Mukherjee claims that her aesthetic must accommodate decidedly Hindu imagination with an American craft of fiction that conceptualize the image of the immigrants who assert their claim to an American identity by struggling hard to reinstate themselves a second chance to reconstruct their lives. They have to reinvent their roles, survive and revise as best as they can. Self-assertion is a power that these women are beginning to enjoy. The characters in her novel analyze and investigate the study further. The study unravels the sufferings of the expatriates. The technique, style and language of the author are discussed. As such the present study offers an important contribution not only to literature but also to the expatriate sensibility. In this way it is outreaching to the society. Mukherjee's protagonists in the first two novels are disintegrated, and there is a discernible movement towards Reincarnation in the third novel.

The caption **Reincarnation** is taken from one of Bharati Mukherjee's interviews with Micheal Connel, Iowa Review, 20, 3 (1990), 18. An immigrant's life is in fact a series of reincarnations. He lives through several lives in a single lifetime. This truth explains the condition of her as well as that of Jasmine. As she declares in one of her interviews:
I have been murdered and reborn at least three times, the very correct young woman I was trained to be, and was a 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. (qtd. in Nagendra Kumar 144)

Bharati Mukherjee is one of the major novelists of Indian Diaspora who have achieved enviable positions within a comparatively short creative span. The creative odyssey that started with the publication of The Tiger's Daughter (1972) kept her seriously involved in exploring the complexities of her choicest theme of expatriate experience. Since then she has never looked back and her literary accomplishments have manifested themselves in the six novels and two story collections that have appeared so far. In them, she deals with the cultural conflicts in all their multiplicity.

The ingredients of her creative style are punctuated with irony and understatement, which arm her with an objectivity of outlook and approach. The unmistakable impression that finally emerges after a careful study of her works is one of affirmation of life and also of an inbuilt urge to live it on one's own terms. Bharati Mukherjee has an esteemed place in the luminous
galaxy of Indian authors writing abroad with native ethos providing them a living ambience.

Expatriate writing, in its theory and practice, is the work of the exile that has experienced unsettlement at the existential, political and metaphysical levels. With this experience, he/she has unsettled the philosophical and aesthetic systems. The phenomenon of exile has emerged at present times due to uneven development within capitalism and due to the movement forced by colonial powers. This development has led to unprecedented migration of the Asians and Africans to the West. The imposed, and indirectly hegemonizing shift from territories has occurred within Asia, Africa and the Middle East and also from these continents to the West. This movement has produced a new person whose mind works at least with these epistemologies. He/she has lost the center that used to unify. Contingencies of history have effected to the extent of dismantling the comforting and stable perspectives. This dismantling has led to some unknown and intermingled visions.

In Days and Nights in Calcutta (1977), Bharati Mukherjee describes her agonizing experiences in Canada owing to her paradoxical position of being “both too visible and too invisible” (169). While her colour has made
her too visible, as a writer she is invisible. She observes in an essay entitled *Immigrant Writing: Give us your maximalists:*

I was a psychological expatriate, though a naturalized Canadian for fifteen years, simply because Canada is a country officially hostile to the concept of assimilation. I perceive myself to be in a comfortable but unwelcoming environment, I struggled to maintain various emblems of my difference.

An immigrant plunges into the present new world. He/She undergoes an important change in the process. The so-called assimilation involved in immigration, however does not mean a denial of the past, which is impossibility. It probably means a giving up of a rigid hold of the past. It is a precognitive recognition of duality or in the words of Mukherjee, recognition of "fluid identity". In her "Introduction to the Collection of Stories *Darkness*", she says that she saw her "Indianness" not as a fragile identity to be preserved against obliteration, but as a set of fluid identities to be celebrated.

Mukherjee considers expatriation as a restrictive and self-defeating attitude in a writer. The expatriate writer is always in a mood of complaint and projects the pain of exile and becomes a figure of solitude. In an
interview with Alison B. Carb, she talks about her personal trauma in Canada and the hostility towards Indians in Canada. To quote her again from the same book:

The attitude in the sixties and seventies was that if one hadn’t played in snow and grown up eating oatmeal, one did not have anything relevant to say to Canadian readers. The seventies were horrendous for Indians in Canada. There was a lot of bigotry against Canadian citizens of Indian origin, especially in Toronto. Toronto made me a civil right activist. I wrote about the devastating personal effects of racism... (ibid. 651-652)

The world of the stories of Mukherjee is fragmented. Their characters often live in a world of nostalgia, centered on a sort of homesickness, hearing the pains of uprooting and rerouting, the struggle to maintain the difference between oneself and the new unfriendly surroundings. Mukherjee’s “Indians abroad” seem to have developed a feeling of inferiority complex and also a sense of refusal to accept the identity / non-identity forced by an alien environment. They also seem to be more self-conscious and inhibited than the Canadians abroad. Both are torn between the old and the new world’s values. The stories give the solutions for the
problems faced by these expatriates. They point out certain crucial moments in their lives and that moment is indeed a moment of revelation.

Mukherjee's early novels *The Tiger's Daughter* (1971) and *Wife* (1975) explore the conditions of being an Indian expatriate in North America. The protagonists of the novels Tara and Dimple are not comfortable in both the native and alien cultures. Here expatriation is not only a major theme but also a metaphor for deeper levels of solitude and alienation.

There are no authoritative interpreters in the stories except the narrators. A.J. Gurr in his *Writer in Exile* has identified this sort of narrative detachment as the clearest hallmark of the exile (341). This is also a characteristically modernist stance shared by Eliot and Joyce. The journey motif is adopted in almost all the stories. In fact, the motif is the controlling pattern of these stories and it is circular. The journey is more clearly the essential element of the themes in her stories. The persistent resolve to make a fresh start in life functions as the silent center of these stories.

The solution to the problems of the immigrants is that they have to accept the fact that all expatriation/emigration involves anxiety and the belongingness to two communities forces a kind of struggle with the
environment. That growth is painful, but that is part of the expatriate experience. In other words, it is recognition of doubleness, "fluid identity". It is an acknowledgement of alternate realities: Mukherjee says: “My theme is the making of the new Americans” (40). She in her book The Invisible Woman makes the political agenda, that her themes have developed thematically in her works to acknowledge that as America has transformed her, so has she, and the "hundreds and thousands" like her transformed America and what it means to be Americans.(351)

Mukherjee’s characters have explored the multiple reinventions possible as a result of continual displacement. Her major themes include immigration to the West, psychological transformation and the violence that accompanies it, women’s perspective and reach for autonomy, and a hybrid world view that relies on her Hindu roots, Americanization and increasingly on trans-nationalism.

The exhaustive analysis of Bharati Mukherjee’s fictional writings show a cultural perspective which demonstrates that she has addressed herself to all the issues associated with expatriate experience. By choosing her protagonists from all parts of the world having divergent ethnic, religious and cultural preoccupations, she has attempted to explore the multiplicity of this theme, which is centered in their struggles to outgrow inherited values.
With her evolving creative vision, the canvas of her thematic content enlarges and the complexity of cultural assimilation acquires a new dimension.

Mukerjee invariably focuses upon sensitive protagonists who lack a firm sense of cultural identity, and are natural victims of racism, sexism and numerous forms of social oppression. The beauty of much of her fiction lies in its being informed by her personal experiences. A peculiar sense of involvement broadening on total identification with the characters, lends her novels a flavour rarely found among expatriate writers. She achieves a dispassionate objectivity through understatements and ironic observations. She feels for her suffering protagonists, at times empathize with them but seldom fails to underline the traumatic process of acculturation, she has not allowed her prejudices to infect her art.

The very philosophy of an expatriate artist is one of concern, of apprehension and of looking at things critically. In her first novel, *The Tiger’s Daughter*, Mukherjee draws a satirical portrait of Indian society from the perspective of her protagonist. Tara Banerjee, though a young expatriate, not fully accustomed to American set up is estranged from the morals and values of her native land. She registers the frailties and contradictions of her ancestral way of life in a peculiar fashion and the close
of the novel leaves ample scope for the reader to ponder over her predicament. Mukherjee discussed in the second novel *Wife*, the psychological traumas of Dimple, a young woman from Calcutta, and of her problems in settling down in New York with her new husband. Brought up to passive and dependent as per Indian standards of womanhood, she lacks the inner resources to cope with the fear and challenging situations and ultimately descends into unexpected violence. It is also a credit of her creator that Dimple wins our attention and sympathy inspite of herself and her circumstances. In the third novel *Jasmine*, one can find the heroine growing up very confident in her powers to shape a new identity. The process of transformation as Jyoti, Jasmine and Jane is figuratively centered in the death of ones ownself and the birth of newself.

The majority of Mukherjee's fictional characters display an undying drive to build up life with fragments, howsoever fragile they might be, and thus they express their affirmation to life. This is shown in her novel *Jasmine*. In trying alternatives they do sometimes appear abnormal in their behaviour but this trait should be viewed from the angle of their innate bid to live life on their own terms.
Writing in an atmosphere marked by sex and violence Mukherjee's works, seldom border on obscenity, which again explains the constraints of her Indian roots despite avowed links with traditional American writers. The nuances of Indian cultural life provide a living ambience to Bharati Mukherjee, sometimes accepted, and at times, even revolted against but they are invariably her terms of reference to perceive and penetrate the Western ethos.

Mukherjee sees immigrants who are confident, sophisticated and poised, as ones who will not melt into an America mainstream but visibly expand of margins of what one may call "the American experience". These new Americans are neither nostalgic for their personal past nor afraid of the unfamiliar present. Their main strategy is adaptation without surrender. To honour their potential and vitality, she formulates her "Maximalist" credo. A Maximalist is one who advocates direct or radical action to secure a social or political goal in its entirety.

The dialectic between change and continuity is a painful but deeply instructive one in personal life as in the life of people. Bharati Mukherjee has insisted on being read not as an Indian, or expatriate writer, but as an immigrant writer, whose literary agenda is to claim America, that is being improvised by new comers from the Third world. Evident in Mukherjee's
self definition is a refusal to be marginalized as a writer of alien material, an insistence that her themes are central and not marginal to the contemporary American society.

Who can take on the perilous adventure in the new world in a spirit that reincarnates her as Kali, the Goddess of strength? In a language of emotion and meticulous metaphor using images provided by the woman protagonist, the novelist has articulated the many sided paths and rebellion of contemporary Indian woman, not only in India but also in the New World. The theme of confinement is prominent on the passages narrating Jasmine’s five months’ stay with the extended Indian family, who are described as having retired to ghetto walls “in an apartment of artificially maintained Indianness” (145). The portrait maintaining the Indian life - style and resisting the culture of American, promotes isolation and alienation from the new world.

Bharati Mukherjee’s Jasmine is an ambitious endeavour for women engaged in a serious quest for values. Despite many difficulties Jasmine survives with grace, holding on to her capacity to make a new life for herself. By the time she writes Jasmine, she is ready to celebrate: “I am one of you now” (35). Jasmine is an ebullient novel offering a spiced up version of the classic recipe of assimilation into dominant culture. However the
central problem of the novel is that it is silent about the conditions that make such assimilation possible. Mukherjee's themes have co-evolved with specific aesthetic strategies. *The Tiger's Daughter* was written with an omniscient narrator whose distance from the content of the novel allows for a certain British tinged irony. *Wife* has a limited third-person narrative. Mukherjee follows the development of her voice from the initial narrative omniscient of her early novels to the subsequent narrative intimacy - retired confidently, in *Leave it to Me*. In an interview with Bill Moyers 1997 she says: "I have lost that wisdom, that distance, and become closer to my material or followed my feelings, and just my own life, to be expressed" (50). The choice of point of view has become first person. Byers - Pevitts Fakrul Alan attributes this 'evolution of voice' (193) to Mukherjee's dedication to celebrating immigrant voice instead of treating the life of exiles and expatriates with condescension.

There is a slow but steady progress in the characters of Bharati Mukherjee. Far from benign, the process of personal transformation requires varying degrees of psychic or physical violence. Tara is raped by P.K. Tuntunwala and soon after witnesses violent mob harm Joyonto Roy Choudhry and killed her childhood friend Pronob. Dimple aborts her pregnancy before self-reinvention, arriving in America, and later murders her husband. After her husband Prakash is murdered by a Sikh terrorist bomb
intended for her, Jasmine travels to America to commit sati, an act which is
displaced by the murder of her rapist Half-Face.

Much of her fiction expresses the devised methods for negotiating
power that non-white women exercise. Yet she persists in critiquing the
limitations of mainstream American and European, thereby performing one
facet of the political motives. Underlying her immigrant fiction, praise of
Mukherjee’s work center around the confidence, assertiveness or
subversiveness of her female characters. Criticism of her work tends to
address a perceived authenticity of voice, implausibility of situation and
betrayal or rejection of her country of origin.

For example in an article dealing with the female protagonists of The
Tiger’s Daughter, Wife and Jasmine, Brinda Bose applies the ideas of
Mukherjee’s treatment of ethnic assimilation into mainstream American
culture. The theme of personal transformation via violence in particular is
targeted. More and more is left out as Mukherjee’s women evolve from the
homesick of Tara who returns home to find herself peculiarly alienated,
through Dimple whose confusion turns violent to the liberated Jyoti -
Jasmine - Jase - Jane who makes a life-time, for every name look like a
possibility for any exuberant immigrant. Dimple’s so called self-assertive act
of murder and Jasmine’s reincarnation as vengeful Kali, should not be the
recourse, used by the author, to catalyze the Americanization of each of these characters.

In *Wife* Bharati Mukherjee iterates the marginalization of women by exploring, and exploding ways in which culture and identity construct feminine identity (97). *Jasmine* is frequently compared and contrasted with *Wife*. Dimple and Jasmine are perceived as in collaboration with the perpetuation of their own exoticism. Though the writer’s individual talent should be rooted in the tradition of a particular society and culture, the real strength of the modern literary imagination lies in its evocation of the individual’s predicament in terms of alienation, immigration, expatriation, exile, and his quest for identity culturally makes him feel of himself, the whole question of his social, emotional, ethnic or cultural identity assumes mythic opportunities and then becomes an unattainable ideal.

One can agree that identifying difference with a culture is not the same or using systems of categorization that in effect retain existing differences as though they were natural and good. In the first case, difference serves to invigorate a culture, keeping it alive, in the second, difference simply preserves a static distribution of social power, The first is egalitarian, the second hierarchical. The first opens opportunities for change. The second
operates as a catalyst for keeping cultures apart in the name of tradition over another.

Since the immigrant writer speaks from the margins, his focus is off centered. Likewise his protagonist hardly takes center-stage, because it is not history that is being narrated. Instead, the narrative gives voice to community life, to local or national politics, to the experience of being alienated, obscured, peripheralized and marginalized. This quest motif is seen in the archetypal pattern, in the literature of the predominant mainstream culture.

The expatriate writer occupies a marginal or borderline position on the periphery of the past, causing the future to take shape. If he recedes into the past, his works would have the value of only of a memoir, a travelogue or perhaps an autobiography, all being limiting since they are subjective, personalized. If on the other hand the writer chooses to completely assimilate himself into the new culture he ceases to capture the sympathy of the people in the homeland who in a way sustain him, keep him alive since sympathy in the host culture is a far cry. So the expatriate writer on the borderline of the stance of double talk, with a show of simultaneity, coalesces the past with the present to create a future.
This present, the contemporaneous, in such cases takes on the responsibility of conveying the accumulative scraps, patches and rags of the past, and also weaving them into the texture of the future. These pre-given help, as said earlier, in actuating self-definition, self-representation, without which the present would be reduced to a meaningless void. And so it is the past that diagnoses the present. This present can be seen as a glass or spectacle through which one sees every thing; it is a point from which one articulates one ideology, the critique of causality, and the materiality. It is not however the sum total but the remaindered, the essential use value and therefore paradoxically the margins have to be attached in terms of its marginality - so the past is essential in constructing the present time.

The novelist Bharati Mukherjee follows a characteristic paradigm beginning with restlessness, repression of the past and an overt acceptance of the present. She reveals an assimilatory consciousness. It can possibly be traced to their own individual’s disintegrated past where Mukherjee’s public school elitist status and mystery’s religious minority makes it impossible for them to wholly relate to their larger nationhood. Moreover their expatriation was the outcome of their own choice; it was not thrust on them, which made their assimilation easier, though not always pleasurable, i.e., rising to their desired expectations.
The protagonists have been trained to behave well and they only simmer inwardly of realizing that back at home things would have been different. Time has taught them better, expatriation has made them more keenly aware of her nationhood. Tara has broadened her horizons. She can even think of waiting at the cops when they smile at her with benevolence. She wants to get into trouble, wants to break into a dance, but her culture asserts that it would be silks and yet her decorous upbringing of the Anglican boarding schools is but a memory. In one of her interviews with Alison B. Carb, Bharati Mukherjee admits that the memories of Indian destitute mix with the hordes of New York street and people free and rejoicing in the fact that:

I’ve made it; I’m making something of my life. I’ve left home, my husband to get a Ph.D., I have a multiple entry visa and a small scholarship for two years. After that we’ll see.(29)

One can see Mukherjee’s characters moving in a stereotypical expatriate paradigm characterized by phases of restlessness, repression of earlier self, in a full. It is a kind of distinctive temporality that she is faced with. What she is attempting to do is to narrativize the contentions of the self, which require her to look at the belonged past from the context to the un-belonged present, through an inherited vocabulary and inherited customs.
The partitioning of reducing life into now and then here and there does make for a whole, but a featured, truncated whole.

The protagonists in her novels make a concrete effort to conceptualize the image of the immigrants, who assert their claim to an American identity by struggling heroically to reinstate themselves successfully in a new cultural landscape. Here they strive to find a niche and give themselves a second chance to build their lives. She saw in immigration an opportunity to redefine herself as an artist in an immigrant tradition, and not as an aloof and alienated expatriate writer, concerned only with the subversive potential of life of the margin. Bharati Mukherjee viewed immigration as an opportunity to the writer in her to represent the experiences and at the same time lend her voice to her belief that it signified a release from constructive social and cultural restraints back home. America is a country of immigrants, immigration being central to America. Every American who ever lives, with the exception of the native Indian, was either an immigrant himself or a descendant of immigrants.

American society is made up of people who either came themselves or their forefathers came from other countries. The interaction between cultures and men from different countries, the ideals, which led them to America, their struggles and pursuits, gave American society its culture and tradition.
They enrich America. Bharati Mukherjee herself is one such immigrant who has assimilated into the American ethos. She writes about people who have left their countries for various reasons and come to America with their hopes, their aspirations, their struggles, their alienation, their pain and trauma. She writes about her own experiences in the society of immigrants, and the experience of the new generations of people, who have come chasing the American dream, through the voice of her characters.

While the main thrust of expatriation is on the native country and tradition left behind, immigration lays all emphasis on the cultural life of the host country. The expatriate dwells on this ‘ex’ status of the past, while the immigrant celebrates his present in the new country. The process of change from expatriation to immigration got off during Mukherjee’s stay in India in 1973 – 74. She recalls, “the year in India had forced me to view myself, more as an immigrant than an exile” (50). The realization of fluid identities and alternate realities too could be traced to this sojourn in India as she observes in Immigrant Writing: Give Us You Maximalists:

In India different perceptions of reality converge without embarrassing anyone. My fear in India had shown me that I did not need to discard my Western education, in order to retrieve the dim shape of my Indian one (40).
Bharati Mukherjee is her own theorist and exemplar since her novels illustrate the credo of immigrant writing as a "Maximalist" act. Mukherjee has shrugged off her own Indianness and claimed that her immigrants move away from their origins in India and yet one can easily find the echoes of Indian English, and Indian sensibility in her novels. There are marked stages in the evolving creative vision of Bharati Mukherjee. With each passing year one can encounter a more daring woman. Nothing happens automatically, nothing happens suddenly. There is always a deliberate and conscious effort on the part of the writer contrived by the favorable circumstances. One can see an entirely changed writer in *Darkness*, but this dynamic growth is present in *The Tiger's Daughter* and *Wife* also.

The disintegration and alienation in the characters is slowly replaced by the positive assimilation towards immigration. The protagonists in Bharati Mukherjee's works prove by their grit and determination that change and adaptability are the keys to survival. One should symbolically assert his / her right to try and move her stars, instead of passively accepting her fate. To migrate for better prospect or safety is the human nature. The immigrants are sometimes torn between the two worlds, their own homeland and the Newland where they prefer to settle down.
An Analytical summing up

The following part of this concluding chapter sums up the discussions of each chapter and draws all the threads together to establish how all the characters in Bharati Mukherjee's novels undergo disgust and depression and finally how they reinstate into the new order after continual sufferings. Tara breaks her family tradition and marries American David. It is also an attempt to get security in an alien land. But her marriage proves a failure because it's an emotional marriage, a decision taken impulsively. Since she has not thoroughly understood David and his society she always remains nervous and apprehensive. In an attempt to Americanize her she loses her Indian identity miserably. In India, the parents start discriminating between their male and female child from the very beginning. It is incessantly hammered on the girl's consciousness that she has to move somewhere else and must be submissive and assimilative, come what may. Thus she starts a life of duality and conflict since her childhood. After marriage she undergoes a traumatic dilemma enjoined upon her to belong to an entirely new set-up. This itself is a kind of migration – a migration from one's own former self to an imposed one. And this conflict gets multiplied with migration to another country. Tara's situation should be looked at from this angle and Brinda Bose in her A Question of Identity thinks along such lines:
Duality and conflict are not merely a feature of immigrant life in America; Mukherjee's women are brought up in a culture that presents them with such ambiguities from childhood. The breaking of identities and the discarding of languages actually begin early, their lives being shaped by the confluence of rich cultural and religious traditions, on the one hand, and the 'new dreaming' imposed by British colonialism in India, on the other. These different influences involve them in tortured processes of self-recognition and self-assimilation right from the start; the confusion is doubled upon coming to America (qtd. in Nagendra Kumar 41).

Bharati Mukherjee's works from *The Tiger's Daughter* (1972) to *Desirable Daughters* (2002) reflect her expatriate, immigrant and diasporic identities. She herself accepts in "Iowa Review" that her works are about "psychological transformation, especially among women immigrants from Asia" (15). Her own experiences in Canada and America as an immigrant reflect her works.

When the protagonist Tara in *The Tiger's Daughter* returns to Calcutta after her sojourn in the West, one can find her greatly changed. She had once admired the houses on Marine Drive but now their shabbiness
appalled her. Bombay’s railway station appears more like a hospital. She finds that she is admired neither by her family nor by her friends. In the institution of marriage, her friends and relatives do not accept Tara. Her husband, David also does not give any encouragement to her excellence as a wife. So Tara has to lead a dual life. She feels alienated and irritated by the trivial and trivializing passions and attitudes of the well-heeled, mainly English speaking Bengalis with whom she socializes in the Catelli-Continental Hotel, an enclave away from the disorderly world outside.

The disintegration of Tara starts at the fusion of Indian and Western culture. There is a strange fusion of “Americanness” and “Indianness” in the psyche of Tara and they are always at a note of confrontation with each other. Sometimes she makes a futile attempt to establish her American self. But it clashes with the Indian life on her visit to Calcutta. Neither she can refuge in her old Indian self nor in her newly discovered American self. But it clashed with the Indian life on her visit to Calcutta. The outcome of this confrontation is her split-up psyche.

Tara Banerjee is not only an immigrant but also a woman. This makes all the difference in the Indian context. In India woman’s fate is decided as early as the child. Thus she starts a life of duality and conflict since her childhood. After marriage she undergoes a traumatic dilemma enjoined
upon her to belong to an entirely new environment. With *The Tiger’s Daughter* and its autobiographical parallel, *Days and Nights in Calcutta*, Mukherjee depicts the ethos of a voluntary exile who returns to her mother country only to realize the strength of the pull of the new world and return there, a resolved immigrant. With this perception, Mukherjee examines the reception of the Indian expatriate returning home.

*The Tiger’s Daughter* (1972) explores the condition of being an Indian expatriate. In conceiving the character of Tara, Mukherjee had already begun to distance herself from the role of an expatriate. She models so well in her novels the deep and persistent undercurrent of nostalgia almost sensual in character.

Tara’s father, the Tiger of the title and Joyonto Roy Choudhury, whose compound has been invaded by and who obliquely warns her to return to America, represents the decaying industrial upper classes. The new industrialist is figured in the paunchy bachelor Pronob, who significantly is killed by a mob of striking workers. The conservative business magnet turned politician attempting to usurp Calcutta’s resources is represented by the lecherous P.K. Tuntunwala.
The writer does not attempt a family saga, but sets about exposing how it feels for a young girl to leave a sheltered home, hedged by class privilege and wealth, return home, a fully grown young woman to come after breaking all social taboos by marrying a foreigner and see whether she can find a place at home again. She realizes that she could not communicate with that society simply because the society Tara rejoins is without a vision of the West. It is the most Jane Austenian' book, presenting a closed, contained society, with irony and affection.

The Tiger's Daughter has rather a British feel to it. The writer adopts the omniscient point of view and a greater use of irony. This is because her concept of language and the notions of how a novel was constructed were based on British models. The education that she received was essentially British. She felt fascinated by English Writers like Jane Austen and E.M. Forster.

Tara is torn between mutually contradictory emotions on seeing Aunt Jharna. While on the one hand she cannot sympathize with the aunt’s religious attempts to heal her child, on the other side she thinks that she must help the crooked child. Similarly Tara is caught in an antithetical tension when she realizes that admiration for her does not come from either quarter. Tara attempts to reconcile to the two worlds i.e., the Western one with its
secular orientation and the Brahmin one, which has a traditional non-secular orientation.

Thus Tara’s journey to India, her own native land ironically proves frustrating, slowly leading to alienation, depression and finally her tragic end. The greatest irony hidden in the story is that she survived the racial hardships of survival in a foreign country but nothing happens to her. Tara finds herself torn between the two worlds - one dead, the other powerless to be born, with nowhere to rest her head; such dreariness, vacuity and desperation are evoked by her American life. Similar antithetical feelings beset her in the company of her friends. Seven years ago she had played with these friends, done homework with Nilima, boldly fancied herself with Pronob, debated with Reena at the British council. But now after her return from America: “She feared their tone, their omissions and their oneness” (113).

Her split personality raises doubts about her husband, who doesn’t understand her country through her: “She is convinced of her little death, a hardening of the heart, a cracking of axis and center” (51). When she forgets the next step of the ritual in the prayer room, She even grows nervous with her mother’s “simple request to share piety with her family and in consequence she thinks in the end she would not stay” (54). For Tara it is
void and ghettos in America’s life that matter, but her friends do not accept the facts about the Americans’ life. They want to be told about fantasies of that life, out of their predicament, her communication become devoid of significance (56). One can appreciate better, the entirety of Mukherjee’s writing if one could view in a chronicling the transitions from an expatriate sensibility to an immigrant one.

Tara’s friends disapprove of her Western husband and one asks her, “How is it you have changed too much Tara?” (106). But if seven years in America and marriage to an American has altered Tara, Mukherjee implies so has Calcutta been affected by the times. The novel provides representative portraits of certain types during the Naxalite uprising and caste riots.

At the end of the novel, as she sits shivering in the Fiat, surrounded by a mob, wondering whether she would ever see her husband again, “she sees the vision twinkling, pinching, pulling, slapping through the crowd that surrounds the hotel” (13). Bharati Mukherjee is refusing to state what it is, invites a reader response in decoding the vision. Tara caught in the midst of the rioting mob marking the invisible presence of her husband David, leaves the reader stunned and wondering as the novel ends there. “In a sense the turmoil outside is but an external manifestation of Tara’s inner state of mind.
and by leaving her amidst that turmoil, perhaps, Mukherjee hints at the irreconcilability of such conflicts” (qtd. in Nagendra Kumar 42).

There is a gradual transformation in the character of Dimple towards self-assertion. The third chapter **Exploring the Hyphenated Identity** deals with Dimple’s depression and disappointments. Bharati Mukherjee’s *Wife* stands out as a unique fictional work by virtue of its insightful probing into its heroine’s psyche and its indubitable technical excellence. Surface:ly, *Wife* is the simple story of Amit and his wife Dimple. Her ill-conceived, sado-masochistic compulsions are soon predicted by the violence ridden and individualistic American life and culminates in her killing of her husband. This psychic development in Dimple has been variously but uncritically viewed as her desperate efforts to ‘forget’ her Indian roots necessitated by the demands of American life and as her aversion of independence from her overbearing husband.

*Wife* deals with the question of the Indian immigrant. Dimple’s father arranges her marriage to an aspiring engineer, Amit, and the couple relocated to New York City. Amit finds a job, and Dimple spends her days confining to their subsequent apartment, watching television and receiving lessons in American consumerism, as well as American feminism from her dubious friend. Dimple’s enervated attempts at adaptation to this setting end with the
disintegration of her sense of health and the murder of Amit. Dimple’s act was positive and self-assertive. However in Dimple, Mukherjee articulates an instructive admonition about the relevance of psychological transformation, beyond the immigrant’s isolationist’s struggle for survival, through adaptation to new surrounding and to the ways of the dominant American culture.

Mukherjee has described the typical Indian immigrant’s life as a bicultural interstate: “you drove the American lane at work and the Indian lane at home” (827). In Wife, she explores how in the new world, attempts to maintain the careful destination between American and Indian facets of one life eventually destroys Dimple. Coleman in his Coming to America says that Dimple is a complex character, suffering from schizophrenia, a group of “psychotic disorders, characterized by gross distortion of reality; withdrawal from social interaction, and the disorganization and fragmentation of perception, thought and emotion”. (292)

Wife is about displacement and alienation, for it portrays the psychological claustrophobia and the resultant distinctive tendencies in that condition of Dimple Dasgupta - a young Bengali wife who is sensitive enough to feel the pain but not intelligent enough to sense out of her situation and breaks out. Dimple is entrapped in a dilemma of tension.
between American culture and society and the traditional constraints surrounding an Indian wife, between a feminists' desire to be assertive and the Indian need to be submissive. No resolution can possibly emerge from the subversion exercised by the values, ideals of freedom, and individuality identified with America, and the cultural identity - Dimples - that they undermine and unravel.

Apart from nostalgic reminiscences, a more serious consideration, however, can also be perceived in the writer's act of recreating the past. They thus become full historians, mythmakers, and customers of the collective history of their people. In many instances, as Vassanji in his No New Land states: "this reclamation of the past is the first serious act of writing. Having reclaimed it, having given himself a history, he liberates himself to write about the present (67). Dimple in Wife is married to an educated and liberated husband, but she is not able to strike a balance between the two juxtaposed worlds - the one she left behind and the other she has come to live in. She is so much frustrated with life that the use of words like loyalty, suffering and pain on her husband's part, have lost meaning, and she starts fantasying the act of murdering her husband.
She has already been in a sick state of mind ever since she has left India. But the alienation from her husband, the environment, the sham and the outward glitter of American life drive her to the fists of psychic depression and ultimate insanity. The novel ends with a pathetic note, glimpsing a distraught woman who has become impulsive foolish ... a maniac watching on T.V., woman getting away with murder and fantasizing her own husband’s murder,(213)

There are many reasons for the disintegration in Dimple’s life. *Wife* brings a unique Indian perspective to the standard themes of immigrant fiction - failed quests, thwarted dreams, dislocation and isolation leading to marital stress, demand of a new and hostile cultural environment, loss of supportive community and loss of a relatively coherent earlier identity. Dimple’s is a case of a feminist and an immigrant’s crisis in her life. Isolated in an alien country with no supportive base, no traditional values to hold on to and no handy rules of dominant culture to help the new comers like Dimple - all these are exposed to dangerous lives, fast-paced and mercenary in nature. In Dimple’s America, in her enforced isolation, she is left alone to the fatal submission of the fantasy narrative of American culture and soap operas portraying the lives of women of her host culture. It is a moving study of a relatively docile person’s inexplicable explosion into violence. The
senseless, violent act of the protagonist in murdering her husband Amit may be viewed as a desperate act on the part of Dimple in Americanizing herself.

Dimple is suffering from hallucination, suicidal dreams and violent traumas. Her isolation has a destructive effect on her psyche. Her abnormal and aggressive behaviour became more pathetic when Amit did not notice changes in her personality and involved so much in his job, that he did not pay proper attention to her emotional and mental needs. As Amit is busy in his daily schedule and work, Dimple does not share her secrets with him.

Dimple’s bewilderment with America is due to her sheltered childhood. She has hardly ever been out of Calcutta. She is totally upset with the shopping and is humiliated by the shopkeeper. She does 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 is like flapping the bugs? Dimple thinks: “She was caught in the crossfire of an American communalism. She could not understand. She felt she’d come very close to getting killed on her third morning in America”(60).
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. Dimple’s gloom deepens with every passing day. She starts realizing: “her life was slow, full of miscalculations” (178)

Dimple in a fit of hallucination murders her husband. It is a misguided act of self-assertion that comes as a consequence of misguided Americanization. Bharati Mukherjee employs much wit, good ear for dialogue, and deep insight into her character. In writing of the aborted Americanization of Dimple in life, she herself was already moving towards it. The style becomes distinctly American. She discards irony for passion. In the next novel *Jasmine* there is a definite transformation towards assimilation.

Jasmine is an ambitions woman engaged in a serious quest for values. Sushmita Roy in her *Jasmine: Exile as a Spiritual Quest* observes:

Being an issue of widespread contemporary interest this suggests an important link in the choice of the ‘new literature’ that is being written at present by women and about women. In its popularity lies the validity of the struggle it depicts (203 – 209)
The fourth chapter Reinvention discusses Jasmine’s repositioning of the stars. In Jasmine, Mukherjee celebrates the freedom of the anonymous in the U.S. and the American reverence for the autonomy of the individual. The energetic protagonist of the novel, who was born as Jyoti metamorphoses herself into personae like Jasmine, Jase, or Jane, according to the requirement of the situation. By the time she starts her first person narrative, she has become a confident accomplished woman who is an adept ‘caregiver’ to American households.

Wife to so many men, Jasmine speaks with authority about diverse subjects such as farming, films, politics, science, medicine, accents of various Englishes spoken around her, Indian philosophy, Indian literature and social issues such as poverty. Her confidence level is very high throughout the novel, despite some real dark patches in her life. She finds herself being praised for her ‘great face’ by an American woman professor. She is a source of love and inspiration for her husband - lovers - Prakash, Taylor and Bud. “You were glamour, something unattainable”, says Bud. (199)

She perceives herself as the woman with “stark - white bobbed hair and a sad, heavy, wrinkled face. It’s the face of a poet or a philosopher, the face of a woman who has come to terms with all the Sukhis and Half-Faces
out there and is no longer afraid” (208). And finally unlike her adopted son Du, who chooses to remain hyphenated, she says, “My transformation has been genetic” (222). It is important to note that unlike an expatriate, Jasmine claims to have changed her very chemistry. Jasmine’s journey of self-actualization leads her not just to a comfortable life and fluid identities but also to forging new alliances to form what she, as an Indian is obsessed with - that is, family.

The theme of *Jasmine* is an Indian immigrant’s encounter with the New World and her gradual transformation as she thoroughly imbibes the New Culture (154). The novel also orchestrates a quest for identity; how a woman comes to terms with her own self. Jasmine’s search for self-recognition takes her into social and spiritual directions till she arrives at a time when she can view the future with hope and confidence.

*Jasmine* can be read at many levels. It is a kind of impressionistic prose poem about being an exile, a refugee, and a spiritual vagabond in the world today. It is an attempt to synthesize the essence of two cultures, Indian and American. It can also be read as a feminist novel where the protagonist rebels not only against the age-old superstitions and traditions, but also affects a proper balance between tradition and modernity.
The very essence of Jasmine resides in the concept of endless possibility. Within the few years of the life of Jasmine - the young Indian protagonist from Punjab, a lifetime of experience is stored. She went through grueling confrontations with death - when only at sixteen her husband was shot dead, the murder of Half-face who raped her, the assault and crippling of Bud and suicide of Darrel. From rural Punjab she has travelled through land and ocean, and traversed through the length and breadth of America, starting from Florida to New York, Iowa and finally ready to leave for the West frontier of California. She proves by her grit and determination that change and adaptability are keys to survival, and that a successful immigrant requires instinct.

In the end, she decides to leave Bud and move to California with Taylor, grasping at, yet another chance of happiness. By doing so, she is not merely choosing between Bud and Taylor, but symbolically asserting her right to try and move her stars, instead of passively accepting her fate. She has learnt by now that nothing lasts forever and so she need not condemn herself to a life she does not want. Self-assertion is a power that she believes in, and is beginning to enjoy. And again when asked whether she saw immigration as an experience of reincarnation, she said that she had been murdered absolutely, and reborn at least three times. One can find Jasmine
growing very confident in her powers to shape a new identity. Her decision
to leave crippled Bud, walking out with Taylor, shows her asserting herself,
not merely choosing between Bud and Taylor instead she is trying to decide
her future.

Jasmine realizes that she need not condemn herself to a life of mere
duty and decides to move out to seek a life of happiness. Mukherjee’s ethnic
women are between roles. There is no role model for the Dimples. They
have to invent their roles, survive and revise as best as they can. A novel of
migration, *Jasmine* is a culmination of a literary trajectory initialed by *The
Tiger’s Daughter*, a semi-auto-biographical novel reflecting a post-colonial
expatriate consciousness. The latter consciousness also reflects Mukherjee’s
memoirs in *Days and Nights in Calcutta*, which records with ironic distance,
the painful experience of negotiating identities across various borders of
alienation.

The New world holds a promise of new self-hood as well as new
battles against marginalisations. Jasmine, the eponymous heroine of Bharati
Mukherjee’s new novel, narrates her life-story in a shuttered way through
her various mutations as suttee goddess, illicit lover, compassionate care­
giver and a courageous, exhilarating dreamer. On the one hand *Jasmine* is a
tale of an individual exile, alienation, transformations, and reckless hopes, on
the other to perversion, precisely because the problem has not been fully resolved by Mukherjee between Indian mythology and attitude on one side, and Western textures and style on the other.

For her perception of violently changing identities, the explanation Mukherjee offers is the Hindu religious belief of incarnations, which is an interesting though marginalized way of linking ethnicity with the new womanhood she celebrates in her works. An interview with Bharati Mukherjee The Massachusetts Review, by Alison B.Carb, she says:

I believe that our souls can be reborn in another body, so the perspective I have about a single character’s life is different from that of an American writer who believes that he only has one life. As a Hindu I believe in the existence of alternate realities, and the belief makes itself evident in my fiction. (28)

As an Indian Woman, Jasmine has to reinvent herself, even as it means relinquishing her past completely. There is no sense for her in holding on to the past that does not qualify one’s reality with meaning. Mukherjee decides she is an immigrant and India is a place she cannot live in, for to be a woman, “was to be a powerless victim whose only escape was through self inflicted wounds” (20). Having felt different from her fellow
Indians all along, she resorts to the collective cultural enclave of North America, particularly The United States, where she explains in her "Introduction to Darkness", a merging of oneself with the mainstream culture is possible, unlike in Canada, a mosaic, where an immigrant can never assimilate. It is therefore, the blending of the American and Hindu imagination - the two desperate imaginations that has vitalized Mukherjee's unique craft. The message that comes across crystal clear to an immigrant writer like herself is to wed their unique craft to the reality- the immigrant reality. As an immigrant writer, she needs to focus on her present surroundings and invent "India's of the Mind" with the help of constantly evolving imagination, not to the present reality, for she feels that reinvention of self, not nostalgia is her strength.

In another interview with Alison B. Carb, she again endorses her belief in reincarnation:

I always found it hard to cope with what are the basic tenets of Hinduism. But yes, if you asked me casually as a believing Hindu, my way of dealing with it has been to say, like in my novel Jasmine, we are reinventing ourselves a million times.

(29)
Each stage of Jasmine's life ends in violence, terror and fear. Khalsa terrorists shoot first Prakash; then there is the violent encounter with Half-Face ending in his death, the romance with Taylor ends when she confronts Prakash's assassinators. Later Bud is crippled by a shot. But like the proverbial phoenix, Jasmine rises from her ashes as it were. Jasmine's every movement is a calculated step into her Americanization and with each development a vital change is marked in her personality.

The majority of Mukherjee's fictional characters display an undying drive to build up life with fragments, howsoever fragile they might be, and thus they express their affirmation to life. In trying alternatives, they do sometimes appear abnormal in their behaviour but this trait should be viewed from the angle of their innate bid to live life on their own terms.

The exhaustive analysis of Bharati Mukherjee's fictional writings undertaken in the preceding chapters, from a cultural perspective demonstrates that she has addressed herself to all the issues associated with expatriate experience. By choosing her protagonists from all parts of the world having divergent ethnic, religious and cultural preoccupations, she has attempted to explore the multiplicity of this theme, which is centered in their struggles to outgrow inherited values. With her evolving creative vision the
canvas of her thematic content enlarges and the complexity of cultural assimilation acquires a new dimension.

America is a country of immigrants, immigration being central to America. The interaction between cultures and men from different countries give American society its and culture and tradition. The immigrants have to face a lot of struggles. In the process of assimilation, their hopes, their aspirations are disintegrated and they suffer from alienation, pain and trauma.

The researcher has been highlighting on the situations wherein Bharati Mukhrjee’s characters in all the novels make a discernible movement from disintegration into reincarnation. The theme of personal transformation via violence in particular is targeted: “More and more is left out as Mukherjee’s women evolve from the homesick Tara who returns home to find herself peculiarly alienated, through Dimple whose confusion turns violent to the liberated Jyoty-Jasmine-Jase-Jane who makes a lifetime-for-every name look like a possibility for any exuberant immigrant” (49). As Adrienne Rich observes in htr “Resisting Amensia” Jasmine makes a declaration: “We murder who we are, so we can rebirth ourselves in the images of dreams” (142). To conclude this study, it may be said that all the characters in all the three novels make an attempt towards Reincarnation, though Tara and
Dimple fail miserably. Jasmine is cast slightly different and one can see that she emerges victorious, in her attempt to rebuild her life out of the fragments. This study bears the title “Disintegration into Reincarnation” and it focuses on the evolution of Mukherjee’s thinking as a writer. The title is justified since there is disintegration discussed in the first two novels leading to reincarnation in the third novel. There can be a way out of the maze into which a person finds his/herself either due to innocence or circumstance or ambition or fate. One can truly believe that phoenix can come out of its own ashes. There can be an incarnation out of disintegration. As the writer herself believes in personal striving, she declares: “Like jasmine, I want to reposition the stars. At the same time, I am aware of a larger design. My way of solving this is to say that every single moment has a purpose. I want to discover that purpose”(47)

Discussing her fiction, Mukherjee states:

I don’t think about my fiction as being about alienation. On the contrary, I mean for it to be about assimilation. My story centers on a new breed and generation of North American pioneers. I’m fascinated by people who have enough gumption, energy, ambition, to pull up their roots...my stories are about conquests and not about loss,(34 - 44)
While Tara and Dimple are making an attempt towards reincarnation, Jasmine proves to be the conqueror in her life.