

Character change essay

[Countries](#), [India](#)



a's character goes under several changes as she tries to identify herself in a world of two different cultures in Bharati Mukherjee's "The Tenant". When you come across Maya's character in the beginning of the story it seems that she does not really know what she wants. Maya, who has become an American citizen, has adapted the western culture in which she is trying to fit in and find herself within while trying to abandon her Indian culture which is a big part of her. She moves from one place to another. Maya engages herself in one night stands and physical relationships and she comes across as someone who does not want a serious relationship. She has much insecurity even though she does not necessarily show it. Maya Sanyal who came to America from Calcutta, India when she was nineteen years old has been trying to find herself a home moving from North Carolina, to New Jersey and now to Cedar Falls, Iowa. She has a Doctorate degree in Comparative Literature. Maya married while she was a student and claims that she had mistaken sex for love, her ex-husband John, abandoned her leaving her with pain and loneliness. Maya filled the loneliness with spontaneous intimate relationships that she now regrets and is ashamed of it and does not disclose it those to others. Maya is independent financially but is a lonely person. She has a few friends whom she can rely on in case of emergencies. Maya always shows others that she is confident, happy and satisfied with what she has. However, in reality, she is ashamed of her past. She is insecure about herself. When Maya starts seeing herself through other people's eyes, she comes in touch with her feelings in reality. She finally accepts it within herself that she is not happy with her life. This is one of the major ways her character changes in the story. Maya immigrated to the United States from

India when she was 19 years old. She left all her family and friends behind her to start a new life in a new world. To fit into the new culture, Maya became an American citizen, married an American man, and made all American friends. Even after her divorce, Maya slept with numerous men but never slept with an Indian man. Maya always thought that she never wanted to marry an Indian man but finally sets a date to meet an Indian co worker Rab Chatterji, who is also from the same cultural background as her in India. When she meets Chatterji, she comes to know that he is married. She visits Chatterji's home and meet's his wife. At the Chatterji's home Maya is touched and at the same time slightly envious. The Chatterji's seem to be living a happy while a diverse life style enjoying both cultures. Her insecurity accompanies her to their residence as well, as she hopes that she is not asked anything about her past personal life. Maya has slept with many men of different ages, married, unmarried and even her students. She has never slept with an Indian man. Maya proclaims that she married an American man because all Indian men are wife beaters. Maya never misses an opportunity to seduce men, not because she's genuinely interested in them, but for personal satisfaction. When Chatterji first approaches Maya, she goes out with him even though she is slightly reluctant. After Chatterji's uncalled behaviour in his car when he starts to masturbate, Maya all of a sudden longs to sleep with an Indian man. She goes to the point where she checks out ads in an Indian newspaper. She comes across Ashok Mehta, someone who intrigues her and even goes to meet him. When she meets him, she finds him so attractive that all of a sudden she feels ugly and unworthy herself thinking that " Her adult life no longer seems miraculously rebellious,

it is grim, it is perverse". (The Tenant, Mukherjee) Maya is so mesmerized by Ashok Mehta that she feels so shameful about her past therefore she does not reveal much about herself to him, but at the same time she is so self-conscious that she feels that he can see it right through her. Maya was so lonely after her husband had left her years ago and always tried to fill the loneliness by keeping sexual relationships with different men which also made her feel wanted. After meeting Ashok Mehta at some point, Maya realizes that she does want to be in serious long term relationship and is seeking love. In conclusion, Maya's character changes throughout the story because Maya starts to visualize herself from other's perception rather than her own. Maya also comes to realize that she wants to live a diverse life style with her Indian and western culture even though she always tried to stay away from her Indian culture. Maya also realizes that she wants to meet one man who she can spend her life with rather than engaging in meaningless physical relationships with different men.