of alienation which is an inevitable initial phase of the transformation of an individual in the context of cross-cultural relations and cross-cultural contacts.

The phase of assimilation is the stage in which the individual gets assimilated, absorbed in the culture to which the person has moved from the native culture. In the present context, the assimilation with the Western culture is the target to be achieved. Tara begins to clean the toilet and bathrooms though at her father's house there is a separate female employee to clean just the bathroom. Tara's rational perspective too makes her assimilated with the culture of the West. Tara's concern for David and David's concern for Tara indicate the way both of them have merged as persons and as representatives of their native cultures. The phase of assimilation too is illustrated in the present study. The cross-cultural relations are thus shown through the reflection of the culture of the Orient and the Occident and the inevitable phases of acculturation such as alienation and assimilation.