THE THEME OF DISLOCATION IN THE NOVELS OF BHARATI MUKHERJEE

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GUIDE CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the work embodied in the thesis entitled, **"THE THEME OF DISLOCATION IN THE NOVELS OF BHARATI MUKHERJEE"** being submitted by **Mr. Deshmukh Sushil Ashokrao** to the Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Aurangabad for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English is a record of bonafide research work carried out by the candidate under my guidance and supervision, and has fulfilled the requirements for the submission of this thesis to my knowledge, has reached requisite standard.

The results contained in this thesis have not been submitted in part or full, to any other University or institute for the award of any degree or diploma.

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ABSTRACT

The Theme of Dislocation in the Novels of Bharati Mukherjee

Introduction:

The present research is an attempt to study the theme of 'Dislocation' in the selected novels of Bharati Mukherjee. Modern civilization has come a long way from a migratory species to a settled one. In contrast to the previous generations, greater numbers of people in the modern world move more often and travel greater distances than ever before. Because of growing capitalism migrations and dislocations have become prevalent in all over the world. Due to globalization the socio-political system is becoming more complex. As a result, disintegration and integration are simultaneous and interwoven. The integrated system of values, beliefs, and rules of conduct within particular society get adapt. To many, the challenges associated with migration are characteristic of our age of postmodernism, multiculturalism, and aspiring cosmopolitanism. Some are nostalgic for an illusory past when people had more in common (Goldin, Cameron and Balarajan). Some experience alienation in the adopted land, while some able to transform themselves due to migration. The term migration is most often used interchangeably with dislocation in scholarly accounts. Social scientists and humanists agree that migration seems likely to go on growing into the new millennium and may be one of the most important factors in global change. No human society has been able to avoid either migration or dislocation. Dislocation is inevitable (Jain). Quest, pilgrimage, journey of discovery or exploration, merchant adventure, grand tour, globetrotting, or simply travelling – all these are dislocating movement. Terms like exile, diaspora, dislocation, in-betweenness, and old/new ethnicities, double inscription, hybridity are used in various ways to describe people's movement. The need for a more comprehensive general theoretical approach to the study of migration is widely recognized by scholars.

Rationale and Significance of the Study:

Bharati Mukherjee is a writer of the Indian Diaspora who, after fifteen years in Canada, felt an expatriate and became an immigrant in America. One needs a theory to analyze and evaluate the corpus of Bharati Mukherjee's fiction, since she declares herself an immigrant and writes about the experiences of immigrants. This study is an

exhaustive analysis of her six selected novels with focus on finding the theme of dislocation in them. Since no full-length study of Bharati Mukherjee's fiction has so far been made from this standpoint, it is hoped that the present research proposal will be of great interest for the academic community in India and abroad.

Statement of problem:

Based on the above-mentioned information the researcher chosen the topic "***The Theme of Dislocation in the Novels of Bharati Mukherjee"*** for his thesis for doctoral degree at Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Aurangabad.

Explanation of the concept:

Ashcroft Bill in his '*Key Concepts in Post-colonial Studies'* defines dislocation as a term for both the occasion of displacement because of imperial occupation and the experiences associated with the event. Considering dislocation as a historical fact of colonization, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffins define dislocation as a "voluntary or forcible movement of people from their homeland into new regions. The term is made to cover the "willing or unwilling movement from a known to an unknown location and includes experiences ranging from invasion and settlement to slavery and imprisonment (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin).

These phenomena of human migration are best conceptualized under the rubric of diaspora. We can locate the term dislocation in the study of diaspora. Diaspora is often used as a synonym for migration (Page and Mercer). Diaspora suggests a dislocation from the nation-state or geographical location of origin and relocation in one or more nation-states, territories, or countries. Diasporas have emerged as an important component in the process of globalization, which has created a global village connecting people of various regions, socio-economic, political, and cultural backgrounds. Diasporic literature faithfully represents migrated sect's life (Kaur). Alienation, schizophrenia, time lag, estrangement, racism, nostalgia, identity crisis, migration are major themes of diasporic literature. Majority of the diaspora writers write about their own experiences, the problems that they have to face while settling on the new land. The Indian diaspora constitutes an important, and in some respects a unique force in world culture.

When we talk about diaspora and diasporic literary writing, we at once recall what has come to be established as a canon in this area. Some well-known writers of India diaspora, Salman Rushdie, V.S. Naipaul, Amitav Ghosh, Anita Desai, Kiran Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, Vikram Seth, Jhumpa Lahiri, Rohinton Mistry, Kamala Markandaya, Suniti Namjoshi, Uma Parmeswaran, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, and a host of other writers come to our mind. Additionally, and more importantly, there is a surge of female writers writing abroad who are being read all over the world. We can identify three generations of Indian women writers who wrote from locations outside their homelands and celebrates diasporic identities. The first generation includes Santha Rama Rau, Attia Hussain and Kamala Markandaya who migrated during forties and fifties. The next generation of writers includes writers like Bharati Mukherjee, Suniti Namjoshi, Indira Ganesan, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Meena Alexander etc. These writers describe multiple patterns of dislocation motivated by different factors: inter racial marriages or preference for alternative sexualities. Each one of them etches out her own trajectory of dislocation and relocation particularly highlighting problems peculiar to female migration.

Scope and Limitation of the Study:

The range of immigrant experiences is wide, and the critical questions that arise are: How do we trace and approach to these experiences of the migrants. In her critical and creative career spread over four decades, Mukherjee's writings are largely honed by the multiple dislocations of her personal life, which itself has been described as a text in a kind of perennial immigration. Obviously, one needs a theory to analyse and evaluate the corpus of Bharati Mukherjee's fiction, since she declares herself an immigrant and writes about the experiences of immigrants. It can be possible to study Mukherjee's treatment of migration by applying the concept of 'globalization.' The present research study focuses on the struggles, pains and joys associated with the displaced characters, particularly Indians coming to the West, who undergoes the traumas of dislocation with reference to the works of Bharati Mukherjee. It is a critical examination of dislocated subjects portrayed in her novels, some whom have adjusted to the dislocation well, those who have chosen the hybrid spaces for empowerment, others who are dragged out to alien territory against their will

resulting in fractured identity, and some who gleefully inhabit trans-local diasporic space. Although Mukherjee has written eight novels in her career, the researcher has excluded two of her works namely *Holder of the World* and *Leave it to Me*, in order to focus more on the immigrant experiences of the third world people migrating to the West, particularly, to America. Within this context, this research analyses Bharati Mukherjee's six novels, *The Tiger's Daughter* (1972), *Wife* (1975), *Jasmine* (1989) *Desirable Daughters* (2002), *The Tree Bride* (2004) and *Miss New India* (2012) with focus on identifying the theme of dislocation in these works.

Objectives of the Study:

The present research aims to locate the theme of dislocation in Bharati Mukherjee's novels. Accordingly, the present project aims to study the forms of dislocation such as exile, diaspora, and migration. While analyzing her works, the study seeks to highlight the driving forces behind her character's moving abroad. In addition, the study has in view the experiences of the migrant in an alien land. The traumas of displacement like, loneliness, identity crisis, alienation, cultural shock, nostalgia as well as an urge to return to the homeland affected her characters in two ways. While stressing the significance of the present study, the researcher attempts to highlight the author's attempt in mapping out the successful flight of women in the act of dislocation.

Hypothesis:

The present study proposes to study the theme of dislocation in selected novels of Bharati Mukherjee. The study argues that the selected texts delve into the theme of dislocation in a combination of literary, historical, and autobiographical patterning.

Methodology:

- Emphasis has been laid on the understanding of various terms associated with dislocation from the historical and theoretical point of view.
- The study involves a close reading of Bharati Mukherjee's novels to find out the pattern of dislocation experience by the protagonists on

different context. The basic theme has been explored in the context of immigrant assimilation and acculturation in an alien country.

- The author's statements and views have also been studied to explore the personal experiences embedded in the novels selected for the present study. Subsequently, the works of other writers and critics are also referred to justify a particular viewpoint or position with regard to the studied theme.
- Theories emerging through contemporary debates in postcolonial and transnational criticism have been applied for analyzing the selected novels of the author.
- Information gathered in books journals, newspapers, magazines, on radio, television and digital platform has been used to support the findings. All these sources are used to provide additional information about the author as well as in identifying the stated theme.

Structure of the thesis:

The thesis is divided into five parts besides references and appendices

Chapter I:

Introduction

The introductory chapter begins with preliminaries; it defines the term 'dislocation.' It is necessary to understand the history and various forms of migration and diaspora. Globalization gives impetus to migration all over the world. Social scientists underscore that migration will be a continuous phenomenon in the 21st century and will be the driving force to change the socio-economic milieu. The boundaries between the nations are getting blurred by the advancement of science and easy modes of transport. There is nothing new about dislocation as various terms like quest, adventure, exploration, mass exodus, pilgrimage, globetrotting is being used to describe people's movement from one part of the world to another. Dictionary definitions and etymology of the word 'dislocation' has been discussed. Dislocation happens when a person, willingly or forcefully, leaves his homeland and travels to a known or unknown place, this chapter throws light on how colonization expanded throughout the world as a result of dislocation. The roots of modern dislocation have

been probed to support the views that European imperialism as well as industrialization accelerated mass migration from agrarian to suburban areas. Different phases of migration are studied to show the basic pattern of migration like forced, voluntary, wartime migration, economically driven movement of people in the globalized world. There is a need of paying special attention to the typologies of migration to examine various aspects of migration and its impact on social, economic, and individual level.

The term 'dislocation' often found in the study of diaspora. Diaspora is often used as a synonym for migration. The word 'diaspora' emerged from the proto-Indi-European root, spr, which can be found today in such English words as "spore," "sperm," "spread," and "disperse." In all its various uses, diaspora has something to do with scattering and dispersal. For the most part, the term diaspora was employed to talked about the forced mass migration of a community from its native territories, specially the dispersion of Jews. The concepts of 'forced migration,' 'mass scattering,' and 'association' are used to define diaspora. The events of dislocation tagged along diaspora at the hour of travelling across the international borders, i.e. movement from one's own country into another. In his editorial preface to the first issue of *Diaspora,* Khachig Tölölian explains that although the term 'diaspora' has been linked with Jewish, Greek and Armenian migration, it also shares meanings with the experiences of immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest-workers, exile community, overseas as well as ethnic community (Tölölian). *The Encyclopedia of Indian Diaspora* points out that nostalgia for the homeland is the characteristic of diasporic community. Vijay Mishra sees people of diaspora are hopelessly placed between a noesis of real or imaginary displacement and purposeful sense of exile making them feel unhappy with their non-hyphenated identities (Mishra).

Indian people started to move around the world on large scale only in the nineteenth century influenced by the economic requirements of colonization. In the initial stage Indian diaspora was limited to the countries of Africa, Southeast Asia, Fiji, and the Caribbean. But later on, because of boom in the IT sector there has been a steady migration of India's skilled professional to the West. Today, the Indian Diaspora boast of having the numbers over 20 million spread across all over the world. Of late Indian diaspora has become a fertile field of study and research.

Literature of the Indian Diaspora embodies a substantial examination of the writings and subsidiary cultural texts of Indian diaspora. It is also an invaluable addition to

diaspora theory as a whole. Writers of Indian diaspora can be divided into two categories: first generation immigrant writers and second-generation immigrant writers. V. S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Kamala Markandaya, Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Aravind Adiga, Vikram Chandra, Rohinton Mistry, Bharati Mukherjee, Chitra Banerjee, Divakaruni, Anita Desai, Kiran Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri etc. It is evident that there is noteworthy presence of female writers who contributed significantly to Indian diasporic writings.

This chapter also takes the survey of Indian Diasporic Writers writing in English with special reference to Bharati Mukherjee and her literary contribution. Bharati Mukherjee is the critically acclaimed Indian-born American novelist and short story writer whose writing reflects Indian culture and immigrant experience. Apart from being in the mainstream of American writing, she is perhaps the only writer who features in anthologies of Asian American literature, Canadian multicultural literature, Indian women writers in English, postcolonial literature, writers of the Indian diaspora. Her works ranges from very good to dazzling. Her handling of her subjects, of what she calls "the pain and absurdity of art and exile…. exile among the former colonizers; the tolerant incomprehension of hosts, the absolute impossibility of even having a home, *desh*…." is uncompromisingly honest and often deeply painful. Mukherjee was born in 1940 to Indian parents in Ballygunge, into an upper-middle-class Hindu Brahmin family in Calcutta. She was educated in both India and the West: she first went to school in England (where her father's business had taken the family) and then in Switzerland. Returning to India in 1951, she attended the Loretto Convent School, run by Irish nuns, in Calcutta, then Calcutta University, from which she received a B.A. in English in 1959. She received an M.A. in English and ancient Indian culture from Baroda University in 1961. Soon afterward she entered the Writer's Workshop at the University of Iowa, where she first met her Canadian husband, Clark Blaise, and earned an M.F.A. in creative writing. She completed her graduate education by obtaining a Ph.D. in English and comparative literature in 1969. Soon after their marriage in 1963, the couple m oved to Montreal, Canada, and Mukherjee became a Canadian citizen in 1972. She taught at McGill University and became a full professor there in 1978. Disillusioned with Canada's treatment of immigrants, Mukherjee finally moved back to the United States with her family; she had lived and worked at different U.S. institution. In 1988, she obtained American nationality (D'Souza). She was

associated with University of California, Berkeley as a professor emerita in the department of English till her death. She died at the age of 76 in New York on January 28, 2017 survived by her husband, Clark Blaise and son, Barnard Blaise (Grimes). The term dislocation is often mentioned in the study of diaspora. Diaspora talks about "communities of people dislocated from their homelands through migration, immigration, or exile as a consequence of colonial expansion."

Her Literary Works:

Mukherjee's writings include eight novels, two collections of short stories, two non-fiction essays written in collaboration with Clark Blaise and numerous essays on immigration and American culture. She wrote her first two novels while in Canada: *The Tiger's Daughter* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972), and *Wife* (Boston: Houghton, 1975. The decade between 1975 and 1985 saw the publication of only one nonfiction work, *Days and Nights in Calcutta* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977), co-authored with her husband and based upon their year-long stay in India in 1973. In the following years, a burst of creative energy focused on short story writing resulted in two volumes, *Darkness* (New York: Penguin, 1985) and *The Middleman and Other Stories* (New York: Fawcett Crest, 1988). Between 1989 and 2011 Mukherjee produced a novel every four to five years: *Jasmine* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1989), (1989), *The Holder of the World* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1993), *Leave it to Me* (New York: Knopf, 1997), *Desirable Daughters* (New York: Hyperion, 2002), *The Tree Bride* (2004), and her last novel *Miss New India* (2011). In 1987 Mukherjee and Blaise published their co-authored investigative study of the tragic downing of Air India Flight 182, titled *The Sorrow and the Terror: The Haunting Legacy of the Air India Tragedy* (Markham, ON: Viking). Her two other nonfiction books, *Political Culture and Leadership in India: A Study of West Bengal* (New Delhi: Mittal Publications) and *Regionalism in Indian Perspective* (Calcutta: K.P. Bagchi), came out in 1991 and 1992, respectively (Mandal).

So far Bharati Mukherjee has written eight novels and almost all her novels have certain common aspects. The present project is a very modest attempt to analyze, explore and evaluate her selected novels with specific viewpoint to identify theme of dislocation in these novels. The project will focus on her six novels published so far: *The Tiger's Daughter* (1971), *Wife* (1975), *Jasmine* (1989), *Desirable Daughters* (2002), *The Tree Bride* (2004), and *Miss New India* (2011).

Chapter II:

The Theme of Dislocation in *The Tiger's Daughter* and *Wife*

This chapter focuses primarily on Bharati Mukherjee's early novels, *The Tiger's Daughter* (1971) and *Wife* (1975). These two-novel touch upon the pains of displacement and dislocation. In both these novels Mukherjee explore the conditions of being an Indian expatriate and being an American immigrant (Sharma). She defines expatriates as conscious knowers of their fate and immigrants—in particular to Canada—as "lost souls put upon and pathetic." In both these novels the author's voice is omniscient and irony her strategy. However, they are not written to imply, as Jasbir Jain says, "total rejection or a ruthless questioning of tradition or a love-hate relationship with the native heritage" (Jain). Rather, these early novels are "articulating a post-colonial consciousness" shared by many other Indians writer who have undergone the experiences of dislocation and the sense of "being cut off from a supporting world."

Dislocation is the central motif of this novel which is expressed in the recurrent pattern of cultural shock, loss of identity and alienation experienced by the protagonist Tara. She experiences dislocation at the very tender age when she has been sent to America for education. This dislocation resulted into her being at the crossroad of two cultures.

Like *The Tiger's Daughter*, the second novel '*Wife'* (1974) by Bharati Mukherjee deals with the intricacies resulted by dislocation. The novel is an account of the short, terrible marriage of Dimple Basu nee Dasgupta and her psychological alteration caused by moving away from their secure environment. The bare outline of the story reveals that the novel is a tragedy of young girl Dimple who lives in her fantasize world and whose dream world shattered when faced with dislocation. The novel shows a migrant's failure to relocate oneself in the foreign land. Critics such as Siva Ramakrishna opines that in *Wife* Mukherjee exhibits "predicament of an Indian wife finding herself out of depths in a foreign country with an alien milieu" (M).

To summarise, it is found that both in *The Tiger's Daughter* and in *Wife,* Bharati Mukherjee deals with the theme of dislocation. Being rootless and displaced the migrants yearns for *home*, try to go back to the *lost origin* and *imaginary homelands.* They also face cultural dilemma when their cultural practices are mocked at and their alienation intensified in the process of assimilation and

acculturation. Dislocated from their homeland, the protagonists of these two novels go through the problems of identity crisis. Both the protagonists, Tara in *The Tiger's Daughter* and Dimple in *Wife*, are dislocated, geographically as well as in mind and spirit. They share the expatriate characteristic of being ill-adapted to their native land as well as to the adopted one. They have gone through the frustration and struggle of expatriation. They represent the dilemma faced by expatriates.

Chapter III:

Theme of Dislocation in *Jasmine*, and *Desirable Daughters*

In her third novel, *Jasmine*, Bharati Mukherjee continues with the theme of dislocation which was the key theme for her previous two novels namely, *The Tiger's Daughter* and *Wife.* In fact, *Jasmine* can be read as a carry forward story of Tara in *The Tiger's Daughter* and Dimple in *Wife*. The dislocation in *The Tiger's Daughter* becomes apparent with the immigrant's return journey to home only to realize the impossibility of repatriation. Tara could not feel at home when she comes back to India after a long stay in the US. Also, if the heroin in *Wife* fails to cope with the transformation bring about by the experience of dislocation as well as exposure to American culture, the heroin in *Jasmine* reincarnates herself in multiple identities.

In *Jasmine* Bharati Mukherjee occupied herself in delineating the experience of dislocation as a course of evolution for the key character. Published in 1989, *Jasmine* is a story of dislocation and relocation as the title character continually sheds lives to move into other roles, moving further westward while constantly fleeing pieces of her past. In it, Mukherjee rejoices in the idea of assimilation and makes it clear that Jasmine needs to travel to America to make something significant of her life, because in the so called 'Third World' she faced only despair and loss. In *Jasmine*, the story describes a young woman's struggle to fit into the foreign land, adopting the American lifestyle and her path to self-transformation. We first encounter her as Jyoti, a poor Hindu girl, beautiful, smart but dowry-less. She marries a modern young Indian, who eager to transform her into a city woman, decrees that she is to be called Jasmine. Later, as an 'undocumented' '-an illegal alien-she finds her way from Florida to New York to Iowa. There, in the land of blonds, this brown Asian outside takes on an identity suitable to the surroundings: she becomes Jane Ripplemeyer. (Dudar) Jasmine does not transform herself gradually; she reinvents

herself by killing her old selves: “There are no harmless, compassionate ways to make oneself. We murder who we were so we can rebirth ourselves in the images of dreams” (*Jasmine* 25) It is this sense of the existence of alternative realities, of life as a continual emigration from oneself to another, which pervades in *Jasmine*.

Mukherjee keeps Jasmine on the move throughout the novel, always looking for a new identity while trying to remain invisible to immigration services due to her illegal status. Mukherjee uses a complex shifting to describe the dislocation of Jasmine. It is true that Jasmine’s migration to America is a mission for her to fulfil the dreams her husband often talked to her. Jasmine begins a symbolic trip of transformations. Her dislocation leads her to new identities.

In her next novel, *Desirable Daughters*, Bharati Mukherjee recommences again the theme that has been her favourite for most of her career – issues of displacement that exiles and immigrants face, familial loyalty, and the question of belonging. As we are aware of the prevailing situation now, quite a few of the immigrants become rootless and get dislocated while others readjust and relocate themselves in the changed environment (Nagarajan). *Desirable Daughters* is a tale of immigrants and the attitude of three sisters and their ways of negotiating the multiple dislocations in three different perspectives (Chhhabra).

To conclude, both novels, *Jasmine* and *Desirable Daughters* deals with the issues of immigrant life. In *Jasmine*, Mukherjee encapsulates many aspects of the immigrant experience in America, in the process revealing the ways in which newcomers from the Third World are being absorbed by, and at the same time are transforming America. The thematic focus of the novel is on protagonist’s exile, the immigrant experience, and her eventual assimilation in the American culture. Jasmine created a new world consisting of new ideas and values. She tries to establish a new cultural identity by incorporating new desires, skills, and habits. Whereas, in *Desirable Daughters*, the trauma of dislocation compels the narrator to get back to her roots. Tara’s identity development and reconstruction can be read considering intersectionality theory, which according to Patricia Hill Collins, denies that gender is the sole factor for a woman’s oppression. Generally, intersectionality theory examines the ways that race, class, gender and sexuality work to create inequality or “interlocking systems of oppression” for women (Collins and Bilge). The intersection of these factors, according to Collins, is a matrix of domination which intersect and oppress women. Tara is doubly oppressed because of her displacement, first as a

member of an ethnic minority, and second as a woman of colour. The novel was an attempt by the novelist to relearn her family history and Bengal's history, especially the middle-class Bengali freedom fighters resisting the colonial British. Tara's root search, her attempts to unearth the secretes of family history is the outcome of identity crisis she undergoes in America after the eventual migration with her husband.

Chapter IV:

Theme of Dislocation in *The Tree Bride* and *Miss New India*

The novel *The Tree Bride* is a sequel to *Desirable Daughters* and here, also, we find how the protagonist of the novel is engulfed by a sense of dislocation and loss which leads her to 'move home'. The novelist attempts to cast the protagonist into the act of American-style root search. In other words, the novel explores where we come from and how we get there. Bharati Mukherjee's characters are relentless travellers, tossed between the two worlds: between India, their homeland, and America, their chosen place to settle down, between the East and the West, the old and the new, the past and the future. The characters in her earlier novels are mostly immigrants or outsiders, discarding the boundaries of tradition and roots and reinventing themselves anew in the alien land, giving themselves a fresh starts and new beginnings but also experiencing the pain of dislocation and loss. Tradition exert a stronger magnetic pull in Mukherjee's previous novel, *Desirable Daughters*. This novel was written as the first volume in a projected trilogy and, as one might expect, *The Tree Bride* begins where the first book ended. Again, Tara of *Desirable Daughters* is the narrator of this novel. Mukherjee moves forward the story of *Desirable Daughter* where Tara returns to India after a bomb attack crippled her husband Bish. Tara and her son Rabi manage to get out unscathed. This causes her to get back to the history of her family tree. To unearth the history of her ancestors, Tara starts writing the story of her ancestor, her namesake, The Tree Bride, Tara Lata Gangooly. After the tragic death of her bridegroom by the snake bite, the father of Tara Lata, Jay Prakash Gangooly married her to a 'sundari tree' to save her from the ignominy of widowhood. In her previous novel, *Desirable Daughters*, Mukherjee lays out the thematic base of *The Tree Bride*. The novel, *Desirable Daughters* begins with the elaborated vivid account of the Tara Lata's planned marriage with the son of zamindar, the death of the bridegroom by the snake bite when the marriage procession was leading to the wedding pavilion, refusal

of Tara's father to the demand of dowry by groom's father and eventually marrying the bride with a tree. Tara Chatterjee, the narrator, is the great granddaughter of Jay Krishna and as a descendant of Jay Prakash Gangooly, Tara feels a connection to the Tree Bride. After the firebombing of her San Francisco house, she is compelled to search for her roots. In tracing the story of Tara Lata, the narrator discovers an ancestry that informs her future as much as it has shaped her past.

In her last novel *Miss New India*, Mukherjee focuses on the theme of internal migration. The novel, *Miss New India*, shades light on the changes brought about by globalization in India, depicting the massive migration of ambitious and audacious young Indians into Bangalore, India's Silicon Valley. Mukherjee portrays twenty-first-century India in a digital age when American culture and values are imported and transformed by the young Indians who end up staying in the country. The novel is the story of a teenage girl from small-town Bihar in India who decides not to submit to her parent's wish and take control of her life. Mukherjee's territory is alienation, cultural shock, identity crisis and personal transformation brought out through traumas of displacement. In almost all her novels she focuses on the complex experience of Indian immigrants and the clash of Indian and Western culture. The present novel, *Miss New India*, bears a resemblance to a long line of Mukherjee's other works where people migrates from their homeland and goes to a foreign place in search of things new and different. Like *Desirable Daughters* and *The Tree Bride*, Mukherjee here talks about immigration, internal migration, and globalization. The novel is about leaving a town or city that one knows very well and landing in a city, town, cultures, and ethics that you do not know.

To conclude, *Miss New India* happens to be Bharati Mukherjee's last novel and it deviates from the narrative of old India. With the economic prosperity, India has become an increasingly confident world power. Globalization has made its impact on India is evident. It has increased the experience of migrancy (Brooker). Thus, increasingly large parts of the country are becoming connected, as migration from formerly isolated rural areas to cities become widespread (Nagendra). The mobility, displacement and uprooting of people and mixture of cultures associated with globalization pose more questions concerning social, cultural, and ethnic identities (Faurholt Csaba and Bengtsson). In her previous novels like "Jasmine" and "Desirable Daughters," Mukherjee deals with the theme of dislocation, and in *Miss New India*, she takes this theme further by charting out Anjali's journey from a small town in

Bihar to one of the country's (and the world's) fastest growing cities, Bangalore. The novel carries forward Mukherjee's project of detailing the transnational processes of migratory "unhousement" and "rehousement," by translating the story of international migration from India to the West to one of internal or in-country migration within India itself.

Chapter V:

Conclusion

In her novels, Bharati Mukherjee deals with the problems of migrancy and its ensuing ramification on migrant people pertaining to their identity crisis and feeling of estrangement in the adopted country. Her writings expose the problematic situation of the immigrants who are deeply rooted in their country of origin. On the flip side, Mukherjee sheds light on the integration of the immigrant in the foreign culture. The present thesis attempts to analyse the novels of Bharati Mukherjee to investigate theme of dislocation in her novels. The study aims to explain the forces underlying the individual decision to move from one social setting to another one. The protagonists in her novels are women immigrants enduring extensive trials and tribulations, isolation, alienation, and frustration as they try to create their own space in the newfound world. Almost all the female protagonists in Mukherjee's novels engaged in the "nuanced process of *rehousement* after the trauma of forced or voluntary *unhousement* (Mukherjee).

To conclude, it has been found from the above study that Bharati Mukherjee's novels are deeply rooted in the theme of dislocation. Her characters found themselves deracinated from a culture of origin and re-rooted in an alien culture.

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DECLARATION BY THE RESEARCH STUDENT

I, hereby declare that the work included in this thesis entitled **"THE THEME OF DISLOCATION IN THE NOVELS OF BHARATI MUKHERJEE"** is carried out by me under the guidance of Dr. Kamalakar D. Jadhav, Assistant Professor, Department of English, S.M.D. Mohekar Mahavidyalaya, Kalamb, Osmanabad. The work is original and has not been submitted in part or in full to any other University or institute for award of any research degree. The extent of information derived from the existing literature has been indicated in the body of the thesis at appropriate places giving the references.

Place:

Date: **Signature of the Candidate**

Deshmukh Sushil Ashokrao

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SUSHIL ASHOKRAO DESHMUKH

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CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

Modern civilization has come a long way from a migratory species to a settled one. In contrast to the previous generations, greater numbers of people in the modern world move more often and travel greater distances than ever before. Because of growing capitalism migrations and dislocations have become prevalent in all over the world. Globalization is getting more complex. As a result, disintegration and integration are simultaneous and interwoven. Migration shapes a person to feel as a stranger in a foreign culture although he or she is acquainted with that culture. In short, cultural codes adapt. To many, the challenges ushered with migration are quintessential of our age of postmodernism, multiculturalism, and aspiring cosmopolitanism. Some are nostalgic for an illusory past when people had more in common (Goldin, Cameron and Balarajan). The term migration is most often used interchangeably with dislocation in scholarly accounts. Although robust expansion in migration is unwelcome, social scientists and humanists agree that migration seems likely to go on growing into the new millennium and may be one of the most important factors in global change. No human society has been able to avoid either migration or dislocation. “Dislocation is inevitable,” says Jasbir Jain (Jain). In fact, in the opinion of Liselotte Glage, “Dislocation is not a recent experience after all.” Pursual, quest, pilgrimage, journey of discovery or exploration, merchant adventure, grand tour, globetrotting, or simply travelling – all these are dislocating movement. Terms like exile, diaspora, dislocation, in-betweenness, and old/new ethnicities, double inscription, hybridity are used in various ways to describe people’s movement” (Glage). The need for a more comprehensive general theoretical approach to the study of migration is widely recognized by scholars. The present thesis is a thematic study of Bharati Mukherjee’s novels in the perspective of dislocation, migration, exile, and movement of people from their homeland to the alien land. This dislocation occurs due to various reasons like war condition, job seeking, education, marriage etc. The major concern of the present study is with dislocation of an individual and a vacuum in his or her personality, resulting into many kinds of trauma associated with his or her dislocation. One such trauma is the trauma of

self-transformation. The concern is also to find out various socio-economic, political, and family reasons which work as a force to migrate people from one part of the world to another either willingly or forcefully. The concern is also with the loss, development, or recovery of an effective identifying relationship between the self and the space they occupy. It attempts to focus on how valid and active sense of the self has been eroded by dislocation resulting from migration and how this sense has been destroyed by cultural denigration, the conscious and unconscious oppression of the indigenous personality and culture by a supposedly superior racial and cultural model.

The word 'dislocation' has its origin in the late Middle English from Medieval Latin dislocato means the act of displacing or the state of being displaced, disruption. It means movement of people from their native land to the adopted land carrying their beliefs, customs, and traditions. The Collins English Dictionary defines 'dislocation' as a situation in which something such as a system, process, or way of life is greatly disturbed or prevented from continuing as normal. Ashcroft Bill in his 'Key Concepts in Post-colonial studies' defines dislocation as a term for both the occasion of displacement because of imperial occupation and the experiences associated with the event. Considering dislocation as a historical fact of colonization, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin define dislocation as a "voluntary or forcible movement of people from their homeland into new regions." The term is made to cover the "willing or unwilling movement from a known to an unknown location and includes experiences ranging from invasion and settlement to slavery and imprisonment" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin). Dislocation is a post-colonial phenomenon. In another book, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practices in Post-Colonial Literature*, Bill Ashcroft states:

> A major feature of post-colonial literatures is the concern with place and displacement. It is here that the special post-colonial crisis of identity comes into being; the concern with the development or recovery of an effective identifying relationship between self and place….A valid and active sense of self may have been eroded by dislocation, resulting from migration (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin).

Dislocation happens either by choice or out of necessity. Walter Rodney highlights that the roots of modern dislocation traces back to the culmination of history that begins with the emergence of capitalistic forces and its outward expansion from Europe, firstly in search of new trade routes, later for the manpower and raw materials that fed the Industrial Revolution and contemporarily in the development of a new international division of labor (Rodney). Indian Fiction in English has recently become very much popular due to some writers who left India but still write about their home country in a nostalgic way. The work of these expatriate and emigrant writers has its own distinct qualities. It is the literary product of Indian encounter with the people of their host land, their involvement in the country of their destination. To understand it properly one must have an adequate knowledge of the concepts like migration, and diaspora.

The Concept of Migration

Historically, migration is defined as a person's moving away from his or her native place and settling down either within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons. However, contemporary theorist recognizes migration as "moving across a national border, often with purpose of settling for a period of time (Goldin, Cameron and Balarajan). The history of migration begins with the origins of mankind in the Rift Valley in Africa, from where between about 1.5 million and 5000 BC *Homo erectus* and *Homo sapiens* spread initially into Europe and later into other continents. In the ancient world, Greek colonization and Roman expansion depended on migration, and outside Europe significant movements were also associated with the Mesopotamian, Inca, Indus, and Zhou empires. Other significant migrations in early history include that of the Vikings and of the Crusaders to the Holy Land (Koser). While tracing the footprints of ancient migration to the recent trends of migration it appears that the basic patterns of human migration have arguably remained continuous throughout the many millennia of our existence: a portion of young adults move, voluntarily or involuntarily, to nearby or distant destinations, taking up new occupations and often learning new languages and cultures. Out of these migrations, knowledge moves from one community to another, power relations shift, and human energies can be concentrated where new opportunities have come available. On the other hand, migration also results from natural disasters and

from expulsion of those deemed undesirable in their home communities. For these forced migrants, the character of their expulsion, their voyages, and their ultimate resettlement determine their later status.

The modern mapmakers of migration have highlighted a series of major migration movement from eighteenth century to the present one. They studied the process of migration from three perspectives: contemporary, historical, and anthropological. Contemporary migration study accentuated on international labour migration, refugee populations, and urbanization. The historical perspective on migration focuses mainly on human movements from early modern times (Manning).

Forced Migration in the Nineteenth Century.

Forced migrations have been a recurring and perhaps constant phenomena in human history. Forced migration is the expulsion of people from their homeland either by natural forces or by human forces. The main patterns of forced migration have been enslavement, natural disasters, expulsion of groups from localities, and forced resettlement by imperial powers. Of these, enslavement has been most consistently documented. In the late eighteenth century millions of African were sent to America, the Mediterranean, Indian Ocean, and within Africa (Iriye and Saunier).

Migration from Densely Populated Regions.

By the mid-1800s, America was amid the Industrial Revolution. Steel mills, textile factories, and other industrial buildings appeared in cities throughout the country. Immigrants from all over the world, especially from Europe, came to America to find work and a better way of life. One of the largest groups of people to immigrate during this time was the Irish. Between 1845 and 1850, Ireland suffered a terrible agricultural disaster when the potato crop was wiped out by blight. More than one million Irish died during the Potato Famine. About another one million left Ireland to escape starvation. Some went to Great Britain, but many headed for America (Thornton).

Widespread exploration has now showed that this was not really a categorically Caucasian migration but, basically, an era of displacement from the heavily settled regions of the world. Already by the 1840s, emigration from Europe, South Asia, and East Asia

each surpassed exodus from Africa. The Irish famine, East India Company's employment of Indian workers and Qing government's endorsement of migration to Manchuria was some of the causes for migration in that period. The beginning and spreading out of steam-powered transportation and spreading of railroads lifted up the moving overseas level in from all these overpopulated countries up to the second decade of the twentieth century. Although the rate of European migration cut down significantly due the commencement of World War I and the severe worldwide economic depression during the 1930; for South and East Asia, out migration increased at a high rate until 1940. These long-distance migrants mainly headed for thinly populated countries with prospects for agricultural, mineral, or industrial development.

In the 1950 there was another wave of voluntary migration that is called as a third great wave of migration of the twenty-first century. These migratory movements occurred in an environment aggravated by the operational end of sponsored resettling, increasing state-monitored constraints, Cold War crisis, and several regional wars and refugee movements. Nevertheless, the wave of international migration beginning about 2000 was undeniably on the equal footing with that of century ending in 1940. The new migration included some longer-distance travel and multiculturalism than many earlier migrations had done, particularly in Western Europe. It also considered more opportunities for back-and-forth travel, with effects on the countries as well as the immigrants themselves.

War, Genocide, and Refugees.

Forced migration took place due to numerous circumstances. Conflicting with the economically motivated movements, most associated with the term "migration," were the erratic displacements associated with warfare and slaughter. These have compelled many millions from their homes. Once displaced, the refugees have sought to settle according to the logic of other migrants; the difference is that they are usually cut off from their displacement, their voyages, and their ultimate resettlement determines their later status. The two great wars caused widespread migration across Europe. The Nazi regime's execution of millions, especially Jews led to expulsions of millions across regional borders and overseas.

Smaller and more localized wars, however, have produced even larger scale of displacement. In general, decolonization has been at the heart of most those struggles. The 1947 partition of British India brought immense mortality and forced dislocation of many more millions. In addition to decolonization struggles, natural disasters, localized massacres, full scale genocide, and slavery brought substantial forced migration in the late twentieth century. The Economist reported how the recent Syria crisis shrunk the population of the country from 22 million to just 16 million. That means more than 6 million Syrian people have fled their country (Editor).

Urbanization.

Migration, mostly short-distance but also long-distance, brought a nineteenth-century wave of urbanization. With the post-1950 wave of migration, urbanization expanded on a far larger scale. For country after country, a point was reached at which society became dominantly urban. New patterns in urban life developed: the commute and the commuting hour became an important social phenomenon. And, for most people, it was the city that became home and the countryside that was visited, rather than the reverse.

Thus, the main processes of migration were forced migration, voluntary or economic migration, urbanization, and refugee movements from intercommunal violence brought by war or decolonization. The uncontrolled spread of migrants compelled the National governments to seek controls on the migration of persons. Passports have now become a near-universal requirement for international travel. Countries like United States and European Nations set migration quotas, identifying the number of immigrants allowed from each nation or territory. Thus, there developed the categories of “legal” and “illegal” migrants. As the nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America press toward economic development and encounter difficulties from the reallocation of labor and relocation of families, the practical importance of being able to understand, predict, and explain this population movement and the forces of social change unleashed in the process, becomes more obvious. Indeed, migration is recognized now not only as a problem creating phenomenon, but also as a problem-solving social process.

Though attempts were made to study migration by many analysts in the past and present, there has been the tendency to treat migration in separate time periods and separate

regions, thus underemphasizing the great parallels in patterns throughout. Migration study is also hampered by lack of theories of migration. Need of the hour is to study typologies of migration and for a more general, systematic approach to study various aspects of migration. As a global phenomenon, migration cannot be understood in meaningful or practical terms without a comprehensive grasp of the dynamic interplay among demographic, economic, social, psychological, and other relevant factors and dimensions that converge in the process of migration and in the act of migrating (Mangalam and Schwarzweller).

This is also emphasized by N. Jayaram in his book *The Indian Diaspora: Dynamics of Migration*. He argues that migration does not mean the mere physical movement of people. Migrants carry with them a sociocultural baggage which among other things consists of (a) a predefined social identity, (b) a set of religious beliefs and practices, (c) a framework of norms and values governing family and kinship organization, and food habits and (d) language. More important, the migrants are not inevitably irrevocably cut off completely from the land of their breed. They themselves may retain physical and/or mental contact with their homeland, often characterized by what is called 'the myth of return.' Their significant others, their folk back in the homeland as well as sections of the population in their land of adoption, may identify them as originating from and/or belonging to their homeland. This facet of migration has important implications for the formation of ethnicity among a migrant community and its relationship with other ethnic groups (Jayaram).

The Origin and Concept of Diaspora

These phenomena of human migration are best conceptualized under the rubric of diaspora. Dislocation occurred since the dawn of human history. We can locate the term dislocation in the study of diaspora. Diaspora is often used as a synonym for migration. Diaspora suggests a dislocation from the nation-state or geographical location of origin and relocation in one or more nation-states, territories, or countries. According to Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur, diaspora refers literally to "communities of people dislocated from their native homelands through migration, immigration, or exile as a consequence of colonial expansion" (Braziel and Mannur). The concept of diaspora and its geographical

and territorial dimensions have all been subject to various interpretations. Until quite recently, the word diaspora was referred primarily to the dispersal and exile of Jews. In due course, the meaning of the term gradually expanded to cover the involuntary dispersal of other populations, especially Armenians and people of African descent (Kenny). It was in 1966 that George Shepperson in a seminal paper introduced the concept of an "African diaspora", implying that the exodus resulting from transatlantic slavery was parallel to the Jewish expulsion. Subsequently, African diaspora became a part of African studies, where the politics and culture of the Africans outside the continent were seen in some sense to be a part of an integral African experience (Shepperson). Owing to its Greek etymology, scholars have submitted that the term "diaspora" was used to refer to Greeks in the colonies of Asia Minor and the Mediterranean. The Greek noun *diaspora* derives from the verb *diaspeirein*, a compound of "dia" (over or through) and "speirein" (to scatter or sow). The word emerged from the proto-Indi-European root, spr, which can be found today in such English words as "spore," "sperm," "spread," and "disperse." In all its various uses, diaspora has something to do with scattering and dispersal.

Diaspora can perhaps be a naming of the 'other' which has historically referred to displaced communities of people who have been dislocated from their native homeland through the movements of migration, immigration, or exile. In his essay, *Diasporas* James Clifford discusses how diaspora discourses represent experiences of displacement (Clifford, Diasporas). Paul Gilroy observes that though the word 'diaspora' was coined long ago in the classical period but has now been revived as a very useful theoretical tool to explain certain kinds of dislocations taking place all over the world. It absorbs both the historical traces and the modern phenomena of constant movements resulting from both coercive and voluntary factors and aided and abetted by new economic compulsions, political upheavals, aspirations for upward mobility and facilitated by innovations of science and technology (Gilroy). According to Steven Vertovec (1999) "Diaspora" is the term often used today to describe practically any population which is considered 'deterritorialized' or 'transnational' – that is, which has originated in a land other than which it currently resides, and whose social, economic, and political networks cross the borders of the nation-states or indeed span the globe (Vertovee). In his editorial preface to the first issue of *Diaspora,* Khachig Tölölian writes, "Diasporas are the exemplary

communities of the transnational moment and that the term that once described Jewish, Greek, and Armenian dispersion now shares meanings with a larger semantic domain that includes words like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest-worker, exile community, overseas community, ethnic community" (Tölölian). In 1991, William Safran in the first issue of *Diaspora* (1991;1999) defines diasporas as follows: "expatriate minority communities" (1) that are dispersed from an original "center" to at least two "peripheral" places; (2) that maintain a "memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland"; (3) that "believe they are not—and perhaps cannot be fully accepted by their host country"; (4) that see the ancestral home as a place of eventual return, when the time is right; (5) that are committed to the maintenance or restoration of this homeland; and (6) they strive to maintain and perpetuate links with their country of origin (Safran). These, then, are the main features of diaspora: a history of dispersal, myths/memories of the homeland, alienation in the host country, desire for eventual return, ongoing support of the homeland, and a collectively identity importantly defined by this relationship.

Homi Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* (1994) positions diasporic epistemology in the realm of the cross-cultural. He calls it a third space, a hybrid location (Bhabha). Robin Cohen in *Global Diasporas* (1997) agrees with Safran's definition and advances it further adding supplementary features to it. He argues that a diaspora should have a few of the following nine common features to be considered a diaspora:

1. emigration from an original homeland, often forcibly and under traumatic conditions, to at least two foreign destinations;
2. expansion from the homeland for trade, work, or colonial ambitions;
3. a preservation of myth and memory regarding the homeland that attributes to specific aspects of identity formation in the diaspora;
4. an idealization of an actual or supposed ancestral home and commitment to its maintenance and prosperity;
5. development of a return movement
6. an ethnic group consciousness and a sense of distinctiveness;
7. a troubled relation with the host country and a certain sense of lack of acceptance;
8. a sense of solidarity with co-ethnic members in different settlements;

9. the potential for offering a distinctive but enriching life in the host society, if the latter is inclined to incorporate such diversities (Cohen).

The Encyclopedia of Indian Diaspora describes diasporas as a relatively exclusively minority communities all over the world whose identities are grounded in national or transnational networks and nostalgia for their (imaginary) homelands (Lal, Reeves and Rai). Vijay Mishra describes people of diaspora as unhappy because they who do not feel comfortable with their non-hyphenated identities as indicated on their passport. In his opinion these people are "precariously lodged within an episteme of real or imagined displacement and self-imposed sense of exile" (Mishra). Moreover, in the post liberalization world, diasporas are celebrated by all the countries which contrast to their being ridiculed in the early modernism. Though subject to varied emphases and disciplinary investments, the contemporary concept of diaspora involves an understanding of the shifting relations between homelands and host nations from the perspective both of those who have moved, whether voluntarily or not, and of the recipient societies in which they find themselves (Quayson and Daswani). Transnational, multicultural, and multiethnic immigrant and expatriate experiences and their nervous relationship within the national framework of the host country, coupled with varying degrees of attachment and attraction to the homeland-- all this characterizes the ambiguity and hybridity of modern-day diasporas. The word has been used in diverse contexts, applied to analyze different models of sociopolitical transactions, marked by nervous and unsure boundaries, characterized by dynamics of forced displacement and volitional placements, and manifested in degrees of uneasiness in confrontations of the self and the other in a complex globalized world.

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries have witnessed events that have resulted in several millions of expatriate peoples whose exodus from home was marked by varying degrees of violence and hope. After the 1970s, almost all people living away from their ancestral homeland came to be considered part of a diaspora. Academia was flooded with suggestions of and discussions on Chinese diaspora, South Asian diaspora, Irish diaspora, and Armenian diaspora. To the major ones listed above, scholars and politicians alike talked about a plethora of other diasporas, including the Bosnian diaspora, the Colombian diaspora, the Afghan diaspora, the diaspora of Acadians expelled from Nova Scotia, the

German diaspora in various parts of the world including the United States, the Indochinese diaspora, the Italian diaspora, the Lithuanian diaspora—the list is virtually inexhaustible. Many of today's diasporic groups have a long history of travel away from original homelands.

Coupled with this long list of common features is the interesting phenomenon of rediasporization. Starting from multiple trajectories of Jewish people in the past, to the mounting emigration of Caribbean peoples to Canada, the United States, and Europe since the middle of the twenty- first century and a steady departure of European South Africans to Australia and the United States, especially after the end of apartheid, distinct trends of rediasporization add to the complexity of diasporic diversities. Search of an all-containing definition and even formulation of a list of features is rendered problematic by these secondary and tertiary diasporizations. This leads one to suggest, as James Clifford has done, that it is not always necessary to cast diasporic definitions on teleology of origin and return movement. A shared history of displacement, resistance, accommodation, and adaption through discoveries and emphasis on lateral connections can provide an alternative definitional paradigm.

What, then, is not a diaspora; what constitutes its borders? One could argue that autochthonous and indigenous groups of people still tied to their claimed original homeland do not constitute a diaspora. The problem with such an argument is that what is meant by "indigenous" is not always free from ambiguities. This is because there is no clarity with the terms of definitions of "indigenousness." One may ask after James Clifford, "precisely how long (does) it take to become indigenous?" Indeed, claims of indigenous are relational; even if people have a deep tie to a land that goes back generations, at some point in the past their ancestors were immigrants themselves. Consider the case of Afro-Jamaicans in New York. The migrants in question here are broadly seen as a part of the "African diaspora" and secondarily as part of the "Afro-Caribbean diaspora". In New York, they exist in an ambiguous relationship with a host nation—that is, the United States, where the hosts are unequivocally Euro-Americans. The hosts in question over the past few centuries have developed a legitimate claim of being a host within a certain geographical territory. They in turn replaced an earlier group—the Amerindians, who claim to be autochthonous. But

the Amerindians, it has been demonstrated, themselves migrated into the continent from elsewhere.

Thus, people everywhere can position themselves in a relational scale from autochthonous to recent migrants. The difference is not in any intrinsic unequivocal claim of sovereignty but rather that of legitimacy passed on through passage of time. Hence, the question "how long does it take to become indigenous?" is of especial relevance to diasporic studies. Boundaries of diasporas are as fluid and relative as are its defining features.

It is also problematic to define diasporas as minority "ethnic" phenomena situated in an alien host nation. Consider the case of South Asians in Mauritius. Roughly half a million Indian indentured laborers immigrated to Mauritius in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, mostly under forcible conditions. The Indians found themselves in a colony dominated by French settlers, ruled by British administrators, and peopled by African former slaves. Today, both Indo-Mauritians ad Indian elsewhere, including those in India, consider Indo-Mauritians to be a part of the South Asian diaspora. And yet South Asians in Mauritius today constitute more than 60 percent of the population and can eminently serve as the "host" to any new immigrant. In *Introduction to Diasporas: Concepts, Intersections, Identities* Kim Knott and Sean McLoughlin have referred to some scholar's doubts about the usefulness of the term 'diaspora' as it seems to have become an exhausted concept emptied of meaning by overuse and lack of precise and agreed definition. Lack of precision and indiscriminate use can in fact render any term 'useless' for critical purposes, as it seems to have happened in the case of 'diaspora'. It has been applied for instance to short term stays outside the nation state or to dislocations (such as inter-ethnic strife or communal riots) inside the nation state, besides being applied to those who had moved to host nations long ago and have settled down there for generations (Knott and McLoughlin). In the present study the researcher has strictly applied the term in the context of movements/ dislocations.

Diasporic Dislocation

It is obvious from the above understanding of the term diaspora that the experiences of dislocation are associated with diaspora at the very moment of crossing the territorial

borders, i.e. movement from one's own country into another. But as diaspora is becoming a global phenomenon the term is being approached from an elsewhere that shaped them in fundamental ways. Since the diasporic feeling of being "out of place" is experienced by increasingly oppressed and displaced people worldwide, they shared a common sense of plight and nostalgia for their homeland. Similarly, dislocation as an integral part of diasporic experience presumably studied as an urge to (re)produce and (re)create the loss but, at the same time, to reinstate the past in the present and in the future. In the opinion of Clifford, people of diaspora endure imagined uncertainty: "the experiences of separation and entanglement, of living here and remembering/desiring another place" (Clifford).

Indian Diaspora.

Diasporas have emerged as an important component in the process of globalization, which has created a global village connecting people of various regions, socio-economic, political, and cultural backgrounds. Today, the Indian diaspora constitutes an important, and in some respects a unique force in world culture. It has also acquired a multiplicity: indentured workers, the early migrants in search of trade, adventure or prosperity, the political exiles, the professionals. The 1970s witnessed the emigration of engineering and medical graduates, later came the IT professionals clustering Silicon Valley and now one can see the effects of globalization. (Jain) However, Indian people have migrated since the dawn of history. There is evidence of Indian migration to Africa and central and southeast Asia as traders, Brahmin priests, Buddhist monks and adventures. Long before European people started migrating to other parts of the world for business purposes, Indian family firms scattered to many parts of world for commercial activities. Scott Levi calls them as an early modern "India Merchant Diaspora" where people from Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujrat, and other major cities of India travelled and settled down in Central Asia, the Caucasus and Russia (Levi). During the colonial period, many Indians made short trips to England and European countries (Gautam). People of Indian origin began to migrate overseas in significant numbers only in the 19th century driven by the economic compulsions generated by colonialism (India). Indians were initially brought in as indentured workers to develop plantation economies, construct railway networks and to serve as soldiers in the imperial military establishments in far-flung parts of the empire in the nineteenth century. More than

two million Indians fought on behalf of the empire in several wars, including the Boer War and the two World Wars, and some remained behind to claim the land on which they had fought as their own (Saumitra). This was the first phase of large-scale migration. Then in the second half of twentieth century, they migrated to the countries like US and UK as professionals leading to the coming of the term the "brain drain." Today there are over 20 million people of Indian origin spread over hundred and thirty-eight countries (Pal and Tapas). Although there are regional variations in their adaptations, in many ways, they display a common 'Indian identity.' They may want their children to prosper in their adopted countries, but at the same time they may prefer them to adopt Indian family values, marry other Indians, and share their common cultures. In other words, many Indians living overseas tend to reproduce their Indian culture, values, language, and religion as much as possible (Oonk). These migrant people also share diasporic forms of longing, memory, and (dis)identification. And, as James Clifford explains, dispersed peoples, once separated from homelands by vast oceans and political barriers, increasingly find themselves in border relations with the old country thanks to a to-and-fro made possible by modern technologies of transport, communication, and labor migration. Airplanes, telephones, internet, electronic mass-media reduces distances and facilitate two-way traffic, legal and illegal, between the world's places (Clifford). The Indian Diaspora, today, is known as International phenomena because of its presence in more than 100 countries globally. In the last several years in the United States and Britain, there has been explosion of interest in the Indian diaspora and in things Indian. While we may observe this trend in cinema, fashion, and music, Indianness is particularly apparent in the field of literature. Many Indian authors who have lived in Britain and the United States have become household names since at least the early 1980s novels by Indian, both immigrants in the first world and those in the subcontinent, have won a range of international prizes. Certainly, the growing visibility of Indian literary work has emphasis and put energy in the individual contexts of the United States, Britain, Canada, or the Caribbean, but the simultaneity of the national developments, the gestures to elsewhere (India and other places) in the writings themselves, and the intertextuality among the authorship signals a diasporic type of production (Shukla). The sons and daughters of Mother India spread in 110 countries all over the world make a strong force today. The diasporic Indian is like the banyan tree, the

traditional symbol of the Indian way of life, he spreads out his roots in several soils, drawing nourishment from one when the rest dry up. Far from being homeless, he has several homes, and that is the only way he has increasingly come to feel at home in the world (Parekh). Indian Diaspora has become a pertinent field of study and research in the recent years.

Indian Diasporic Writers

Diasporas have entered into the picture as a distinct factor amidst globalization where the world has become a global village bringing together people of various regions, socio-economic, political, and cultural backgrounds. The Indian diaspora constitutes an important place in the world today. Indian diaspora means population outside India, particularly of those who have migrated to foreign lands and in course of time renounced their Indian citizenship. The sense of urgent longing for the motherland is the dominating feeling of the worldwide Indian diaspora. Their yearning intensifies when their travelling become more hazardous and unusual because their feel that their returning might never occur. The feeling of inadequacy in living in a remote place continuous to trouble their imagination in spite of easy access of communication and advance mode of travelling. Out of their bonding with to the homeland's traditions, religions and languages, coupled with their nostalgia give birth to diaspora literature (Sreenivasan). The Indian diaspora has two conspicuous period. The early generation of Indian writers who left India between 1875 and 1947 preferred to be called Expatriate writers, whereas the new generation who left the country after independence and now live outside India have a new name- Diaspora writers. When we talk about diaspora and diasporic literary writing, we at once recall what has come to be established as a canon in this area. A major predominance in this respect has been that of the writers like Salman Rushdie and V.S. Naipaul, who are recognized as citizens-a-global manifestation of the exile condition. Along with them writers like Anita Desai, Ashish Gupta, Rohinton Mistry, Kamala Markandaya, Bharati Mukherjee, Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh, Jhumpa Lahiri, Hari Kunzru, Suniti Namjoshi, Uma Parmeswaran, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, and a host of other writers come to our mind who have established themselves as fine writers in the tradition of India Diasporic writing.

In the modern era of twentieth century marks yet another important shift in diaspora movements and this shift is strongly monitored by the process of information technology revolution and the process of globalization as well. Since these revolutions have transformed the world we live in, bringing in new promises, rewards, hazards, dislocations, and a sense of transnationality. Along with it there is an increasing number of female writers who are being read and received an overwhelming response from all over the world. It is against this background; we can identify three generations of Indian women writers who wrote from locations outside their homelands and celebrates diasporic identities. The first generation includes Santha Rama Rau, Attia Hussain and Kamala Markandaya who migrated during forties and fifties. The next generation of writers includes writers like Bharati Mukherjee, Suniti Namjoshi, Indira Ganesan, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Meena Alexander etc. These writers describe multiple patterns of dislocation motivated by different factors: inter racial marriages or preference for alternative sexualities. Each one of them etches out her own trajectory of dislocation and relocation particularly highlighting problems peculiar to female migration (Ravikumar). Subsequently, some writers use an assimilation approach to the cultures of the West to such a degree that they find Indian culture monolithically oppressive, while others continue to romanticize Indianness, yet still others exoticize, eroticize and ethnicize the east for western consumption (Singh and Rajendra Chetty).

Life and Literary Works of Bharati Mukherjee

Bharati Mukherjee is the critically acclaimed Indian-born American novelist and short story writer whose writing reflects Indian culture and immigrant experience. Apart from being in the mainstream of American writing, she is perhaps the only writer who features in anthologies of Asian American literature, Canadian multicultural literature, Indian women writers in English, postcolonial literature, writers of the Indian diaspora. Her works ranges from very good to dazzling. Her handling of her subjects, of what she calls "the pain and absurdity of art and exile…. exile among the former colonizers; the tolerant incomprehension of hosts, the absolute impossibility of even having a home, *desh*…." is uncompromisingly honest and often deeply painful. Mukherjee was born in 1940 to Indian parents in Ballygunge, into an upper-middle-class Hindu Brahmin family in Calcutta. Due

to their privileged circumstances her family remained immune to the political upheaval of independence and trauma of partition that engulfed the country in the 1940's. She is among the three daughters (one elder, one younger) who "were born both too late and not late enough to be real Indian. Her father, Sudhir Lal Mukherjee was a well-known chemist who did his higher education from Germany and England. Although her mother, Bina Mukherjee was particularly educated but she was keen to give the best education to her daughters. Being Bengali Brahmins, the Mukherjees belonged to the highest caste among Bengali Hindus. Sudhir Mukherjee's ancestral home was in Faridapur and his wife's in Dhaka, two districts of Bengal that is now part of Bangladesh. Bharati Mukherjee's affinity with Bengal is seen in many of her interviews where she says: "I thought of myself as a Bengali rather than as an Indian. You were who you were because of the language and dialect you spoke, the location of the village of your male ancestors, the family and religion you were born into. I was a Bengali and proud of it" (Chen and Goudie). When the Mukherjees moved to Calcutta after independence, Bharati Mukherjee used to live with forty to fifty extended family members in a palatial house on Rash Bihari Road. But very soon her father relocated the family to London where he pursued his research. She was educated in both India and the West: she first went to school in England and then in Switzerland. Returning to India in 1951, she attended the Loretto House, a British convent school run by Irish nuns. While talking about her childhood in Calcutta, Mukherjee tells, "My very early childhood was lived in British-ruled Calcutta. I have only one "colonial" memory, but it is a memory that over the years has become important to me. I was born into an upper-middle-class Bengali family in a city where to be Bengali was to be part of the mainstream (Mukherjee). But she also admits that her family played an important role in shaping her character. Hers was an extremely close-knit family. Mukherjee's father was a visionary and a self-made man. He was keen to isolate and protect his three daughters from the noise and labour agitation that plagued the city. So, when he returned to Calcutta in 1951, he settled his family in a mansion contained within the factory compound that has lakes, swimming pools, armed guards, and a retinue of servants. But the years spent in the West and the life the family lived within the walled compound meant that the Mukherjee girls feel "inviolable and inaccessible" making them increasingly alienated from the middle-class Calcutta of their childhood (Alam). To this end, Mukherjee herself complied

with the idiosyncrasy of her caste and become more partial to avoid the misery of the society around her rather than question or reflect upon it. Also, the parents of Bharati Mukherjee had "fostered in their daughters qualities that would led Bharati to break away from family and country" (Alam). However, her parents were liberal minded with their daughters and provided them the best education. Bharati Mukherjee remembers her father respectfully and admits that he influenced her early years very much. He was, she says:

> A self-made man. From a one room laboratory, he built a very successful pharmaceutical firm. He was very much the benevolent patriarch. He was the protector and lavish provider. At the same time, he was a visionary and a great risk taker…. He wanted the best for his daughters. And to him, the "best" meant intellectually fulfilling lives (Hancock).

Her mother, too, was equally keen to give her daughters top-class English education so that they "would not end up as chattel to a traditional Bengali Husband" (Desai and Barnstone). In her interviews given to Geoff Hancock, Bharati Mukherjee talks about her mother as "One of those exceptional Third World women who "burned" all her life for an education, which was denied to well-brought-up women of her generation" (Hancock). Her mother took all the pains so that her daughters "never suffered the same wants." In *Days and Nights in Calcutta*, Mukherjee describes her mother as "a powerful storyteller" who played vital role in grooming her as a writer (Blaise and Mukherjee). It was because of her mother's support and encouraging approval from her father that she received her B.A. with honours in English from the University of Calcutta in 1959. From Calcutta she moved to Baroda with her father, where she completed her M.A. in English and ancient Indian culture. Mukherjee was an avid reader from her childhood and the Bengali translations of great Russian and European novelists like Chekhov, Babel, Tolstoy, and Dostoyevsky stimulated her imagination from an early age which ultimately led her to the realm of writing. Speaking about her fascination for writing, Mukherjee says:

> I always knew I was going to be a writer. I had wanted to write since I was a child. The world of fiction seemed more real to me than the world around

> me. I started my first novel when I was about nine or ten. It came to seventy or eighty pages (Mukherjee).

She also wrote early tales Napoleon in exile and Roman soldiers in the school magazine of Loreto Convent School and which earned her the encouragement by the school principal for having, "a gift of pen." Her father noticed her love for writing and arranged for her to attend the University of Iowa's Writer's Workshop in 1961. Thus, he was instrumental in shaping his daughter's career as a writer, not only by imbuing her with his belief but also by taking the initiative in sending her off to Iowa. It was there that Mukherjee met Clark Blaise, an American writer of Canadian origin, whom she married on September 13, 1963 (Holzer). The marriage, in fact, happened without any approval from her parents because while she was studying at Iowa, her father had planned arranged marriage for her and informed her about his finding a perfect groom for her, "a nuclear physicist, Bengali, right caste, right background, right education" (Steinberg). Bharati Mukherjee did receive her MFA in creative writing from Iowa in 1963 but in other respects things did not go according to the blueprint. She assumed that fellow student Clark Blaise who was at first deterred from asking her out because of rumours that she was a princess whose bodyguards would break the knees of potential suitors. But after a short courtship and just as her parents were arranging an appropriate betrothal to a nuclear scientist of proper caste and class she and Blaise were married. Bharati Mukherjee believed that had she married the man of her father's choice she would have been a very different kind of person and a different kind of writer. Also, she would have not to worry about her identity which occupies a major part in most of her literary work i.e. the process of shedding shared identity that she was given and searching for an individual that is still evolving. But destiny had other plans for her, and after the whirlwind courtship that lasted about two weeks Mukherjee married Clarke Blaise, fellow student at Iowa Writer's Workshop. Their wedding took place in a lawyer's office during lunch break that lasted for five minutes. She had sent a cable to her father saying, "By the time you get this, Dad, I'll already be married" (Elam). Mukherjee describes how her marriage to Blaise changed her into a transient with incongruous duties to two polar opposites cultures: "That act cut me off forever from the rules and ways of

upper-middle class life in Bengal, and hurled me into a New World life of scary improvisations and heady explorations" (Mukherjee).

After the marriage Mukherjee lived in Canada for ten years along with her husband Clarke Blaise. Blaise was born in Fargo, North Dakota in 1940 to Canadian parents and grew up in Gainesville, Florid. Their marriage, as described by Mukherjee, was "an intensely literary marriage" (Carb). Both were professors of English at two different universities in Canada. While Bharati used to teach at McGill University, Clarke taught creative writing at Sir George Williams University, Montreal. Talking about how she shared her husband's interest, Bharati Mukherjee says, "I got married and had my first child when I was 23- I became absorbed in my husband Clark's kinds of interests. I knew more about American sports because he was a sports fan, I knew about Trivial Pursuit simply because I was young, dutiful wife" (Gabriel, Routes of Identity: In Conversation with Bharati Mukherjee). They have two sons, Bart Anand, and Bernard Sudhir. Both their sons have been named by mixing English and Bengali names. In her interviews Mukherjee has described how Blaise's knowledge about novels and experience in teaching and writing fiction have helped her as a writer. Clark was "a very good audience for my work. He reads it and comments on it just as he did when we were students in the Writer's Workshop at the University of Iowa, where we first met" (Carb). As a writer Mukherjee found it advantageous for having Clark as her spouse because both could read each other's work. Moreover, they were not competitors as they wrote different kinds of fiction with different readership. Their marriage was a fifty-four-year fiction workshop. Although she married to a foreigner, Mukherjee understood very well that a husband and wife relationship must be based on mutual understanding and knowing each other well. Both Clarke and Bharati were supportive and respectful of each other. Also, the new environment in Canada enhanced her individualism to a great extent. She noticed the discrimination against the women in Canada where it was rather difficult for women to get equal opportunity of jobs and promotions in comparison to men. Overall, their days at Montreal were the happiest days as called by Clarke Blaise (Staff). They held honourable scholarly jobs and soon became prominent figures in Canada's literary arena, enjoying the friendships of Margaret Atwood, Alice Munro, Hugh Hood and Michael Ondaatje. In 1977 the couple had to move to Toronto, where Clarke had been offered a position at York University. In the opinion

of Clarke Blaise, "I live to regret it because Toronto was not Montreal" (Staff). Comparing Toronto with London as said by Joseph Conrad in *Heart of Darkness,* 'This too is one of the dark places of the Earth,' Clark says, "Toronto has been a dark place. Vancouver has been a dark place" (Barber). Their dislike for the city went on to become public when in her 1981 essay, "An Invisible Woman," Bharati Mukherjee slammed the racism she faced in the city as an Indo-Canadian woman. Although a professor at McGill University and a naturalized Canadian citizen, she was always seen as the "ethnic" other, "frequently taken for a prostitute or shoplifter." She wrote this essay as her farewell to Canada where she reinforces herself:

> It creates double-vision when self-perception is so utterly at odds with social standing we are split from our most confident self-assumptions. We must be blind, stupid or egomaniacal to maintain self-respect or dignity when society consistently undervalues our contribution (Mukherjee).

Sahar Jamshidian explains how in her short story "The Management of Grief," Bharati Mukherjee elaborates on her rootlessness and despair in Canada on account of her paradoxical position of being too visible and too invisible. She was invisible as a writer, but her colour made her too visible as a non-white immigrant in Canada (Jamshidian and Pirnajmuddin). To echo this view, Sharmani Gabriel in her obituary to Mukherjee highlights how this "double trope of (in)visibility became an important motif in her work, influencing the title of her first collection of stories, *Darkness*" (Gabriel). Commenting on her decision to leave Canada, Mukherjee says, "It was because I hadn't yet accepted - and still haven't accepted – social demotion because of immigration. For me, the demotion was so steep. And I had the guts to say, 'I think this is wrong and I'm going to say it as loudly as I can.'" (Barber). She blamed the official rhetoric of Canada that proudly resists cultural fusion. Canada, in her own words, "is a New World country with Old World concepts of a fixed, exclusivist national identity" (Mukherjee). Thus, their 14 year stay in Canada ended on a bad note and the couple relocated themselves along with their two sons to United States. Those years of race-related discrimination in Canada made her more involved in political matters which eventually strengthen her love of the ideals rooted in the American

Bill of Rights. Although Clark and Bharati admits that situation in Canada is not the same now as the country is more tolerant towards culture and supports equality but the wounds remain. They had surrender stability by leaving Toronto and soon found their life in the States was constantly on the move as both had rarely lived together due to jobs in separate cities. Despite this both had a very happy and fruitful relationship over the years. During her last few years Mukherjee battled with the illness of rheumatoid arthritis. She died on 28 January 2017 at New York University Hospital. Informing her death to the San Francisco Chronicle Clark Blaise said, "She begged for death. She was really not in pain as such, but she realized there was no turning around" (McMurtrie).

When we take a glance at Mukherjee's childhood, education at home and abroad and her marriage to Clark Blaise, we find that as a writer her personal history builds in a series of dislocations and expatriations. But her transition from expatriate to immigrant, from "detached onlooker to committed immigrant" was not easy one. Throughout her life she had to move from place to place, nation to nation, and even continent to continent, for one reason or the other. Obviously, her work reflected the phenomenon of migration, particularly the migration of South Asians to the States. Having gone through the pain of dislocation, her work focused on the lives of uprooted individuals, the misery of expatriation, and the imminent exasperation encountered by immigrants in their attempt to adjust with loneliness and often alien culture, but also about the exuberance of immigration, the feeling of new beginning, and the hopes of a better life that are embodied in the immigrant experience. In the early 1980s she was getting reviews for her themes focusing on women's issues, on immigration and the globalization, on the various cultural models for the assimilation of immigrants into the host countries, on displacements and creativity, displacement and nationalism and violence. Mukherjee herself acknowledges her treatment of themes in relation to the country she had adopted. She proclaims in *American Dreamer*: "I am an American," she wrote, "not an Asian-American. My rejection of hyphenation has been called race treachery, but it is really a demand that America deliver the promises of its dreams to all citizens equally" (Mukherjee). Although she is a part of diaspora, she breaks away from politically motivated agenda and shies away from highlighting racial stereotypes in the diasporic process, ignoring victimization, isolation and the obsessive

recreation of the homeland as the main strategies for survival in the new world (Gonzalez). For her arrival at a new place is not simply a loss, the loss of communal memory and the erosion of the original culture, but it is also a gain. This shift in her attitude toward exile, expatriation, and immigration has modulated over the years. In the very beginning of her career she felt like an exile, or at best an expatriate. Then she called herself "an immigrant, living in a continent of immigrants" (Hancock). She was interested in documenting the "fog of South Asians that has crept into America" and she considered herself as its chronicler- a "twenty first century Fitzgerald to make it alive" (Mukherjee).

In her works Mukherjee succeeds in capturing the feeling of being here and there. From her first novel, *The Tiger's Daughters*, to her last book, *Miss New India*, she confronts and describes the world as an open-ended space which is ever-changing. Her first novel *The Tiger's Daughters* was published on 5 November 1971. The novel focus on the discovery of the heroine, Tara Banerjee Cartwright, that her homeland and people is not same when she left it years before. To her dismay it is now in a state of terminal decline, making her to see her own "foreignness of spirit," which ultimately leads her to realise that her future lay not in it but in expatriation. In "American Dreamer" Mukherjee talks about this novel:

> My first novel, *The Tiger's Daughters*, embodies the loneliness I felt but could not acknowledge, even to myself, as I negotiated no man's land between the country of my past and the continent of my present. Shaped by memory, textured with nostalgia for a class and culture I had abandoned, this novel quite naturally became an expression of the expatriate consciousness (Mukherjee).

By and large, Bharati Mukherjee's novel, *The Tiger's Daughter* deals with the cultural identity of an expatriate who experiences dislocation due to her migration to the West and still does not feel comfortable when returns to her native land in the East. When the novel was published, it was welcomed with generous praise by the readers and critics. The Kirkus Reviews praised the author for her realistic portrayal of Calcutta:

> Miss Mukherjee's achievement, and it is a very real one, is to catch the air of edged excitation which prevails—sometimes with humour (there's a marvellous Miss Americanized beauty contest up at a hill station), sometimes with a tragic shaft (the old tea planter in his blazer and sockless oxfords, trapped by his wealth and his failing mind) while cockroaches and dogs and cows scuttle through the back alleys of the city, far from the gracious protection of the Bengal Tiger's house on Camac Street (Review).

Frank Birbalsingh observes that in *The Tiger's Daughter*, Mukherjee matches with the fiction of Nayantara Sahgal, who describes Western-educated, affluent Indian society along with Indian political affairs. Similarly, in *The Tiger's Daughter*, Mukherjee weaves cultural observations and political concerns into a work of fiction with a life of its own and with insights, concerns, and revelations of its own (Birbalsingh). It is not only Indian but British writers like Jane Austen and E. M. Forster made a profound influence on the early writings of Bharati Mukherjee. For example, Tara from *The Tiger's Daughter* is moulded on the heroines of Jane Austen. The descriptive style of E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India* echoes in the opening of Mukherjee's novel:

> The Catelli-Continental Hotel on Chowringhee Avenue, Calcutta, is the navel of the universe. Gray and imposing, with many bay windows and fake turrets, the hotel occupies half a block, then spills untidily into an intersection…There is of course, no escape from Calcutta (*The Tiger's Daughter* 3-4).

Speaking to Geoff Hancock in an interview, Mukherjee admits that her first novel has a "British feel to it" (Hancock). It is quite natural on Mukherjee's part to both mimic and subvert the authors whose works she read mostly as a child. She completed *The Tiger's Daughter* while she was working in the McGill University and there are parallels between the life of protagonist Tara and the author. The central theme revolves around the tragic tale of heroine, Tara Banerjee Cartwright, who has to leave a sheltered home hedged by

class privilege and wealth, come back to it grown to young womanhood—to come home after breaking all the social taboos by marrying a foreigner---and see whether she can find her place at home again (Sharma). In short, *The Tiger's Daughter*, is crafted to encapsulate the anguish of someone coming back years after to her homeland: to such a person, home will never be same again, and although it is unpleasant, life in exile will be selected eventually over the homeland. The novelist does not provide any clarity about Tara's future course of action as the novel ends with Tara stuck fast in a car that is flanked by rioters, wondering "whether she would get out of Calcutta, and if she didn't, whether David would ever know that she loved him fiercely" (*The Tiger's Daughter* 210).

In 1973, Mukherjee along with her husband Clark Blaise, and two children paid a visit to India and spend a year in Calcutta (now Kolkata) with Mukherjee's family. They chronicled their experiences of that one year in the book *Days and Nights in Calcutta*. Published in 1977, *Days and Nights in Calcutta* is a memoir jointly written by Mukherjee and Clarke. It is divided into two parts: in the first part Blaise attempts to learn the traditions and the growing political conflicts happening at that time in Calcutta. In the second part, Bharati Mukherjee explores the cultural conflict hinted at her life as privileged Indian woman who revisits her homeland after becoming a Canadian citizen. Told from the viewpoints of a native Indian and a native Canadian, the book offers independent observations about India from both Eastern and Western perspectives (Hulander). As a writer *Days and Nights in Calcutta* is an attempt on Mukherjee's part to emphasis her "authentic voice," and to construct new metaphorical India which would be more real her than the literary stereotypes (Blaise and Mukherjee). *Days and Nights in Calcutta* contains solicitous sightings of her family, especially her father Sudhir Mukherjee. In this context *Days and Nights in Calcutta* can be read along with *The Tiger's Daughter*. Both works use the theme of the returning home from wilful exile in a foreign country and both concluded that displacement is more longed for that what "home" has become. These works comprise the initial stages of Mukherjee's progression as a writer and follow the trail of early roads she has taken that established her as the chronicler of immigrant lives.

Much like *The Tiger's Daughter*, Bharati Mukherjee's second novel, *Wife*, was also written in the beginning of her stay in Canada. Published in 1975, the novel gives an instance of the matter and manner of her work. She wrote this work as a response to one innocent question asked by a Columbia professor who wanted to know the everyday life of Bengali girls between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five. Mukherjee says: "So I wrote a novel to explain to him what we did" (Hancock). Dimple Dasgupta, the heroine of the novel, is a young Bengali woman who has an arranged marriage to Amit Basu, an engineer, instead of marrying a neurosurgeon as she had dreamed about. Soon after the marriage the Basus move to the United State. Dimple, feeling alienated in America, experiences cultural shock and loneliness. Although she is helped by her husband and his friends to assimilate in America, Dimple is unable to effect change in herself. Her frustration grows into insanity culminating with the murder of her husband, Amit at the end. *Wife* serves as a foil to *The Tiger's Daughter*. While the latter is exclusively set in India, most of the action in *Wife* happens in the United States. Dimple's overindulgence in the fantasy world and her inability to get away from the Bengali culture in which she is confined to, despite her moving to New York City, differ from Tara's wakeful realization that she is unfit for her homeland. Both undergo the pain of dislocation, but Dimple cannot cope with the traumatic experiences of immigration from the controlled society to the open-minded society of America. *Wife*, in Bharati Mukherjee's view, is about "a young Bengali wife who was sensitive enough to feel the pain, but not intelligent enough to make sense out of her situation and break out" (Blaise and Mukherjee). The name of the heroine, Dimple, is perhaps a yardstick of her fatuousness. In the beginning of the novel, Dimple is like any teen age Bengali girl who happened to set a high store on marriage:

> Marriage, she was sure, would free her, fill her with passion. Discreet and virgin, she waited for real life to begin (*Wife* 3).

Ironically, Dimple's romantic expectations of marriage fades soon, and she becomes disillusion with her husband and the married state. To lull the pain of disillusion in married life, Dimple indulges in masochistic suffering. The rage welling up inside her finds a momentary outlet when she kills a mouse with a broom. Mukherjee uses this image of

violence as a leitmotif; it hangs around Dimple throughout the novel, and the inner woman inside her relived the scene again and again during the novel. From her killing first a mouse then cockroaches to stabbing her husband at the end of the novel are all interlinked with the psychic violence of Dimple. In that sense, *Wife* is a perfect psychological novel about a newly married Asian immigrant woman who ends up as a psycho murderer. Mukherjee reveals with acute skilfulness the disturbed psyche of simpleminded, unhappy, and hysterical wife experiencing the "culture shock" that all Indian wives in America go through, a condition to be characterised by "one of those famous 'breakdowns' that American wives were fond of having" (*Wife* 180). In *Wife*, too, Mukherjee has stated precisely a foremost area of her scholarly pursuit— "the psychological world of the South Asian woman facing the challenge of immigration to America with its attendant trauma of culture shock, its rush of freedom, its responsibility of self-definition, and its access to power" (Magill).

In 1978 Mukherjee got the Guggenheim Fellowship for her exceptional creative work in the field of fiction. Although she related to her family in India during this period, Mukherjee proclaimed that she "was an immigrant writer in the tradition of other, older (European) immigrant groups." In 1980 she decided to leave Canada and settle permanently in the USA. According to Mukherjee, the principle of the "mosaic structure" of multiculturalism has been laid out and consolidated, especially in Canada. This is the reason why she eventually decided to leave the country after 14 years of residing there and made the U.S. her country of choice to fight for her ideas of "applied integrated pluralism" (Benedikter and Hilber). Soon after getting the permanent citizenship, Mukherjee embarks on a free-lance teaching career. During the 1980s she taught at Skidmore College, Mountain State College, Queen's College of the City University of New York, and Columbia University. In 1981, she won the National Magazine Awards second prize for her essay *An Invisible Woman*. In this essay, Mukherjee highlights the paradoxes she found while living in Canada where she is judged by the colour of her skin. In Canada she experienced racism which unleashed an anger that finally led to powerful fiction. In many ways, *An Invisible Woman* is a proof of an eloquent, strong, and fervent personality.

In 1985, Mukherjee published her collection of stories about immigrants, *Darkness*, which she dedicated to Bernard Malamud, famous short story writer and close family friend of the Blaise. *Darkness* is a collection of stories that reveals a variety of responses to immigration to North America. While some stories in *Darkness* show "the exuberance of immigration" other stories depict the struggle of characters who suffer from the "aloofness of expatriation" and who want to settle in America but are unsuccessful due to some lacking in them or in the world around them (*Darkness* 3). After the publication of *Darkness*, Mukherjee moved into New York City and taught at City University of New York. Meanwhile she published *The Sorrow and the Terror*, a collaborative work with her husband, on the 1985 Air India plane crash (Bombay to Toronto). The following year saw the publication of Mukherjee's award-winning *The Middleman and Other Stories* (1988), a collection of varied stories which deal with the issues of immigrants in the New World. The stories in this collection deal with the theme of "new changing America" by immigrants from Afghanistan and Asia, from Uganda and Latin America. These immigrants in return been transformed by the "idea" of living in America. For them, America is a receding eternity of new beginnings, they move upwards with luck and grace. In many ways, *The Middleman and Other Stories* was a breakthrough because it was the first time that somebody from India who had won the National Book Critics Circle Award. Experts were full of praise for Mukherjee's execution of theme and her brilliant use of American language. Praising her handling of the idiom of America in the 1980's is as par with Nabokov, Jonathan Raban describes *The Middleman and Other Stories* as "a consummate romance with the American language" (Raban). There is no denying the fact that with the publication of *The Middleman and Other Stories* Mukherjee confirmed her position among the elite of American writers.

Mukherjee continues to elaborate the theme of immigration and how it acts as reincarnation for her characters in the next novel *Jasmine* which was published in 1989. In fact, Mukherjee expanded her short story, *Jasmine*, from *The Middleman and Other Stories*, into a novel. In the short story a Trinidadian girl named Jasmine becomes an illegal immigrant relishing America. Mukherjee recreated the setting of the story and placed the heroine of the novel into Punjab, Florida, New York, and Iowa. Unlike the heroin of the

short story of the same name, Jasmine in the novel is part of "a society that was so repressive, traditional, so caste-bound, genderist, that she could discard it in ways that a fluid American society could not" (Connell, Grearson and Grimes). By doing this she complicated the situation of Jasmine in different ways. Jasmine is subjected to several transformation. Speaking to Connell, Grearson, and Grimes, Mukherjee says, "It was just that this was a character that I fell in love with."

The protagonist of the novel, *Jasmine*, is a poor village girl from Punjab whose unhappy fate seems to await her since her birth. Her mother unsuccessfully tries to strangle her because she is the fifth daughter in the family. Daughters are considered as burden in the Indian society because they are required to married away with a dowry. She marries Prakash Vijh, a freethinking and intellectual young man who aspires to get an admission in an American University. Unfortunately, when he gets a letter of admission from Florida institution, Prakash is killed by a Sikh terrorist bomb attack. To fulfil her dead husband's dream, Jasmine plans to travel to the Florida International Institute of Technology and commit herself as *Sati*. On her first day in America, Jasmine is raped by the boat captain who has brought them illegally to America. To avenge her dishonour, Jasmine kills her defiler and abandon her plans to burn herself as a *Sati*. In this sense, Jasmine's first night in America is both her death and rebirth. She is sheltered by Lillian Gordon who calls Jasmine "Jazzy" and helps her travel to Flushing New York where Prakash's mentor Professor Devinder Vadhera lives. After spending five months in Queens ghetto with the Vadheras, Jasmine leaves their house as she is determined to seek a new life in America. For her, "nothing was rooted anymore. Everything was in motion." After this, Jasmine starts working as a nanny in New York for the adopted daughter of Taylor and Wylie Hayes. No sooner she starts feeling happy with the Hayes family, Jasmine is forced to flee to Iowa when she spots the murderer of her husband. In Iowa Jasmine adopts a new name Jane and becomes the mistress of Bud Ripplemeyer. A local banker. Although, Bud, who is in a wheelchair because her was shot two years back, insists on marrying her, Jasmine refuses for some unknown reasons. However, out of sympathy for him she conceives his baby as well as adopts a teenage Vietnamese boy named Du. In the end of the novel when Taylor comes to take her to California, a pregnant Jasmine agrees to go with him without

any hesitation. Mukherjee explained Jasmine's leaving Bud as an act of getting out of a regressive life because with Bud, she feels, she is living a village life. Thought the novel, Jasmine oversees her situation. She never crushed by adversities and subjugation. She is a born fighter-whether it is surviving the strangulation by her mother, a mad dog, facing boldly the goons in her village, overcoming the trauma of rape by the boat captain-she appears as a doer and passive receiver. Thus, in *Jasmine,* Mukherjee portrays various features of the immigrant experiences in America, in the act, unfolding the traumatic experiences and cultural perplexities of the South-Asian immigrant.

The novel, *Jasmine*, is the landmark in Bharati Mukherjee's the scholarly career as a writer because it has metamorphosised her from a recorder of exile to a crusader of immigrants. In this novel she deviates from the linear narrative technique used in the previous work and employs what Gurleen Grewal rightly pointed out in her essay "Born Again American: The Immigrant Consciousness in *Jasmine*" as "nonlinear narrative technique of montage and jump-cuts, shuffling us back and forth in time" (Grewal). Also, in the presentation of Jasmine's character, Mukherjee enhances images of the Third World Woman who is restrained by her womanliness and by the Indian patriarchy. Jasmine is shown by the author as someone who resists this subjugation of woman based on gender and class. As a writer, Mukherjee successfully explores the promises of emancipation through transformation on the grounds of immigration to the New World for oppressed, rural, and lower-middle-class women from the Third World.

After the tremendous success of *Jasmine,* Mukherjee published her fourth novel, *The Holder of the World*, in 1993. The novel is considered as a masterpiece of storytelling where Mukherjee weaves both the future and the past into a story that is not only intelligent but also appealing. To meet her purpose, Mukherjee infuses subplot to the main plot in the novel. The main plot of the novel digs into the story of Hannah Easton, an exceptional woman who is born in the American colonies in 1670 and turns into an emperor's mistress in India. Curious, energetic, and conscious of her prospects, Hannah make an expedition to Mughal India along with her husband, and English trader. Once she reaches India, Hannah finds herself in a tricky situation. Her husband turns pirate and leaves her to

manage by herself in the unknown land. Hannah becomes the white lover of a Hindu raja named Jadav Singh and translates herself into the Salem Bibi. She also conceives a girl child from him. But her brief stint as the mistress of the raja ends abruptly when Jadav Singh locks horn with Aurangzeb, the mighty Mughal emperor. Though Hannah makes an earnest request to Aurangzeb to spare the life and kingdom of Jadav Singh, the emperor does not oblige. Subsequently, Hannah, along with her daughter Pearl, returns to Salem after the killing of raja. The subsidiary plot tells about the narrator of the novel, Beigh Masters. Known as an "asset hunter" Beigh is a twenty-first century American woman, who in her tracking for the Emperor's Tear has stumbled upon a string of Mughal miniature paintings in a marine trade gallery in Massachusetts that exhibits "a yellow haired woman in diaphanous skirt and veil," who has transformed into "Salem Bibi" or white lover from Salem. The novel is Hannah's story, narrated by Beigh dwelling on the subjects that excites her: the passage of time, the distinction of efforts to recreate a segment of time that has passed, the clash of values as a result of New World meeting the Old, the exercising of power by free-spirited women in a conservative society and how that society exacts its revenge. Mukherjee is at her fierce best in portraying the 17th century America, England and Mughal India and interweaving an exciting narrative of selfishness, lust, brawls, and treachery.

In 1997, Mukherjee published her fifth novel, *Leave It to Me* where she explores issues of identity, ethnicity, and history from a fresh angle. Infusing the Indian concept of Karma and the Greek notions of destiny, the novel tells the story of Debby who is dumped in an orphanage by her American hippie mother and Eurasian Indian father. She is later taken in by an Italian American family, DiMartino. A brief but failed love affair with her Asian boss contributes in questioning her true self. The awareness of being different tortures her little soul. When her adopted mother, Serena DiMartino tells Debby about her biological parents who had callously abandoned her, she decides to set out about them. She leaves for California as she is being told that her real mother was a flower child from Fresno. Henceforth, the storyline leaps up and down in an erratic manner, garnering a variety of characters who crosses the protagonist in her search. While journeying to San Francisco in search her parents, she picks up the name Devi Dee from a vanity licence

plate. In due course, she lands in the shabby suburbs of Haight-Ashbury flanked by the colony of refugees and gypsies. Shortly, she gets into a relationship with, Hamilton Cohen also known as Ham, a film producer who introduces her to Jess DuPree, an ex-hippie. Ham once used to be Jess's lover. Devi brings in a private investigator, Fred Pointer to search for her parents. His evidence hints that Jess could be her mother and her father might be in Indian jail. When she meets her father, he emerges as a serial killer named Romeo Hawk who has the unscrupulous record of being a flamboyant escape artist. He used to befriend the white, hippie women from Europe, the United Sates, and Canada. After that he abused, raped, and murdered them in very grisly ways and abandoning his illegitimate children across the Indian subcontinent. Remo Hawk kills Jess and Hamilton to erase his past. Towards the end of the novel, Debby/Devi slays her father in the fashion of Hindu goddess Devi slays the Buffalo Demon. In *Leave It to Me*, Bharati Mukherjee employs her favourite themes: exiles, assimilation, and metamorphosis of the female protagonist as she casts off her past live while entering in a country where freedom led to rootlessness, association into dislocation.

In took Mukherjee six years to publish her sixth novel, *Desirable Daughters*. The novel has everything which a Hollywood film ask for: intrigue, suspense, murder. Tara, the narrator of the novel gets married at the age of 19, to Bishwapriya Chatterjee, the most prospective bridegroom in Calcutta. Their lives change immediately after moving to the United States. Tara comes out of the role of a submissive Indian wife by becoming modern in lifestyle and outlook. Bish, too, achieves fame and fortune due to his invention in computer bandwidth routing technology. He becomes "the poster boy of Indian entrepreneurship" (*Desirable Daughters* 26). With success comes the problems as Bish, has no time to spend with wife and son, Rabi. He moves all around the world for business purposes. Tara who now has adjusted to American culture, feels trap in the house fulfilling the domestic duties like a traditional Indian wife and raising their only son, Rabi. So, after ten years of their marriage Tara divorces Bish and decides to enjoy her life like a true American. She lives with her son and keeps herself busy in doing volunteer work in a preschool. She also finds a live-in partner, Andy, a Hungarian Buddhist contractor/yoga instructor. But in America, messy family affairs are fair game. Her life receives a bolt from

the blue when one afternoon a young Indian stranger poses before her as the illegitimate son of her eldest sister, Padma who had affair with a Christian boy when she was young. He introduces himself as Chris Day and claims that his birth was kept as a secret by Tara's parents because it was unimaginable sins in their elite caste. To prove his identity, Chris produces the letter of introduction from Ron Day, who claims to be his biological father. Although Tara is doubtful about the young man's claim, her faith in the family deeply shaken by this revelation. To unravel the truth, Tara decides to do the root search of the family. She, first, before confronting Padma, enquires Parvati, her middle sister living in Bombay, about this scandal. Her suspicion strengthens with the confirmation coming from Ron Day, back in India, but not by Padma. However, Ron Day describes the boy as tall and having the complexion of Bhattacharjee family. To prove the stranger as an imposter and not real Chris, Tara gets the help of Jack Sindhu, a New York policeman, who ascertain that the boy is not real Chris Day but an imposter using his passport. Suddenly, forced to deal with the culture she has discarded long time ago, Tara shifts between the old times, memory, and modern world as she looks for the truth and her own identity.

Terming the novel as "a mix -and-match morality play," Suzanne Ruta calls the narrator, Tara, "as a bit of an Indian princess" (Ruta). At the age of 36, Tara is living as a single mother and slowly wringing the snob out of herself. As a matter of facts, the idea of home takes Tara back to her birthplace. To her American friends, she is "overdetermined" with her region, language, and caste. But being born in an upper caste Bengali Brahmin family, Tara takes immense pride in her family where "everyone knows your business and…even loneliness, become privileged commodities" (*Desirable Daughter* 51). The novel is as much about Tara who is a self-conscious narrator as it is about her other sisters: Padma and Parvati. Tara and her sisters are fascinating liars. Their storytelling continues for long until they faced with the truth. Once their mask of decency lay bare, they get infuriated by the sense of betrayal. However, they don't have any other option but to reconcile with each other. Unable to cope with the overwhelming turbulence in life, Tara reunions with her husband, but an explosion demolishes her house leaving Bishwapriya badly injured. Finally, Tara revisits Mishtigunj, where the Tree-Bride dwelt, "like a pilgrim but following the course of the Ganges to its source" (*Desirable Daughters* 395).

In 2004, Mukherjee published her next novel, *The Tree Bride*, as a sequel to her previous novel, *Desirable Daughters*. The story moves forward from where Mukherjee left in her earlier novel. Tara and Bish are now reunited after their château have been burned down by a bomb planted by Abbas Sattar Hai, leaving Bish disabled. Tara, who is working on her new novel, is now expecting a baby and pays a visit to a gynaecologist. She is keen to have an Indian lady doctor and gets the appointment of Victoria Khanna, an English woman married to an Indian professor at Stanford who used to be Bish's teacher. In their first meeting, Victoria tells Tara that destiny has brought them together. In the follow up, Victoria hands over a box of papers to Tara which she from her grandfather, Vertie Treadwell. The papers tells the history of Tara's ancestral village, Mishtigunj and her great-great-aunt, Tara Lata Gangooly, the tree bride, whom she wants to glorify in her novel (Skerrett). Tara Lata has been called as the tree bride because her prospective husband died of a cobra bite on the same day of marriage, prompting her learned father, Jay Prakash Gangooly, to marry her to a tree so that she would live an ignominious life of a widow. It is rumoured that her dowry was buried somewhere in the forest. For next sixty she had never left her marriage-house, but everybody revered her as she united and inspired the local people to fight against the British Raj. Vertie Treadwell's life story runs parallel to Tara Lata's life in Mishtigunj. Vertie Treadwell was British administrator who served in East Bengal until India got freedom from British Raj. As soon as Tara, the narrator, get hold of the box from Victoria, she examines the enigmatic connection between Treadwell, Tara Lata, and the founder of the village, John Mist, who was hanged by the British, so was Tara Lata herself for her involvement in proving financial aid to India's freedom movement. While connecting Tara Lata's transformation from a submissive girl into an ardent architect of resistance against the British Raj, the modern-day Tara throws light on her 'American identity.' Tara who is completely assimilated into the American way of life is forced to look back and finds her identity in the process of roots search. Mukherjee has webbed a variety of outwardly separate storylines together, closing the gaps between complex and intertwined relationships. The Washington Times praises Bharati Mukherjee for her elegant, sardonic, and often brilliant prose. "Despite the complex, often open-ended plot twists and some under-developed characters, there can be no doubt that Miss Mukherjee is a fine writer" (Lothar).

Published in 2011, *Miss New India* happens to be the last novel by Bharati Mukherjee. The novel recounts the coming-of-age story of Anjali Bose, a small-town girl pursuing big dream. The novel examines the concept of globalised identities and the way young generation rejects traditional identity endorsed by their parent's generation and prefers cosmopolitan subjectivity in line with American identity. Driven by ambition, these young Indians are always ready to grab the new opportunities offered in the post liberal India. They only care for prosperity and personal happiness. In the process, they create the myth of an "Indian Dream" (Lavigilante). The protagonist of the novel is Anjali Bose, a beautiful girl born in a Bengali family that settled down in Gauripur, Bihar, one of India's backward states. Her parents only wish to marry her off so that they would be done with their responsibilities. But Anjali is constantly encouraged by her English tutor, Peter Champion to explore the avenues of big cities like Mumbai, Bangalore, and Delhi because "India is on fire." Anjali delays her plan to go to Bangalore which proves tragic for her. She is raped by Subodh Mitra, a candidate selected by her father to get married. Devastated by this experience, Anjali leaves for Bangalore. Peter helps her in providing financial aid and lodging of his acquaintance.

To sum up, this concise information of Bharati Mukherjee's personal life and literary works aims to offer a brief outline of each of her book and provide a glimpse of the topics she got attracted to in her entire career as a writer. In the same manner that her characters brave the pain of dislocation and as the circumstances push them to the wall, they undergo reincarnations of identity, so does Mukherjee's own life exhibit infinite opportunities to go for through immigration. She has experienced racism while working in Canada after her marriage to Clark Blaise. She has been forced not only to leave that country but to also change her citizenship. Although a professor of English, Mukherjee made herself ready to negotiate in new languages, and moved from being an expatriate to an immigrant to an American. Throughout this volatile journey, she carried on the awakening at her childhood that she was a writer. It is through her own experience as an immigrant that she created the epic narrative of this millennium.

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CHAPTER II

Theme of Dislocation in *The Tiger's Daughter* and *Wife*

Bharati Mukherjee's early novels, *The Tiger's Daughter* (1971) and *Wife* (1975), touch upon the pains of displacement and dislocation. In both these novels Mukherjee explore the conditions of being an Indian expatriate and being an American immigrant. (M. Sharma) Mukherjee defines expatriates as conscious knowers of their fate and immigrants—in particular to Canada—as "lost souls put upon and pathetic." In both these novels the author's voice is omniscient and irony her strategy. However, they are not written to imply, as Jasbir Jain says, "total rejection or a ruthless questioning of tradition or a love-hate relationship with the native heritage" (Jain). Rather, these early novels are "articulating a post-colonial consciousness" shared by many other Indians writer who have undergone the experiences of dislocation and the sense of "being cut off from a supporting world." Her characters *choose* to uproot themselves from their native country. And when people moved away from one culture to another, they are caught between two cultures and are very often engaged either in a process of self-recovery through resort to history and memory or in a process of self-preservation through an act of transformation. Bharati Mukherjee's novels deals with immigrant's exploration of self because of moving away from their country. The novelist herself stated her views on this aspect. (Gupta and Ondaatje)

> We immigrants have fascinating tales to relate. Many of us have lived in newly independent or emerging countries and come here which are placed by civil and religious conflicts…… When we uproot ourselves from those countries and come here, either by choice or out of necessity, we suddenly must get about 200 years of American history and learn to adopt to American society. I attempt to illustrate this in my novels and short stories. My aim is to explore Americans to the energetic voices of new settlers in this country.

Today, dislocation has become a metaphor for the experiences of expatriation, refugee, exile, immigration. The writers who deals with the problems of uprootedness and dislocation at the political, existential or metaphorical levels are mostly the immigrant writers. They are different from the western writers in the sense that the western writers have not lost their 'real' countries and seem stuck with alienation which is a kind of psychological exile. On the other hand, the immigrant writers live between two worlds. In the words of Salman Rushdie:

> If you arrive in a society as a migrant, your position is automatically a dislocated one, and so you have to work out a literary mode which can allow that kind of conflict of description to take place in it…. I do feel that physical and geographical displacement makes you self-conscious about your position (Rushdie).

The immigrant writers create and inscribe 'alternative worlds' by exchanging one tradition for another, one culture for another, and one home for another. They are caught in a dilemma of nothingness or not belonging. Adopting the tradition of the new land and trying to learn new culture is a challenge. In the process, it is the woman who suffers the most because of her multiple dislocations, and expatriate writings has been able to transform the stereotypical suffering of woman to an aggressive or independent person trying to seek an identity of her own through her various relationships within the family and society. She gets involved in an act of sustained self-removal from her native culture, balanced by a conscious resistance to total inclusion in the new host society. She carries the burden of cultural values of her native land with her to her new country, thus making it more difficult and problematic for her to adjust. She is caught between cultures and feeling of in-betweenness or being juxtaposed poses before her the problem of trying to maintain a balance between her dual affiliation. Nevertheless, along with the trauma of displacement she is fired by the will to bond herself to a new community, to a new narrative of identity. As an expatriate writer Bharati Mukherjee also discusses the complications of the place

and time in which she has seen the immigrants. She has to respond and react to the duel culture positively taking the best from both sides and even negotiating between their identity and a hyphenated space.

Accepting the in-betweenness of diaspora identity can minimize the alienating effects of difference while refusing to erase aspects of identity entailed in the process of homogenization. The post-colonial condition is one of dislocation and cultural expatriation (a sense of belonging to one place and simultaneous refusal to accept another), and of exaggeration. Conversely, to accept diasporic identity is to accept both places, which in turn minimizes the negative effects of dislocation and expatriation and the tendency to exaggerate. (Crane) But this is not an easy (or always desirable) state of grace to enter, as Hanif Kureishi has outlined:

> I know Pakistanis and Indians born and brought up here (in Britain) who consider their position to be the result of a diaspora: they are in exile, awaiting return to a better place, where they belong, where they are welcome. And this 'belonging' will be total. This will be home, peace. (Kureishi)

Returning home never quite plays out as expected, as "home" might have become unfamiliar in the time they were away. Different factors affect the experience of return, including their social status when they return, when and why they left their homeland and the frequency and types of communications they maintained while away. Ethnic migrants who return home often find themselves caught betwixt-and-between two or multiple worlds and social-economic realities. They begin to question where "home" truly is and whether they should have returned in the first place. (Daswani) What happens to the human spirit between worlds, to desire and longing as they cross and recross geographical and cultural borders, to the domains of intimacy and family in migration, dislocation, and relocations? For some Asian Americans, Meena Alexander writes in her essay/poem "Alphabets of Flesh," "assimilation translated into doing well, very well, not just making do. But the streets lined with gold are hard to walk and what happens with the heart can give one pause." (Alexander) Similarly, what happens when an expatriate return to the deferred homeland,

finds oneself in an alien position between two worlds? *The Tiger's Daughter* deals with all these issues as it narrates the return of an expatriate to her home country. The novel is about Tara, a convent educated Calcutta girl, who goes to America for higher education, and is married to an American, David Cartwright. Although reluctant to come back Tara eventually returns to India after seven years of stay in America. Returning to India Tara feels more alienated as she faces cultural clash. Her impersonating American culture leads to identity crisis. She feels like an alien in her own country. Therefore, in the end she decides to return to her husband David in America. Her mental anguish is rightly described by Aparajita Ray: "The protagonist Tara Banerjee Cartwright makes a trip home to India to soothe her ruffle feathers but becomes painfully aware that her memories of a genteel Brahmin lifestyle are usurped by westernization." (Ray)

The novel is divided into four parts. Part I deals with the part of Tara, her family background, and the process of her settlement in New York. Part II deals with Tara's arrival at Bombay, her journey to Calcutta, and her reaction to India. Part III concentrates on Tara's life at Calcutta and her Catelli-continental friends. Part IV of the novel deals her visit to Darjeeling with her friends to spend summer vacation, her coming back to Calcutta, her boredom and alienation, her victimization in a mob, and her tragic end which remains mysterious.

Dislocation is the central motif of this novel which is expressed in the recurrent pattern of cultural shock, loss of identity and alienation experienced by the protagonist Tara. Even when Tara is totally unprepared for it, she is sent abroad for a degree by her father, the 'Bengal Tiger' who assumes that Calcutta is no longer as safe as it once was because of its "constant gheraos and coke bottles filled with urine and vulgar men leering at them" (*The Tiger's Daughter* 45). The fear for the safety of his daughter and fascination for the Western world acted as the reasons behind Tara's transnational dislocation to Poughkeepsie, in the United States where life is all different. She is unable to find connections with the American culture and she experiences a 'double shock' with her return to India. The novel illustrates how cultural belonging of an individual is important as it assures his/her identity. But due to transnational mobility, the dislocated individual understands that s/ he is in a new cultural space which is not familiar, and where s/ he has to relocate the self. Moreover, as the individual moves across the border, a longing for

home becomes active inside the self. The strong emotional attachment to the homeland and the long period of stay in the adopted country may stimulate an expatriate to return at least temporarily, if not permanently. Cultural memory of his /her 'place of origin' stays quite inseparably with him /her like a shadow within the self and it helps to ignite his/ her urge to look back towards 'home'. There is a sense of dilemma of 'staying or going home.' Home has a significant function in our lives. Thinking of home, we associate notions like shelter and comfort and when we come home, we want to feel safe and welcome. John McLeod argues in this sense that "to be 'at home' is to occupy a location where we are welcome, where we can be with people very much like ourselves." (McLeod) According to him home can be imagined in diaspora communities as "Mythic Place" or an "Imaginary Homeland."

Migrants see their home country as idyllic place of security and shelter where they are welcome and where the people are like them (race, nationality, religion etc.). Migrants often experience discrimination against them in their host country. One way to deal with this experience is to idealize their home country and to see their host country only as a place of temporary residence. As Avtar Brah puts it: "Home is a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination." (Brah)

In *The Tiger's Daughter* Tara experiences dislocation at the very tender age when she has been sent to America for education. This dislocation resulted into her being at the cross road of two cultures. She suffers the problems of adjustment, racial discrimination, nostalgia and home sickness. She tries hard to assimilate to the changing situation but fails due to her 'otherness'. In her attempt to adapt herself with the new surroundings and culture, Tara "stayed up till two in the mornings discussing birth control with her dormitory neighbours….cycling blithely from class to class, rubbing Nivea cream on her face to protect it from the hostile weather" (*The Tiger's Daughter* 11). Though the desire to become part of her new milieu is strong, Tara's attempts to communicate with fellow students are largely unsuccessful. There seems to be an invisible wall between her and the white students. During the vacation, all her friends go back to their homes. Tara is all alone in her hostel. She experiences a deep anguish of homesickness. She feels lonely and insecure in the alien atmosphere. For Tara, Vassar had been an almost unsalvageable mistake. (10)

> 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. (*The Tiger's Daughter* 49)

The above example shows the nostalgic feelings of Tara as she remembered Camac Street and remembered her mother praying to Gods. The term nostalgia, which is derived from the Greek *nostos* ("to return home") and *algos* ("pain"). According to Svetlana Boym, nostalgia bears an intrinsic connection to spatiality: tracing the concept's origins in the enlightenment medicalization of homesickness or *maladie du pays*, she argues that the feeling classically relates to some kind of 'elsewhere': 'Nostalgia (from *nostos* — return home, and *algia* — longing) is a longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed.' Past homes, neighbourhoods and countries are the prime objects of this retrospective longing. According to Boym, however, the yearning of the exile or the nostalgic for another space is actually a reprocessing of a more insoluble feeling of *temporal* dislocation. Nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement. (Boym) Nostalgia is now commonly associated with rapture from, and the desire to one day return to, a place called home. Tara thinks that she is a prisoner of her old world. To save herself, she tries to win the confidence of the Camac Street girls. After the college she runs errands for them: standing in line at the post office, sharing with them shampoos and lipsticks, traying to get the sense of jokes told by them. The memories of her home help her to lessen the strain of dislocation. This evokes a sense of the longing for belonging, a quest for the cultural space of her homeland. She is also caught between her past and present, between two spatio-temporalities.

In *The Tiger's Daughter* Bharati Mukherjee also discusses how her immigrant woman protagonist tackle the challenges of dislocation as well as how she battles the prejudices and discrimination in an alien society. Tara finds America a mixed blessing because the American experience can be both liberating and discriminating. Tara's cross-cultural marriage also aggravated her alienation. Tara marries David Cartwright against her parents wish. Her parents want an upper-class Bengali boy as her husband. But Tara weds David to erase the stamp of 'other' on her and to attain an identity in the American society. After marriage with David, she realizes that she made a mistake. Time and again she feels

that there are certain misunderstandings between her and David. She feels that there is a big mental gap between them as they are born and brought up in two contrasting social values. She finds herself helpless as she could not explain her Indian social traditional values, customs, and her nostalgic feelings for her home in Calcutta to her husband. The cultural difference between her and David restricts her to assure him that she loves him deeply. Although she tries her best by seizing the specific questions asked by him, it turns into futile exercise. She tries all possible ways to transform herself from an Indian girl to an American wife but fails due to her nostalgic memory for her native traditions. She is helpless to refuse her Indian self and is unable to remain fixed in her newly discovered American self. Thus, she seems to be trapped between her two selves.

Tara wants to overcome this situation but never gets much support from her husband. He is after all wholly western and she is always apprehensive of the fact. "Madison square was unbearable and her husband was after all foreigner." David likes to see her as a caring Indian wife who would accomplish her domestic services without any questions. Tara does her domestic works as well as the works such as "cleaning bathroom" that she never did in her father's home but never gets any appreciation from the part of her husband. She is puzzled that whether she was happier in her father's home than in the house of David. She wonders if she made a mistake in marrying a person of outside her caste.

> New York was certainly extra-ordinary and it had driven her to despair. On days she had thought she had thought 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 burned incense sent from home." (*The Tiger's Daughter* 64)

According to Tweed, religious artifacts have a particular significance for migrants who are experiencing a sense of dislocation. Religious artifacts are both tangible and symbolic. They can function to transport people emotionally to the imagined homeland. Artifacts because they occupy space, can also be a means through which displaced persons and groups form emotional attachments to a new place. (Tweed) These images and artifacts

bring a bit of the homelands into the new geographic place and help people crave out a sense of cohesion in the new cultural place. (Moschella) For Tara burning of incense from India is an act of "constructing a symbolic dwelling" in which she may have her own space and identity. It is very clear to her that she has lost her identity of an individual woman in her utmost attempt to become an American wife. Her sensibility alters under the stress of circumstances while she is desperately trying to change the situation around her by fighting. In his article 'Alien Gods', A. Sivanandan comments:

> On the margin of European culture, and alienated from his own, the "coloured" [...person] is an artefact of colonial history, marginal man par excellence. He is creature of two worlds, and of none. Thrown up by a specific history, he remains stranded on its shores even as it recedes. And what he comes into is not so much a twilight world, as a world of false shadows and false light. (Sivanandan)

Tara feels that she has no independence in the house of her husband. She becomes depressed by thinking that before marriage her life was governed by her father and after the marriage her life is dominated by her husband in the name of bondage of marriage. All this trauma compels her to return India to find out her lost roots (Datta and Verma).

Expecting to find solace, Tara, on the contrary feels like an alien on her return visit to India. She wonders "how does the foreignness of spirit begin?" (*The Tiger's Daughter* 37) In her article 'Foreignness at Home,' Jasbir Jain argues that the diasporic engagement with the culture of origin is multi-layered and complex. At times, the diasporic eye that is turned on, is one of closure- a past well got rid-off; at other times, it is a westernized gaze of the foreigner unable to decipher the cultural undertones. When diaspora visits the home country, very often he does so with a sense of foreignness. Everything- the home where he spent his childhood, the streets he walked, the heat that he lived through-all seem strange and unwelcome (Jain). When Tara returns to India, she realizes how the things has gone through a sea change. Seven years ago, she admired the houses on Marine Drive but her lodging at Vassar did change her outlook on Indian life and now their shabbiness appalls

her. Her relatives appear strangers to her. Her reluctant to stay longer in Bombay as well as her refusal to alter her itineraries disappoints them. “Defeated and embarrassed, the relatives attributed Tara’s improprieties to her seven years in America” (TD 19) In spite of their warning not to look at the bad parts of India, Tara finds the Bombay railway station more like a hospital filled with sick and deformed men sitting listlessly on bundles and trunks. Her supercilious attitude in the air-conditioned compartment makes her ironically observe her travelling companions, both of whom, the animal-like Marwari and the hairy Nepali. Looking at the Marwari she expresses her disapproval:

> The Marwari was indeed very ugly and tiny and insolent. He reminded her of a circus animal who had gotten the better of his master, and the other occupant, a Nepali was fidgety older man with coarse hair. He kept crossing and recrossing his legs and pinching the creases of his pants. Both men, Tara decide, could effortlessly ruin her journey to Calcutta (*The Tiger’s Daughter* 20).

Although Tara tries her best not to watch the night ablutions of her companions, she is sure that this return to her native place won’t be a memorable one. She states: “I have returned dry holes by the sides of railway tracks, to brown fields like excavations for a thousand homes. I have returned to India” (*The Tiger’s Daughter* 19). To her the scenery outside appears ‘merely alien and hostile’ and she regrets if she made a mistake of coming without David. The friends she had played with seven years ago, done her homework with Nilima, briefly fancied herself in love with Pronob, debated with Reena at the British Council.” But now after her return from America, she fears “their tone, their omissions, their aristocratic oneness.”

Even Calcutta could not perform any magic to rejuvenate her dampened spirits. She finds the Calcutta of which she was homesick has gone through many changes. She could not find the Calcutta of Satyajit Ray; she was expecting happy Bengal of her childhood where children are running through cool green spaces and aristocrats despairing in music rooms of empty palaces. On the contrary, Tara is outraged by Calcutta where so many people scramble in alleys and storefronts and staircases. She feels disgusted when she sees

kids eating yoghurt off dirty sidewalks. Bharati Mukherjee herself finds Calcutta as a hell when she first returned to the city with her husband Clark Blaise. The city she knew was full of gracious greenery "where Irish nuns instructed girls from better families on how to hold their heads high and how to drop their voices to a whisper and still be heard and obeyed above the screams of the city" (*Invisible Woman* 36).

Tara also witnesses how Calcutta losing its memories in a bonfire of effigies, buses and trams. An appetite for the grotesque has taken over the city and her homesick eyes bleed pain with these outrageous changes. She expresses her bitter disappointment at the sight of fractured Calcutta:

> But so far, the return had brought only wounds. First the corrosive hours on Marine Drive, then the deformed beggar in the railway station, and now the inexorable train ride steadily undid what strength she had held in reserve. She was an embittered woman, she now thought, old and cynical at twenty-two and quick to take offence (*The Tiger's Daughters* 25).

The Calcutta newspapers were swarming with stories of epidemics, collusions, fatal quarrels and starvation- the vision of modern India. Tara loses her mind when she sees a little girl suffering from leprosy. She screams and becomes almost hysteric: "Don't touch me, don't touch me!" Ironically, "Tara has never been a part of the crowd. She has always been sheltered, as a child, young adult, and woman. Each excursion traumatizes her when she gets herself close to the city and its masses. This city that she had left, though comfortable, was not soft even then. And now she is back without her foreign husband and unaware that she is the source of disease in her social universe. In fact, disease, suffering, and poverty are part of existence and a common Indian ignores it or rather accepts it as an integral part of life. Tara herself once ignored all these things but her stay in America has opened her eyes to the gulf between the lives of the poor and those of the rich in her own country. Like the people of the West now she started looking at India as a land of poor people living in a hostile, unhygienic conditions and suffering from starvation, decay and disease. During the summer Darjeeling is the favorite holidaying place for the upper-class families of Bengal. Along with the families of her friends Tara's family also moves to

Darjeeling for a holiday trip. Darjeeling is as beautiful as ever. Tara tries to enjoy the beauties of blue mountains and natural surroundings. But her trip is marred by ugly and violent incidents. One afternoon she accompanies Pronob and an American lady Antonia on horseback around the Observatory Hill but on the way, she is stopped and teased by some young hooligans. This incident leaves Tara troubled and ill-humoured. Not only this but she is also insulted by one of the members while she suggests something about the beauty contest organized by the hotel manager. The heart specialist who is one of the judges sarcastically remarks, "I think your years abroad have robbed you of feminine propriety" (*The Tiger's Daughter* 187). That Tara is the alter ego of the author is clear from the autobiographical details in *Days and Nights*; the testing of Tara is also battling in the growth of the author's sensibility from that of the expatriate to that of the immigrant. This change is not arrived at by petulant challenge of tradition, but by deliberately putting the self at risk abroad and at home.

That Mukherjee put her own experiences of expatiation in her works is obvious when we scrutinize her novels regarding her personal life. As expressed, nu D Her Abroad at first as a young woman of 21, Bharati Mukherjee came to study at Iowa while her younger sister Ranu tried again at Vassar but was once more overcome by homesickness and went back to Baroda at Christmas. Bharati remained in graduate school, eventually to complete an M.F.A. and a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature. In 1963, during her second year of graduate school at the age of 23, she married Clark Blaise, a fellow student, in the lunchtime hour, forging the sacraments and ceremonies of a Bengali wedding.[1] Before and after having children, Mukherjee traveled to India in the summer, to stay connected and to let her husband have quite in which to write: "India had been a place to send the family on summer vacations so that he could have undisturbed time for writing" (*Days and Nights* Part II 168).

In *The Tiger's Daughter*, Mukherjee put her experience of Canada—traumatic transformation—behind her and found a voice of her own. Tara Banerjee, the protagonist of *The Tiger's Daughter,* is modeled in her homesickness on Ranu's experience at Vassar; but her strength to endure that agony, go to "Madison" for summer school, meet and marry the young American David Cartwright, bear two sons, live at 124th Street and Broadway, and go back after seven years, is drawn out of the stuff of Bharati Mukherjee herself. Tara

goes home to assess herself—to see whether she can rediscover herself in her birth tradition—to understand how much she belongs and in what manner she is different. However, in *The Tiger's Daughter* Mukherjee wisely does not attempt a family saga but sets about exposing how it feels for a fifteen-year old girl to leave a sheltered home hedged by class privilege and wealth, come back to it grown to young womanhood—to come home after breaking all the social taboos by marrying a foreigner—and see whether she can find her place at home again. This journey begins in Bombay and concludes in Calcutta, as Mukherjee sets her heroine travelling alone in a train across India. In Calcutta she experiences the terrors of a city paralyzed physically and morally in a *gherao* (mobbing). All the questions for which Tara had no information at Vassar will be answered as she continues to witness the crowd's use of its numbers to surround or gherao, paralyzing movement, political demonstration, street and *bustee* (squatter) life, at first from the security of the balcony of the fashionable Catelli-Continental Hotel and finally marooned in a car in the middle of an angry mob. Early on, this woman finds that she is different her contemporaries in ways that cannot be communicated even if they wished that communication, simply because the society Tara rejoins is without a vision of the West that they could read if they chose to. All America means to that society is gadgets. Her tact and politeness render her unable to articulate her differences. It is this inability on Tara's part that in part upsets Mukherjee's Indian critics.

Something about *The Tiger's Daughter* upsets Indian critics greatly. They seem to share the reaction of Tara's erstwhile schoolmates, who feels she has polluted herself beyond redemption by her foreign education and *mleccha* marriage. They criticize her for stopping so low despite her being Brahmin. Tara doubts that her mother is also no longer love her for having willfully abandoned her caste by marrying a foreigner. "Here in Darjeeling", Jasbir Jain says incorrectly, "she is seduced, and this act of seduction is symbolic of her foreignness which is an experience which cannot be undone" (15). The "seduction" is more like rape but, after all, having married a foreigner, she had it coming. The rape itself happens not in Darjeeling, the hill station of the Raj, but in Nayapur and at the hands of Tuntunwalla, both symbolic of the new India. At the end of the novel,

according to Jain, Tara is "rejecting India and her Indianness unable to grasp its meaning, and equally unable to understand the America she is going back to" (15).

In *The Tiger's Daughter* Bharati Mukherjee deploys the immigrant's return journey to home as a leitmotif and shows that although painful and traumatic but expatriation is more tolerable than what "home" has become. Here Mukherjee explores the postcolonial dilemma of an expatriate. Tara's visit to Calcutta is designed to highlight her expatriate sensibilities – to show the drastic change in psychology due to dislocation. The central character, Tara, is something of an outcast in this society because of her 'mleccha' husband and she feels alienated from her friends and their way of life which are depicted from an outsider's viewpoint. The narrator mourns the decline of Calcutta in the face of communist-inspired populist uprising; there is no place in this world for the likes of Tara. The world-weariness and angst of this novel culminates in the violent metaphor of rape: Tara is raped by a brutal, unscrupulous and evil politician – who is also in the process of 'raping' the peasants and the land in the name of industrial progress. The novel closes with Tara's passionate statement of attachment to America, her husband's home and her desperate wish to 'get out of Calcutta (Brewster).

In *The Tiger's Daughter* Mukherjee shows that nostalgia and cultural memory are integral parts of an expatriate's mental state but as one spends some years in the adopted country, the effectiveness of these gradually wear out. One then finds it difficult to adjust to the ways of life and habits in the 'home' country one has left years ago, particularly when the country goes through a serious socio-political crisis. The protagonist Tara Banerjee Cartwright is in an intermediate stage when she is unable to negotiate the cultural terrain of Calcutta she has left behind seven years ago, and is looking forward to overcome the loneliness she fees in the alien space and to be part of the nation. Mukherjee herself writers about the novel as follows:

> My first novel, *The Tiger's Daughter,* embodies the loneliness I felt but could not acknowledge, even to myself, as I negotiate the no-man's land between the country of my past and the continent of my present. Shaped by memory, textured with nostalgia for a class and culture I had abandoned,

> this novel quite naturally became my expression of the *expatriate consciousness.* (Mukherjee)

Tara becomes alienated and dislocated in her own homeland. The phrase 'cracking of axis and center' symbolically points out the psyche of Tara which has come in her due to loss of her own cultural heritage. The novelist remarkably delineated the past cheerfulness in ignorance.

> And sad, Tara thought in spite of the promised 'bhajan.' As a child, Tara remembered, she had sung 'bhajans'…….. Raghupati Raghava Rajaram. But that had been a long time ago, before some invisible spirit on darkness had covered Tara like skin (*The Tiger's Daughter* 54).

Her friend Reena tells her that she has "become too self-centered and European" (*The Tiger's Daughter* 105). Tara tries to convince Reena that the life of Calcutta in spite of all the dark spots and drawbacks, has its own life which is found nowhere else and which her husband David would not be able to realize in spite of his vision and knowledge of India.

> She thought about Calcutta. Not of the poor sleeping on main streets dying on obscure thoroughfares. But of the consolation Calcutta offers. Life can be very pleasant here, thought Tara. (*The Tiger's Daughter* 132).

She compares New York and Calcutta:

> …. much easier she thought it was to live in Calcutta. How much simpler to trust the city's police inspection and play tennis with him on Saturdays. How humane to accompany a friendly editor to watch the riots in town. New York, she confined, was a gruesome nightmare. It wasn't muggings she feared so much as rude little invasions (*The Tiger's Daughter* 69).

Tara also feels that the Indians, who feel crazy for foreign things, dress, and items but they do not approve marriage with foreign people. Indians considers themselves racial purist.

They love to watch English movies. They like to read English magazines so that they can admire the western beauty. Not only this Indian consider English language far superior than their own. But when the subject comes down to marriage, Indian express their displeasure over the foreign marriage patterns. Most of the relatives of Tara are not pleased with her marriage to David. Tara thinks her marriage as an emancipation from traditions and Indian culture.

Tara feels herself as misfit everywhere she goes. She is forced to look at her inner world consisting of two cultures and the two different ideologies which are two worlds wide apart. Realizing that the reconciliation is impossible, Tara feels to go back to David. Her father, Bengal Tiger tries to please her and make her mind to accept the native land as her own by sending her to Darjeeling for picnic. But she goes to Air India office and reserves a seat on a flight to New York. Her journey is decided but after a short time of this reservation Tara becomes a victim of violence. The end of Tara remains mysterious and there is a suggestion that Tara does not survive in the violence of the mob which does not even spare the old man Joyonto Roy Choudhary. In this way Tara's returning to India proves as a quest for self and quest for immigrant psyche which proves frustrating slowly leading to her illusion, alienation, depression and finally her tragic end.

After describing various dilemmas and experiences of dislocation, exile, and home coming of a diasporic individual, Mukherjee shows Tara a new routes and new modes of thinking for the 'new world' of changing political, social and cultural global scenario. The novelist has delineated wonderful projection of mental state of the diasporic individual in the novel. At the end of the novel, Tara finds that the past that she has uncovered is very much a part of her present, a situation that she has always feared. The experience of the South Asian diasporic woman is always delving "in between" worlds, where time and space have created a sense of psychological uncertainty. The state of uncertainty often disorients the individual, making one subject to an indeterminate identity, it also allows her to exist as many, expressing the voices of the multitudes that lie within her, and promising to sound the voices of those selves that have yet to be discovered.

Thus, *The Tiger's Daughter* imbued with the Bharati Mukherjee's favourite theme i.e. dislocation of a migrant protagonist in a foreign land and her attempts to find her own place. Here we find that the central character Tara's experiences in America are mainly recounted or referred to whereas the main plot of the novel takes up the theme of how she feels and reacts to Indian reality when she returns to India after an interval of seven years. Mukherjee uses a non-linear narrative mode to tell the story of Tara's journey to America and her coming back to India. The novel is about an Indian woman who returns to India after many years in the West and looks at her native country through changed eyes. The poverty, hunger and dirt in the country now cloud the memory of the upper-class genteel life style of her childhood and youth. Yet the longing for the security of home and comfort of her own culture creates a conflict known only to those born in the third world burned with the choice of living in the West. Things go on happening before her eyes and she reacts to those with the indifferent detachment of someone with the 'foreignness of spirit.' (Maiti) Mukherjee's verbalization on dislocation is clear with this irresoluteness of the spit self. In *The Tiger's Daughter* Tara is not only caught physically but also emotionally and culturally between two worlds caused by dislocation.

Bharati Mukherjee's second novel '*Wife'* (1974) also deals with the intricacies resulted by dislocation. The novel is an account of the short, terrible marriage of Dimple Basu nee Dasgupta and her psychological alteration caused by moving away from their secure environment. Like *The Tiger's Daughter*, the autobiographical elements are found in this novel too. In Bharati Mukherjee's writings, we find a strong urge to write about her own struggle with identity first as an exile from India, then as an Indian expatriate in Canada, and finally as an immigrant in the United States. Her work corresponds with the various phases of her life as her protagonists are close projection of herself. Dimple Dasgupta, in *Wife,* is one of her autobiographical sketches of her own experiences as an expatriate in Canada, even though New York is the setting of this novel. Mukherjee herself commented that the novel reflects her life in Toronto (Goodwin) *Wife* marks Mukherjee's early career as an expatriate writer in Canada. As Fakrul Alam states:

> Her struggle with identity first as an exile from India, then as an Indian expatriate in Canada and finally as an immigrant in the United States had led to her current contentment of being an immigrant in a country of immigrants (Fakrul).

Another critic Amanda Fields echoes the same views:

> One should consider the complex weaving of influences making up her identity. Her personal and creative experience testifies to the fact that survival skills and adaptations are necessary when one is transplanted into a new cultural environment. Mukherjee's fiction is well known for its depiction of characters living through immigration and assimilation. (Fields)

While her experiences as an "invisible minority" in Canada were traumatic for Mukherjee, Feroza Jussawalla points out that Mukherjee celebrates the "exuberance" that an immigrant feels at the melting pot theory of assimilation in the United States (Jussawalla). However, as mentioned by Milton Gordon "the proponents of the melting pot idea had dealt largely with the diversity produced by the sizeable immigration from the countries of northern and western Europe alone—the "old immigration," consisting of peoples with cultures and physical appearance not greatly different from those of the Anglo-Saxon stock." Gordon further pointed out that in the last two decades of the nineteenth century America was engulfed with mostly European

> "..a large-scale influx of peoples from the countries of southern and eastern Europe imperatively posed the question of whether these uprooted newcomers who were crowding into the large cities of the nation and the industrial sector of the economy could also be successfully "melted" (Gordon).

Therefore, Mukherjee's statement regarding assimilation in the melting pot draw a strident comment from Jussawalla, who finds in postcolonial writers like Mukherjee "a

new hegemonic discourse of those who see themselves as assimilated and assimilable. The irony is that in separating themselves from other South Asian immigrants and in hoping to be accepted among the mainstream of the majority, these writers only extend and perpetuate a new colonial mentality". Mukherjee sees the new world full of potential where negotiations for gendered and national identities occur in an alien, albeit liberating, world. Although she has written extensively about immigrant experiences of people from all over the world in her later works, the works that focus on Indian immigrants seem more popular. Additionally, while most immigrants to the West are predominantly from urban areas and are Western-educated, in *Wife* we see a village girl who comes to the United States. Here, the village is shown as the pit of traditionalism from which the protagonist is eager to escape (Singh).

The bare outline of the story reveals that the novel is a tragedy of young girl Dimple who lives in her fantasize world and whose dream world shattered when faced with dislocation. The novel shows a migrant's failure to relocate oneself in the foreign land. Critics such as Siva Ramakrishna opines that in *Wife* Mukherjee exhibits "predicament of an Indian wife finding herself out of depths in a foreign country with an alien milieu" (M). Placing the novel as an immigrant narrative, we find several clearly pronounced themes such as adjustment to a new society, job hunting, frustrations, and the shattering of a dream. The novel moves through Dimple's adjustment in finding a husband who fits her teen-like fantasy, adapting to the life of a married woman in her husband's house and to life as a migrant. In fact, Dimple leads a fragmented life in all three phases and the novel ends in tragedy. However, F. A. Inamdar in his article, "Man Woman Relationship in Bharati Mukherjee's *The Tiger's Daughter* and *Wife*", discards this view that *Wife* is out and out an immigrant novel. He is of the view that *Wife* resembles Arun Joshi's *The Foreigner* and states that the foreignness of the protagonists in both the novels is not something manifest in the alien land, but the problem lies somewhere within them. But as put forth by Anne Brewster in her article, "A Critique of Bharati Mukherjee's New-nationalism", that in her fiction Bharati Mukherjee "constructs a personal mythology of immigration and 'assimilation' and *Wife,* in its depiction of the central character's alienation and depression,

also articulates a bleak vision of an immigrant woman's failure to 'assimilate' into Western culture (Brewster). The novel has an Austenesque opening:

> Dimple Dasgupta had set her heart on marrying a neurosurgeon, but her father was looking for engineers in the matrimonial ads. Dimple wanted a different kind of life—an apartment in Chowrinhee, her hair done by Chinese girls, trips to New Market for nylon saris – so she placed her faith in neurosurgeon and architects. Marriage, she hoped, would bring her freedom, cocktail parties, on carpeted lawns, fund raising dinners for noble charities. Marriage would bring her love. Dimple was happy about that decision, she thoughts of premarital life as a dress rehearsal for actual living. Years of waiting had already made her nervous, unnaturally prone to colds, coughs, and headaches, wasted years – she was twenty – lay like a chill weight in her body (*Wife* 3)

In Dimple's imagination, there is no place for mundane responsibility, struggle with day-to-day existence like water shortage, electricity failure, adjustment with the in-laws. Life has so far been simply a rehearsal for real life, the kind of real life that comes with marriage; for marriage brings opportunities that single women are denied in Indian society, and Dimple longs for those freedoms more than anything. Ironically, Dimple is subjected to the desires and whims of others and has been socialized to be unaware of her own desire for an independent identity but does not know it. She believes she wants to be a wife, but her longing is confused with her desire for freedom (Vignesh).

Dimple marries Amit Basu an engineer chosen by her father. Amit Kumar Basu, an average middle class unimaginative, young engineer who dreams of making a fortune in America and retiring to live a comfortable rich life in Calcutta. He has already applied for immigration to Canada and US and his job application is also pending in Kenya. Dimple is all ecstatic about her marriage. She has always lived in a fantastic world. But after getting married she comes closer to reality which shatters all her dreams. When she confronts the hard realities of life the feathers of her imagination are clipped. All her dreams crumble

one by one and she is deeply upset. She thinks that waiting for marriage was better than getting married. She starts hating everything:

> She hated the gray cotton with red roses inside yellow circles that her mother-in-law had hung on sagging tapes against the metal bars of the windows (*Wife* 20).

Her friend, Paramita Ray, whom everybody calls Pixie had brought for her magazines in the days of waiting and she had seen in those magazines how "young married" were always decorating and selecting their colours, especially bedroom colours. That was supposed to be the best part of getting married; "being free and expressing yourself" (*Wife* 20). Dimple thinks that marriage has robbed her all romantic yearnings so tastefully nourished.

Dimple often measures her husband against her ideal man and her life against her dream and finds both of them wanting in many respects. Thus, she is desperate. She tries hard to adjust to Amit's wishes and be a dutiful wife even though she knows very well that he is not the man of her dreams.

> She wanted to dream of Amit but she knew she would not. Amit did not feed her fantasy life; he was merely the provider of small material comforts. In bitter moments she ranked husband, blender, color TV, Cassette tape recorder, stereo, in their order of convenience (*Wife* 113).

The marital relationship between Dimple and her husband is ruined because Dimple is not able to come to terms with reality. Her attainable happiness with Amit is spoiled by her knowledge of the possibility of greater happiness with a different man.

With the passage of time, her expectations from marriage are utterly frustrated and she begins to develop revulsion for everything around her. Her marriage fails to provide her all the glittering things she had imagined. She, therefore, dislikes everything associated

with her married life. Pregnancy is a boon for Indian women because they are supposed to maintain the continuity of the clan. They are "Shakti-incarnate." They are the very source of creation. If a woman fails to reproduce a child she is condemned and becomes an object of hatred in society. When Dimple gets pregnant, "she thought of ways to get rid of.... Whatever it was that blocked her tubes and pipes" (*Wife* 31). Her repulsion with her own pregnancy is born out of her hatred for Amit who fails to feed her fantasy world.

Dimple is about to migrate but she does "not want to carry any relics from her old life" (*Wife* 42). She thinks that old things will remind her of frustrations and irritations. She counts her pregnancy also among the relics and ponders over ways of getting rid of it. She wants everything to be nice and new when she goes to the US. At last she decides to end it by skipping ropes. The description of her self-abortion is very poignant and touching.

> She had skipped rope until her legs grew numb and her stomach burned; then she had poured water from the heavy bucket over her head, shoulders, over the tight little curve of her stomach. She had poured until the last of the blood washed off her legs; then she had collapsed (*Wife* 42).

This self-abortion by Dimple raises serious questions regarding her very womanhood. After terminating her pregnancy, she hardly gives any afterthought to it. She never repents for the cruel deed she has committed by killing a prospective human life. She remains poised and dispassionate while it should have led her to an emotional upheaval. In the view of some critics Dimple's act of abortion "is a sacrament of liberation from the traditional roles and constraints of womanhood" (M. M. Sharma). *Wife* was so different from *The Tiger's Daughter* that many readers didn't know what to make of it. Tara Cartwright returns to India to recover her roots; Dimple Basu does everything she can to obliterate her. We sympathies with and feel for Tara but Dimple's action of self-abortion fails to arouse our sympathy. *Wife* had a negative response from the critics. *Ms.* Magazine described Bharati Mukherjee 'Miss Mean Mouth' when this novel came out. It said "Some books can be allowed to die, but others have to be killed" (Klass). Another critic raised questions about Mukherjee's intention in writing "a sick novel about a sick woman, a novel which is

an aberration and does not belong to the mainstream of Indian fiction" (Ramachandra). But Mukherjee understands them all too well. She admits that *Wife* 'was a very controversial book [and] was very painful to [her].' (Connell) *Wife* is the story of these consequences. For Dimple, as for some Western feminists, abortion is a sacrament of liberation from the traditional roles and constraints of womanhood. She terminates her pregnancy by skipping rope, but that does not mean that the action is undertaken frivolously. Rather, this detail may signify that the action is frivolous one in a very deep and sinister sense, and that Dimple is aware of this. It is the deliberate repudiation of a moral code for which she has no replacement. Mukherjee's lightness of touch is here no lack of seriousness. In an interview given to Shefali Desai and Tony Barnstone, Mukherjee claims that through her writings she tries to make her own myth for as an immigrant she doesn't have models in America. She says:

> When I grew up, I didn't have the bedtime tales of Hans Christian Andersen, but the Puranic tales, thousands of years B.C., and the Hindu epics. Which means that some of the stories, like that of Sita, the perfect wife who is self-sacrificing and self-effacing, are the ones that I want to attack, critique (Desai, Branstone and Mukherjee).

The novel *Wife,* in Diane Johnson's words, is "a funny but upsetting account of the conflict of Western and Indian cultures." Mukherjee shows a close encounter of two cultures faced by an immigrant. After their marriage, the Basus immigrate to America. In spite of her friend's advice about not to settle in the US, Dimple looks thrilled and excited when she first lands at Kennedy Airport.

> She had never seen such bigness before. The bigness was thrilling and a little scary as well. She could not imagine the kind of people who had conceived it and who controlled it (*Wife* 52).

Things become complicated for Basus as soon as they reach America where they live in a series of apartments temporarily vacated by acquaintances. The novelist makes apparent how dislocation cause new identities. Mukherjee describes the challenges faced by an

immigrant in a foreign land. Dimple had to undergo a traumatic experience when she goes to the market to buy cheese cake. She asks a shopkeeper selling beef and other items if he has cheese cake. The shopkeeper gives her a stern look and tells her very harshly that if she was not aware of the American law. Dimple was so terrified that when the shopkeeper opened his drawer to take out something, she thought that he was taking out a gun to kill her.

This very first exposure to America leaves a traumatic effect on her mind. She fails to understand the reason why a man selling beef etc. cannot sell cheese cake. What is the law of America? Did she really insult that man by asking for cheesecake? Does this provide him with sufficient reason for killing her? She runs from there for life and forgets to buy anything herself. Her bewilderment with America is due to her sheltered childhood. She had hardly ever been out of Calcutta. She did not know what might offend anybody there to cost her the precious life itself. How a boorish, an innocent Indian wife can keep her nerves in a country where murder was like flapping the bugs? Dimple thought:

> She was caught in the crossfire of an American communalism. She could not understand. She felt she would come very close to being killed on her morning in America. (*Wife* 60).

Milton Gordon once talked about the acculturation model as an alternative to the melting pot. Ethnic groups, according to him, had been adopting the values of the host culture and were being integrated into the host society in so far as their secondary relations were concerned. But in their interpersonal group-relations, they preferred to stay within their own community and uphold their own ethnic sub-culture. While applying this theory to the novel, it becomes obvious that how Dimple exhilarated by meeting people with whom she can identify herself easily. The party at Vinod Khanna's place was splendid and Dimple saw Indian-Americans in flying colours. This was for the first time that Dimple happens to see so many Indians since she had left Calcutta. She realized, a "little India" had come alive. People like the Sens, Mehras, Khannas and Bhattacharayas, Miss Chakravorty all talking in familiar language. Everybody full of praise for Indian things – culture, food, habit etc. Everyone showing disgust with Americans. For them Americans

are ‘dirty people’ who bathe only once a week. Not only this they ‘use a lot of perfume’. This is just beyond Mrs. Bhattacharya’s understanding why they wash their clothes in the bathroom sink in which they spit and wash their dishes? Way back to Queens Jyoti is full of praise for the feeling of unity among Indians abroad. Jyoti said:

> Wasn’t it wonderful that Indians abroad were so outgoing and open minded? They didn’t give a damn about communalism and petty feelings. They personally counted a number of Punjabis and Gujaratis and South Indians among their friends (*Wife 67).*

Amit’s frustration is now obvious because he finds himself still jobless. In the parties his opinion does not matter. As the days pass by, he becomes more impatient and his confidence starts shaking. This embitters his relationship with Dimple and petty-fogging becomes the order of the day. On the other hand, Dimple helps Meena Sen in domestic works and spends her time in watching T.V. or reading newspapers. Dimple always lives under fear— everything terrifies her. All she hears about is murder, smugglings in the basement of the building etc. She is afraid of the policemen:

> She was scared of the policemen; they just did not look inoffensive, like the ones back home (*Wife* 74).

In yet another party at Mullicks, Dimple gets an opportunity to meet people both Indians and native Americans and study their behavior. Here she meets Ina, the notorious wife of Bijoy Mullick. She has a particular theory about Indian immigrant. She says that in America, Indians find themselves in trouble because they imitate badly and preserve things even worse.

> It takes them a year to get out of their system. In the second year they’ve bought all the things they’ve hungered for. So, then they go back, or they stay here and vegetate or else they have got to live anyone else (*Wife 76*).

In *The Tiger's Daughter* Bharati Mukherjee illustrate how Tara's enterprising returning to India and family homes is painfully bewildering. Whereas in *Wife* and other works she shows how the attempt to build new South Asian American lives and homes often leads to insanity and violence. Her characters remind one of circus performers, a combination of tightrope walkers and trapeze artists, as they search for secure, even familiar, places they can claim as their home. As they look for compromises between their cultures, they try to hold on to their love for their family and friends who seem to have become strangers. They try to transcend the isolation of being a foreigner not only in another country but also in their own cultures. Most of these attempts fail and we see these South Asian Americans become untidily unraveled, caught and wounded on the sharp edges of cultural complexities and conflicts. The protagonist, Tara, in *The Tiger's Daughter,* is caught in the physical violence of Calcutta as she tries to untangle the confusion of different cultures. Dimple loses her sanity when faced with a culture she doesn't comprehend and which refuses to make room for her. The readers get baffled with these two characters. In the opinion of Roshani Rustomiji-Kerns *The Tiger's Daughter* and *Wife* are only well-written South Asian American gothic: "who here would kill her husband as he eats his cereal? and who would be so silly as to be caught in the midst of a political confrontation?" But there is less doubt that in her writing Mukherjee has taken her own fears and struggles, as well as the fears and struggles of many immigrants and gave voice to their experiences, and presented some of the more violent and grotesque aspects of cultural collisions. (Rustomji-Kerns) Dimple, who comes to the United States as the dependent wife of an engineer, is not expected by her husband or her community to have any interaction with the new culture; she is expected to leave it to her husband to negotiate the pressures of life in an alien land and to accomplish the goal—making money—that has brought them to America. However, television brings America's cultural world into her apartment, and she buys into the version of American life that they sell. Frustrated and unnerved by the disjunction between the life she leads and those that America seems to promise her on television, she kills her husband, because in her mind it is, he who stands in the way of her happiness (Wickramagamage).

The process of moving away from one's native place has not always been fruitful for many immigrants. Sociological surveys and literary representations of the New World immigrant experience, for instance, suggest that many immigrants both perceive and experience immigration as deracination and dislocation, leading them to congregate in ethnic enclaves, where they attempt to maintain the illusion of a home away from home. In views of Jaspal Kaur Singh, while *The Tiger's Daughter* maps Mukherjee's slow dissociation and withdrawal from the old world, *Wife* represents the possibilities of the new world for the immigrant. In *Wife,* we see Dimple is unable to cope with the transformation and liberation she witnesses in the United Sates. Mukherjee shows us that Dimple has in her the makings of an independent, liberated woman, or is it really the making of a "mad" woman?

The tension between the traditional and the modern, between the East and the West, manifests itself when Dimple moves to America with Amit a few months after her marriage. After he gets a job as a boiler maintenance engineer, Dimple is represented as being kept isolated in an apartment all day as she does not have transportation, nor does she know how to drive. Also, she is unsure about her English-speaking skills. In spite of warnings by the Sens against Ina, Dimple is fascinated by her. However, Dimple is not allowed to make friends with Ina because Amit considers her too "Americanized"; she might give Dimple some "bad ideas." The "bad idea" is that Ina is a chain smoker, drinks, flirts and goes to night school. Sens and others are disgusted with her because "she wears pants and mascara" and is "more American than the Americans. Indian society is a patriarchal society and it hardly permits a woman to talk of liberation and equality. Here male members decide the fate of their female counterpart. An Indian woman has no right to put herself in such unsafe situations, especially "with so many Indians around, a television, and a child, a woman shouldn't get time to get crazy ideas." (*Wife* 69). Mukherjee shows Amit's anxiety about the West and its "liberating" influences, which manifests itself in such representations. It is this anxiety which prompts him to restrain Dimple from accepting Ina's drink: "She does not like alcoholic beverages," Amit said, "she does not even like coke" (*Wife* 77). It is at this party that Dimple and Amit meet Marsha Mookerji and Pradosh Mookerji – their future benefactors. For Dimple, Milt Glasser, brother of Marsha is like a riddle. She is instantly attracted towards his tall and lanky personality and his courteous manners though "Dimple

could not follow the way he talked, the things he talked about and the amazing leaps between his conversations" (*Wife* 83).

The theme of dislocation becomes apparent when with the passage of time, Dimple starts breaking after the realization that she is deceived in marriage and a good-for-nothing husband like Amit will not cater for her dream world. She cannot tolerate his snores anymore and insomnia becomes her accustomed habit. She suddenly realizes that "she hated the Sens' apartment, sofa-bed, the wall to wall rug" (*Wife* 88). Now she gets disturbed at those habits of Amit which she ignored at Calcutta:

> In Calcutta she had trained herself not to see his hand (always the left) as it stopped carefully at each button, then slid up and down a few times before hanging limply at his side. But in New York these little gestures had begun to irritate her (*Wife* 88).

She thinks that her marriage to Amit is a failure of her dreams:

> She was bitter that marriage had betrayed her, had not provided all the glittery things she had imagined, had not brought her cocktails under canopied skies and three A.M. drives to dinzy restaurants where they sold divine Kababs rolled in roti (*Wife* 102).

Dimple and Amit's struggles to adjust with each other serve as a metaphor for the process of their assimilation in the US. Dimple's alienation aggravated when she finds herself clueless with the names of the places like Nebraska and Nevada, Ohio and Iowa. She is equally unhappy with her physique also because she sees herself now with the eyes of Ina Mullick. America underscores Dimple's inferiority and she contemplates ways of bringing an end to this tortuous existence. The second movement of the novel ends with Amit getting a job and with their decision to move to Greenwich in Marsha's flat.

The third and final movement is the climax marked by intense dramatic scenes punctuated with Dimple's growing abnormality. She had always dreamt of a splendid

apartment fully furnished and accomplished with all sorts of appliances. Marsha's flat is like a dream come true for her. However, the burden of responsibilities in terms of watering the plants and cleaning the kitchen, etc. annoys her greatly. Amit feels lonely and wishes if they could have shifted near the Sens. Quite often Dimple feels irritated even over trifles. One day while Amit is reading something, she complains of exhaustion which he attributes to her meagre diet. She loses her temper at this inference:

> I feel sort of dead inside and you can do is read the paper and talk to me about food. You never listen; you've never listened to me. You hate me. Don't deny it; I know you do. You hate me because I'm not fat and fair. (*Wife* 110).

The furious outburst of Dimple shows her accumulated frustrations. She is suffering from inferiority complex and thinks that she is not able to win her husband's love and affection. Amit may also be blamed for his ignorance of female psychology. He thinks that providing creature comforts is enough and hardly bothers for her emotional needs. Her takes her out of four-walls very rarely and goes on admonishing instead:

> You must go out, make friends, do something constructive, not stay at home and think about Calcutta (*Wife* 111).

To be fair to Dimple it can be said that with her deficiencies in English she could have hardly conducted herself well in a city of enormous size like New York on her own.

America has outwitted her and now she is gripped by a sense of nostalgia. It is just beyond her understanding "how could she live in a country… where every other woman was a stranger, where she felt different, ignorant, exposed to ridicule in the elevator?" (*Wife* 112). Her whole world is limited to the four-walls of the apartment and media becomes her only friend. She feels like writing to Pixie but drops the idea because she thinks:

> Friendship was impossible through letters. Conveying New York, Ina Mullick, her nightmares, the "phase" (as Amit called it) she was going through — all impossible to talk about. (*Wife* 120).

In leisurely hours she tries to dream about Amit but fails to do so because

> Amit did not feed her fantasy life; he was merely the provider of small material comforts. In bitter moments, she ranked husband, blender, color TV, cassette, tape recorder, stereo, in their order of convenience (*Wife* 113).

Dimple's bracketing of her husband with electronic appliances evidences that Amit is just a robot and not an actual human being for her. (Kumar)

Dimple's disgust with American English and American system gets accentuated even by small things. She is afraid to operate the self-service elevators. Linda Sandler explains it in terms of her traditional upbringing:

> Dimple emigrates to the electronic age with her traditional values almost intact, only partly modified by the pop culture of modern Calcutta, she is unable to make the transition from Before to After and chooses violence as a "problem-solving" device… (Sandler)

Dimple finds life impossible "with the people who didn't understand about Durga Puja" (*Wife* 114). Assimilation is a process in which formerly distinct and separate groups come to share a common culture and merge together socially. As a society undergoes assimilation, differences among groups decrease. Pluralism, on the other hand, exists when groups maintain their individual identities. For Indians, religion is an integral part of life and Dimple's failure to absorb completely in the American world attributed to sticking, in some extent, with her own culture. As stated by Andrew Greeley:

> As the ingredients in a stew maintain their distinctiveness despite being affected by the flavor of others, so also do ethnic groups retain certain

> peculiar aspects of their own culture even after adopting more or less the American life style. (Greeley)

An expatriate is tenaciously conscious of preserving one's identity even in most trying moments of life. In America, Dimple realizes how easy it was to live, to communicate, to share with people in Calcutta. She never felt frightened at the sight of the policemen whose faces were so friendly, but the scene has changed completely in the new environment. Enakshi Choudhary describes Dimple's psychological condition caused by dislocation:

> She is scared of self-service elevators, of policemen, of gadgets and appliances. She does not want to wear Western clothes as she thinks she would be mistakenly taken for a Puerto Rican. She does not want to lose her identity but feels isolated, trapped, alienated, marginalized. (Choudhury)

Dimple's act of killing Amit towards the end of the novel can be attributed to her feeling of marginalization. She did have expected some trouble in the American set up when she came to this city because pain was part of any new beginning. But never in her wildest dreams had she imagined 'to be strained like this beyond endurance.' The consequences of change turned too tragic to her imagination. Dimple finds that she is not only badly prepared for the cultural gulf she experiences, but also the ever-widening gap in her barren relationship with Amit.

> She had expected pain when she had come to America, had told herself that pain was part of any new beginning, and in the sweet structures of that new life had allotted pain a special place. But she had not expected her mind to be strained like this, beyond endurance. She had not anticipated inertia, exhaustion, endless indecisiveness (*Wife* 115).

Asnani pertinently ascribes Dimple's mental state to the 'dilemma of cultures' –

> Dimple is entrapped in a dilemma of tensions between American culture and society and the traditional constraints surrounding an Indian wife,

> between a feminist desire to be assertive and independent and the Indian need to be submissive and self-effacing. (Asnani)

It is obvious that immigrants live in two worlds which is not only painful but also marginalising for them. At times when loneliness becomes unbearable dimple contemplates as many as seven ways of committing suicide. It seems as if she is in love with whatever is dark, evil, sinister, gruesome – murder, suicide, mugging these are all fascinating words for her. Even her ways of getting rid of life are fanciful like a television advertisement. She cannot trust anybody but media. Even "Her own body seemed curiously alien to her, filled with hate, malice, an insane desire to hurt, yet weightless, almost airborne" (*Wife* 117). Linda Sandler accounts for this feeling of 'emptiness' as follows:

> She is uprooted from her family and her familiar world, and projected into a social vacuum where the media becomes her surrogate community, her global village. New York intensifies her frustrations and unhooks her further from reality.

Her mind is always full of news about mugging and rape; she always feels that someone is breaking her window. When Amit dismisses her apprehensions as foolishness as they live on the 14th floor, she retorts: "In America anything is possible. You can be raped and killed on any floor" (*Wife* 129). In a state of nervousness, she hurts Amit with knife when he comes from behind to embrace her. She is all apologetic and blames America for her timidity.

The constructions of gender identity in most minority communities in the United States are complicated with racial oppression. In order to fight their marginalization in the dominant discourse, the middle-class, Western-educated Indians seek to validate their identity through the private sphere. While the public sphere, where success is coded in material gains, is open to educated Indians, the private and cultural spaces of America are shut off to most Indians. Thus, Indians, mostly men, can be progressive and Westernized in the public spaces, but the domestic and private space must remain India, therefore traditional.

In spite of all the warnings about "crazy ideas," Dimple makes friends with Ina, whose friendship with Milt, a young white American man, she envies. Even though Ina is married, she has a comfortable friendship with another man. Dimple aspires to be like Ina, who is spontaneous and funny, but must keep her friendship with Ina and Milt a secret. Feeling alienated and lonely, she spends more time watching soap operas and other programs on television and stars confusing her reality with that of the characters on television. The two hegemonies – Western and Patriarchal – are reconstructing Dimple's psyche through different ideological discursive systems at this point.

Dimple tries to "cite" the dominant norms by looking for Marsha's (the woman whose apartment they are subletting) Western clothing and trying on it. She starts daydreaming about liberty and freedom. But as a caretaker of tradition and culture, and caught between two world views, Dimple starts dreading even her dreams, which she cannot share with anyone. She becomes "a small stiff lump, hair arranged like black bat wings against the sky-blue pillow" (128). Caught in such a dismal situation, Dimple feels that catching a fatal disease, like leukemia, is preferable and more "glamorous." Her reality turns to dreaming, and her journey to "madness" begins. Were her madness stems from her decision to abort her baby? Or does it start one afternoon when she has sex with the tall and good-looking Milt, a "genuine American," who considers her beautiful, and who finds the dimple on her cheeks charming?

She thinks that having casual sex with Milt will turn her into an American; instead, she feels disappointed and guilty:

> She has mismanaged [sex with Milt] all; she'd seen enough TV and read enough novels to know this was the time to lie in bed, to hum little songs, to pinch, pull, slap; it was not the time to reach for dark glasses and sensible undergarments and make discreet inquiries about the young man's job. She was so much worse off than ever, lonelier, more cut off from Amit, from the Indians, left only with borrowed disguises. She felt like a shadow without feelings. Whatever she did, no matter how coolly she planned it, would be wrong. (*Wife* 200)

For Mukherjee's women protagonists, identity construction entails finding out about their sexuality, which might lead them to liberation and happiness. If she can have casual sex, she must be turning "American." Yet Dimple starts to contemplate suicide as a way out:

> One [way] was to stand under a warm shower and slice open a jugular…. She could see pretty jet sprays of pinkish blood..... She would like to make one extravagant gesture in her life" (*Wife* 154).

Mukherjee claims that Dimple's contemplation of suicide is very Indian, very traditional: "Dimple, if she had remained in Calcutta, would have gone into depression, and she would have found a very convenient way out for unhappy Bengali wives – suicide" (Connell 20). Mukherjee's rewriting of "sanctioned suicide" in India, where women do not commit suicide because they cannot "find" themselves, but because of severe physical, economic, and psychological oppression from greedy in-laws due to their inability to give dowry, shows her subject position as Westernized. Alienation and dislocation can lead one to see oppressions differently: in India, economic difficulties are paramount; in America, where prosperity reigns, it is the "human condition" that calls for suicide. If one cannot find oneself, one can annihilate oneself.

But Dimple, whose resistance to the hegemonies of both India and the United States is not successful, decides to end her oppression by destroying the obstacle to her successful assimilation:

> That night trapped between the cold wall and Amit's heavy body, in post nightmare lucidity, she sought revenge …. her own intensity shocked her – she had not considered herself susceptible to violence – so she tried to explain it away as unnatural sexual desire. 'Love is dread,' she whispered loudly to the sleeper (*Wife* 117).

As she considers killing Amit by "applying light, rhythmical pressure" on Amit's neck, she begins "to feel that violence was right, even decent…. Her own body seemed curiously alien to her, filled with hate, malice, and insane desire to hurt, yet weightless, almost airborne" (*Wife* 117).

Thus, the state of dislocation brought about by the experience of immigration is a very painful experience for all human beings. Historical forces have uprooted people in all parts of the world, but the diverse and unique form of immigration to the United States, the only country formed for and by immigrants, offers a strange alienation. Dislocation brings psychological and historical suspension and self-doubt, one that does not get better with time. Bharati Mukherjee's *Wife* explores the agonies, the pains and the cultural tension immigration brings into a woman's life. *Wife* is not a novel merely of the record of an immigrant's experience. It is a careful and sensitive examination of the condition with keen political and social concerns. The novel offers a rare and insightful critique of the attitudes and perspectives of men toward women, and of one culture toward another. After her marriage to Amit, Dimple moves to the United States and begins a journey of cultural moon walk. Her conflicts, with her husbands and her eventual murder of him, seen as mere inflated mental sickness. But her struggle and pain are real as she is devastated and depressed due her excessive dependence on others, a loss of opportunity to build her own identity and a hostile environment in the adopted country. Dimple is driven to despair and the novelist finds her killing her husband and suicidal in the end.

To conclude, it is found that both in *The Tiger's Daughter* and in *Wife*, Bharati Mukherjee deals with the theme of dislocation. Being rootless and displaced the migrants yearns for *home*, try to go back to the *lost origin* and *imaginary homelands.* They also face cultural dilemma when their cultural practices are mocked at and their alienation intensified in the process of assimilation and acculturation. Dislocated from their homeland, the protagonists of these two novels go through the problems of identity crisis. Both the protagonists, Tara in *The Tiger's Daughter* and Dimple in *Wife*, are dislocated, geographically as well as in mind and spirit. They share the expatriate characteristic of being ill-adapted to their native land as well as to the adopted one. They had gone through

the frustration and struggle of expatriation. They represent the dilemma faced by expatriates. In these two novels Mukherjee presents some of the more violent and grotesque aspects of cultural collisions. In both these novels, not only is dislocation a major theme, but it becomes a metaphor for deeper levels of alienation like existential alienation and self-estrangement. This is revealed in some significant images used in the two novels. In *The Tiger's Daughter*, Hotel Catelli- Continental, described as the "navel of the universe," becomes an important symbol of a rootless existence, a symbol of Tara's dislocation. Where as in *Wife*, the Cage is an important symbol. It stands for a comfortable but restricted existence, for isolation and a denial of freedom. It is significant that Dimple kills her husband after watching a T.V. Programme in which a bird cage figured prominently (M.). She sets herself free by killing her husband. The cultural dislocation she experiences since her arrival to America culminates in the killing of her husband.

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CHAPTER III

Theme of Dislocation in *Jasmine* and *Desirable Daughters*

Bharati Mukherjee's literary work is known for celebrating, too enthusiastically, the swagger of immigration as well as the process of transformation. According to Fakrul Alam, in her novels, Bharati Mukherjee has occupied herself with the "phenomena of migration, the status of new immigrants, the feeling of alienation often experienced by expatriates" and with the expatriate's identity formation due to the process of dislocation (Alam). In her third novel, *Jasmine,* Bharati Mukherjee continues with the theme of dislocation which was the key theme for her previous two novels namely, *The Tiger's Daughter* and *Wife.* In fact, *Jasmine* can be read as a carry forward story of Tara in *The Tiger's Daughter* and Dimple in *Wife*. The dislocation in *The Tiger's Daughter* becomes apparent with the immigrant's return journey to home only to realize the impossibility of repatriation. Tara could not feel at home when she comes back to India after a long stay in the US. The novel ends with Tara in a car surrounded by a mob, immobile in her class privilege. Gurleen Grewal remarks on this:

> The dislocation and the entrapment of gender and class in *The Tiger's Daughter* gives ways to the relocation and emancipation of the Indian woman in *Jasmine* whom we see, in the novel's last scene, heading for the car that will transport her to the California frontier (Grewal).

Also, if the heroin in *Wife* fails to cope with the transformation bring about by the experience of dislocation as well as exposure to American culture, the heroin in *Jasmine* reincarnates herself in multiple identities. Both Dimple and Jasmine discover that they cannot live in and be encompassed by a culture—in this case, the American culture—without entering some form of interaction with it. The author herself, wants to celebrate the "exuberance of immigration":

> I have joined imaginative forces with an anonymous, driven, underclass of semi-assimilated Indians with sentimental attachments to a distant homeland but no real desire for permanent return. I see my "immigrant" story replicated in a dozen American cities, and instead of seeing my Indianness as a fragile identity to be preserved against obliteration, (or worse, a 'visible' disfigurement to be hidden), I see it now as a set fluid identities to be celebrated (Mukherjee).

In postmodernist theory, *subjectivity* means to take the perspective of the individual self, rather than some neutral, *objective*, perspective, from outside the self's experience. Female subjectivity looks at how a woman herself (the "subject") lived and saw her role in life. Female subjectivity takes seriously the experience of women as human beings and individuals. Subjectivity looks at how women saw their activities and roles as contributing (or not) to her identity and meaning (Lewis). Echoing this view, Susan Koshy believes that female subjectivity forms the primary site of dislocation in Bharati Mukherjee's stories of the making and imagining of immigrant identities in America. Mukherjee, in her stories reveals the vexed and ambivalent renarrations of "woman" produced by the dissemination of identities (Koshy). The heroine of *Jasmine* on her way to becoming American, changes names, places, and roles as regularly as a member of a road-show repertory company. We first encounter her as Jyoti, a poor Hindu girl, beautiful, smart but dowry-less. She marries a modern young Indian, who eager to transform her into a city woman, decrees that she is to be called Jasmine. Later, as an 'undocumented' '-an illegal alien-she finds her way from Florida to New York to Iowa. There, in the land of blonds, this brown Asian outside takes on an identity suitable to the surroundings: she becomes Jane Ripplemeyer (Dudar). Jasmine does not transform herself gradually; she reinvents herself by killing her old selves: "There are no harmless, compassionate ways to make oneself. We murder who we were so we can rebirth ourselves in the images of dreams" (*Jasmine* 25). It is this sense of the existence of alternative realities, of life as a continual emigration from oneself to another, which pervades in *Jasmine*.

Mukherjee's earlier two novels reflect the shades of author's life because the settings, characters as well as the social and political milieu of these two novels are Bengal

and Calcutta, the native place of Mukherjee herself. However, in *Jasmine* the author presents an altogether new settings and plot associated with a young Punjabi girl. As the author, herself states:

> *Jasmine* contains the shape of my life and my desire. But no incident is at all autobiographical. (Mukherjee, PW Interviews)

She and her eponymous narrator have very different backgrounds, to be sure. The author was an urban child of privilege in the Bengali cultural center of Calcutta who earned a Ph.D. at the University of Iowa. The character grows up sleeping on the dirt floor of a hut in a benighted village in the Punjab and barely avoids an arranged marriage at age twelve before illegally immigrating to the United States. Despite the writer's claim that no incident in the novel is autobiographical, many of Jasmine's experiences have their genesis in Mukherjee's life. An exploration of her literary transfiguration of fact into fiction reveals that a key technique of her artistry in *Jasmine* is to take personal memories and add action, often in the form of violence, to illustrate dramatically a non-Western feminism in the course of Jasmine's Americanization (B. Edwards). like Jasmine, Bharati Mukherjee has changed citizenships and cultures with disorienting rapidity.

In *Jasmine* Bharati Mukherjee occupied herself in delineating the experience of dislocation as a course of evolution for the key character. Published in 1989, *Jasmine* is a story of dislocation and relocation as the title character continually sheds lives to move into other roles, moving further westward while constantly fleeing pieces of her past. In it, Mukherjee rejoices in the idea of assimilation and makes it clear that Jasmine needs to travel to America to make something significant of her life, because in the so called 'Third World' she faced only despair and loss. In *Jasmine*, the story describes a young woman's struggle to fit into the foreign land, adopting the American lifestyle and her path to self-transformation. Through *Jasmine* Mukherjee once again return to her favourite literary form i.e. novel. The book received good response from the readers as well as from the critics and established Mukherjee as the mainstream American novelist. Interestingly, the author does not provide any synopsis of the plot at the back cover. All we have are excerpts from reviews. *The New York Times Book Reviews* acclaims the novel as 'rich' and "One of

the most suggestive novels we have about what it is to become an American"; implicating the process of how people from different cultures, religions, social groups, and philosophies steer into the multi-ethnic and multicultural United States and adopting the American ethnicity. The *San Francisco Chronicle* appreciates the novel for its exotic and poetic beauty as well as perfectly controlled narrative. In the similar voice *The New York Times* welcomes the novelist for eloquently succeeded in creating "A fable, a kind of impressionistic prose poem, about being an exile, a refugee, a spiritual vagabond in the world today." Thematically the novel explores the exile and the immigrant experience, as well as the role of women in both India and the United States.

In *Jasmine,* Mukherjee encapsulates many aspects of the immigrant experience in America, in the process revealing the ways in which newcomers from the Third World are being absorbed by, and at the same time are transforming America. The thematic focus of the novel is on protagonist's exile. In fact, the novel opens with the impending dislocation of Jasmine:

> Lifetimes ago, under a banyan tree in the village of Hasnapur, an astrologer cupped his ears—his satellite dish to the stars—and foretold my widowhood and exile (*Jasmine* 3).

The phrase "lifetimes ago," sets in motion its major motifs, or themes: continuous displacement and recreation of one's self. Jasmine is seven years old. Under a banyan tree in Hasnapur, an astrologer foretells her eventual widowhood and exile. Given the traditional Hindu belief in the accuracy of such astrological forecasts, this is a grave moment in the young girl's life. It foreshadows her first husband's death and even her move to the isolated Iowa farm town of Baden. Jasmine boldly challenges the astrologer and incurs his anger. As she tries to run away from him, she trips and falls only to receive a star-like wound on her forehead. Her sisters *worry* that the wound will lesser her prospects of marriage. But Jasmine is not affected by all this and calls the scar as her "third eye." She even proclaims herself a "sage" rewriting her position from passive object to empowered seer.

Jasmine concerns the dislocation and re-location undertaken by a young village girl who is uprooted from her home in rural India, and finds herself, by some twist of fortune, on her way to Tampa, Florida. In *Jasmine*, the protagonist's name was initially Jyoti. Jyoti's father was a migrant who came to the remote village of Hasnapur in the Punjab from Lahore during the Partition riots. One recent article in *The Guardian* tells how the partition of India was one of the worst calamities of the 20th century. It is estimated that a million-people died, from ethnic violence and from diseases rife in makeshift refugee camps. Up to 15 million people left their homes to begin a new life in India or Pakistan. The epicentre was Punjab, and nearly every Punjabi family – Indian and Pakistani – can tell a tale about a relative uprooted in the night, the old friends and servants left behind, the nostalgia for a cherished house now fallen into new hands (Khan).

For Jasmine's family, an acute sense of loss and displacement defines the post-partition, postcolonial condition. They were forced violently from their comfortable, upper-middle class lifestyle in Lahore – where they had previously owned land and shops, lived in a sprawling home, and were respected for their family name – and forced into "a village of flaky mud huts" (*Jasmine* 41). Jasmine narrates how this loss of home, homeland, and status plagues her family:

> Mataji, my mother, couldn't forget the Partition Riots. Muslims sacked our house. Neighbour's servants tugged off earrings and bangles, defiled grottoes, sobered my grandfather's horse. Life shouldn't have turned out that way! I've never been to Lahore, but the loss survives in the instant replay of my family story: forever Lahore smokes, forever my parents flee (*Jasmine* 41).

The trauma of this departure forces Jasmine's parents into an exile that makes her mother distrustful and pessimistic, and that her father never comes to accept. Jasmine describes his perpetual attachment to Lahore in the kurtas he continued to wear, the Pakistani radio broadcasts he listened to, and his disgust for anything not related to Lahore – including the mangoes, women, music, and Punjabi dialect of the Indian side of the partition (Alfonso-Forero).

Jyoti's earliest memories deal with the agony of these people uprooted from their homesteads. Her agony is also aggravated by the fact that she is born a girl, and therefore,

a burden to her impoverished family. She recalls how as an infant she was strangulated by her mother to spare her the pain of dowry-less bride:

> If I had been a boy, my birth in a bountiful year would have marked me as lucky, a child with a special destiny to fulfill. But daughters were curses. A daughter had to be married off before she could enter heaven, and dowries beggared families for generations (*Jasmine*, 39).

She is constantly reminded of her misfortune of being a dowry-less daughter. However, luck favours her, and she marries Prakash Vijh, 'a modern man, a city man.' Prakash represents one of those Indians who believe in the American immigrant saga that all people in the United States, if only they worked hard, could become wealthy (Khandelwal, Becoming American, Being Indian). Prakash renames her as Jasmine after their marriage and declares that there is no room in modern India for feudalism. Jasmine thinks of Prakash as Prof. Higgins in Pygmalion.

> He wanted to break down the Jyoti I had been in Hasnapur and make me a new kind of city woman. To break off the past, he gave me a new name: Jasmine. He said, "you are small and sweet and heady, my Jasmine. You'll quicken the whole world with your perfume" (*Jasmine*, 77).

In her essay, "Re-imagining Happily-Ever-After in Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine*," Amy Nishimura states that in *Jasmine* Mukherjee constructs a prototypical newlywed coupled, regardless of national identity; at the same time, she nods to the problematic construction of America as a traveling destination or site where dreams come true. As a young, married couple, Prakash and Jyoti are enamored by the travel brochures and the lofty descriptions of America. Nestled in travel brochures, the escape mechanism and the promise of security and wealth are hypnotic for both Prakash and Jyoti. The marketing of America as a global stopping point, as a continuum of the 1970s-suburban dream world, where everyone can achieve the American dream, is re-set in India (Nishimura). Prakash works hard to secure a comfortable life for him and Jasmine. He is frustrated with the fact

that he is surrounded by backward, corrupt, and mediocre fools. It is obvious that Prakash made Jyoti believed that to live a real life they should leave India and go away to America. Once he reads to her a letter from Professor Devinder Vadhera, his former teacher.

> Day by day our Jullundhar graduates are rushing to this country and minting lakhs and lakhs of rupees. They stay in nice houses with 24-hoour electricity and no-load shedding. They have running hot and cold water. They and their wives also are liking to work. They enjoy all manner of comforts and amenities. I see the onrush of the dunderheads from our college. When will I see my truly best student blooming in the healthy soil of this country? (*Jasmine* 84)

Jasmine comforts him by agreeing to leave for America. She thinks that if they could just get away from India, then all fates would be cancelled. Here she has on her mind the astrologer's prophecy. She thinks that by leaving India she would avoid the prophecy. It would be a new start with the destiny. There would not be any restrictions on her way of living. She could say or become anything she wanted. As she would be far away from India, Gods also cannot see or find her. Shortly after this conversation Jasmine recalls a frightful incident in her school when young boys of Khalistan movement humiliated and shot dead an old teacher. This incident used by the novelist to underline the eventual death of Prakash by the extremist. No sooner does he get confirmation of his admission in the Florida Institute of Technology; Prakash is killed in a bomb explosion meant for Jasmine. Pulverize by this bereavement Jasmine decides to undertake the journey to America that her husband had himself dreamed of.

> Think Vijh & Wife! Prakash exhorted me from every corner of our grief-darkened room. There is no dying, there is only an ascending or a descending, a moving on to other planes. Do not crawl back to Hasnapur and feudalism. That Jyoti is dead (*Jasmine* 96).

Jasmine is an accidental immigrant. So is Dimple in *Wife* but this is the extent of their similarity as far as their experiences of immigration are concerned because the avenues available to them for these acts of spatial relocation are different. Dimple is allowed to arrive upon the shores of America using the "official" route because she has the "proper" credentials as the dependent wife of a man in the "desirable" -aliens category, whereas, after her husband's death, Jasmine can no longer lay claim to that "proper" designation. Instead, she must take the "improper" route to America used by numerous other illegal immigrant hopefuls. She comes to America because she has taken it upon herself to fulfill her husband's fervent dream of coming to America—which he cherished as the promised land of the free—after his untimely death. But Jasmine is neither intimidated by an image of America as the space of a cultural "other," nor buoyed up by a vision of it as the mythical land of freedom. America appears reduced, in her eyes, to the size of a sanctified cremating ground upon which to fulfill the requirements of the mission that brings her there: to go through the motions of *Sati Puja* (i.e., widow sacrifice) under some palm trees on the grounds of the school that her husband had hoped to attend (Wickramagamage).

Some critics attributed Jasmin's leaving India to America because of violence she experienced in the form of her husband's death (B. Edwards). Bose comments: "Violence is a key word, a leitmotif in Mukherjee's fiction, and the 'psychic violence' that she thinks is necessary for the transformation of character is often emphasized by an accompanying physical conflict of some sort" (Bose). Hence Jasmine decides to go to America to fulfil her late husband's will even though the idea seems ludicrous at the start:

> I must be mad! Certainly, I was. I told them. I had sworn it before God. A matter of duty and honor (*Jasmine* 97).

The aim of her journey is to take her husband's suitcase to Florida, symbolically fulfilling her husband's dream to emigrate. The spitting image of the stereotypically good Hindu wife, Jasmine decides that upon reaching the long-awaited destination in Tampa, Florida, she will build a funeral pyre of her late husband's cloths under a tree, and commit *sati* in his memory by diving into the flames. She makes her way to the west as a stowaway on a boat.

The experience of migration is often projected via the *topos* of the journey. Physical travel across sea and land becomes an extended metaphor for a woman's struggle to come to terms with herself. There are at least two types of journey, one in which the decision to migrate is not made by the individual woman, and the other where a woman seeks escape from the entrapping domain of home through exile. In the former, a woman is either transported from place to place by her mobile parents, or she turns into an appendage to a male passport, losing her nativity and nationality with marriage. In both the cases a woman is always govern by the male decision. Bharati Mukherjee's earlier two novels fall under these categories. Tara, in *The Tiger's Daughter*, is packed off by her father at a very early age of fifteen for higher studies. While Dimple, in *Wife*, immigrates to the USA after marrying Amit. For Tara and Dimple the struggle to cope with the psyche stress created by the difficult task of negotiating a new territory is intense, and the consequence is often schizophrenia, insanity, or resignation to the fact of being an eternal alien. They either succumb to the pressures of expatriate life or they manage to barely survive. But of greater interest are those who undertake the journey of their own volition, as an act of self-assertion. Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine* is the most potent representative of this group.

The immigrant journeys to the promised land and battles adversity, both mental and material (Choudhury). Jasmine, a Punjabi girl with no formal education or patron, arrives in America with neither money nor passport. Her illegal immigration is an act of defiance whereby she breaks all norms – familial, cultural, national, and legal. Her journey through an alien landscape and her gradual transformation into a stable, confident resident constitute a *Bildungsroman* of female migration. Jasmine, in fact, belongs to the tradition of the early Asian immigrant women who boarded ships bound for the West to escape oppressive homes, suffered the trials of immigrant life, and made their destiny in America. Jasmine's journeys and travails in America parallel those of the legendary Chines women immigrants of the early-twentieth century, referred to as China Marys after the first Chines woman to land in San Francisco, in 1848. Jasmine's journey, being voluntary, purposive, and eventually successful, turns into a celebration of female fortitude. She fights fate when her hopes are smothered early in life and she is condemned to a life of widowhood. She breaks the fetters of family, society and culture and crosses the seas to the distant dreamland

of her dead husband, confronting oppression fearlessly and finally rising to face a new morning (Vijayasree).

The effects of the displacement of peoples—their forced migration, their deportation, their voluntary emigration, their movement to new lands where they made themselves masters over others or became subjects of the masters of their new homes reverberate down the years and are still felt today. E. San Juan, Jr. in his studious book, *After Postcolonialism,* highlights that Mukherjee's fiction is a protracted meditation on the plight of immigrants, refugees, expatriates, and exiles in a world transfigured by the rapid consumption of localities or places as a means of production (E. San Juan). In the novel *Jasmine*, the protagonist describes how in their pursuit of happiness refugees, exiles and immigrants of the world throw in together:

> But we are refugees and mercenaries and guest workers; you see us sleeping in airport lounges, you watch us unwrapping the last of our native foods, unrolling our prayer rugs, reading our holy books, taking out for the hundredth time an aerogram promising a job or space to sleep, a newspaper in our language, a photo of happier times, a passport, a visa, a *laissez-passer….* (*Jasmine* 101).

Furthermore, in her well-crafted book, Cristina Dascălu defines who is to be called as an exile. She asserts that the exile holds a peripheral place, neither truly at home in his or her homeland, nor truly a native of the newly achieved shore. The exile may play many roles, inhabit many parts, and be the sum of many different cultures. Based on this definition, Dascălu cites that Bharati Mukherjee's fiction captures precisely the radical nature of exile, the effects exile has on the individual, and more importantly, the effects that the notion of exile has on our beliefs about our own lives: the certainty of our identities, the functions of our memories, our convictions about our own and "the Other's" (Dascălu). The novel *Jasmine,* becomes the embodiment of the story of exile itself:

> We are the outcasts and deportees, strange pilgrims visiting outlandish shrines, landing at the end of tarmacs, ferried in old army trucks

> where we are roughly handled and taken to roped-off corners of waiting rooms where surly, barely wakened customs guards await their bribe. We are dressed in shreds of national costumes, out of season, the wilted plumage of intercontinental vagabondage. We ask only one thing: to be allowed to land; to pass through; to continue. We sneak a look at the big departure board, the one the tourists use. Our cities are there, too, our destinations are so close (*Jasmine* 101).

National identities, borders between countries, and racial and ethnic differences disappear in the face of shared experiences of dislocation (Zaborowska). Jasmine's journey to America is filled with fear and hopes. On her way, she is acquainted with the fellow travellers who, too, look forward to the possibility of earning their bread. Mukherjee, here, tries to show how migration involves "superdiversity" a term coined by Steven Vertovec (Vertovec). He stressed that though groups of people may share similar experiences of migration, migrants form a highly diverse group of people and interpret their migration stories in different ways. There are people from Filipina, Sri Lanka, Australia, Uganda, and India. Although alone, Jasmine shakes off her fear and find security in the idol of Ganpati, a God with elephant trunk and face. It happens to be the first day of her long journey. In the boat, she prefers to sit close with a Filipina nurse who is on her way to Bahrain. Jasmine surprises to see hundreds of people travelling to fulfil their dreams. The sandalwood Ganesh she hides in her purse gives her the much-needed courage and strength. Mukherjee, here, exhibits the faith of Indian women in gods and destiny. Although Jasmine finds herself among unknown people, she believes that she will be protected by her gods. Her belief is so strong that she knows her god will help her in uprooting anything that comes in her path. As soon as Jasmine arrives in her dreamland America, she finds the ugly side of the most powerful nation in the world. The cones of nuclear plant, and the emission of smoke from them makes her sick. The darker side of the country strikes her immediately. Jasmine spends her first night in an ordinary motel where the exhibition of the dirt presents everywhere. The swimming pool is filled with garbage sacks, and grass grows all over the parking lot. Her journey turns into nightmare as she is raped by a Half-faced captain who in the pretext of helping takes her to a motel and assaulted her. Although telling him about

her deceased husband, the captain ignores her. He shows no sympathy for her. He just wants to satisfy his physical hunger. Even if Jasmine is mourning the death of her husband, he simply ignores that fact. All he wishes to have a good time with her. He rejects Jasmine's claim of seeing a television set for the first time as a lie. The inevitable rape follows, but what is most remarkable is the way Jasmine seems less concerned with what happened to her, and more with the shower system in the motel room:

> I had never used a Western shower, standing instead of squatting, with automatic hot water coming hard from a nozzle instead of cool water from a hand-dipped pitcher. It seemed like a miracle that even here in a place that looked deserted (*Jasmine* 117).

The violence she faces just after landing in America regenerated her. According to Faymonville, this sense of freedom enables her to do everything: she [Jasmine] is able to find a new morality that enables her to leave behind those things that limit her personal freedom." Hence she has no qualms about murdering the captain and feeling ecstatic afterwards; for her the motel is transformed "into a hotel; hell turned into paradise" (Faymonville). The adaptive process for Jasmine is almost instantaneous; rather than trying to reconcile the experience of her home culture with her day-to-day life in America, she exchanges one identity for another, setting aside her traditional Indian sati and wearing blue jeans instead. This process of transformation, figuratively centred in the death of one's old self and the birth of a new self, is a motif that suffuses the book's narrative language: sensory images reiterate at various levels the symbolism of cyclical patterns of birth, death, and new birth, in the context of the postcolonial immigrant woman's life and experiences.

Commenting on this atrocious episode in the novel Andrew Hock Soon Ng notes that in her most difficult time in America Jasmine uses her native identity, this time in the form of faith, to overcome the most humiliating experience of her life: "In this moment of physical and psychological extreme, the grotesque rapist is murdered by the Goddess of death in the form of his victim… Jasmine's alter ego actually saves her." (Ng) Instead of running away or surrendering to her fate Jasmine gathers her courage. For the first time in

her life she witnesses such grotesque evil. By no way Half-Face looks like a human but an evil who comes from an underworld. A moment of truth strikes her. She is facing death before her in the form of Half-Face. She

> For the first time in my life I understood what evil was about. It was about not being human. Half-Face was from an underworld of evil. It was very simple, very clear perception, a moment of truth, the kind of understanding that I have heard comes at the moment of death. I had faced death twice before and cheated it. Yama will not sneak up on me (*Jasmine* 116).

By declaring that Yama – the Lord of Death – will not sneak up on her, she is implying that she will not yield to fate this tie. Her initial response to her rape is to commit suicide:

> He stared. His hands were trembling and then he whooped, "Oh, God!" and tried to kiss me, but he was all hands and face in motion. I twisted, only delaying the inevitable, making it worse perhaps, more forced, more violent. I tried to keep my eyes on Ganpati and prayed for the strength to survive, long enough to kill myself (*Jasmine* 116).

While cleansing her body in the bathroom after the rape, Jasmine thinks about to end her life:

> This would be a fitting place to die. The bathroom steamed like a smokehouse. I reached into the pocket of my salwar for Kingsland's knife. Until the moment that I held its short, sharp blade to my throat I had not thought of any conclusion but the obvious one: to balance my defilement with my death. I could not see myself in the steamed-up mirror—only a dark shadow in the center of the glass. I could not see, as I had wanted to, an arm reaching to the neck, the swift slice, the end of my life. (*Jasmine* 117).

However, she becomes conscious of the fact that her mission would be incomplete, and she should not screw herself up due to the smitten of her personal honour. "I could not let my

personal honour disrupt my mission" (*Jasmine* 118). Instead, she cuts her tongue with a blade and returns to face her rapist, who is dozing on the bed. Just one stroke of the bade on his throat and the scene of the murder is perfect:

> I wanted that moment when he saw me above him as he had last seen me, naked, but now with my mouth open, pouring blood, my red tongue out (*Jasmine* 118).

Awakening her inner strength Jasmine decides to kill Half-Face. As Kali, she commences to slit her tongue before advancing towards her intended victim. Afterwards, as she murders Half-Faced, Jasmine burns her suitcase with all the objects and memories inside in an area outside the motel. (R and T) With the burning of belongings, she brought from India, Jasmine embarks a new journey in America:

> I said my prayers for the dead, clutching my Ganpati. I thought, the pitcher is broken. Lord Yama, who had wanted me, who had courted me, and whom I'd flirted with on the long trip over, had now deserted me (*Jasmine* 120).

Florence D'Souza remarks that the broken pitcher and the desertion of Lord Yama liberate Jasmine from the constraints of the past permitting her to launch into new discoveries in a new continent. (D'Souza) In her essay, "An Alternative Diasporic Celebration in Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine*," Laura Peco González strongly argues that Mukherjee, in this novel, "articulates some very personal statements, such as her rejection of ghettos and boundaries, and how the people who insist on leaving behind oppressing but safe walls become victims of their own incoherence, rage and boredom." (González) Even so, the author also states through this novel that to abandon the walls of the homeland or of ghettoization means breaking the rules, which to some extent involves the frequently traumatic encounter with Americans who need to express the rage they feel about the new immigrants through violence. That is the case of Half-Face, the sinister captain of the ship which takes her to the New World and rapes her. The transformation of Jasmine from the archetype of Sati to that of Goddess Kali as she towers over the man who violated her chastity, with blood

oozing out from her sliced tongue, is a dramatic and violent imagery of self-assertion. The critic Nagendra Kumar notes that Jasmine's "decision to kill herself first, is a decision of a woman who lives for her deceased husband but the woman who kills Half-Faced is prompted by her will to live to continue her life" ((Kumar).

In one of her interviews Bharati Mukherjee says she sees immigration as an experience of reincarnation.

> I have been murdered and reborn at least three times; the very correct young woman I was trained to be, and was very happy being, is very different from the politicized, shrill, civil rights activist I was in Canada, and from the urgent writer that I have become in the last few years in the United States. (Mukherjee, Blaise and Connell)

Instead of succumbing to the ignominy which she suffered on her immediate arrival in America, Jasmine renounces her identity and reincarnate herself in the new one:

> My body was merely the shell, soon to be discarded. Then I could be reborn, debts and sins all paid for. …. With the first streak of dawn, my first full American day, I walked out the front drive of the motel to the highway and began my journey, traveling light (*Jasmine* 121).

Mukherjee hails Jasmine for her sheer optimism, courage, and openness to new experience. Her attitude is: "Hey, you can't rape me and get away with it! You can't push me around! I'm here, I'm gonna stay if I want to, and I'm gonna conquer the territory!" (Mukherjee) As she is walking, Jasmine is shelter by a "kind Quaker lady, Lillian Gordon. Lillian not only offers Jasmine a room but also helps her in overcoming the trauma she experienced a day ago:

> She forbade all discussion of it. She had a low tolerance for reminiscence, bitterness, or nostalgia. Let the past make you wary, by all means. But do not let it deform you (*Jasmine* 131).

Stanley M Stephen in *Bharati Mukherjee: A Study in Immigrant Sensibility* explains how much Jasmine benefits from meeting Lillian Gordon:

> Henceforth, all her encounter with strangers in the new land are benign. Lillian Gorgon, a seventy-year- old Quaker lady shelters her. She teaches her how to 'talk' American and 'walk' American. She trains her to survive in the New World. Under the protection of Lillian Gordon, Jasmine becomes 'Jazzy' (Stephen)

In her interview to Fred Bonnie Bharati Mukherjee insists that the novel *Jasmine* isn't just the story of the main character Jasmine. On the contrary, the novel is a story of America changing, as well as Jasmine changing. (Mukherjee) The novel provided so many different points of focus: the experience of dislocation and relocation is handled by each of the immigrant characters. Mukherjee says:

> As in Akbari miniatures, my novel compresses the immigration histories of many minor characters. Professorji, his wife, his elderly parents, the Caribbean housekeepers in Manhattan, the Guatemalans in Florida, Du and his Asian American friend in Iowa: even within an ethnic group, each minor character has a distinct response (Mukherjee).

Mukherjee has Jasmine on the move, but not necessarily forward. Indian culture is portrayed as a suffocating element that Jasmine, once again needs to escape from on her way to becoming her next incarnation. Lillian Gordon sends Jasmine to Flushing, New York where her daughter lives. In New York, Jazzy finds herself in a caregiver position at the home of Dev Vadhera, the former professor of her late husband. The Vadheras live in an apartment building in which many Indian immigrant families live. It is a kind of Indian ghetto. In this atmosphere, Jasmine begins to lose touch with the American culture she thinks she wants membership in. She feels the expectations of the Indian culture among her neighbours as suffocation, closing off any possible escape route to her dream of an American life. Jazzy does not want to revert to the conditions of her life as Jyoti from Hasnapur:

> I could not admit that I had accustomed myself to American clothes. American clothes disguised my widowhood. In a T-shirt and cords, I was taken for a student. In this apartment of artificially maintained Indianness, I wanted to distance myself from everything India, everything Jyoti-like (*Jasmine* 145).

Jasmine experiences depression while living with the Vadhera. She feels like she is being trap:

> An imaginary brick wall topped with barbed wire cut me off from the past and kept me from breaking into the future. I was a prisoner doing unreal time (*Jasmine* 148).

Although the Vadheras treat her well, Jasmine feels helpless and alienated as she must go back into the lifestyle of a traditional and submissive woman. The Vadheras cling to the old India whereas Jasmine changes from a traditional Indian girl into a young American woman. Interestingly, not only does Jasmine change her name but also Professor Devinder gets a new name in America and becomes Dave. But unlike Jasmine who changes her name to adopt and survive, Vadhera changes out of superficial conformity—just to bend in with American society but without making any changes on the inside. They obsess with Indian food, magazines, and films. Indulging themselves into nostalgia and matchmaking the Vadheras refuse to transform. This upset Jasmine as she is eager to assimilate into America. The Professor, who is secretive and parsimonious with his affection, on the other hand, complains that a part of him is dying because America is killing him. Sadly, Vadhera's transformation never occurs because he chooses to live in the past while Jasmine heads for her future. The old Vadheras are also unhappy with their son and his wife. Their displacement from their country deprives them of things they can get happiness.

> We have followed our children to America and look what happens to us.! Our sons are selfish. Our daughters want to work and stay thin. All the time, this rush-rush. What to do? There are no grandchildren for us to play with.

> This country has drained my son of his dum. This country has turned my daughter-in-law into a barren field (*Jasmine* 148).

Professor's wife Nirmala, too, remain a voiceless housewife. She knows nothing about what her husband does while he is at work. She is a mix of "submission, beauty, and innocence." Her only craving is for Hindi films (Tai). When asked about why some of the Indian women characters like Nirmala avoid transformation or avoid the struggle against transformation, Bharati Mukherjee replies:

> I am looking for people who test their fates and then either discard or reclaim them, as opposed to those women who never test the fates and who live according to rites and rituals.

Deepika Bahri points out that Mukherjee falls back on the popular belief that "Americans are superior" and "the novel makes us look at how an immigrant survives in America rather than how America saves immigrants" (Bahri). One of the problems that Jasmine faces in America is being an illegal immigrant. Through all her incarnations, through all her "becomings," Jasmine is an illegal—she is not "becoming" an illegal, she is an illegal. Already having been on the move several times in search of new identities, the fact that she is an illegal immigrant keeps her on the move. When she comes across the reality of Dev's job, that of selling Indian women's hair and not that of a professor or scientist, Jasmine selfishly uses that information in a form of blackmail. As per her plan, if Dev gets her a green card, Jasmine will move out of Dev's apartment and reveal his secret to his friends and family. She desperately wants to leave the life in Flushing, New York before the cultural ghetto smothers her, and move on to a new life. In fact, determined to seek a new way of life in America, Jasmine without hesitation or guilt leaves them, knowing that she needs to be on the move: "Nothing was rooted anymore. Everything was in motion" (*Jasmine* 152). Manifestly, Jasmine's moving out implies she has the courage to face the challenges beyond her control. In this regard, jasmine is always on the road and ready for her next destination.

Moving from Flushing to New York City, Jasmine is once again in a caregiver's position, this time as a nanny to Duff, the daughter of Taylor and Wylie: "I became an American in an apartment on Claremont Avenue across the street from a Barnard College dormitory. I lived with Taylor and Wylie Hayes for nearly two years. Duff was my child; Taylor and Wylie my parents, my teachers, my family" (*Jasmine* 165). The couple offers a haven for Jasmine to test a new identity, this time named Jase by Taylor. In contrast with other men. Jasmine feels at ease with Taylor because, to a considerable degree, he accepts her for who she is. Jasmine develops a strong sense of self-value when she begins earning her own money and feels she is part of Taylor and Duff's family.

> I felt lucky. My pillow was dry, a launch pad for lift-off. Taylor, Wylie, and Duff were family. America may be fluid and build on family, invisible lines of weak gravity, but I was a dense object, I had landed and was getting rooted (*Jasmine* 179).

After such a long journey, Jasmine gradually starts to feel at home and that she is part of something important. She gains ability to adjust to her environment and live out her American Dream, as she becomes Jase. Jase would love to do a lot of things in America—attend school, have a driver's license, get paid legally—that require her to have legal immigrant status. But legal immigrant status is not high on Jasmine's list of things she wants to accomplish as an American. Is her constant movement from one location to another the result of trying to hide her illegal status? Or is her constant movement really a symptom of an inborn desire to constantly reinvent herself? That could be why, when her life becomes too settled in location, Jasmine looks for an escape route. The most important aspect of Taylor is his acceptance of Jasmine as she is; he does not want or try to change her: "He didn't want to scour and sanitize the foreignness. My being different from Wylie or Kate didn't scare him" (*Jasmine* 185). Very soon they fall in love:

> He smiled his crooked-toothed smile, and I began to fall in love. I mean, I fell in love with he represented to me, a professor who served biscuits to a

> servant, smiled at her, and admitted her to the broad democracy of his joking, even when she didn't understand it. It seemed entirely American. I was curious about his life, not repulsed. I wanted to watch, be a part of it. He seemed wondrously extravagant, that Sunday morning (*Jasmine* 167).

Being with him, Jasmine does not feel any pressure. They are like a happily married couple. They understand each other and have endless conversations on daily activities. Jasmine finds true comfort in telling Taylor about minutiae of her new life experiences. Jasmine's transformation through Taylor occurs due to her personal need and because of a negative reaction to her surroundings.

But just when Jasmine has begun to find happiness, again she must move and transform her identity. One day when they are together in the park, Jasmine spots the person who killed her husband and knows that the man has also seen her. When Taylor offers to call the policeman, she reminds him that she is an illegal migrant. Taylor offers solution like moving to another locality. But Jasmine fears that the man could kill either Taylor or Duff or both. To protect the people, she loves she flees to Iowa. In rural Iowa Jasmine gets shelter from Mrs. Ripplemeyer, an elderly lady of German origin. Jasmine calls her mother Ripplemeyer who introduces Jasmine to her son Bud Ripplemeyer, an Iowa Banker. Jasmine is less than of his age. Bud met with an accident and became crippled. So, Jasmine serves him and take care of his adopted son Du. Both Du and Jasmine are expatriates. Jasmine says: "Du and I have seen death up close. We've stowed away on boats like half-Face's, we've hurtled through time tunnels. We've seen the worst and survived. Like creatures in fairy tales, we've shrunk, and we've swollen, and we've swallowed the cosmos whole" (*Jasmine* 240). Very soon Jasmine becomes Jane Ripplemeyer, the live-in companion of Bud. "Bud calls me Jane. Me Bud, you Jane. I didn't get it first. He kids. Calamity Jane. Jane as in jane Russell, not Jane as in Plain Jane. But Plain Jane is all I want to be" (*Jasmine* 26). Jasmine is pregnant with Bud's baby. He wants to marry her before the baby is born. But Jasmine's mind is not in position to say yes: "I always hear a question mark these days, after everything he says… I think sometimes I saved his life by not marrying him (*Jasmine* 12). So, in Iowa, Jasmine now becomes Jane, but back at her mind all her incarnations looms like ghost: "In the white lamplight, ghosts float toward me. Jane,

Jasmine, Jyoti" (*Jasmine* 21). The fluid identity serves as a positive vehicle for Jasmine to continually renew herself while avoiding becoming merely the dutiful mate. Thus, the various names and faces Jasmine assumes reflects her ongoing change of identity. Importantly, Jasmine's departure reflects how she is no longer able to live a sterile life because change is her vehicle for survival as well. In describing her relationship with all men, Jasmine says: "I have had a husband for each of the women I have been. Prakash for Jasmine, Taylor for Jase, and Bud for Jane. Half-face for Kali (*Jasmine)*. In each of the experiences with these men populating her life, jasmine has created many selves and literally died to be reborn again. (Tai) Living in a self-enclosed community in Iowa, Jasmine/Jane feels isolated – especially when Bud seems to be oblivious to her attempts to Americanize herself. Friedman identifies this as a racist reaction "based on ideologies of inferiority, alienness, beastiality, and/or exoticism." Nonetheless, Jasmine retains her spirit and willingness to adapt, qualities that help her "to survive and prosper in America" (Alam).

In Jasmine, Mukherjee uses the "backward gaze," the time-frame places Jasmine's Indian experiences in the past and her Iowan life in the present. Appropriate to a novel that moves irregularly and unexpected among the twenty-four years of the heroine's life, the epigraph for *Jasmine* comes from James Gleick's book about the physics and mathematics of chaos science. It reads:

> The new geometry mirrors a universe that a rough, not rounded, scabrous, not smooth. It is a geometry of the pitted, pocked, and broken up, the twisted, and intertwined. (Gleick)

Forewarned by the epigraph, the reader finds a "broken up" novel in which events and subjects are "twisted, tangled, and intertwined," in which the title character first appears "scabrous-armed from leaves and thorns." Mukherjee uses the technique of narrative that begins with Jasmine's early years and then it jumps back and forth unpredictably and sometimes rapidly, ending at the moment of narration.

Named Jyoti at her birth in the Punjab village of Hasnapur, the brilliant heroine enjoys schooling that is unusually long for a girl (six years, during which she learns English). Her parents resist a proposal to marry her (at 13) to a widower with three children.

Violence enters her life when she kills a rabid dog and, soon after, her father is gored to death by a bull. At 14, she marries for love, dowryless. Her husband, Prakash (who renames her Jasmine) plans to study in the United States but is murdered by terrorists fighting for a separate Sikh homeland. At 17, Jasmine fulfils an astrologer's prophecy of widowhood and exile when, equipped with forged papers, she goes to America, intending to commit *sati* on the college campus where Prakash hoped to study.

Once ashore in Florida, she murders the boat captain, Half-face, after he rapes her, and is rescued (and renamed Jazzy) amid Guatemalan Indians who are illegal immigrants like her. From Florida, she goes to New York City, where (after sheltering in the Indian ghetto in Flushing, Queens) she works as a nanny caring for the adopted daughter, Duff, of an intellectual couple in Manhattan, Taylor, and Wylie Hayes. Taylor, who calls her Jase, falls in love with her. Two years later, she flees to Elsa County, Iowa, Duff's birthplace, when Prakash's murderer, now a New York hot dog vendor, glimpses her in a park. In Iowa, she becomes a bank teller and quasi-wife of the bank's president, Bud Ripplemeyer (who renames her Jane). Bud and Jane adopt an orphaned Vietnamese teenager, Du, who later joins his sister in California. Two days before Christmas 1987, a farmer maddened by impending bankruptcy shoots and paralyzes Bud. Two years hence, when Jane is eight months pregnant by Bud, the now-divorced Taylor pulls into her driveway. Knowing that Bud's ex-wife loves and will care for him, Jase leaves for California with Taylor and Duff. Notwithstanding that apparent overload of events, this tightly woven novel is as probable as any fable.

America always remains a land of opportunity for people all over the world. The immigrant arrives in America to fulfil the dream he/she cherishes in their life. In the novel, *Jasmine*, the protagonist moves from one location to another. Mukherjee keeps Jasmine on the move throughout the novel, always looking for a new identity while trying to remain invisible to immigration services due to her illegal status. Mukherjee uses a complex shifting to describe the dislocation of Jasmine. It is true that Jasmine's migration to America is a mission for her to fulfil the dreams her husband often talked to her. Jasmine begins a symbolic trip of transformations. Her dislocation leads her to new identities. She undergoes her first transformation from a village girl Jyoti to a dutiful wife, Jasmine, when

she marries Prakash. His unexpected death takes her to America where on being raped she becomes Kali to kill Half-Face, her rapist. For a brief period, she assumed the name Jazzy given by a Quaker lady. But when she meets the intellectual Taylor, she is transformed as Jase. Then she moves on to become Bud's Jane. All these transformation and transition is shown by the author as a positive and optimistic journey. Jasmine created a new world consisting of new ideas and values. She tries to establish a new cultural identity by incorporating new desires, skills, and habits. This transformation governs not only the changes in her attitude, but also her relationship with men. Sengupta opines: "She enacts a kind of death for her too: the death of her old self and out of the ashes raises phoenix-like a new self" (Sengupta).

Theme of Dislocation in *Desirable Daughters*

In *Desirable Daughters*, Bharati Mukherjee recommences again the theme that has been her favourite for most of her career – issues of displacement that exiles and immigrants face, familial loyalty, and the question of belonging. As we are aware of the prevailing situation now, quite a few of the immigrants become rootless and get dislocated while others readjust and relocate themselves in the changed environment (Nagarajan). *Desirable Daughters* is a tale of immigrants and the attitude of three sisters and their ways of negotiating the multiple dislocations in three different perspectives (Chhhabra). The novel grew out of an autobiographical project Mukherjee to do with her sisters, which took on a life of its own as fiction (B. C. Edwards). The novelist infuses unusual amount of autobiographical materials in this novel of self-discovery with a suspenseful mystery-thriller plot. Published in 2002, *Desirable Daughters* is the first among the projected trilogy and according to Michael Krasny, is full of suspense, intrigue, and the cultural tensions of traditional India in contemporary America. Much of the novel is set in San Francisco, California, but the novelist also takes her reader to the Tri-City, Jersey City, Newark, and ultimately back to India. So, the novel is about movement as the protagonist and other Indian characters operate under two sets of time leading to the issues of identity and culture clash.

In the very beginning of the novel Tara, the narrator recounts the tale of "The Tree Bride" which she heard from her mother in the childhood. The story of "The Tree Bride" has a dominant influence till the end of the novel. Jay Prakash Gangooly, a learned lawyer at Dacca High Court, lived in his ancestral house on the river in Mishtigunj town. The year was 1879 and Bengal was the part of British power with Calcutta its capital. Jay Prakash Gangooly was a staunch believer in Hindu culture. He had three daughters, the youngest named Tara Lata. When Tara was five years old, he arranged her marriage. Misfortune befell on the little girl when her would be husband died of a snake bite on his way to wedding pavilion. Refusing to yield to the demand of dowry by the groom's father, Jay Prakash took his daughter into a deep forest and married her to a tree bride. In this way, he not only saved the daughter from an unhappy life as a widow but also showed the ways of resisting colonial pressure by going back and learning to cope with and understand the purpose of Hindu tradition. Tara Chatterjee, the narrator, is the great granddaughter of Jay Krishna. So as a descendant of Jay Prakash Gangooly, Tara feels a connection to the Tree Bride who never left her father's house till the British officers arrested her and killed her in the prison on the backdrop of India's independence. Tara marries to the boy of her father's choice and goes to America where her new husband, Bishwapriya Chatterjee makes million in the Silicon Valley. In due course, she gets a divorce and lives separately with her son Rabindra and works as a volunteer in a preschool in San Francisco. She also chooses a live-in partner Andy, a Hungarian Buddhist carpenter. In short, unlike her ancestress, Tara enjoy complete social, financial, and sexual freedom. But the strange behaviour of her son Rabi and the emergence of Chris Day claiming to be the illegitimate son of her sister Padma begin to disrupt her haven. Aghast to know the truth of her sister's past and insecure with her present disposition, Tara sets herself on to ascertain the reality of this claim by Chris Day. Tara's search for truth through phone calls and internet searches leads her into a desperate journey into the past filled with mysterious twists and turns, leading finally to the uncovering of murder and ending melodramatically with a miraculous escape when her house is bombed by unknown Abbas Sattar Hai, member of Dawood gang and who impersonates Christopher Day. Bish rescues Tara from the enveloping flames and in the process gets badly burnt. The novel ends where it opens. Tara returns, 120 years later, to Mishtigunj, where the tree bride lived "not for rest but to the Ganges to its source." The

narrator and the Tree-Bride reach the same dead end, although through different routes (Agarwal).

The novel is a narrative of immigration and how the protagonist and her two sisters deal with the multiple dislocations they encounter in their life. It is the story of three sisters and their relationship to the past as well as, their ongoing relationship to the present. All these three sisters gifted with beauty, spirit, and success. They seem to be kind of interwoven together despite being distinctly different from one another. When the novel begins, protagonist Tara Chatterjee is involved with a Hungarian-born, ex-biker, Buddhist carpenter and has divorced her Indian husband, Bish Chatterjee, in attempt to develop her own individuality. Describing him as the Bill Gates of the South Asian community, Mukherjee tells Michael Krasny that Bish was the bridegroom she imagined her parents would have chosen for her. When a young man claiming to be the illegitimate son of her sister approaches Tara, she begins to probe her family's past, leading her deeper into historical mysteries that have created the foundation of her identity. Mukherjee tells Krasny:

> I am coming to terms, as is Tara the narrator, who though is much younger than I am, with what my Indian heritage has left me as residue and what America I have discovered, and discovered as empowerment, and knitting the two together so that I know who I am in ways that I didn't want to know when I was writing my earlier novels (Mukherjee).

No matter how far we go away from our home and settled anywhere at the back of the world, sooner or later, we are pulled back by our roots. What beckons us is our land, family, history, and culture. A sense of belongingness for the exotic world takes us for a trip down memory lane. Eventually we get our hands on the old memories, tradition as well as perspectives of people around us accompanied by a set of understanding and misunderstanding. This revelation of the past might weaken us intellectually but ultimately enriches us on the emotional part. The person is marked by his or her place. People are convinced of the solidity of the family tree and its firm rootedness in time and place (Wampole, Rootedness: The Ramification of a Metaphor). Humans are context-seeking

creatures, and this need to feel woven into the world takes many forms: research into family history; pride about one's hometown, state, or country and the specificities of these places that have marked one's character, behaviour, and speech; nostalgia for a past when people appeared to have stable destinies when gender roles, social hierarchies went uncontested; and the pastoral longing to restore a lost communion with the earth itself (Wampole). Tara's root search leads her to the story of her namesake, Tara Lata the tree bride, who was betrothed to a tree and became a leader in the Bengali resistance against the British. As she learns more about her heritage, Tara experiences historical convergences as past events begin to impact her personal life. Surely reflecting on her own experience of death threats, Mukherjee tells Krasny that she wanted to show that "we can lead our innocent lives of self-absorption when suddenly a larger plot is going to enmesh us in its nightmarish vision." Once again mapping the fine line between personal agency and cosmic destiny, *Desirable Daughters* demonstrates Mukherjee's cultural fluency as she seamlessly weaves the narratives across the black waters of time and space from the present preoccupations of California to the historical incidents of India (B. C. Edwards). The novel lays out the spuming of a consciousness, the high and lows of the tangible mental processes which helps the most loving daughter from an affluent family to get the true picture of the in and out of the world she inherits and the world she moves in. Mukherjee's earlier works describe the transformation of characters due to dislocation; however, in this novel the novelist analysed how a rooted identity "smashed by hammer blows, melted down and re-emerging as something wondrous, or grotesque" (*Desirable Daughters* 196). In an interview with Dave Weich, Mukherjee explains her strategy of discarding the old-fashioned formula and employing a new one. The novel not only traverses through history and geography but also investigates the issues of hyphenated identities. In her earlier novels, diasporic transmigration meant new opening and emancipation from the clutches of convention bound society. In her previous novel *Jasmine,* Mukherjee explores how the diasporic experience of dislocation from home and relocation to new socio-cultural spaces redefines the personality of the female protagonist; however, Tara Chatterjee in *Desirable Daughters* undertakes a quest which is poles apart from the journeys of Jasmine. Jasmine travels from the Indian village Hasnapur, undergoes myriad experiences in the different American cities, and becomes Americanised. On the other hand, Tara Chatterjee, the most

'un-Indian' Indian in America, commences her journey from the New World, and whose immigrant experiences lead her to go in search of her roots opting a transmigration phenomenon. In *Desirable Daughters* Mukherjee considers different pattern of belonging in the global perspectives from in-between temporality to assimilative permanence and further, hyphenated, and unmixed nationness.

In *Desirable Daughters*, the narrator is a thirty-six-year-old woman called Tara; she is educated and from a self-confident reasonably affluent family and is one of three sisters, the only sister who submits to having her marriage arranged by her patriarchal father. She becomes the bride of an immigrant Bengali engineer, who goes Stanford University and becomes the Indian Bill Gates of the Indo-American community in the Silicon Valley. After their marriage, Tara migrates to America with Bish. He is being called by people, the Guru, the Mogul and Bill Gates of South-Asian Community. In America, living with Bish, Tara is caught between ideas she has inherited about how time operates or how destiny operates, and her gradual Americanization and her exercising of free will. In her personal pursuit of happiness Tara divorces Bish only to realise toward the end of the novel that she misjudges him.

In all her books, Bharati Mukherjee deals with different kinds of immigrants move into America in different circumstances. Her previous novel, *Jasmine*, is about an undocumented immigrant who snuck into the United States so not always welcome. But America post liberalization is a different country. It has more open attitude about immigrants from non-European countries. People coming over, like Tara and her husband, Bish Chatterjee, who are making great engineering and Intel progress in places like Silicon Valley, are cosmopolitan. They have self-confidence. They might say, "I can be here, and I also can be three months in my retirement home in India, or a villa in Italy with ease." Bob Dhillon, Canadian-Indian chief executive officer of Mainstreet Equity Corp, sees this as the third wave of migration from India—after poor and marginal farmers from Punjab moved to western countries over a century ago and later, professionals left India in search of better working and living conditions. The US, not surprisingly, is a big draw for high

net worth Indians, looking to tap international markets and pursue entrepreneurial dreams (Duttagupta). Bish is considered as a rising star of American technological field.

Desirable Daughters is a sequel to *The Tree Bride* which Mukherjee wrote later. The novel is about Tara and her journey to India to search her roots. The story is about three sisters who find themselves for different reasons in the United States at a fairly young age breaking away from their traditional Indian communal identity and negotiating individual identity. The strikingly beautiful sisters Padma, Parvati and Tara have settled in New Jersey, Bombay, and San Francisco respectively and their lives variously reflect the cultural double-bind experienced by modern women, both in their diasporic locations and at home. Thus, after spending so many years in America they try, in very different ways, to think through what does home means? Is it homeland that you inherit, which is a kind of imaginary ancestral village that you may never have been to? Is it just a caste that you have inherited, the class that your father has made accessible to you, or is home something that you carry inside you or that you fashion, invent on your own? The three sisters find very different ways of discovering the trauma of derailment. The root search undertaken by Tara is very much American phenomenon. Mukherjee comments:

> I had Tara who revels in the kind of individuality that gives license to act out your desires, and I thought that was going to be it—individual accommodations in the context of American race relations, social relations, changing gender relations for the immigrant Bengali wife. But as I was writing that last scene, I realized that I'm not really talking about, and I cannot only talk about, the individual accommodations and revolutions, transformations. Unlike perhaps the European immigrants before me, the naturalized Americans of South Asian origin, people like Tara, people like me, have been formed not just by desire, ambition to go as far as you can. We have been shaped, deformed, pummelled by political, social, colonial forces. (Mukherjee)

The novel *Desirable Daughters* is the result of dislocation experienced by the writer herself. Speaking to Bradley Edwards she said: "If I had stayed in India I would probably never have felt compelled to write *Desirable Daughters* and *Tree Bride* (B. C. Edwards). Therefore, Firoza Jussawalla pointed out that: "However much Bharati Mukherjee might proclaim "I am American now," "home" is in the eye of the beholder, and she knows this. S. P. Swain in his essay highlights that the people who are dislocated form their home country often have a 'homing instinct'—the desire to discover their "in betweenness" in a transnational and trans-cultural space. (Swain)

In *Desirable Daughters*, Bharati Mukherjee has delineated the individual self-quagmire in the kaleidoscopic spatio-temporal reality of the American as well as the Indian society. The novelist negotiates between tradition and modernity by representing past and present which is achieved through the female protagonist – Tara, who severed her links with tradition but remains tied to her country. The novel traces the life of the three Brahmin daughters, Tara, Padma, and Parvati, all agog to forge an identity of their own in very trying and complex socio-cultural situations. Tara, Padma, and Parvati were born into wealthy Brahmin Bengali family presided over by their fond father and a tradition-bound orthodox mother. The daughters are intelligent and artistic. They never feel bogged down or suffocated by a conventional society which has little regard for women. They rebel against this hackneyed and constraining socio-cultural set up and chart out their own course of action. Each of them is on the move.

In the novels of Bharati Mukherjee immigration is a persistent motif and it is looked at from different perspectives relating to the issues of personal experience and the unhappiness in settling down and settling for the U.S. The immigrants do not enjoy their lives in "straight lines and smooth plains" and Mukherjee rather feels "very declassee" juxtaposing her characters who struggle in a "fragile identity and cultural hybridity to be preserved against obliteration" (Mukherjee). Neither can she completely detach herself from her past nor do her characters have any certitude in the future. In the expatriate sensibility her woman protagonists think of India abroad in their bicultural perception, emotional transit and ghetto of nostalgia confronting multi-cultural society in the

awareness of their social reality by carrying "core beliefs in the interior of the self against which all new experience is measured" (Lal).

People become immigrants primarily for economic, political, or religious reasons. America has become the nation of immigrants as the new corners are offered the hope of a more free and prosperous life. It is a great movement in demography in response to the factors, social, political, and economic. In Mukherjee's fictional works immigrant suffer in their process of dislocation but desire to return to their lost origins. From her *The Tiger's Daughter* to *Desirable Daughters* one can observe a steady metamorphosis from acculturation to self-actualisation in Mukherjee's fictional works. In her earlier novels identity and home are two intertwined issues often emphasised in her narrative telling of the mobility of the migrant subject. In *Desirable Daughters* Mukherjee presents the experience of immigrants when they are thrown in the alien environment due to their dislocation.

Mukherjee's *Desirable Daughters* sheds light on the voluntary and independent aspect of women's migration, exploring the element of 'choice' and the extent of agency they have in framing their own experience. The novel lays out the lives of three sisters, Padma, Parvati and Tara, all brought up in strict conformity to the domestic customs and conventions of a conservative and traditional society with the values followed and preserved by the educated upper-middle class Bengalis. Padma, the eldest one is married to Harish Mehta, a non-Bengali businessperson and both are settled in Montclair, New Jersey with their grown-up children. Parvati the pliable middle daughter lives in one of the expensive flats in Nariman Point, Mumbai with her rich businessman husband Aurobindo Banerji, an executive of a company. Tara the protagonist carries the name of her ancestors for whom her father chooses a perfect match, one Bill Gates like Indian computer millionaire mogul Bishwapriya Chatterjee "the Icon of Silicon Valley," the reigning genius hailing from an outstanding family. all the three sisters have got arranged marriages and they are settled in America and India. Tara and Bish settle down in Atherton, one of the earliest settlements of what later has come to be called the Silicon Valley, the site of civilizational plenitude. Bish's penchant to develop a system in computer technology called

"CHATTY," a patented one heralds a breakthrough in information technology that enables computers to route instantaneously urgent information in the least congested lines. The irony is that what was thought to be a very predictable, very successful marriage negotiation turns out be a disastrous misbegotten marriage in Tara's life. Love in her childhood and adolescence was distinguishable from duty and obedience but now she realises:

> Love is a slippery word when both partners bring their own definition. Love, to Bish, is the residue of providing for parents and family, contributing to good causes and community charities, earning professional respect, and being recognised from hard work and honesty. Love is distinguishable from status and honors… Love is having fun with someone, more fun with that person than with anyone else, over a longer haul (*Desirable Daughters* 27).

For an Indian girl, marriage is much more about complying to her parent's wish, and much less about personal choice and desire. Tara expresses her dissatisfaction over this, and about her marriage with Bish she says:

> I married a man I had never met, whose picture and biography and blood lines I approved of, because my father told me it was time to get married and this was the best husband on the market (*Desirable Daughters* 26).

Soon after her marriage to Bish Chatterjee, Tara leaves India with her husband and comes to America. There she faces immigrant dilemma because she is not sure what part of life she should reveal or supress. American women find her arrange marriage to Bish both appalling and amusing. For them it is a recipe for disaster, 'a modern enigma' where girls in India are subjected to the "whims of fate and the manipulations of the marital marketplace" (*Desirable Daughters* 27). However, Tara knows pretty well the advantage of marrying an Indian man as most of them with all their faults are 'programmed to provide for their wives and children. Yet she divorces Bish because America makes her realize that she is not an artefact 'endlessly on display at dinner and openings.' Secondly, Bish who is busy in so busy in building his gigantic business that his humanity suffers. "Working fifteen-hours days, at home he relapses into the role of a traditionally demanding husband,

hectoring and threatening his dreamy artistic son Rabi" (Ruta). As a result, a sense of isolation grows in Tara while living with Bish in San Francisco:

> I'm feeling just a little alien and uncomfortable, a tinge of not belonging, amid such welcoming comfort (*Desirable Daughters* 75).

She finds it difficult to balance her life trapped in the two cultures- Indian and American. Unable to enjoy her life with Bish, Tara divorces him so that she will be "free to make a mess of her [my] own life" (*Desirable Daughters* 48). This shows that Tara seeks individual happiness which is a truly American characteristic. When she first arrives in America with Bish, Tara meets other Asian engineering students at the student pub. Tara wonders how her life turns into something she deeply craved for. She has been waited for such life throughout her life. The freedom that comes with marriage brings smile on her face. She looks forward to travel with her husband and explore the wider world.

Through Tara's character, Mukherjee meditates on the challenges women face in balancing the weight of culture while maintaining self-hood amid ever-changing ideas of how to be a woman whether in the West, East or the interstitial spaces between. Although raised in a conservative family in India and married as per her parent's wish Tara discards her Indian timidity when exposes herself to Western ways of life. She, however, does not totally abandon Indian culture for American one. Madhulika Khandelwal rightly comments on this aspect of possessing both cultures at one time:

> The lives of these Indian immigrant women… were not monochromatic stories of bewildered traditional women adrift in the United States. Neither were their experiences simple linear transitions from Indian to modern Western society. Indian women's experiences and viewpoints varied widely, running along class and generational lines. Significantly, few women were inclined to reject wholesale their cultural traditions for American social patterns and values. Instead, the sense prevailed that they faced the challenge of redefining their traditions and roles in the migration context

> (Khandelwal, Becoming American, Being Indian: An Immigrant Community in New York City).

Cultures are often in the position of viewing other cultures as wrong in certain matters, in conflict with their own beliefs and standards (Jones). Tara reveals how her American friends call her "overdetermined" when she speaks about India with all the intricacies of a particular "region, language, caste and sub-caste. She is being born and brought up in a Bengali family claims her father's birthplace as her "*desh*, her home." Although she has never been to Dhaka, it is her mother's *desh*. Both of Tara's parents were born in Calcutta, but her mother's family hailed from Dhaka, her father's family from a provincial town called Faridpur, and they still pined for the eternal greenery of East Bengal. Tara is transported from "the enchanted garden" of Ballygunge to Stanford University in the early 1980s by a man called Bish Chatterjee. And after a decade of marriage, when she leaves Bish "it was because the promise of life as an American wife was not being fulfilled. Tara wants to live on her own, but she does not want to give the impression to the people that her husband is incapable of supporting his wife. Her decision to work must not bring shame to Bish because he is already one of the successful businessmen in America.

She has her reasons to leave Bish because in no time Bish, with his Bill Gates- like penchant for invention in computer technology, emerges as the poster boy of Indian entrepreneurship. He gets so busy in his business that as a husband he could not spent much time with Tara. Tara becomes restricted with an identity of Bish. She hardly gets a chance to create her own space in the world. Most of her time is used to take care of the house and look after her son, Rabi. She describes her colourless life in Atherton:

> My world was Atherton, and the two weeks we spent each winter in Calcutta visiting his parents-with a few side visits to mine-and the arrival-and-departure nights in Bombay with Parvati (*Desirable Daughters* 82).

She wishes to continue her education in the local community college but her responsibility as Rabi's mother stops her to do that. She wants to work but could not as Bish's reputation poses as a big disadvantage. She wonders whether "wife" is the only role permitted to her. Tara also remembers how on her wedding night Bish's mother expected her to be the epitome of wifely duty. Her life is occupied with roles of wife, mother, and daughter-in law. This culture bound roles becomes a burden to her. She craves for a life of leisure. Along with Meena Melwani, a Sindhi from Bombay, Tara explore the avenues of freedom that America allows. She relives the delicious little sabbaticals which she enjoyed with Meena Melwani. Most of the times she and Meena drive out to the beach or see the open fields south of San Jose. They also trek into the mountains, or just stroll through the Gallerias and devour burritos in some Mexican restaurants.

Identity is not so much the act of choosing between cultures, but rather it is having the power to redefine the terms of cultural practices and customs to fit one's own experience. She considers her identity is rooted in her family, culture, and home:

> When everyone knows your business and every name declares your identity, where no landscape fails to contain a plethora of human figures, even a damaged consciousness, even loneliness, become privileged commodities (*Desirable Daughters* 34).

However, America also gives her the anonymity that she craves for. Here she is invisible. No one can recognize Tara as the "Asian," or "Oriental." Her students accept her just as their parents, or their teachers. This invisibility helps Tara in loosening the shackles of Indian patriarchy and conventional barriers imposed on her in various ways. She enthusiastically volunteers for a gay Chicago candidate without any collusion with the other. However, the novel demonstrates that, identity instigation cannot be sack as easily as a snake's skin:

> Yet I'm still too timid to feed my Ballygunge Park Road identity into the kitchen Garburator. That dusty identity is as fixed as any specimen in a

> lepidopterist's glass case, confidently labelled by father's religion (Hindu), caste (Brahmin), subcaste (Kulin), mother-tongue (Bengali), place of birth (Calcutta), formative region of ancestral origin (Mishtigunj, East Bengal), education (postgraduate and professional), and social attitudes (conservative) (*Desirable Daughters* 78).

Vandana Singh comments: "Though the female protagonist is comfortable with her American identity still she identifies with her Indian roots" (Singh). When her boyfriend remarks that her too much intrusiveness in the life of Rabi might lead the boy to run away from the house, Tara impulsively reacts:

> "What're you talking about? We are not that kind of a family! Boys from good Indian families don't run away!" (*Desirable Daughters* 92)

That means Tara's assimilation into alien land of America is not full. Her loyalty to the American culture is provisional. In the opinion of Jopi Nayman, Tara has "ambiguous relationship with Americanness" (Nyman). Tara is fully aware of this ambiguity in life in America:

> The moment I step outside the bookstore on to the crowded height Street, I lose the heady kinship with the world that I feel through my reading. Nobody pays attention to me other than to ask for spare change or press a handbill into my closed fist. I am not the only blue-jeaned woman with a Pashmina shawl around my shoulders and broken-down running shoes on my feet. I am not the only Indian on the block. All the same, I stand out, I'm convinced. I don't belong here, despite my political leanings; worse, I don't want to belong (*Desirable Daughters* 79).

Tar's alienation is aggravated when her ethnicity and nationality is perceived wrongly by the fellow American teacher who asked her to help Nafisa's mother. The teacher suspects

that Nafisa's mother might be the victim of domestic abuse. Tara is bewildered as she has no connection in terms of language or nationality with Nafisa's mother:

> Nafisa's mother and I don't speak the same dialect. We don't even speak the same language. I am tired of explaining India to Americans. I am sick of feeling an alien (*Desirable Daughters* 87).

In his book, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*, Avtar Brah describes how the issues of home, belonging and identity is integral to the migrant. Though born and brought up in Uganda to an Indian parents Brah was asked by an American interviewer whether he saw himself Indian or African. Brah says:

> He had used the term 'Indian' in the general sense that it was often used in East Africa to refer to all people of South Asian descent. The sub-continent had, of course, long since been partitioned into India and Pakistan (Brah).

Tara encountered similar experience when she is loosely connected with Nafisa, a Pakistani national. Even Bharati Mukherjee acknowledged her surprised when reviewers and some critics put indiscriminately all Asian American writers together as being a homogeneous group. Whereas within the subcontinental group of immigrants there is a big ethnic difference.

In his article "Diasporas", historian and anthropologist James Clifford seems to believe that, "Diaspora women are caught between patriarchies, ambiguous pasts, and future. They connect and disconnect, forget, and remember, in complex, strategic ways. The lived experiences of diasporic women thus involve painful difficulty in mediating discrepant world" (Clifford). In the novel, Tara oscillates between the nostalgic fascinations of a traditional past and the romantic and adventurous allurement of the present. Through Tara's character, Mukherjee brings out the cross-cultural interaction of Indian diaspora and how it affects the people who moved from their motherland. Leaving behind

the chain of Indian customary that is always unfavourable to women, Tara moves into America to get a free and liberated life. In India Tara's identity was fixed by family identity. In America Tara enjoys the ability to invent and reinvent herself, as a "border-crashing claimant of all people's legacies" (Newman). She even divorces her husband, leaves the protected sphere, and moves with Rabi to San Francisco. She gets into the live-in-relationship with Andy Karolyi, her "balding, red-bearded, former biker, former bad-boy, Hungarian Buddhist contractor/yoga instructor" (25). Her relationship with Andy is being termed as "American adventure" by her sister Parvati because divorce is unheard of in Tara's Indian community. Tara called her relationship with Andy as "exotic."

Tara's reconstruction of identity is rooted in her nostalgic and romantic recollection of her past. It is based on the flux of her thoughts about the past coming to her mind in the present but in fragments, and not whole. She tries to reconstruct her identity through her diasporic experience. In her attempt to redefine the importance of her cultures she narrates her life-story by travelling in time and space. She describes how her life changed when she got married to Bish and came to USA with him. In the beginning Tara has not only enjoyed her stay in America but also engrossed herself in her duty as a devoted wife and doting mother. As soon as she becomes accustom to the American culture Tara craves for freedom and recognition which the country offers her in abundance. When she adopted herself well to the American culture Tara decides to live life on her own wish and will. Her relationship with Andy is both an act of seeking her identity and breaking the shackles of tradition and embracing the modern way of living. But Tara is split between her Old World and New World. She struggles to shake off the Old-World constraints of class, female deference, and fate. She relapses into her past time and again. Andy, her lover tries to help her to get out of the past realm. He also urges Tara to get over the past and put all her "Calcutta shit to rest." He says: "It is nice to visit the past every now and then. Just don't live there" (76). But Tara finds it difficult to break away from her past.

Tara's relation with her sisters is criticised by her son Rabi. He calls them hypocrite who point out the flaws in others but deny their own. Bharati Mukherjee as an exemplary

author of immigrant literature shows how the process of migration causes a gap of understanding between the sisters:

> The gap between youngest daughter and oldest, the disparity of our marriages and the paths our immigration have taken, have made us strangers (*Desirable Daughters* 94).

How dislocation affects the relation between Tara and Padma is shown when Tara introspects on her relationship with her elder sister. Despite of their living in cities that is not far away, Tara and her sister never visited each other's places but only at hotels. This, Tara admits, is unimaginable to her relatives in India. But Tara feels that it is easier to call India and have a talk with Parvati than calling Padma because she is rarely available at her home. Surprisingly, Padma has become more Indian than when she left Calcutta. This shows that dislocation affects people differently depending on the personal experiences and choices they make in the process of displacement. The process of migration makes Tara more courageous to transcend the boundaries, to take initiations on an unknown path which may lead her to ruin. While her other sisters Padma and Parvati lead a complacent and passive life, adopt a middle path, remain suspicious about their new identity, do not feel the need to widen their horizons and are less assertive, Tara emerges as a powerful figure to meet every adverse situation; to march ahead with all her limitations to an unknown and unfathomed path of realizing her full potential as an independent human being.

But she continuously finds herself displaced. Padma criticizes Tara's independence and considers Tara's divorce as disgrace to the Bhattacharjee family. Although living in adjunct cities the two sisters hardly meet each other. Tara has become American, self-engrossed, for whom the past is now darkest cave. Tara's American life is shattered with the arrival of her so-called nephew Chris Day who calls Padma as his mother. Although her son, Rabi, insists her to clear the air by asking Padma, Tara decides not to confront Didi directly, but to first seek an ally in her middle sister. Settled in a luxurious high-rise in Bombay, Parvati speaks to Tara by telephone once a week. "The whole point of these

phantom family reunions is to stop time, to when we were the Bhattacharjee sisters" (*Desirable Daughters* 53). There is no face to face communication, merely a fantasy of electronic propinquity.

The novel also highlights cultural blending prompted by migration. Tara is brought up in accordance to Hindu tradition. But she undergoes many behavioural changes in her persona when she moves to America with her husband, Bishwapriya Chatterjee. His American friends calls him Bish, but Tara as an ideal Hindu wife could not call him by his name in the early days of her marriage. However, after crossing the dark waters to California she also calls him Bishu first, then Bish. Her adapting herself to a new culture turns into a kind of brave "American adventure." She leaves Bish and gets into the live-in relationship with Andy, a balding red former biker, because she feels that the promise of life as an American wife is missing. On the streets of San Francisco, Tara Chatterjee can disguise herself in blue jeans and a Pashmina shawl as one more divorced woman and single mother, happily bowing to the exalted American ideal of just blending in. Her assimilation in the American culture changes the perception of her relatives back in India. Parvati, for example, accuses Tara for becoming "Americanised" in all ways. Anything that an Indian find unusual about Tara is attributed to her living in America. For example, when she directly asks Ronald Day in a letter if Chris is her son, he replies, "I surmise that the frankness of its phrasing is a consequence of your long residence in the United States" (*Desirable Daughters* 129). In many ways Tara experiences cultural blending. She blends when she divorces her husband and begins seeing other men. She also understands the artistic talent of her son Rabi and put him into an art school in San Francisco which is not approved by her millionaire ex-husband as well as her convent educated sister. Bish represents those typical Indians who rips the benefits of American affluence but at the same time tries their best to keep their American-born children immune to the free culture of American society. They agreed that:

> America made children soft in the brain as well as the body; it weakened the moral fiber. They grew up without respect for family and tradition. At the same time, they were protective men who did not want to expose their

> children to the grade-dampening distractions of after-school jobs, or to the possible heartbreak of dating, American boys, or girls (*Desirable Daughters* 154).

But Tara hopes that unlike his parents Rabi will create something resembling a new American consciousness. And she accepts his being gay. In fact, she thanks his counsellor for helping her son to be normal with his sexual orientation. This act of Tara is the result of being mixed with the American society and knowing that gay population had suddenly exploded in her life. In fact, Rabi is also not the traditional Indian son. He is a quintessential American kid, unfettered by cross-cultural angst, open to enlarging himself with ties to his Indian origins. He reflects the culture in which he has raised. In a letter to Tara he reveals his sexual orientation, and writes: "Ma, I am gay. It's another first for the family, another distinction we're going to have to work on" (*Desirable Daughters* 164). Tara's sexual freedom in America as well as Rabi's revelation about his sexual orientation is an act of self-empowerment for them.

To conclude, both novels, *Jasmine* and *Desirable Daughters* deal with the issues of immigrant life. In *Jasmine*, Mukherjee encapsulates many aspects of the immigrant experience in America, in the process revealing the ways in which newcomers from the Third World are being absorbed by, and at the same time are transforming America. The thematic focus of the novel is on protagonist's exile, the immigrant experience, and her eventual assimilation in the American culture. Jasmine created a new world consisting of new ideas and values. She tries to establish a new cultural identity by incorporating new desires, skills, and habits. Whereas, in *Desirable Daughters,* the trauma of dislocation compels the narrator to get back to her roots. Like Tara, Bharati Mukherjee, too, moved cities, countries, continents and has gone through the process of discarding the given communal identity and searching for an individual identity that's still evolving. Tara's identity development and reconstruction can be read considering intersectionality theory, which according to Patricia Hill Collins, denies that gender is the sole factor for a woman's oppression. Generally, intersectionality theory examines the ways that race, class, gender and sexuality work to create inequality or "interlocking systems of oppression" for women

(Collins and Bilge). The intersection of these factors, according to Collins, is a matrix of domination which intersect and oppress women. Tara is doubly oppressed because of her displacement, first as a member of an ethnic minority, and second as a woman of colour. The novel was an attempt by the novelist to relearn her family history and Bengal's history, especially the middle-class Bengali freedom fighters resisting the colonial British. Tara's root search, her attempts to unearth the secretes of family history is the outcome of identity crisis she undergoes in America after the eventual migration with her husband. The novel is a tale of migration and how the protagonist and her three sisters deal with the multiple dislocation they go through in their life.

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CHAPTER IV

Theme of Dislocation in *The Tree Bride* and *Miss New India*

The novel *The Tree Bride* is a sequel to *Desirable Daughters* and here, also, we find how the protagonist of the novel is engulfed by a sense of dislocation and loss which leads her to 'move home'. The novelist attempts to cast the protagonist into the act of American-style root search. In other words, the novel explores where we come from and how we get there. Bharati Mukherjee's characters are relentless travellers, tossed between the two worlds: between India, their homeland, and America, their chosen place to settle down, between the East and the West, the old and the new, the past and the future. The characters in her earlier novels are mostly immigrants or outsiders, discarding the boundaries of tradition and roots and reinventing themselves anew in the alien land, giving themselves a fresh starts and new beginnings but also experiencing the pain of dislocation and loss. Tradition exert a stronger magnetic pull in Mukherjee's previous novel, *Desirable Daughters*. This novel was written as the first volume in a projected trilogy and, as one might expect, *The Tree Bride* begins where the first book ended. Again, Tara of *Desirable Daughters* is the narrator of this novel. Mukherjee moves forward the story of *Desirable Daughter* where Tara returns to India after a bomb attack crippled her husband Bish. Tara and her son Rabi manage to get out unscathed. This causes her to get back to the history of her family tree. In order to unearth the history of her ancestors, Tara starts writing the story of her ancestor, her namesake, The Tree Bride, Tara Lata Gangooly. After the tragic death of her bridegroom by the snake bite, the father of Tara Lata, Jay Prakash Gangooly married her to a 'sundari tree' to save her from the ignominy of widowhood. In her previous novel, *Desirable Daughters*, Mukherjee lays out the thematic base of *The Tree Bride*. The novel, *Desirable Daughters* begins with the elaborated vivid account of the Tara Lata's planned marriage with the son of zamindar, the death of the bridegroom by the snake bite when the marriage procession was leading to the wedding pavilion, refusal of Tara's father to the demand of dowry by groom's father and eventually marrying the bride with a tree. Tara Chatterjee, the narrator, is the great granddaughter of Jay Krishna and as a descendant of

Jay Prakash Gangooly, Tara feels a connection to the Tree Bride. After the firebombing of her San Francisco house, she is compelled to search for her roots. In tracing the story of Tara Lata, the narrator discovers an ancestry that informs her future as much as it has shaped her past.

The Tree Bride is a new kind of novel about a new kind of American, an exploration of heritage and identity. Tara's getting back to her roots is like finding solace in one's homeland after spending so many years abroad. Her retrospective journey is, in fact, seeking Eastern solution to the heart grown weary in the Western World. To quote Susheila Nasta, "Home is not necessarily where one *belongs* but the place where one starts from" (Nasta). Mukherjee is deeply rooted in her native soil, but she is critical with prevailing situation in India yet declining, at the same time, to pay short shrift to its vitality. While writing about the two invariables of the transnational conditions- exile and homeland, Mukherjee in her novels captures the temporal and spatial dynamics of immigrant sensibility lost in the space between home and location. The estranging consciousness of relocation is haunted by some sense of loss, an urge to reclaim or to look back at the transgressive precinct of the past. In the words of Maya Manju Sharma: "In her fiction Mukherjee handles Western themes and settings as well as characters who are westernized or bicultural. Yet she is forced to admit that the very structure of her imagination is essentially Hindu and essentially moral" (Sharma).

Bharati Mukherjee's *The Tree Bride* travels between centuries, continents, and cultures, and links people, past, and present, sometimes in far from obvious ways. The novel opens with Tara's visit to hospital for pregnancy check. Tara, who is pregnant, is doing research for a novel at the same time she's looking for a gynaecologist. She conducts a name search for an Indian doctor and is led to Victoria Khanna, a European married to an Indian professor at Stanford who once taught her husband. Their chance meeting leads to more convergences and opens several doors in Tara's search into the history of her ancestral village and her great-great aunt, Tara Lata Gangooly, the tree bride, whom she aims to immortalize in her novel. There she is checked by Dr. Victoria Khanna, wife of Bish's mentor Yash Khanna. Like Tara, Victoria, too, is an immigrant. Like Tara, Victoria has also held the MA degree in English Literature. This meeting gives Tara a feeling that

destiny plays an important role in migration. Migration, sometimes, does not happen by choice but by destiny. Early in the novel, Tara Chatterjee is of the opinion destiny governs the fate of a migrant. She describes herself in the following words:

> I am enough of a mystic, like Bish, to believe there are no coincidences, only convergences. Yash Khanna had met and married an Anglo-Canadian, Victoria Treadwell-Percy, in India. They'd left India for Stanford and he taught my Indian husband. No Yash Khanna, no Bish and Chet Yee, no CHATTY (*The Tree Bride* 27).

As the novel progresses, we find how Tara, along with Victoria, tries to get to roots of her ancestors as well other people associated with the Tree Bride. Victoria's grandfather was Vertie Treadwell, a district commissioner, in the Indian Civil Service, who served in east Bengal until India claimed independence from Britain. Victoria, who has kept her grandfather's personal papers, hands them over to Tara. Until then, Tara had been collecting information about the tree bride and her ancestral village, Mishtigunj, mostly from family sources and old books and ledgers, but Treadwell's papers prove to be a gold mine. They form the backbone of this suspenseful story, which reveals the effects of colonialism and its aftermath.

The writer herself proclaimed in the very beginning that she is going to dig into the past and as we can see much of the past continues in the present. Tara Chatterjee's quest into the past leads her not only to an American-style roots search into her own genealogy, but also to an investigation of such epic subjects of history as the British colonization of India and its legacy. In an interview with Angela Elam in 2005, Mukherjee tells, "For us, colonial forces—the encounter between the imperialistic white man, good and bad, and the language imposed, the sense of right and wrong, democracy or feudalism imposed—has gone into the very shaping of what language I write in'' (B. Mukherjee). Mukherjee's treatment of colonialism runs through all her work but is evident in *The Tree Bride*. Here we see how the British made no space to subjugate it or hold it at a distance. As a reader we get to know the histories of Bengal and its people. Nineteenth-century Bengal is presented as a place full of contradictions and ironies. People from all over the world is

seduced by the tormented beauty of Bengal. Its beauty comes along with desperation, and its suffering stems partly from the British Raj and its own customs:

> Plenitude is its feeble precaution against starvation. In all that water, there are droughts. In all that wild profusion, starvation looms in shades of green. Muslims can take four wives and brahmins from my subcaste any number, all in the hope that a single son might survive (*The Tree Bride* 54).

In this novel Mukherjee delves into the conflicts faced by the British who leave home, sometimes with good intentions, for a chance at respectability in colonized India. Many of them, such as young immigrant John Mist, were outcasts in Britain but once in India attained a status unachievable in their homeland.

It is apparently tacit that Bharati Mukherjee's life is a story of exile, expatriation and withdrawal that constitute her exceptional diasporic perception which is, in fact, responsible for her creative expression. Therefore, her writings are a replica of her personal experiences accumulated in cross-cultural boundaries and her novels honestly reflect the different phases of life from alienation in India to isolation in Canada and finally assimilation in America (Mukherjee). Her personal experience about arriving first in America was mixed with a sense of loneliness and love for Indians she used to see on the American streets. She felt that culturally America has become more vibrant and diverse today than it was in 1960s or 70s. Remembering her earlier days at America, Mukherjee said:

> "There were so few Indians that I would be tempted to say hello to a stranger, which I would never have done back in Kolkata," (B. Mukherjee).

It is interesting to track down how Bharati Mukherjee designated herself as the chronicler of immigrant experience. One has to remember Bharati Mukherjee came to America at a time when that immigration fog had not yet crept in. She contrasts this scenario with the present growing number of Indians migrating to America. In the novel,

The Tree Bride, Tara Chatterjee describes how Indians are feeling on firmer ground in America:

> During the twenty years I've been in California, an immigrant fog of south Asians has crept into America. Quiet, prosperous, hardworking, professional—in India they would have been blocked by social convention and family duties. There are Indians in every town, every hospital, every high school and college, in banks, motels, 7- Elevens and taxis, and a startling number have begun appearing in everyday American families (*The Tree Bride* 19).

Identity crisis faced by the female protagonist due to dislocation is the recurring theme in most of Bharati Mukherjee's novels and the novel *The Tree Bride* is no exception. Through her female characters who are autobiographical projections of her experience as an expatriate she represents the contemporary woman's struggle to define herself and attain an autonomous selfhood, especially in cross-cultural crisis, a subject which has assumed a great significance in the present world of globalization. Tara, in her initial days at America feels that she has no identity of her own except her being the wife of Bish Chatterjee. One day Tara goes to a bank for encashing a check. She gets a surprise to know that cash teller is an India girl named Shobana. Tara feels a twinge of envy for Shobana as she is successful in creating a place in the New World far away from her mother land. She desperately wants to create her own identity. Tara says:

> Wife of Bish-Chatterjee was my full identity. If I had plans for the future, they would be to follow my husband wherever he went, probably back to India. Shobana, wherever she was…., was constructing a different immigrant life. I suffered a twinge of envy for her. I wondered if "wife" was the only role permitted to me if there was a way of being in this country with my own identity (*The Tree Bride* 19).

This shows how married Indian women who are immigrated to the foreign land often works to create their own identity. To create her own identity and overcome the dislocation she went through, Tara divorces her Husband Bish and embraces the North American culture and lifestyle. She gets into live-in relationship with a Hungarian Buddhist carpenter and Yoga instructor. At that time Tara was confident about her life. But after her house is destroyed by bomb attack Tara again reunites with her husband. As she nurses her husband and tries to get together their lives, she gathers the pieces and coincidences of her life to reconstruct her own identity.

People who are displaced or dislocated from their homeland are contend with the cultural memory of their own place as it is impossible to revisit it physically. Avtar Brah described this duel relation of migrants to their homeland. He says:

> On the one hand, 'home' is a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination. In this sense it is a place of no return, even if it is possible to visit the geographical territory that is seen as the place of 'origin'. On the other hand, home is also the lived experience of a locality. Its sounds and smells, its heat and dust, balmy summer evenings, sombre grey skies in the middle of the day…all this, as meditated by the historically specific everyday of social relations (Brah).

When Victoria Khanna, Tara's doctor, gives her a box filled with old papers which Victoria got from her father, Tara is lost in the bygone days that still occupies her memory:

> The contents were covered by an old sari. All the identifiable odours of India rose from that box, a century of monsoons, sweet and rancid bug spray, dust, hot mustard oil, fried fish and vegetables, basmati rice, trapped sun, mold and decades of uncirculated air. Even today I can remember the smells of drying saris, the slippery never-dry bathroom, the heavy air and fatigue of tropical Sundays, odours that the memory never releases (*The Tree Bride* 26).

This returning to the past through memory forms the "cultural identity" of a migrant as described by Stuart Hall in his famous essay Cultural Identity and Diaspora:

> The past continues to speak to us. But it no longer addresses us as simple, factual 'past', since our relation to it, like the child's relation to the mother, is always-already 'after the break.' It is constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth (Hall).

Bharati Mukherjee recreates the past through the connection between history and fiction. In the novel *The Tree Bride* mythic family story of the Tree Bride as well as Tara's memories of India and the history of India's Independence struggle is closely knit together. The history of East India Company, pre-partitioned Bengal which is now known as Bangladesh is interesting to read. Along with this the novel contained the conflicted roles of British in India and how the European society went through a sea change after Industrial Revolution took hold. The following lines describe the early 19th century situation in Europe when Industrialism grappled it:

> What had worked in previous centuries, however, was now under assault. No sooner had Bonapartism been routed than new challenges arose. Hell had climbed from the bowels of the earth and taken up residence in every port and city. This brutal new thing would soon go by the name of Industrialism. Devils of industry were running free where trout and salmon had once filled creels, in tidal basins where the poor had raked for shellfish, and on village greens where flocks had fed for centuries (*The Tree Bride* 74).

The above lines show that Mukherjee is at her best in documenting the history in an elegant, evocative prose. Although the novel is about new kind of American root-search, an exploration of heritage and identity, there are stories within stories where British-Indian relations during India's period of colonization are also discussed through the characters

like Vertie Treadwell and John Mist. The novelist meditates extensively on these two English characters who are completely contrast to each other.

The novel is divided into four parts fringed by a prologue and epilogue. The epigraph to the prologue is a passage from Mahabharata highlighting the inevitability of suffering to kings also. The first part reads like a thrillingly suspenseful 19th century seafaring adventure, and another of which is a perspective of some of the sour consequences of the British Raj in Anglo-India. The second part deals with John Mist, an English foundling who goes through an extraordinary series of events (including piracy at sea and murder) that culminate in his becoming a white "Hindu" and the empire-builder of Mishtigunj. In the third part Victoria Treadwell's grandfather Vertie Treadwell is revealed to the readers. His real name was Virgil Treadwell, but people called him Vertie—an acronym of Virgil Ernest Reginald Treadwell. He was of same age of the Tree Bride and was a district commissioner when the Tree Bride was arrested from her house and died in the police custody. Tara Lata's house was often visited by protester and activist including Mahatma Gandhi the pacifist and Netaji Subhash Bose the radicalise. It is quite natural that as a district commissioner, Vertie Treadwell is a regular visitor at Tara Lata's house. As Victoria hands over the box of papers to Tara written by Vertie Treadwell about the history of Tree Bride's life, she warns her that as a colonizer Vertie is somewhat biased towards the Indian:

> You may find Vertie's accounts of Indians somewhat biased, to be sure. I was about to say that history is written by the victors, but in the case of India it's not always clear who won, is it? (*The Tree Bride* 35).

In fact, Vertie Treadwell represents the colonial ideology that was imbued with racist terms and he justified his racist ideology with the argument that British rule conferred the benefits of superior civilization to Indians whose lives were mired in illiteracy, poverty, superstitions, and strife. Here is Vertie Treadwell's uniformed opinion that captures not only the imperial hubris but also the overt racist beliefs behind the British colonial rule in India:

> I am one of the India-born. Fully ninety percent of my life has been spent in India. I have probably spent a greater percentage of my life in India than Mr. Nehru has, and certainly more than the late Mr. Gandhi has. I have participated in many of India's greatest moments. I have endeavoured, from love, to keep India free of modern contaminants. The indisputable truth, however, they twist it, is that we built their country, and we saved them from their own bloodsucking tyrants, their ignorance, their indescribable filth and superstition (*The Tree Bride* 201).

Vertie's history, like several other character's histories in this narrative, is one which is bitterly engaged with the ugly business of maintaining colonial control, and has much at stake:

> Yet they have the gall to serve notice on families that have known no reality but India's for two hundred years, loved nothing but Indians, served nothing but India's needs, and buried untold thousands of their children and wives in the malodorous, malarial muck, that steaming bog of vile licentiousness (*The Tree Bride* 201).

The character of Vertie Treadwell is similar to Georgie Porgie in Rudyard Kipling's short story of the same name who concede that "civilized people who eat out of china and own card-cases have no right to apply their standard of right and wrong to an unsettled land." For Kipling, "the men who run ahead of the cars of Decency and Propriety, and make the jungle ways straight, cannot be judged in the same manner as the stay-at-home folk" (Kipling). In his article *Racist Raj I* Abhik Roy argues that for the writer like Kipling, the British colonists were men of a special breed who had the divine responsibility to bring about civility, law and order in a nation marked by chaos, lawlessness, and corruption, where normal standards of morality simply could not be applied (Roy).

As an immigrant writer, Bharati Mukherjee exhibits a strong cultural association with her homeland and culture. She reveals her pride to be a Bengali Brahmin thus:

> My identity was viscerally connected with ancestral soil and genealogy. I was, because I was Dr. Sudhir Lal Mukherjee's daughter because I was Hindu Brahmin, because I was Bengali speaking and because my desh- the Bengali word for homeland- was an East village called Faridpur (B. Mukherjee).

In the novel *The Tree Bride*, Bharati Mukherjee described her ancestral home in East Bengal as a historically constituted terrain, changing and contested. Bangladesh was once the part of Bengal. With the separation of Bengal and India on the basis of religion, it became a Muslim nation and called as East Pakistan. Tara Chatterjee, the protagonist, first wrongly blamed the Muslim fanatics for her family's expulsion from the present-day Bangladesh. She gradually realises that it was not Muslims who forced the family to dislocate from Bangladesh and relocate in Calcutta, but it was British Raj and their colonial ideology disguised under the name of decency and civility brought the relocation. The British who had come as traders, in no times, had become rulers and administrators, and influenced the social, economic, and political systems of the country. In the name of giving peace, individual security and prosperity to the immense population of India thirty thousand British bureaucrats systematically able to rule ten thousand times more Indians through their divide and rule policy. Tara's family belonged to Brahmin caste which was targeted by British as they were seen as potential threat to the British rule in India. Slowly and systematically Indian small skilled sector was destroyed by and the "invisible hand" of the market became the supreme adjunct of imperial authority. Tara feels that all this led to the eventual migration of many Bengali brahmins from their native land as well as their adaptive nature:

> It all began in 1833: the seeds of Brahmo-Arya split, the active encouragement of English, and the creation of a native, English-speaking intellectual aristocracy. It's the year that created my hybrid family of orthodox Hindu, Bengali-speaking, cricket loving, Shakespeare-acting, Gilbert and Sullivan-singing, adaptive-anywhere brahmins (*The Tree Bride* 45).

The cultural dislocation of not only the Bengali people but also the Indians, in general, happened when Macaulay presented his "Minute on Education" which was scathing on the inferiority of native culture and learning. He argued that Western learning was superior, and currently could only be taught through the medium of English. With the emphasis on English language in higher education he insisted on producing "a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect." This approach of British authority was completely opposite to the earlier generations of European visitors who were charmed by Indian culture and had adopted Indian ways. But people like Vertie Treadwell follows the path set by Macaulay with the common aim of turning the natives into surrogate Englishmen. Tara, in her early school days, was made to feel ashamed of her orthodox Hindu background. Thanks to the plan of Macaulay many of Tara's friends were effortlessly Westernized. However, people like John Mist and the Tree Bride were immune to their plan. Even Jay Krishna Gangooly, the learned father of Tara Lata, abandon English language altogether and settled down in Mishtigunj. His grandson, the modern Tara's father had an English taste in his reading and drinking but deep inside his heart he craved for a life of recluse. Ultimately, he leads a life of prayer in Rishikesh. Tara Chatterjee in her initial years, however, admired the British because they embodied a notion of fair play and scholarship which the Indians could emulate:

> The British were the most reliable source of knowledge about ourselves, because they had lifted us from the deep slumber of decadence, they had injected us with the spirit of inquiry and reverence for art and culture, and of course manly competition and fair play, and we'd do well to emulate them (*The Tree Bride* 48).

On the lines of Edward Said's criticism of Eurocentric perspectives that claimed that Europe's colonisation of 'the rest of the world' made it possible for the "barbaric" natives to enter history and modernity, Bharati Mukherjee, through the protagonist Tara, questions and rejects the facial sociological order which promotes European knowledge as archetypes of modern society. For Tara, the history of the British rule in India is "a story

of adventure gone bad". This view of Mukherjee is echoed by Shashi Tharoor in his scholarly non-fictional book *An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India* highlighted the horrors of British colonialism in India. He is strongly of the opinion that the British empire inflicted wrongs on its subject and therefore India is entitled to a reparation by the British government. Tharoor also shows how some Indians like Nirad C. Chaudhuri extolled the virtues of British empire and lamented its passing (Tharoor).

According to Braziel et.al, the term diaspora implies a "dislocation from the nation-state or geographical location of origin and relocation in one or more nation-states, territories, or countries" (Braziel and Mannur). Many theorists of diaspora have pointed out that a community may move or be displaced from its homeland but retain a deep attachment to the land, community and place which they have left behind. The diasporic community has an intense desire to retain ties with the real or imagined homeland. One major feature of diaspora cited by James Clifford is:

> A strong attachment to and desire for literal return to a well-preserved homeland (Clifford).

A home in the context of a diaspora is a place which has a glorious past and it arouses nostalgic feeling among the community. In his essay *Imaginary Homelands* Salman Rushdie describes how much he longs to restore the past to himself "not in the faded greys of old family-album snapshots, but whole in Cinemascope and glorious Technicolor". Rushdie, further, believes that writers of diaspora have the intense urge to reclaim the past:

> It may be that writers in my position, exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt. But if we do look back, we must also do so in the knowledge—which gives rise to profound uncertainties—that our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind (Rushdie).

Rushdie asserts that the sentimental attachment that one had with one's homeland is perhaps not 'imaginary' because it keeps renewing itself time and again by keeping alive the physical as well as emotional contacts with the native land. As an immigrant writer, Bharati Mukherjee also shows through her writings that personal experiences of the homeland and of life in diaspora constitute and define the individual notion of what it means to be an immigrant. In the novel *The Tree Bride*, Mukherjee uses 'homing desire' as a theme of the novel. In order to know where she really belongs, Tara decides to come back to India for her "American-style roots search". She visits Mishtigunj, the birthplace of her great grand mother and her namesake Tara Lata Gangooly (Saikia).

According to a critic, "A key theme in *The Tree Bride* is Tara's attempt to reconcile the part of her tied to her Indian heritage with her life as an assimilated America" (Skerrett). A fictional web of longing, fantasy, allegiance and memories continue to exist in Tara's diasporic consciousness. Tara remembers how her mother was a mesmerizing storyteller. Those stories kept little Tara and her sisters spellbound at night in the high-ceilinged house in Ballygunge Park:

> We sat on wicket stools at her feet on the veranda. A filigreed brass lamp in a far corner was the only light, so as not to attract mosquitoes, and we let her voice carry us to exotic places in bygone centuries (*The Tree Bride* 38).

Apart from Tara's search for her roots, Mukherjee in *The Tree Bride* interwoven multiple threads of narratives. And as rightly suggested by Ubaraj Katawal "things are inextricably interconnected" in this novel (Katawal). The man, Abbas Sattar Hai who bombed Tara's house, reveals as a great grandson of Rafeek Hai, who, back in Bangladesh, was a close friend of Tara's great great grandfather, Jai Krishna Gangooly. His daughter and Tara's great great aunt Tara Lata owned the Mist Mahal and it was Sattar Hai's family occupied this house after Tara Lata's death. The place Mishtigunj now falls in modern Bangladesh. When Tara expresses her desire to visit the place she is turned down by her family:

> I wanted to see this place called Mishtigunj that everyone in the family had talked Babout, but no one had visited in sixty years. “Why go that side?” my mother had asked. It was much better to talk nostalgically and bitterly of that place, “that side,” than actually to expose oneself to it (*The Tree Bride* 20).

But Tara’s resolution to unearth the history of her ancestor leads her to also discover the identity of the founder of Mishtigunj, John Mist. The story of John Mist intertwines with that of the Tree Bride. The Tree Bride was forced to marry a tree as a child because of her bridegroom’s unfortunate death on the wedding day. She thus occupied a liminal state, both wife and virgin, and eventually became a nationalist fighting against the British rule. Similarly, John Mist also occupied a liminal state by reinventing himself and ‘going native’, thus becoming neither English nor Bengali (Iyer).

Bharati Mukherjee, through the story of John Mist, highlighted how the beautiful but equally dangerous forest like Shoonder Bon lures the European due to its abundance of fresh water for growing rice and fish, the “blue devil” indigo, and the forests of sundari trees. The wood of these trees is known for its firmness and durability and anyone who could provide ‘reliable wood to the world and especially the British navy and East India Company ‘owned riches more convertible than gold’. The forests lie outside the jurisdiction of the East India Company and of the British administration and any European who arrived there became free from his past inheritance. His past records were wiped out so that he could become free from all ‘debts and oppression, free to ‘invent past and future’ or he could give away his ‘every scrap of inheritance’. Moreover, he could become Hindu or Muslim in his faith or a ‘less constricting combination known only to himself’. The bewildering abundance of Bengal attracted many European and John Mist was no exception. Tara points out that how he created Mishtigunj:

> Not every pioneer pushes westward in a covered wagon or breaks the prairie sod with a wooden plow, some head south into bewildering abundance.

> Such a man was John Mist and the village he created is that magical word in my native language, my desh, my unseen home (*The Tree Bride* 55).

Europeans like John Mist who reached the exotic forest of Bengal and secured timber or indigo concessions had the dark secretive past behind them. Most of them were either outcasts of the British Isles or cut off from inheritance. They forged their documents to hide their ignominious past. Cornish seafarers, Manxmen, Scotch, Welsh, and Irish, theirs were the names on charge sheets, the escapees from debtors' prison, the common criminals and mutineers. Once they cleared from their history they would emerge as the new nawabs of indigo or timber, and later of jute and tea. It was early phase of colonialism when India transited from feudalism to capitalism. Gayatri Spivak defined it as "a change from semi-feudalism into capitalist subjection" (Spivak). Mukherjee, like a Subaltern theorist, pointed out the "force of crisis" which led to a cycle of starvation:

> By the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the "blue devil" indigo had created its own British planter society, insular and profitable, hostile to outsiders and newcomers. Indigo turned native farmers into poorly paid laborers and transformed paddy fields into plantations (*The Tree Bride* 55).

Not every sheltered European of Shoonder Bans had the criminal past. Some like John Mist were the victims of circumstances. They were 'the orphaned, the abandoned, and the foundlings.' Tara felt that the foundlings were luckier due to the absence of past memory or patrimony. There were no legends of lost inheritance to muddle their thinking. Aware of their circumstance, they had not been under obligation to any man, king or state. Without any string of past attachment, they were 'free to fashion anything they pleased.' In her another novel, *Leave It to Me,* Bharati Mukherjee has touched upon the idea inheriting nothing means claim to everything. John Mist was such a man who had no past records of his whereabout, and he created the utopian world in the village Mishtigunj, now known as Rajakpur located in present Bangladesh.

The life of John Mist is a story of mongrelized immigrant who suffers multiple mutilations and humiliations, survives violence, and seizes the opportunity offered by the

new homeland. In part two of the novel, John Mist is introduced as Jack Snow. In the year 1820, at east London he was left outside the doors of the Orphan and Foundlings Betterment Trust by a woman in rag-bound feet and a man in boots. At the age of six Jack Snow was sent to work for "sweeping animal waste and gutter slime" (75). In spite of no deafness or gross deformity, he was not known to speak and called as "Jack Snow Mute". It was during these early years of his life, little Jack learnt the moral instructions taught by Brothers of Spade, the supervisor, Henry Wiggins. He tells Jack that no one knows what the next strike of the shovel brings to them. For Jack, a patient, sharp-eyed boy, the well-timed thrust of the proper shovel did indeed unlock the door of fortune. On the handsome autumn morning in 1827, when Jack was seven years old, he saved the life of Tom Crabbe, a wild deformed sailor of the Indiaman *Malabar Queen*. With Tom's help little Jack headed out to India as a cabin boy. It was Crabbe who warned little Jack about the new development in the shipping industry. The great days of sailing were soon to lose its shine. Colonialism was at its height and British ruled India under a government known as the Raj. India was a land of opportunity to many British men served the British Raj. Women that followed the men came by boats; a long terrible, dangerous trip. These women were wives, fiancées, sisters, daughters etc. The men waiting in India called these boats "the fishing fleet" since so many were fishing for their husbands. These ships had luxurious cabin for captain and ladies where chickens and cabbages are entitled for more light and air. But the two hundred sailors are subjected to miserable condition where there is no sufficient light nor air to breath. Diligence Partridge, captain of the Indiaman *Malabar Queen*, was younger and educated in Nautical Science. He appoints Jack Snow as his assistant to measure the temperature of the water below. Jack becomes Master Snow. On the ship also sailing an attractive young lady Olivia Todd. She is on her way to Calcutta to meet her future husband Mr. Humphrey Todd-Nugent an official at East India Company. Miss Olivia calls little Jack "bright, bright lad" and invites him to stay on with her new family in Calcutta as a cook's assistant and apprentice butler. She is in tears when she comes to know of his cruel abandonment by his parents and institutional upbringing. The writer describes:

> For the first time in his life, Jack Snow found himself in the company of a woman who paid him respect and attention and placed one affectionate hand on his shoulder as they strolled (*The Tree Bride* 92).

It is through the discussion of Captain Partridge with other mates Jack receives the best education he ever gets. He overhears the captain and officers joking of Calcutta's carryings-on of East India Company officials with native women called bibis when their wives are back in England. He also learns about the hierarchy, the social etiquette, of East India officials in Calcutta. He notices how give and take goes on around him. Slowly, little Jack starts picking up words, codes, the apprehensions of the people who are in the power.

Just when things seem going well on the ship and Jack feels happier with the company of Miss Olivia Todd, the ship is besieged off the coast Madagascar by the pirates. Not only they kill the captain and the first mate but also take away with them the only female passenger Miss Olivia Todd. But before her abduction by the Mascarene pirates, she is able to save Master Snow by hiding him in the chest. That night Jack Snow dies, and John Mist rises in his place who does not speak of the piracy act. His witnessing the dreadful events of that night removes his youth and changes him into a man. When the *Malabar Queen* arrived in Calcutta, he sees how Calcutta is far cleaner and modern in compared to London which he wrongly thought earlier was the centre of the world and the glory of civilization. John Mist closes his eyes and remembers Captain partridge's description of Calcutta:

> Calcutta was the seat of British governance, but also the base of the Honourable Company. As a commercial and political entity, it sat next only to London in the Empire, and might even surpass it (*The Tree Bride* 110).

Unfortunately, John Mist's first encounter with Calcutta turns out to be the reversal of expectation. He hoped for a warm welcome from the city and especially from Mr. Todd-Nugent, the husband-to-be of Miss Olivia Todd. Instead Mr. Todd-Nugent brings out his arrest which not only crushes his soul but also takes words from his mouth. Mr. Todd-

Nugent accuses the surviving crew of the *Malabar Queen* of plotting against the Captain and attempting the molestation of Miss Olivia Todd. Facing a possible penalty of death for mutiny, John Mist is tortured by Humphrey Todd-Nugent. As he is the only person who knows Miss Olivia Todd he is summoned every time to ascertain her identity if any woman poses herself as Miss Todd. He is rescued by retired barrister Mr. Owen and his assistant, the fastest and the most accurate transcriber, English, Persian, or Bengali, Rafeek Hai.

Through the character of Owen, Bharati Mukherjee sheds light on the early paradise like fusion of cultures that was possible in eighteenth century India. Mr. Owen, "a perfect Welsh egg," has been born and brought up in Calcutta is known for his Indian way of life. He dresses by Indian fashion in kurta-pyjama with colourful shawl drape over his shoulder and covering his bald head in a turban. He keeps four wives with more than thirty children. Because his love for India embarrasses the British establishments he is called as the old "British Hindoos". Around the time period of 1832, in India, a man like Owens would not have seemed misplaced. This was the period when, the writer states:

> Many Britishers came to India and became more Indian than the natives, learning the languages, practicing the religions, eating the food, and fathering half-Indian children from a virtual harem of bibis. They did so while still holding important offices within the East India Company (*The Tree Bride* 119).

As the political ambition of the British empire

Although Tom Crabbe becomes the focus of the inquiry, Mr. Owen chooses John Mist, the mute cabin boy, and introduces him as a proud product of strictly Christian and how his innocence is taken away since that dreadful night on the ship. Mr. Owen's earnest defence convinces the judge that Mist is a most extraordinary young man. After his acquittal from the mutiny charges Mist is placed on three years' probation in an Orphan house where he is supposed to learn Jute trade. Mist reflects upon the piracy act and regret his greatest failing in life that he could not save Miss Olivia Todd. When the real Olivia arrives, he is forced by Mr. Todd-Nugent not to confirm her originality because it would spoil his image. At the same time, Mr. Todd tries to hide his having a bibi and children

from her. All this makes Mist mad in anger. He feels he has been duped. But feeling helpless against the power of Mr. Todd, Mist does what he is expected to do. He refuses to recognise Olivia Todd even he knows she is real. This not only saves him from possible death but also gives him an opportunity to settle score with Mr. Todd Nugent. Burden with the guilt of not saving Olivia, Mist decides not to speak anymore in English language. He also makes a fail attempt of suicide for not having the strength to acknowledge Olivia Todd. This gives him a lifelong scar around the neck. Knowing well that his life is under threat by Mr. Todd-Nugent, Mist slays him and escape to Shoonder Bon with the help of Hai and Owens. During his escape he vows never to wear English clothes again and even loathed the English language.

Because of his stay in the Hickey Home, John Mist finds himself assimilated into Indian culture. When Mr. Hai enquires if Mist has forgotten the English language. He declares to the delight of Mr. Owen and Hai that he no longer speaks in English but Bengali:

> It seemed that every conversation he'd ever held with Crabbe, with Olivia, with Captain Partridge, had been in Bengali. The God he prayed to, the God who had granted him extended life, obviously did not speak a heathen tongue. He would not be offended. It would not be a violation of his vow (*The Tree Bride* 137).

In fact, he emerges as a clearer thinker and better negotiator in Bengali language. It is like getting a new birth with the purgation of his past sins. His foreignness does not come in his way to imbibe the local culture. For thirty-seven years he remains unknown to the rest of the world. He travels all over India, visits the holy places of Amaranth, Himalayas, and Benares. Everywhere he is taken as an Indian and on one doubt his British origins. In the Mistnama he wrote:

> We are the same people. A hundred miles east into Burma, a hundred miles north into Assam, and my foreignness could not have been disguised. We are perched here at the edge of Europe (*The Tree Bride* 149).

Jasbir Jain points out how Bharati Mukherjee's writings empowers a transition in immigrant fiction, from a preoccupation with nostalgia and binding memories to creating space for the new culture of the adopted land. In *The Tree Bride*, the writer focuses on "transformations and not merely adjustment or acculturation (Jain). Tara feels that Mist's transformation from a foreigner to a "British Hindoo" is very rare. His life story is a perfect example of Homi Bhaba's theory of hybridity and mimicry of becoming "almost the same, but not quite" (Bhabha). In East Bengal, on a riverbank, he creates his village named Mishtigunj. Rafeek Hai illustrates Mist's adventure in the Shoonder Bon in Persian book *Mist-nama*. British laws, customs as well as Christians have no place in this utopia where "Education, justice, health, food, a spirit of cooperation, and the uninhabited worship of one's god" (*The Tree Bride* 140-150) has been the foundation. Mist also invites people like Jai Krishna Gangooly, Tara's great grandfather, who opposes British law and British customs, to start a new career in this newly founded village. Although Mist tries to keep the Britishers away from Mishtigunj he meets his end when the British authorities bribes the son of Ghani Rehman Razak, the nominal owner of Mishtigunj. The British troop enter the provinces and hang Mist and Rafeek Hai publicly. Tara Lata, the tree bride, witnesses this twin hanging along with her father. The heroics of John Mist for his adopted homeland inspires Tara Lata to fight against the British Crown.

Mist, despite his foreignness, feels at home in India. He doesn't get support from his own people like Todd-Nugent. Born as an illiterate he knows the importance of education and insinuates money into schools. His scientific temperament earns the respect of his hater Vertie Treadwell who values his contribution for establishing "a very reliable guide to local flora and fauna as well as a meticulous record of tides and winds and rainfall, onset and vigour of monsoons, et cetra". He aspires to get rooted. Not only he wins the hearts of people in Mishtigunj but also forges an alliance between Mussalmans and Hindus. When he is getting hanged by the Britishers Mist remains clam and composed. He just smiles and commands in Bangla: "Chalo, Kajey hat lagao". He learns the language, abides by its cultural practices and assimilates to the spirit of the land. For the people of Mishtigunj he is like a father and mother. They worship him and name the village after John Mist when he dies. Thus, Mist achieves his 'home' morally, physically, and eternally in Mishtigunj and in the memory of the people.

Like John Mist, other examples of West meet the East are Nigel Coughlin and Tara's "ob-gyn" Dr. Victoria Khanna. British settler, Nigel Coughlin and the "white Hindoos" who likewise have rejected Western lifestyle along with the colonial enterprise and "gone native" are instances of "reverse assimilation". Nigel Coughlin represents the fifth generation of British diaspora in India. Although working as a secretary to the Eastern Army general staff, he is a sympathizer and sincere friend of India. People like Vertie Treadwell shows no attempt to hide their disdain for Mr. Coughlin and calls him sodomite with no sense of loyalty. Being fully aware of the atrocities committed by British troops and police against unarmed villages in the district of Mishtigunj, Coughlin becomes confident of the tree bride and informs her movements of British troops. His foreignness doesn't prevent him to know the sentiments of Indian people and opposition to the British rule in India. His passions to learn Bengali language and cultures proves him to be respectful in the extreme. When he first meets Tara Lata, Nigel greets her like any simple villager. He even kisses her hand on their first meeting which no one dares before. Their first meeting continues for many hours in languages like English and Bengali as well as Persian:

> They knew precisely when to change languages, when references to the other's world were more appropriate than from their own. It seemed to Tara for the moment that communion between the two great cultures of the world, the English and the Bengalis, was possible, as it had been in the time of Mist, Hai, and her father (*The Tree Bride* 262).

Nigel Coughlin belongs to the tribe of displaced Englishmen who feels proud with Indian ties. He is assimilated with Indian soil so completely that he hardly knows any "equivalent English words for the birds and fish of Bengal." When sent to England for school education he nostalgically remembers his childhood in the Bengal hills as idyllic. He declares his love for India and prepares hard for ICS exams that would return him to India. He is not critical to be called as a "White Hindu" and declares that his whiteness should not come in the way of his being an Indian:

> "If there was a way, I could trade this pale skin and these blue eyes and lank yellow hair for anything I see on the streets of India, I should do so in a flash" (*The Tree Bride* 267).

His love for Bengal makes Tara believe that he is the incarnation of John Mist himself. Like Mist, he is a Hindu in his heart. Coughlin understands the outrageous assault and casual butchery of Indians by the Britishers. His research on John Mist strengthen his view that ICS officers are "frustrated souls" and agrees with Tara Lata that John Mist has been wrongly executed leading to an enduring strain relation between Indian and British people.

Contrary to the characters of Mist, Owen and Coughlin who embrace the Bengali cultures, others, such as, Vertie Treadwell insulated themselves from Bengali life. His Victorian mindset and loyalty to the British Raj guides his cruel actions towards the colonized India. Vertie Treadwell appears one hundred years after the hanging of John Mist in Mishtigunj. He doesn't receive the kind of love or respect enjoyed by John Mist. It is because of love for Olivia Todd that Mist murders Mr. Todd-Nugent. Whereas, Vertie lives without love which is the tragedy of British Raj.

To conclude, dislocation is a central theme of *The Tree Bride* which Bharati Mukherjee tries to describe through the characters like John Mist, Vertie Treadwell, David Owen and Nigel Coughlin. John Mist who breaks away from colonial reigns and builds the place 'Mishtigunj', an ideal of Hindu Muslim unity and with no British or colonial trace. He undergoes a complete transformation in India, even forgetting the English language. He is revered by the villagers and they named the village for him after his death. Through his transformation Mist stands out as the perfect "British Hindoo". Like Mist, Nigel Coughlin, David Owen and Victoria Treadwell-Khanna also become Indian by adoption. Mist, Owens and Coughlin represents British diaspora who glorify India- a country of adoption which welcomes them warmly – as their homeland. Whereas Victoria who marries an Indian is the granddaughter of Vertie Treadwell. Both Tara, the protagonist and Victoria values their Indian identity despite living in America. No matter how successful they are in America, a sense of belonging to Indian soil strengthen their immigrant sensibilities. Tara leaves India at a very young age after her marriage and embrace the lifestyle of her adopted land. She divorces her husband, has lovers and cut loose. But still remains a believing, ritual-observing Hindu. After the bomb blast, she re-establishes her Indian home and a family with Bish, her ex-husband. She tries to unearth the story behind her name sake Tara Lata.

Her dislocation makes her to undertake the mission of writing true story of tree bride. She brings back her own days through memory, whereas with the help of papers given to her by Victoria, Tara sketches down the story of Vertie Treadwell and Tree Bride. Nostalgia for homeland and earning to return to the past memories pulls her towards the ancestors' land. She is very much happy with her cross-cultural identity. She knows very well that although she is settled in America, she cannot abandon or neglect past Indianness. In fact, through Tara, Mukherjee shows a way to find a perfect balance between being an Indian and American acculturation.

Theme of Dislocation in *Miss New India*

After four decades of writing about the migration of Indians to America, Bharati Mukherjee turns to the depiction of transnational and internal migration in India in her last novel *Miss New India*. The novel completes the trilogy of *Desirable Daughters* and *The Tree Bride* and shades light on the changes brought about by globalization in India, depicting the massive migration of ambitious and audacious young Indians into Bangalore, India's Silicon Valley. Mukherjee portrays twenty-first-century India in a digital age when American culture and values are imported and transformed by the young Indians who end up staying in the country. As commented by Natasha Lavigilante, "Roots and routs are negotiated in *Miss New India* in unprecedented ways, leading to the rise of new kinds of transnational cultural identities" (Lavigilante). The novel is the story of a teenage girl from small-town Bihar in India who decides not to submit to her parent's wish and take control of her life. Mukherjee's territory is alienation, cultural shock, identity crisis and personal transformation brought out through traumas of displacement. In almost all her novels she focuses on the complex experience of Indian immigrants and the clash of Indian and Western culture. The present novel, *Miss New India*, bears a resemblance to a long line of Mukherjee's other works where people migrates from their homeland and goes to a foreign place in search of things new and different. Like *Desirable Daughters* and *The Tree Bride*, Mukherjee here talks about immigration, internal migration and globalization. The novel is about leaving a town or city that one knows very well and landing in a city, town, cultures and ethics that you don't know.

Dealing with the issues of globalization and the role of women therein, the novel *Miss New India* is about a nineteen-year- old girl named Anjali Bose who lives in Gauripur, a backward town in the northern part of India. She has recently graduated from high school and she is now taking college classes in management. Like any other teenagers who wants to break down the shackles of family constraint and explore the unknown world, Anjali is curious about life outside her quiet hometown of Gauripur. She has the skills and connections to do so: she was one of the smartest girls in her class and has been taking private lessons with her American expat teacher Peter Champion, to refine her English. Peter considers Anjali as his most bright student and has been urging her to make the move to Bangalore, which is at the forefront of the global economy. The main thing holding Anjali back is her traditional family. Her parents think she should get married and settled down. Her father puts the word out in the Bengali community that he is looking for a suitable boy for her. Anjali is torn between these two visions of the future and she is certainly not opposed to marrying if her father can find the right man. She understands the problem of arranging a good match since her older sister married a man who appeared to be a great match but now, she is divorced and a single mother. After a disastrous meeting with a prospective bridegroom Anjali does decide to go to Bangalore. The city is thriving IT hub, thronged with young migrants, who aspires to find jobs in call centers. Peter Champion gave her two names of residents who could help her. One is an old woman who rents out rooms in her Raj era mansion. The other name Anjali has been given is of a woman who owns a school that prepares young people to work at the call centers. In Bangalore, suddenly feeling free of the confines of class, ethnicity and gender, Anjali hurls herself into building a new life. Of course, a new life in a New India comes at a cost. The novel looks like an 'amoral fairy tale' that explores, in Kishwar Desai's words, "India's post-liberation generation, starstruck by foreign brands, stumbling towards the Holy Grail of mega bucks and quick success, deserting the debris of 'values' and 'ethics" (Desai).

With the publication of *Miss New India*, Mukherjee's work has come a full circle: from uneasy expatriation to exuberant immigration to a celebration of return "home" to India, a burgeoning new India with immense potential and possibilities (Nelson). In her previous novel, *The Tree Bride*, Bharati Mukherjee attempts to depict the protagonist's

reconnection with the past to build a stable future. Whereas, the female protagonist of *Miss New India* immerses herself in the excitement of New India, and with time, learns to disregard the past (Bhattacharya). In *Miss New India,* Mukherjee celebrates the struggle of modern and empowering young woman going through the process of transformation to survive in the New World. The novel portrays the embarkment of the protagonist to create her own identity in the new world. Anjali Bose, the heroine of *Miss New India*, is reasonably attractive girl with good English and an adventurous nature. The tag of small-town girl doesn't stop her from dreaming big. a young and dynamic with a good command over English language. She runs away from her small-town Gauripur to Bangalore, the Silicon Valley of India. There she works at a call center, falls in love, meets dynamic young entrepreneurs and marvels at the fortunes being made all around her. She encounters her share of hardships — cultural dislocation, alienation, identity crisis, police brutality, real-estate sharks – but ultimately succeeds in reinventing herself. Although, *Miss New India* is slightly different from Mukherjee's earlier novels where she portrays the immigrant experiences of Indians in America. *Miss New India* encompasses the protagonist's hardship in a metro city like Bangalore where she builds her new life. Through the character of Anjali, the novelist clearly shows that women are really coming out the age and are not reluctant to express themselves. For Mukherjee, Anjali is a symbol of rebellion against contentment. People like her wants personal pleasure, not class or caste or tribal privilege. And remarkably fortunate Anjali does bag that personal happiness she hopes for, all over the places.

Most of the female protagonists of Mukherjee's previous novels break the umbilical cord with the homeland as they all compel to leave their country and settled in America. Anjali, in *Miss New India*, however, becomes immigrant in her own country rather than in a foreign land. In fact, she is displaced from one city to another alien city in her own native country. Her displacement from Gauripur to Bangalore results in many experiences as are faced by diasporic immigrants. Although she remains in her own country, but her dislocation creates same problems of rootlessness, alienation, restlessness and identity crisis as for an immigrant in a foreign land. For Anjali, Bangalore is just like America. Through this novel Bharati Mukherjee addresses the complexities and doldrums of life within a globalized India of liberalized markets, offshoring, "neutralized" English, and

troubling new hybridized identities. Set against this backdrop of "new India" that is rising as a global power, the novel chronicles India's seismic shift in early 2000s: mushrooming of call centers cultures in Indian cities like Bangalore, Mumbai, Gurgaon and Pune, the rise of the outsourcing power house and the technological and economic boom.

Miss New India talks about the journey of Anjali in Bangalore. Simultaneously, it tells us about the city that has been hailed as the "Silicon Valley" of India. This is where the call centers created a new subculture, where small-town Indians learned American accents, where day and night were reversed, and young people were suddenly earning more than their parents ever dreamed. Home to some of the world's biggest IT companies and exponentially growing start-up ecosystems, Bangalore attracts thousands of software engineers and IT specialist and the middle-class youths like Anjali from the furthest parts of India. These small-town Indians upgrade their English accent to American accents and become part of the call center where working on night shifts has become a way life. All of them have a dream to make most of the life by earning great as the sun of BPOs is shining brightly. The novel presented the story of two Bangalores. Anjali first stays as a tenet in Minnie Bagehot's 1840s Raj-era mansion, a relic of a fast fading city that has shuttered off from modern India. She later moves to Dollar Colony where foreign-returned executives and expats live American suburban lives in McMansions with four master bedrooms suites and spa baths. Anjali has no doubt about which life she wants. She finds little romance in the past, in the disappearing India, the way Anjali's friends, the California-born photographer Rabi Chatterjee, does. Rabi, after all, can leave whenever he wants and return to America.

In *Miss New India* Bharati Mukherjee celebrates a "new India" that offers economic opportunities to all those who carry on. For decades, the allure of America as a land of plenty attracted talented Indians for better jobs and better lives. But to a young boy or girl with fire in his or her belly, India has everything they want on the earth. "India is starting to wake up. India is a giant still in its bed but beginning to stir. It's too late for me, but India is catching fire" (Prologue: x), says Peter Champion an expatriate American in the novel. The significance of India's relative belatedness is obvious in the myths of nation that attach to India; myths which encompass British Rule under Raj, a valorisation of the

generation of nation-builders at the start of the twentieth-century and claims of a newly triumphant India, encapsulated in slogans such as “India Rising” or “India Shining”. The prologue of the novel describes immigration in reverse circumstances. The writer describes how the 1960s had seen American and other westerners flocked to India to overcome their ennui aroused from the consumerism and absorbed into Indian society. In the mid-1960s, many Americans like Beatles became interested in Indian culture. The novelist tells us how westerners, particularly the Americans, were allured towards India:

> Young Americans- the disillusioned, the reckless, and the hopeful- began streaming into India. The disaffected children of American affluence: college dropout, draft dodgers, romantics, druggies. (Prologue: vii)

They represented the rebellious youth of sixties indulged by their affluent parents. They were the newly sprung higher middleclass who lacked the capacity for delayed gratification that characterized previous generations. What they wanted, in a word, was “fun.” However, Mukherjee describes how one in a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand absorbed in the locality of India:

> They settled down in towns and villages, learned the languages, and lived Indian life. They took modest jobs with foundations and charities. They taught English and took to the countryside to collect music and folktales, arts and crafts. They married local girls or stayed celibate and identified themselves with Indian needs and aspirations (Prologue: viii).

Peter Champion is one such immigrant who not only settled down in India and but also adopted Indian language and culture completely. He teaches English in his small apartment in the less developed town like Gauripur. He came to India when America was at war with Vietnam. Instead of going back to America he had set on to Raj-era houses and public buildings. Ironically, at the same time young and talented Indians were attracted towards the West for jobs and education. It is a two-way trend: Indians are going abroad to secure a bright future, and overseas children like Peter come to India in search of their soul. *We were hungry for America, but they were sated with it* (Prologue: viii). When Anjali

meets Rabi Chatterjee, she is surprised to know he too is drawn towards India despite his being an American. His coming to India makes her laugh, "Now *that's* crazy. Why would anyone from California come to a pokey little town like Gauripur?" (*Miss New India* 36). This synergy of global and local is highlighted throughout the novel (Deshmukh). So, when the Indian professors boast of their global degrees and intimidate the local Indian students with their legendary achievements Peter Champion jokes about his mediocre education. He encourages Anjali to pursue her dreams as India is changing and not to yield to her parent's wish. He explains:

> Companies fail when they keep making the same product in the same way, even when the customer base is changing. Well, the base—that's India today—is changing and the old ways are dead ways. This marriage portrait is a wasted effort (*Miss New India* 48).

Along with education and jobs, marriage acts as one of the biggest driving forces behind people in India to move out. In Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* marriage is the primary concern for the heroin's mother. Here, in *Miss New India* Anjali's parents are obsess with finding a suitable boy for their daughter. They like Anjali to leave Gauripur only after her marriage. Her father says:

> It's not a question of happiness, yours or ours. It's about our name, our family reputation (*Miss New India* 7).

But being resolute not to yield her right to happiness, Anjali wants to save her from the tedium of Gauripur and find a job for herself in metro city:

> She could more easily visualise herself in a fancy Mumbai café overlooking the Gateway of India, stirring a foamy pink falooda with a long spoon in a frosty glass, than nibbling spicy savouries from a street vendor in Gauripur (*Miss New India* 6).

The novel chronicles the journey of Anjali Bose, who leaves her family and their expectations behind to get big city prospects in Bangalore, the Silicon Valley. When Anjali discloses her dream to settled in Mumbai, Peter recommends her go to Bangalore as it is bustling with call centres and luring thousands of young talents like Anjali. He explains to her: "In Bangalore, if you've got the talent, there's a market" (*Miss New India* 12). Peter expresses his willingness to finance her journey to Bangalore because he has seen the dream of many ambitious and girls is shattered by their parents. He justifies:

> They never left; they never got a proper education. These girls who wanted to be doctors and teachers, not flight attendants. Their fathers pulled them out of school as soon as they got their high school certificates and had them married off within the month (*Miss New India* 48).

He advises her to leave Gauripur for her better future:

> I told you at graduation you had to leave this place before you got trapped in a rotten marriage. I am telling you again, let that happen and you're as good as dead…I have dreams for you. You get married to some boy from here, and the dream dies. You'll never see the world (*Miss New India* 17-18).

But her parents are completely against her leaving Gauripur until her marriage to a big city-based bridegroom. For them marriage is a sacred duty. Generally, in the Bengali family, the girls can get good education to get good match. Anjali is permitted to attend Peter's classes because it would be handy for her to help her family if some misfortune befell on her husband. Through Anjali Bose, Bharati Mukherjee points out how well-educated women are also tuned in to accept their parent's wish in the matter of marriage. As a study, conducted by Jadavpur University, brought out, "continuing with schooling is perceived as going against the interests of marriage" (Bagchi, Guha and Sengupta). Indian society gives more importance to family honour and reputation. Anjali's father already erred in marring his elder daughter Sonali to a scoundrel. The Bose is still smarting from that disastrous marriage which leads to Sonali's divorce and her living as a single mother in nearby Patna. Despite this fact Mr. Bose wants Anjali to go for a boy of his choice. For him love equals duty. To discharge duty is to express love. Anjali is tossed between these two choices

before her. On the one hand the thought of maybe finding a "good boy" through the arranged marriage circuit and settling down is not an entirely unpleasant one. Yet she knows, as her sister had warned her:

> Matchmaking might start as a small cloud on the distant horizon, but before it was over, the marital monsoon would break, and on one in the world could hold the floodwaters back (*The Tree Bride* 18).

Then there's the attraction of leading an independent life in a big cosmopolitan city like Bangalore. Peter Champion repeatedly paints a glamorous picture that appeals to "Angie", but she understands very well that she would be walking on a double-edged sword if she goes to Bangalore on her own. It would be a "monumental life-destroying—or liberating—decision." The novel points out the generation gap between parents and their children. Mr. and Mrs. Bose belong to old and impoverished India, whereas Anjali is part of the bold new India. Anjali thinks her parents could not make progress in life because they live a dull and humiliated life, denying themselves comforts and delaying pleasures. Their life stuck in routine with same food, gossip and meaningless questions and answers. She considers it has been great injustice to her for denying the opportunity to use her intelligent and find the happiness. But Anjali decides to listen to her father:

> "No need to rush," Anjali would say. She would be fair to her father. She'd give him another six months. If it looked hopeless, if he couldn't come through with a fancy catch, then she would definitely sneak out of the house, go to Peter, and wheedle a counter-dowry out of him, and send a postcard from Bangalore (*Miss New India* 20).

However, this procrastination of Anjali takes a band turn when in response to the matrimonial ad given by her father the first boy who comes to see Anjali attacks her. Subodh Mitra, come from Asansol for marriage inspection, poses himself as an engineer with M.B.A. degree and an experience of working in a call centre at Bangalore. On their

approved date he takes Anjali out in his car. When they reach at desolate place off the highway, he stops the car in a dark grove and molests her. This incident tears her soul apart, prompting her to leave her parents' home. That night when she leaves her parent's home Anjali put behind all her hesitation and doubt. She is ready to take her place in the world. She leaves behind not only her place, people but also her past:

> In just a day, India had gone from something green and lush and beautiful to something barren and hideous. Her sister had deserted her, and her parents were prepared to marry her off to a monster whose father demanded a set of golf clubs (*Miss New India* 72).

With financial assistance and local convenience provided by Peter, Anjali reaches to Bangalore. However, her journey from Gauripur to Bangalore is anything but a pleasant one. It is just the beginning of fresh ordeal. After an exhausting and starving journey, Anjali arrives in Bangalore. It appears another world to her as she could not speak or understand language of south of India. Her pride over her Hindi and English and even Bangla buys no listener. When she sees hundreds of migrant laborers coming with "a purpose and destination", it drains off her confidence, "This was the first morning of her new life, but it felt like death" (78). Bangalore, as mentioned earlier, is presented as America in this novel. The call centre culture is cultivating and progressing just to curb the demands of America. Bangalore is just like another America created on Indian map. The youth working in call centres are Indians who speak and live more of an American life. These young men and women assume American identities during their work shift to earn their livelihood and once they are off -the -job hours, they switch to their customary language and personality. They are role-playing "an American" without giving up being "Indian". For Anjali this "pluralization of identity" (Benedikter and Hilber) leads to a cultural shock. She feels herself at an alien world where "nothing in her previous life could guide her. Her religion is irrelevant in this fast, energetic life where everything is on the move:

> This was energy, something palpable that she'd never experienced, and it left her frightened and indecisive. She'd never experienced, and it left her

> frightened and indecisive. She'd never witnessed "progress" or placed herself in its path (*Miss New India* 78).

Bharati Mukherjee, in *Miss New India,* talks about the changes happened due to globalization in contemporary India, leading to a generation gap. The novelist links this generational clash in concepts of "Indian culture" to globalization. Like Anjali Bose, many of the characters are not financially well off. But thanks to their English medium education and good command over English, they reap the benefits of newly established industry of outsourcing. In Mukherjee's words this newly found financial independence enables the young men and women to resist their parents' traditional values:

> Anjali and other like-minded young women, are ready to find self-fulfilment and fortune on their own terms, which often entails leaving their home-towns and family and flocking to bigger towns, like Bangalore, where there are jobs for people with their skill sets (Lavigilante).

At her age of nineteen, Anjali represents the new 'Young India' which occupies half of India's population. In his non-fictional debut book, popular fiction writer Chetan Bhagat describes this Young India dominating the national agenda of the national discourse. Bhagat focuses on the aspirational Indians who grew up in tier two or tier three cities and are in haste to make the most of the opportunities of globalization. As Bhagat says: "We need to get rich, and fast…." (Bhagat). In her book, "Take Me Home", well known non-fiction writer, Rashmi Bansal traces the success stories of young entrepreneurs from small-town India. In her preface Bansal writes:

> This is the new India, the 'real India', the consumer every marketer and every soap opera wants to reach. They have overpowered the metros with their numbers, with their hunger. To be something, to do something. Through education, through aspiration, through pursuit of work. They come to metro cities, in search of opportunity... ... For there is a small revolution

> taking place in small-town India. A new breed of entrepreneurs who are changing old equations and assumptions (Bansal).

In *Miss New India*, Bangalore is shown as a true embodiment of "progress" happening due to globalization. Anjali wonders if this transformation is the result of internal migration of young people like her. On her first day in Bangalore Anjali feels like an abandon foreigner in an alien country. Her alienation is aggravated with her not understanding the local language. She hardly communicates with others as "the language sounded so alien". Mukherjee shows that in most part of India language is the primary mark of identity. Language is important in the construction of individual and social identities (Thornborrow). Peter Champion knows how belonging to a particular group or community depends on adopting the linguistic convention of that group. He admits that although he is a "child from overseas", he made India his home. He recalls his first assignment as Peace Corps volunteer in a village in the hills of Uttar Pradesh where he taught to the students who spoke only in tribal language. Before he could teach anything, Peter says:

> I had to learn the language my students spoke. I count that as a blessing. If those villagers were to learn anything from me, I first of all had to learn from them. Those two years set me on a course. It set the stage for what I've been doing all my life (*Miss New India* 159).

Anjali Bose is Bengali by birth, but she feels powerless speaking in that language. It is English language that gives her confidence. She feels at home in Barista when she hears young men and women chattering in American English, a "language with familiar cadences." They all work in call centres and like her, dressed in jeans and T-shirt. Anjali is shocked to see the display of self-indulgence at Barista where many girls smoke and are cosy with others. They are new Indians in new India. Mr. GG, under his pseudonym "Dynamo" sums up theirs and the nation's evolution in his newspaper columns:

> They come from the great cities and the mofussil towns... They come…bearing hope and energy that is infectious. They don't simper, they don't dance, and they don't wear saris or evening gowns. They stride in comfortable salwars or in blue jeans, and Bang-amour had better get used to it. Our torpid institutions…. will try to beat them down, but the train has already left the station (*Miss New India*186).

Anjali can feel connected with these call centre employees at once, though she doesn't understand a word they speak. Girish Gujral calls it Bangalore babble with no meaning at all. The city of Bangalore has American imprint on almost everything. It is "roaringly capitalistic," "the new centre of the universe," a "go-for-broke, rule-bending, forget-about-yesterday, and let's-blow-it-all" place populated by tech-savvy, "hyperconfident" young Indians who speak in exaggerated American accents and have replaced the abstemiousness of an earlier generation with the titillations of casual sex, alcohol and nightclubs (Kapur). No doubt Bangalore excites Anjali as no one cares about her past:

> No one in Bangalore seemed to be struck with a discernible identity. She could kill off Angie Bose, and who would know, or care? She could be anything she wanted, a Hindi-speaking girl from Varanasi or a Brahmin from Kolkata. Bangalore doesn't care (*Miss New India* 95).

Bangalore Barista, in the novel, is shown as an enclave for "like-minded cosmopolitans." Anjali is keen to assimilate into these "groups of noisy patrons her age." There is no jealousy among the girls and friendship to men doesn't lead to marriage. Gossip and scandal hardly affect them as they all belong to different part of India. Anjali likes to be part of their group. They are just like her, "open and friendly." She hopes to get a job in a call centre and have her own apartment, a scooter and a closet stuffed with clothes. These are small-town desires, big city ambitions. Milton Gordon explains this desire of the migrants to seek out:

> Oasis of familiarity in a strange land, by the desire of the settlers to rebuild (necessarily in miniature) a society in which they could communicate in the

> familiar tongue and maintain familiar institutions, and finally, by the necessity to band together for mutual aid and mutual protection against the uncertainties of a strange and frequently hostile environment. This was true of the "old" immigration as of the "new" (Gordon).

Anjali's first hour in a Barista on M.G. Road in Bangalore gives her the assurance that she is not an outsider in the city. She would like to stay there and, even for one morning, "be part of such a flow" and "to be carried along like a twig in a flood." Initially, she has been overwhelmed by the call-center employees at Barista and doesn't make out what they say but everyone behaves with her in a friendly manner. On seeing the advertisements of Call-Center Training Institutes she asks herself whether "they'd known she was coming and might need a brush-up course." She knows very well that if she has to fulfil her dreams, she has to get over her hesitation and stop worrying over the future or reputation. At the same time, she has to curb her emotion to stick in Bangalore. Mr. GG describes Bangalore as the most advance city in the world. It is like Los Angelis:

> They had a movie industry, and we've got hi-tech. we're both virtual and we've both got buried bodies, but we'll be a much bigger city in maybe five years…Every company in the world had to have a Bangalore address, and every modern mogul from India, Korea, Japan and the middle East had to have a Bangalore condo or mansions (*Miss New India* 102-103).

In her interview, "Globalization and Change in India: The Rise of an Indian Dream in *Miss New India*", Mukherjee herself explained that as an author she wanted *Miss New India,* through its large cast of characters, to present a complicated response to the transformative effects of globalization. In its literal sense, globalization is the process of metamorphosis of local or regional phenomena into global one. In his preface to *The Cultures of Globalization* (2004), Fredric Jameson rightly calls globalisation the "proverbial elephant," perceived differently by various "blind observers". Globalization is the increasing interaction of people through the growth of the international flow of money, ideas, and culture. Providing explanatory contexts for phenomena as diverse as global tourism, climate change, Jihadi terrorism, the power of transnational brands, mass

migration, the spread of the English language and growth of global media (Jameson). Suman Gupta in *Globalization and Literature* (2008) argues that globalization accounts for a transcendent entity that affects a wide range of human life (Gupta). Globalization is often linked with liberalism, a phenomenon of post 1990s. Similarly, globalization is also seen as a revival of modernization theory of post 1950s and 1960s. Anthony Gidden interpreted globalization as the spreading of western modernity around the globe. As he suggests, "Globalization can be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles and vice versa." (Giddens). Bangalore represents modern India where "crores are the new lakhs." However, behind this shining achievement and breath-taking wealth lies She realises there is no place for sentimentality in this city. In her earlier books Mukherjee focuses on immigration and the process of exercising citizenship in America. However, in *Miss New India* the novelist tries to present the nationalized identity in this age of globalization. Anjali represents a new Indian youth who are strange, exciting, exhilarating and who come from small towns with minimum education and good fluency of English. They don't hesitate to leave their hometown for the possibility of securing employment that they could be good at. They earn a good amount of money enabling them to have control over their life. As one of manifold "Miss New Indias," Anjali is amongst the growing generation of women who have "grown up on the modern side of a great national divide" (*Miss New India* 23). Anjali is one of them, who are eager to part of the bold new India because somehow, they have caught the fever of rising India.

Mukherjee excels in negotiating between home-grown girl Anjali, who has never spotted women smoke, and the most westerly world she runs into. She scrambles to pronounce "fine," not "p'hine." Most of the American slangs used by the Barista folks go over her head. Even in the interview at CCI the only words her understand "good cop, bad cop" (*Miss New India* 185). Mukherjee, while recording Anjali's meteoric journey from Gauripur to Bangalore, lets her readers to have the chance to peep into the fragments of Anjali's Gauripur life, which put together the story of her own half-grown life. At the very tender age, Anjali witnesses her elder sister's bitter compromises, Nirmal's tragic suicide, Peter's freehearted love for her, and his inconsolable love for Ali, her father's fatal despair,

the monstrous guy selected for her to marry: the molestation, the humiliation, the powerlessness. In her joyless days at Gauripur, she fondly remembers her walk with Rabi.

Miss New India unquestionably is an immigrant narrative but not the same as Mukherjee's previous novel *Jasmine*. Both the novels recount the rags to riches story of the protagonists who overcome the barriers of small-town upbringing and create their own space in the modern world. Their migratory routes may be different but who despite everything withstand migration in person. In other words, in both cases the protagonist experienced migration at the very youth age. Their blooming feminine form gets affected by the process of migration. Jasmine enters illegally into America, on the other hand, Anjali embarks on internal migration from undeveloped to the developed part of India. On her arrival to the States, Jasmine suffers the trauma of sexual assault by the boat captain, whereas Anjali leaves her home when the suitor selected by her father raped her. Deborah Philips considers the novel, *Miss New India,* as "one of many contemporary novels for a woman readership" which are specially meant for "Young India" who "grew up in the wake of India's second-generation economic reforms and are now urged to make the most of the opportunities of globalization" (Deborah). India's biggest bestseller of the decade, Chetan Bhagat, writes mainly to please the young readers. The success of these novels established a genre that Emma Dawson Varughese has described as "Young India" In her views, the novels that fall under this category "capture the call center lifestyle so often cited as indicative of New India" (Varughese). Like the persons in different "New India" narratives, with an urge in the heart, Anjali travels from a small town to big city in search of career and lifestyle opportunities.

In Bangalore, Anjali checks into Bagehot house, a boarding house in the city run by a mysterious, old Anglo-India lady by the name of Minnie Bagehot. The house, a testimony of Raj-era mansion, is still hanging on to the glorious past and stands alone in a dilapidated condition. For Anjali, at the first glance, the house is "a storage barn, more a warehouse for unusable possessions than an active residence" (*Miss New India* 112). It's owner, too, is still clings to her past and takes pride in the old values and manners that once ruled in the villa, disregarding the evidence of decay everywhere. This identifies her with Anjali's very own parents, whom she often sees as "irremediably alien, part of a suspicious,

impoverished, humiliated India" (*Miss New India* 112). Although nobody knows about Minnie's past life, it is speculated by other boarders that she is a half-caste, "the product of the old cantonment culture, the indiscernible intercourse between an unidentified soldier and a native woman, decades or centuries ago" (*Miss New India* 121). Exploiting her beauty, Minnie poses as a pure British lady and comforts herself by living in the colonial past, ignoring the changes that happened and are happening in twenty-first century India and the world. Anjali meets three other girl boarders of her own age in the Bagehot House who introduces them as Tookie D'Mello from Goa, Husseina Shiraz from Hyderabad, and Sunita Sampath from "a small town halfway between Mysore and Bangalore" (*Miss New India* 113). Anjali, on her first meeting with these girls, notices the striking likeness between she and Husseina that would pass them for sisters. What Minnie calls "a historically important residence" (116) and what these three girls call "a madhouse" is revealed by Anjali as a "museum of horrors" (137). One afternoon, when all three of her fellow boarders are away and Minnie dozes off, Anjali gets a chance to prowl the forbidden parts of the residence. There, in one corner of the ballroom, Anjali finds a row of photographs featuring "Sari-clad bodies lay strewn along a riverbank… distant row of hanged men, Sikh with their hair chopped off, hanging by their turbans" (137). While looking at the photos, Anjali feels the blunt insult of history as they have made her conscious of her Indianness. She says to herself:

> *I am Indian*, she thought. I*'m Indian in ways no one in this house is Indian, except maybe poor little Sunita Sampath. I have no roots anywhere but in India. My ancestors were hated and persecuted by everyone but themselves* (*Miss New India* 138).

Anjali, standing before these testimonies of British atrocities, feels an unusual connection to all the Indian dead, and the indignity they suffered. She understands how her father's generation has sabotaged by British oppression. Her admiration for Minnie as a benevolent owner of Bagehot House replaces with a sense of betrayal. To Anjali, Minnie has become the symbol of colonial evil. Suddenly, Anjali sees through the fabrication of the dazzling new Bangalore as a city of total amnesia. As a result of witnessing the heinous crime against poor Indians, it seems only fitted that Bagehot House vandalized by the

displaced of postmodern world, the former banished crouching in the mansion's yard, who were coaxed by the rancorous smugglers and who try to grab anything that can be made profit on. Obviously, the atrocities done by British administration through the people like Maxie and Minnie Bagehot are unforgivable that justify the violent end of Bagehot House.

Like Minnie, the other boarders appear as a trickster. Husseina emerges as conversant terrorist, Tookie a thug, and Sunita a burglar. This proves Anjali's apprehensions about the city where "nothing is at it seems. Everything is run by dark forces" (119). Dark characters like Husseina embody the wiliness necessary for survival. Although Husseina allies in a terrorist plot, her involvement is motivated by her loyalty to her husband, a modern British Muslim with shrouded political objectives. Her wealthy parents were totally ignorant of their son-in-law's terrorist background when they fix Husseina's marriage with him. Likewise, Anjali's parents were clueless over evil intention of Subodh Mitra. However, Husseina's act of duping Anjali is one of fulfilling her political destiny.

To conclude, *Miss New India* happens to be Bharati Mukherjee's last novel and it deviates from the narrative of old India. With the economic prosperity, India has become an increasingly confident world power. Globalization has made its impact on India is evident. It has increased the experience of migrancy (Brooker). Thus, increasingly large parts of the country are becoming connected, as migration from formerly isolated rural areas to cities become widespread (Nagendra). The mobility, displacement and uprooting of people and mixture of cultures associated with globalization pose more questions concerning social, cultural, and ethnic identities (Faurholt Csaba and Bengtsson). In her previous novels like "Jasmine" and "Desirable Daughters," Mukherjee deals with the theme of dislocation, and in *Miss New India,* she takes this theme further by charting out Anjali's journey from a small town in Bihar to one of the country's (and the world's) fastest growing cities, Bangalore. The novel carries forward Mukherjee's project of detailing the transnational processes of migratory "unhousement" and "rehousement," by translating the story of international migration from India to the West to one of internal or in-country migration within India itself.

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CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

To sum up, it can be said that whether desired or not 'human migration' influences the modern world like never before. Millions of people move outside their countries of birth in search of jobs, a new home or simply a secure place to live. Exiles or emigrants or expatriates are subjected to displacement both geographically as well as culturally. Literature of diaspora deals with the narratives of individuals who experience the pain of immigration and dislocation. The term "dislocation," roughly speaking, means migrating from one's land of birth to a foreign country. This migration culminates from choice and the intensity of choice rests on the social status of the immigrant. Notwithstanding to the degree of their choice, whether self-imposed or forceful, the immigrants are always at the crossroads in the host country. To simply put, dislocation is hardly a smooth process in which a person, in order to find a more prospective life, decides to pull up his or her roots in the place of origin and quickly becomes assimilated in the new country. Much more often migration is a tedious process affecting the migrant in many ways (Castles and Miller). More significantly, migration experience varies in accordance with men and women. In her novels, Bharati Mukherjee deals with the problems of migrancy and its ensuing ramification on migrant people pertaining to their identity crisis and feeling of estrangement in the adopted country. The pain of immigration and dislocation and the perennial longing for one's homeland is reflected in her works. Her writings expose the problematic situation of the immigrants who are deeply rooted in their country of origin. On the flip side, Mukherjee sheds light on the integration of the immigrant in the foreign culture. The present thesis attempts to analyse the novels of Bharati Mukherjee to investigate theme of dislocation in her novels. The study aims to explain the forces underlying the individual decision to move from one social setting to another one. The protagonists in her novels are women immigrants enduring extensive trials and tribulations, isolation, alienation, and frustration as they try to create their own space in the newfound world. In most cases, they must get into multiple identities. Mukherjee herself faced difficulties with her identities first as an exile from India, then as an Indian expatriate in Canada, and finally as an immigrant in the United

States. Obviously, her writings highlight this identity crisis resulted from dislocation. Almost all the female protagonists in Mukherjee's novels engaged in the "nuanced process of *rehousement* after the trauma of forced or voluntary *unhousement* (Mukherjee).

Mukherjee's novels imbued with the push-pull theories of migration. The causes of migration in her novels consist in a composition of 'push factors', obliging female protagonists to move out of the place of origin, and 'pull factors', alluring them to a land of plenty. Her characters choose to uproot themselves from their native country. The heroin of her first novel, Tara in *The Tiger's Daughter*, is sent to America for education by her father. The fear for the safety of his daughter and fascination for the Western world acted as the reasons behind Tara's transnational dislocation to Poughkeepsie, in the United States where life is all different. She is unable to find connections with the American culture and she experiences a 'double shock' with her return to India. Here, the immigrant has not submitted to a geographical transition but also endured an internal changeover. *The Tiger's Daughter* graphically recounts Tara's dislocation and cultural in-betweenness. Home, for her, is an elusive place (Huang). In *Wife,* marriage act as a basis for the protagonist's migration to the States. Dimple Basu, the heroine of *Wife*, marries Amit Basu, an engineer who is about to immigrate to the United States. Dimple's family show consideration, while marrying her off, to Amit's prospects of going to America. Dimple who initially does not like to go to North America, agrees to marry Amit as she sees opportunities in her migration. She fancies to live a life of economic success, social freedom, and independence from extended family responsibilities. Her fantasies shift from the glamorous lives of movie stars to her own life as she imagines it will be in the new country (O'Neil).

In *Jasmine,* Bharati Mukherjee exhibits the true assimilation of an immigrant in the American culture. The novel put in a nutshell the spirit of twenty-first-century mass migration and dislocation. Jasmine's dislocation happens due to her husband's unfortunate death in a fire bombing. Only seven years old, Jasmine is introduced as 'fast and venturesome'. The weird village astrologer forecast her widowhood and exile life. After this, she is exposed to a life full of continual movement and transformation. With her marriage to Prakash, a 'city man', who plans to find job in

America, Jasmine rejects the barriers of traditions and gender roles assign to a woman. When Prakash is killed before their eventual emigration to America, Jasmine decides to make the journey on her own to fulfill her husband's dream. She undergoes a complete evolution when she enters the alien American culture and moves through an oscillating series of painful and joyful experiences. In *Jasmine*, the protagonist constantly shuttles between her identities ascribed to her dislocation. In the course of the novel, we witness the heroine Jyoti, born in a small village of Hasnapur, transforms into Jasmine, (named again by her city based husband), a spilt-tongued Kali (murdering Half-Faced who raped her), Jazzy (illegal immigrant in Florida), Jyoti again (staying in an enclave of Indians in Flushing), Jase (working as the "day mummy" to the adopted daughter of liberal Manhattan couple), and finally Jane (as the mistress of Bud, an Iowan banker).

In *Desirable Daughters*, migrant experience enables the protagonist to cut loose from her Indianness and enjoys complete social, financial, and sexual freedom. Once again, marriage acts as a driving force for the protagonist's moving out from her place of origin. Tara, the heroine of the novel, leaves India immediately after her marriage with Bishwapriya Chatterjee who goes on to become Bill Gates of South Asian community in Silicon Valley. The novel begins with the wedding scene of Tara Lata, the tree bride. At the age of five, Tara the daughter of Jay Krishna Gangooly has to marry a sundari tree to avoid the ignominy of widowhood. Tara's gradual Americanization allows her to pursuit happiness and exercise her free will. She not only divorces her husband but also gets into a live-in relationship. Tara embarks on roots retrieval when an imposter poses as her sister's illegitimate son. To unravel the truth about her lineage, Tara returns to India to visit her ancestral village Mishtigunj. In the process she also comes to know the story of her great grandmother, the Tree Bride.

Mukherjee moves forward the story of *Desirable Daughters* in her next novel, *The Tree Bride*. Tara's exploration of her heritage and identity leads her to the story of her name sake, Tara Lata Gangooly, the Tree Bride. For Tara, getting back to her roots is an atonement for her discarding cultural conditioning. In this novel Bharati Mukherjee deals with the issues of colonialism and assimilation of white men into Indian culture. Both *Desirable Daughters* and *The Tree Bride* are infused with autobiographical elements of the writer. Mukherjee, like Tara, exhibits strong cultural

bonding with her homeland and culture. The novel depicts the cultural dislocation of Indian people attributed to the Macaulayism in India, and the systematic wiping out of traditional and ancient Indian education system (Kampfner). "Homing desire" of a diaspora is another theme of the novel as Tara set herself on "America-styled root-search".

In her last novel, *Miss New India*, Bharati Mukherjee focuses on the theme of internal migration and transnational migration. Again, like other novels of the novelist, matrimony acts as the motivating force for Anjali's dislocation. In order to escape from the oppressiveness of arranged marriage Anjali leaves Gauripur. As a consequence of disastrous encounter with her prospective bridegroom, Anjali sets off to Bangalore for shaping her future. The novelist depicts the influence of Western ideals on the young generation in India. Mukherjee also builds up some of the problems raised in her earlier novels, such as the process of "unhousement" and "rehousement," the reinvention of identities, and the awakening of the female migrant characters to self-empowerment. Anjali, the heroine of *Miss New India*, leaves a city where she was brought up and starts a new live in Bangalore which is way different from her native place. Although set in India, American culture and values plays a decisive role in this novel.

A close analysis of selected novels by Bharati Mukherjee reveal that in her earlier novels, women migrants go through the immigrant experience as 'dependents' and subjects of 'family reunification'. Dimple Basu in *Wife* and Tara Chatterjee in *Desirable Daughters* enter the migration flows merely as 'passive', 'tied', or associative movers. The novels highlight the supremacy of patriarchal frameworks present in the process of migration. While accepting the grooms chosen by their parents and moving out to the U.S., Dimple and Tara accept the supposed passive and secondary role of women as migrant. Unlike their husbands, these women have to cope with the social/psychological consequences of migration like the sense of dislocation, alienation, and loss of sense of belonging while attempting to find their way about in the new situation. In their process of migration Dimple in *Wife,* and Tara in *Desirable Daughters* accepts their structural position in the patriarchal society.

Whereas, Tara in *The Tiger's Daughter* and the title character in *Jasmine*

reject the barriers of tradition as well as patriarchal domination. Most of the women characters in Mukherjee's novels are born and bred in India but they are either sent or choose to live in America. Tara Banerjee in *Tiger's Daughter* is sent by her father for education. Dimple, the protagonist in *Wife*, marries an engineer and moves to New York City. Jasmine fulfills her childhood forecasting by crossing "the black waters" to the United Sates. The heroine in *Desirable Daughters* is well-educated and from an affluent family. Unlike her two sisters, Tara agrees to the marriage arranged by her patriarchal father. She weds an immigrant Bengali engineer and movers out of India to the United States.

Bharati Mukherjee is keened to portray the volatile conflicts and complexities of a migrant in an alien land. In the process of migration, an immigrant find himself or herself into double jeopardy. He or she not only undergoes the process of physical relocation but also experience at first a sense of loss, dislocation, alienation, and isolation, which, eventually, make possible his or her assimilation into the host country. Tara, in *The Tiger's Daughter* undergoes not just a physical dislocation but also a psychological dislocation. Her marriage to David Cartwright, a foreigner, puts her between two cultures leading to her loneliness and alienation and even after her love marriage "Madison Square was unbearable" because "her husband was after all a foreigner" (*The Tiger's Daughter* 117). Even before her marriage to David, Tara experiences alienation as she has to adjust with the new surroundings and culture. When her roommate refuses to share food with her, Tara thinks she is discriminated for her being an Indian. In order to assimilate into American society, Tara gives up her Indian modes of life. Her marriage to David Cartwright, an American, does not provide her any comforts because of their cultural differences. Slowly she begins to suffer from an identity crisis. Even after seven years of her marriage, Tara fails to integrate fully in the Western ways of life. All this ended with her returning to India after ten years of her marriage. However, this going back home doesn't turn out a simple return to familiarity. She finds herself even more alienated in the country of her birth. Because of her stay in America, Tara fails to see India through the same spectrum that she once used to. On the contrary, she observed India with the keenness of a foreigner. Tara feels like a foreigner in her own country because of her off the grid with people and things back home. Her seven years stay as an American migrant blockaded her the Indian culture and traditions though she is not fully assimilated in the host country i.e. in America.

Dislocation leads to the protagonist's mental break-down and personality disorder in *Wife*. Dimple Dasgupta, the protagonist, could not adjust herself in the American soil. She struggles to find a balance between the Bengali prototype of the ideal, docile wife and the compulsion of her new American life. In her attempt to dispense with stereotyped constraints of wife she loses sight of reality and sinks into the world of fantasy. Life in America shatters her illusion of liberty. She realizes how Indian men after marrying back at home bring their wives to America only to create 'little India' around them. Indian wives don't have any freedom or accomplishment. Dimple gets impressed by Ina Mullick, a chain smoker and heavy drinker woman with a flirtatious nature. Dimple finds her husband Amit incompetent to provide her the pleasure-loving life:

> Amit did not feed her fantasy life; he was merely the provider of small material comforts. In bitter moments she ranked husband, blender, color TV, cassette recorder, stereo, in their order of convenience (*Wife* 113).

As result she is lured by debonair livings of American people. She loses her own identity just to act like an American. She borrows clothes, shoes, jackets, and tinted glasses from Marsha just to effect change in her identity. She involves into an adultery with Milt Glasser because he represents America to her. All these attempts to assimilate in the American main culture proves futile to her. Unable to get over the traumas of dislocation, Dimple stabs her husband at the novel's end. In the opinion of Bharati Mukherjee:

> Dimple's decision to murder her husband is her misguided act of self-assertion. If she had remained a housewife living with her extended family in India, she would probably not have asked herself questions such as, am I unhappy. And if by chance she had asked herself these questions, she might have settled these problems by committing suicide. So, turning to violence outward rather than inward is part of her slow and misguided Americanization (Hancock).

Although Dimple detract from traditional values, she could not handle the traumatic changes—cultural, psychological, taking place due to her immigration to America. Her dislocation culminates in the cultural bewilderment and falling out with her husband. Through Dimple, Mukherjee portrays disoriented Bengali woman, who, struggles to fit in a new land and culture, undergoes distressing racial, cultural, and psychological transformation. The novel centers around the heroine's emotional receptivity to the act of dislocation leading to her emotional disorders which ultimately resulted into her killing of her own husband.

The issue of fashioning a new identity in another country continues to dominate in Bharati Mukherjee's third novel, *Jasmine*. Here, the novelist aims to bring out trials and tribulation of an immigrant to construct new identity in America. Jasmine, the central character in the novel, continuously recast into new identities before finding her true happiness into an alien country. In her journey from India to Iowa, Jyoti becomes Jasmine becomes Jase becomes Jane, stripping away layers of identities with each name. In the opinion of Tai:

> Jasmine exemplifies all immigrant women who have taken their destiny at home (Tai).

The female protagonists in Mukherjee's fiction are torn between their life events of India and high hopes of America. Moreover, while adapting themselves to the traumatic change they need to undergo extensive transformation. In the opinion of Emmanuel Nelson, "Such adaptation is possible only when the characters unanchored themselves from their nostalgic immobility and begin to engage risk and adventure (Nelson). Throughout the novel Jasmine is constantly on the move. She starts her journey from the village Hasnapur, Punjab, to Florida, to New York, and next to Iowa and lastly, she is on her way to California. Mythili sheds light on this aspect and argues that the novel, "is a story of dislocation and relocation, as the protagonist continually sheds her existing role to move into other roles" (Mythili).

In *Wife* Dimple faces identity crisis immediately after her marriage and eventual migration to America. On the contrary, the heroine of *Jasmine* struggles to find her true self since her birth. As soon as she is born her parents unsuccessfully strangulate her because of her born as a girl child. In this way, they want to free her from the predicament of marriage. Jasmine never forgets this trauma of early

childhood. In fact, she remembers her past as a force to carry on in the most grotesque situation. In the course of her life Jasmine lives through many identities like- Jyoti, Jasmine, Jase, and Jane. With her marriage to Prakash, she transforms into Jasmine from Jyoti. This new identity provides her happiness as well as safety. She gives up her birth name Jyoti and becomes Jasmine, a city woman. Her husband Prakash happens to be educated and modern who sees her as his equal. Sadly, when Prakash is killed in a bomb blast Jasmine loses her newly bestowed identity. To fulfill her late husband's dream Jasmine set off to America as an illegal migrant. Mukherjee wants to draw the character of Jasmine in the line of an undocumented alien who manages to sneak into the United States or who are not always welcome. It should be noted that Jasmine is an accidental immigrant. When she arrives in America, she has no preconception about the country. She does not suffer a cultural shock on her arrival in Florida. She sees herself only as a sacred widow with a mission i.e. to fulfill her late husband's dream by sacrificing herself on a funeral-pyre. However, after becoming a rape-victim she feels that her purity has been ruined to pieces:

> I determined to clean my body as it had never been cleaned, with the small wrapped bar of soap, and to purify my soul with all the prayers I could remember (*Jasmine* 117).

This rape act paves the new way to her. She not only kills her rapist but also abandons her plan to immolate herself as a *sati*. As pointed out by Amanpreet Kaur: "After the assassination, Jasmine does a commitment to herself to begin a new journey in America. She prepares herself to lead a different life, which is away from her pure and pious identity and her orthodox Indian past" (Kaur, Khanna and Khanna). With a motherly help from Lillian Gordon, Jasmine travels to Flushing, New York and meet Professor Devinder Vadhera. However, Jasmine does not like the confining life lived by Indians in Queen ghetto. All she wants is to live a life devoid of everything Indian, "everything Jyoti-like." But when an American beggar calls her a "foreign bitch," Jasmine feels she is trapped in an alien land. She describes her misery in the following words:

> I feel at times like a stone hurtling through diaphanous mist, unable to grab hold, unable to slow myself, yet unwilling to abandon the ride I

> am on. Down and down I go, where I will stop, God only knows (*Jasmine* 139).

Next, we see Jasmine as a day-mummy to the adopted daughter of Taylor and Wylie Hayes who give her new name "Jase" and she is very much pleased with this life. She assimilates in the American world and no longer feels like an uprooted person: "I had landed and was getting rooted" (*Jasmine* 179). But destiny makes her to run again from New York. She sees her husband's killer and does not want to put Taylor and Duff in danger. She moves to Iowa where she becomes the mistress of Bud Ripplemeyer who is not only twenty years older to her but also crippled. She changes her name once more to Jane Ripplemeyer. According to Nagendra Kumar: "Jasmine's every movement is a calculated step into her Americanization and with each development a vital change is marked in her personality. Jasmine's flight to Iowa and her renaming as Jane is indicative of a slow but steady immersion into the mainstream American culture" (Kumar). Bharati Mukherjee in *Jasmine* highlights that the protagonist's assimilation in the host country looks smooth but only on the surface. In reality, Jasmine has to assume multiple identities as well as to disassociate with her past. Pushpa Parekh rightly observes:

> Hurtling from the confines of an Indian widow's bleak imprisonment, she runs into the harsh brutality of illegal entry, rape, and murder in America (Parekh).

In Mukherjee's novels the women protagonist's attempt to find a new identity is a matter of agonizing struggle with the self, with traditional customs, with the fascinations and shocks of a new culture, with thriving longings, hopes and desires. Mukherjee's women have to fight tooth and nail with their own images imposed by the patriarchal society to create their own identity in the alien country. Almost all her female protagonists are born and brought up in traditional Indian households where Western knowledge intermixed with traditional convictions. As a result, the heroines in Mukherjee's novels are self-sufficient but confused. Tara in *Desirable Daughters* has been fully assimilated in the American culture where she enjoys her life without any restrictions imposed upon her by her Indian identity. Still she could not disconnect herself completely from her home country. In her way of life Tara considers herself as an American, but is always conscious of her Indian heritage.

Finding some similarities with the narrator of this novel, Mukherjee admits that finally she is finding a balance between her Indian heritage and her American empowerment. The novel is a meditation of her life first as an expatriate and later as an immigrant and how she sees immigration as a quest for one's identity. Tara's calm life in America is disturbed by the invasion of a young man claiming himself as her illegitimate nephew. His intrusion compels Tara to dig into her past to find her true identity. There are three dimensions to examine her identity: first, how she values her Indian origin and family. Second, how she evolved after her dislocation to America after marrying to Bish, and lastly, how people back at homeland and hostland regards her. When she lands in America with her husband, Tara is torn between her constrained Indian identity and her newly adopted American lifestyle. In her attempt to split off from the subdued identity as a docile Indian wife and submerge into the adventurous free culture of America, Tara finds herself oscillate between two lives: "maybe I really was between two lives" (*Desirable Daughters* 251). Tara's eldest sister Padma also experiences identity transformation due to her dislocation. Although she is permanently settled in New York, Padma doesn't fully assimilate in America as Tara does. In fact, in her ways of life she is more Indian than Tara as she clings to her Indian identity with complete aversion to Western lifestyle. In this way she makes up with her loss of identity in America. This cultural preservation of overseas Indians is rightly pointed out by S. L. Sharma:

> So ostensibly overseas Indian adhere to their traditional culture that at times it appears that they are more Indian in their cultural orientations and practices than resident Indians in India…. Even those Indians couldn't care less for their culture in India become quite observant of it in foreign lands (Sharma).

The adaptation and assimilation of Tara and Padma in America is completely different from each other. Tara represents the cultural hybridity of an immigrant who accepts the new values of the American culture, but also feels the beckoning of the home culture. She tries to discard her Indian practices, but fails to do so. Whereas, Padma represents hyphenated Indians clinging to their home culture and orientation. Circumstances leads Tara to negotiate her hybridizing identity through a series of locations and Padma prefers a hyphenated identity by embracing the traditions of her

Indian culture. Dislocation empowers Tara as she freed herself from the traditional role of a submissive wife. Tara speaks of her newly found identity:

> I understood better why Didi had condemned me for going through with divorce. According to her, I had become "American, meaning self-engrossed (*Desirable Daughters* 134).

Tara's Americanization is evident with her openness to life. She not only divorces her husband Bish but also enters into live-in-relationship with her carpenter, Hungarian born, Andy. She says:

> It's one of those San Francisco things I can't begin to explain in India, just like I can't explain my Indian life to the women I know in California (*Desirable Daughters* 26).

In spite of her Americanized life-style and approach, Tara believes that neither she belongs to America nor she wants to be. Her search for the story of Tree Bride turns out to be her own search with identity. Finally, she reunites with her husband and in the process reconciles herself again with her Indianness and her Indian traditions.

The novel *Tree Bride* is a sequel to *Desirable Daughters* and again Tara Chatterjee is the narrator of this novel. Tara's exploration of her heritage takes her to India, and back in colonial time, where she unearths the story of her great grand aunt Tara Lata Gangooly who supported India's struggle against British Raj. Tara became "tree bride" after being married to a tree at the age of five. Then after she spent her whole life in Mishtigunj, a utopian village founded by John Mist. In the course of her finding the true story of the "tree bride," Tara, the protagonist started to think better of her identity in the context of her dislocation. In the opinion of James Fearon, "An identity is some distinguishing characteristics that a person takes special pride in" (Fearon). Born into a Hindu Bengali family, Tara, is proud of her upper caste, and ancestral place. The novelist, too, finds herself in the similar position due to her immigration to America. In one of her interviews Mukherjee says:

> If I had married an Indian, stayed on in Kolkata, and written novels about Kolkata, I would never have been really worried about who am I,

> what is my identity. I am my class, caste, mother tongue, and ancestral village (Bradley).

Like Tara, Mukherjee also moved around the world discarding her social identity and preferring the individual identity that is altering with time. As a result, it became necessary for the novelist to relearn her family history and Bengal's history, particularly the history of middle-class- Bengali people fighting against the colonial British. The quest for reality becomes the important factor in Tara's search for identity in *The Tree Bride*. As a writer Mukherjee shows a fascinating shift in *The Tree Bride* from her earlier works where the protagonists look forward to their assimilation in the new world. The earlier works focuses on the characters who break away from their traditional Indian identity and negotiate with their individual identities in the process of assimilation in the alien country. On the other hand, in *The Tree Bride*, the writer focuses on British history in colonial India. Although the story tells of Tara's mission to trace her family's ancestral roots, the novelist through the story of John Mist gives in detail the lives of British men and their assimilation in India. Through the lives of Tara Lata, John Mist, Vertie Treadwell, David Owen and Nigel Coughlin, the modern Tara discovers how these people were the guardians of, or emblems of, of different periods in Anglo-Indians relationships. John Mist comes to India in precolonial times after running away from an orphan house in England. When he is falsely implicated by East India Company official Mr. Humphrey Todd-Nugent, Mist escapes into rural Bengal, and founds a kind of utopia, Mishtigunj, where Hindus, Muslims, and an Englishman live in harmony. Vertie Treadwell is a colonial administrator who champions the cause of the British empire. He exercises his power over locals and imprisons Tara Lata for supporting India's freedom movement. Thus, in *The Tree Bride*, Mukherjee presents coextending texts and histories of people spanning culture, religion, nation, and gender. Although a foreigner by birth, Mist becomes an Indian Native at heart. He not only chooses Bengal as his home but also adopted the language of host country. He turns into a "British Hindoo," as he decides to turn his back towards British empire and even English customs. He truly exhibits Homi Bhabha's hybridity and mimicry by becoming Indian at heart. He even maintains his hybrid identity when he is hanged by the Britishers. The novelist explores further this cultural assimilation and hybridity of British officials in pre-independent India. Mr. Owen is another such 'white Hindoos"

who goes completely native in his dress and manners. On the contrary Vertie Treadwell is Anglo-Indian by birth and English by nature. He represents himself as a "White Mughals" due to his insulation from Bengali life. There are reasons behind Vertie's disrespect for India and Indian people. He has been broken by the family happenings prior to his arrival in India. Then he is not only side-lined by the British colonial hierarchy but also placed to a remote colonial out-post, where he is unchecked to wield his power over locals. His dislocation happened when he has no right to live free India. But still he considers his identity rooted in Indian soil. His connection with India consists of love and hate. As he says before his death in England:

> I am one of the India-born. Fully ninety percent of my life has been spent in India than Mr. Nehru has, and certainly more than late Mr. Gandhi has. I have participated in many of India's greatest moments. I have endeavored from love to keep India free of modern contaminants (*The Tree Bride* 201).

Verite's grand-daughter, and Tara's doctor, Victoria Treadwell-Khanna also experiences this diasporic dilemma. Fayeza Hasanat describes Victoria as a "child of here and there" (Hasanat) because she inherited the 'illegitimate blood line' from her grand-father and like Tara she moves through continents before marrying an Indian Professor, Yash Khanna. Finally, she come in terms with her identity as an Indian. Before dying in a bomb-blast she confesses to Tara: "I am Indian, my dear, what do you think of that? (*The Tree Bride* 242). In her novels Mukherjee captures this double-consciousness (Du Bois) of a migrant in alien country. The constant feeling of in-between-ness and feeling of straddling multiple borders at once occupies the lives of her characters. Dislocation poses the question of belonging before them. They do not know where exactly they do belong: to the place of their birth which they are forced to leave or to a country in which they are going to live till their death.

Identity crisis is also a phenomenon of ultra-modern world where universalization of western life-style affecting the lives of young generation. In her last novel *Miss New India*, Mukherjee shows how American cultures and values are popularized by the young Indians in thriving metro cities, leading to the rise of new kinds of transnational cultural identities. The novel traces the journey of small-town

girl Anjali Bose to Bangalore, the 'beating heart of India's IT industry (Radhakrishnan). Anjali, the main protagonist of *Miss New India*, is a representative of new India. She, like many other internal migrants, is born with dreams in their hearts, looking for better days ahead. When Anjali finishes her high-school education her teacher makes her aware about the newly born call center markets and the need for both qualifications and experience to secure a job as a call center executive. Through Anjali the novelist presents before us the ambitious young generation who are audacious risk taking and having the courage to seek new opportunities and facing challenges and temptations that their tradition bound parents want to protect them from. When Anjali reaches at Bangalore, she finds a group of young men and women of her age at a coffee shop calling each other by American names. Most of them are call center employees who impersonate an American identity while working, and after a period of time, at leisure, they unmask their assumed name and go on with their individual concepts of self-identity in a dynamic India. The young people of Indian call center industry, in the words of Divya McMillin, "undergo certain transformation to adapt to the workplace identity" (Divya). The protagonist in *Miss New India* also splits herself in two identities. She is both Anjali and Angie. Anjali is her father's daughter and Angie is bold, young woman drawn towards modern India. She feels comfortable and proud of her double identity until Subodh Mitra physically abuses her. This assault shattered the self-concept of Anjali and she feels like a ghost. In the opinion of Liang et al., "partner violence produces fear and self-doubt, it threatens life goals, safety and even survival, and it is associated with lost agency and ability to control the world (Liang, Goodman and Tummala-Narra). Soon after this traumatic experience Anjali decides to leave Gauripur and heads towards Bangalore. She writes a note to her parents, telling them about her leaving their home and slips it in her mother's "just in case" lentils jar. In the novel *Jasmine*, the protagonist abandons her plan of killing herself on a pyre after the sexual assault by Half-face. Similarly, after the physical abused by the man she would have got married, Anjali appears clearer with her future plan. She says, "I am ready to take my place in the world" (*Miss New India* 64). Surprisingly, Anjali doesn't confide to her parents about this ordeal but approaches her teacher Peter Champion to get her out of Gauripur. With Peter's assistance Anjali reaches to Bangalore. This is the first time in her life that she travels alone to a big city like Bangalore. In Bangalore Anjali knows for sure that the city offers boundless opportunities to those who have fire in their belly. The novel

highlights that in a globalizing world, new economic opportunities and media choices are available to those who take advantages of them (Divya). Having nothing to lose, no good name to tarnish, Anjali realizes that she could be anyone there as: "No one in Bangalore seemed to be stuck with discernable identity" (*Miss New India* 95). The city gives her much needed moral confidence after the trauma she experienced at Gauripur. "Here I feel I can do anything," she proclaims. "I feel I can change my life if that's what I want" (*Miss New India* 166). Although Bangalore excites her, Anjali knows the pitfalls of a big city: "All the money made people go slightly crazy" (*Miss New India* 97). She also understands that just being in a city like Bangalore doesn't going to make her bigger and stronger because, "if you failed here", she thinks, "you failed a hundred times faster and fell into a hole a hundred times deeper" (*Miss New India* 98). Very soon Anjali gets accustomed with the 21st century life-style.

"Identity, as pointed out by Judith Butler, "forms around an individual's social, familial, and historical contexts, as well as the individual's responses to those experiences" (Butler). Anjali earns a transnational identity as she moves from an eventless girlhood in a slow-moving town like Gauripur to an events-stormed, bewildering adulthood in dynamic city like Bangalore. Her response to the changes that come unavoidably with mass migration and economic globalization is matured and healthy one. She succeeds in empowering herself by overcoming the barriers imposed by her parents. The female protagonists in Bharati Mukherjee's fiction prioritize self-fulfillment over the others. Whether it is Tara in *Tiger's Daughter* or Dimple Dasgupta in *Wife*, these protagonists are usually pioneers in their families to set self-fulfillment as their life's goal. Anjali is different than Tara and Dimple because she is an internal migrant and she doesn't have to leave her country like them. But she has to utilize the available resources with her. In that sense, she could be associate with Jasmine. Both Jasmine and Anjali experience identity as a development, an outcome of their resourcefulness. Like Jasmine, Anjali finds her resourcefulness through her encounter with different types of sexual experiences. Although Anjali is conscious of her femininity, the violent sexual encounter with Subodh Mitra compels her to flee from Gauripur. She also sees how her elder sister Sonali uses sex with her boss to ensure survival; she witnesses sex as a barter at bus stations on her long journey to Bangalore. And after her sex act with Mr. GG in Bangalore, Anjali realizes how her identity undergoes change. She tells him:

> Half an hour ago, I was just trying to get a ride in your car. I was someone entirely different, and now I'll never be that person again (*Miss New India* 224).

Sexuality becomes a fevered way of expressing revolution for the female protagonists in Mukherjee's novels. It becomes the mode of resistance or a way to rebel. Tara in *Desirable Daughter* explores sex life outside the approved conjugal parameters. Her act is an attack on whole patriarchal society. Dimple, the heroine of the novel *Wife*, indulges in casual sex with Milt Gessler in order to keep her identity as a separate and unique being. The title character of the novel *Jasmine* knows that she is in charge while making love with the maimed lover Bud. She exercises the power of her sexuality to appease the ego of her crippled lover. In a sense sexuality is used by Mukherjee's heroine as a weapon against male dominance. These female characters are born and brought up in a patriarchal society where a woman is judge by her chastity. So, to create their own identity in this patriarchal society, the women characters in Mukherjee's novel use their sexuality as a metaphor for liberation.

A close analysis of Bharati Mukherjee's writings along with the personal background of the author also reveal that most of the female protagonists in Mukherjee's novels are very much similar to the writer herself. There are many parallels between Mukherjee's real-life stories and the fictional stories. Exploring immigrant's experience of dislocation, Mukherjee has fused her own experiences as an expatriate and as an immigrant to create a new consciousness for her women characters who face the trauma of dislocation at multiple levels. Talking about the autobiographical impulse in her works, Mukherjee says, "I feel that I am invested, metaphorically, in every single character in each of the books" (Desai, Barnstone and Mukherjee). Each of Mukherjee's novels is a sort of way station in her personal Americanization. The external similarities between protagonist Tara Banerjee Cartwright in *Tiger's Daughter* and Bharati Mukherjee Blaise show that she based much of the book on her own experiences. Like Tara, Mukherjee was raised in wealthy Hindu family and was sent abroad for education to the states. Mukherjee's parents wanted her to marry a boy of their choice which is identical with Tara's parents wish. However, Tara the narrator in *Tiger's Daughter* marries a man of her choice just like the author herself, who got married with the fellow students at Iowa. In one of her interviews Mukherjee tells how her father identified himself with the

portrait of Tara's father Tiger Banerjee (Meer). Mukherjee wrote *The Tiger's Daughter* when she was an expatriate and she found that life in Calcutta has changed enormously. Towards the end of the novel, when she is stranded in a car surrounded by a violent mob, Tara realizes that she is an expatriate who cannot go home again. Even the heroine in *Jasmine* is based loosely on Mukherjee's life. Both of them had horoscopes that predict their exile. Jasmine's odyssey to America and her continuous changing the places is drawn on the similar line of the author who lived all over the world before settling down to New York.

To conclude, it has been found from the above study that Bharati Mukherjee's novels are deeply rooted in the theme of dislocation. Her characters found themselves deracinated from a culture of origin and re-rooted in an alien culture. Being uprooted from their home culture and trying to adapt to the new culture is a time consuming and tiresome process. It requires, on the immigrants' part to be resilient and resourceful at this critical moment of their life. They have to adjust, to adopt and assimilate which by itself is a new experience to them. The characters in Mukherjee's fiction are people who are dislocated from their native place. They become immigrants in America who like the author have a pre-history. Being an immigrant herself, Mukherjee faithfully records the episodes of assimilation and alliance that resulted from the cultural obligations of immigrants and their intersections with the unknown forces of the new world. Through the female protagonists in her novels, Mukherjee shows how far the sphere of Indian woman's life may be extended beyond the quiet walls of the house. Mukherjee's heroines have removed the domestic constraints to reach beyond the geographical limits of the country itself. Beside exposing the complex personal and cultural negotiation that Indian women immigrant face as they struggle to adapt themselves in alien country, Mukherjee also constructs a personal mythology of immigration and assimilation in her writings. As a writer she deliberately presents her characters abandoning the old order and embracing the new. Her characters take risk while entering into new culture by putting aside some of the old customs and the traditional roles. "My characters," says Bharati Mukherjee, "want to make it the new world. Although they are often hurt or depressed by the setbacks in their new lives and occupations, they do not give up. They take risk they wouldn't have taken in their old, comfortable worlds to solve their problem. As they change citizenship, they are reborn" (Carb).

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