Chapter I

INTRODUCTION
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"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 and even linguistically estranged as the individual feels about himself, the whole question of his social, emotional, ethnic or cultural identity assumes mythic proportions and thus becomes an unattainable ideal".\(^1\)

The Objectives and Focus of the Study

The present thesis is a comparative study of the impact of migration on the personality and identity of an individual as reflected in the works of V.S. Naipaul and Bharati Mukherjee. The places that Mukherjee and Naipaul occupy as the first and the third generation immigrants, respectively determine their choice for this study. Their views, visions and reactions towards the diasporic experiences help us to see diaspora from different perspectives. The major concern of the study is with the dislocation of an individual and the resulting crisis of identity in his / her personality. 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 a 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 or cultural model.
1. Diaspora: Meaning and Tradition

In the recent times the migrations of Asians and Africans to the west have invited the attention of the world at large towards the problems poised by the basic differences in the culture of the west and that of the east. However, due to these problems the term diaspora has been used in varied senses indicating the problems of settlement in a new country and the resultant cultural dilemmas, generational differences and transformation of identities. This further leads to the re-examination of the relationship between the self and the culture in both the migrated land as well as the home country.

The concept of diaspora is probably as old as the human history. Literally it means the dispersion or the spreading of the people from a particular nation or culture. It was initially used by the ancient Greeks to indicate the movement of the citizens of a grand city migrating to the conquered land with the explicit purpose of colonisation. For them the word diaspora meant spreading or migration.

This original meaning acquired a new sense when it was used with reference to the dispersion of the Jewish population from Israel and adjoining territories after the Babylonian captivity in 586 B.C. In the Greek translation of the Old Testament the word was subsequently used to designate the dispersal of the Jewish population all over the world. It also carried certain religious, philosophical and political connotations due to what the Jews perceived as the special relationship between the land of Israel and the Jews themselves.
One of the important features of the diaspora seems to be the discrimination against the diasporic group by the dominant social group in the homeland as well as the place of resettlement. It is quite likely that this feeling may be overcome in due course of time. However, it does not diminish the most significant aspect of diaspora - the yearning to return to the lost homeland. This seems to be the central feeling characterising the diaspora which was generated by a forceful displacement from the homeland. Some of the characteristics of the earlier diasporas are stated by Anita Sengupta as follows:

"More specifically diasporas are defined as a group of ethnic expatriates who share the following characteristics (1)They or their ancestors have been dispersed from a specific original 'centre' to two or more peripheral regions. (2) They retain a collective memory, vision or myth about their homeland. (3) They believe that they are not fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel alienated and insulated from it. (4) They regard their ancestral homeland as their true ideal home and as a place to which they or their descendents would eventually return when conditions are appropriate. (5) They would believe that they should be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their homeland. (6) They continue to relate personally or vicariously to that homeland and their ethno-communal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such relationship." 

The term diaspora was specifically used with reference to the dispersion of Jews all over the world. According to the Jewish tradition God gave the land of the Canaan, the present day Israel, to Abraham and his descendents. Following the word of God, Abraham his son Issac, his grandson Jacob lived in the land of Canaan. Jacob had twelve sons who in turn founded twelve tribes. These tribes were
enslaved under the Egyptian rule. The name Jew is derived from Yahudda (Judah) one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The Exodus of Israelites from Egypt to Canaan led by prophet Moses marks the formation of Israelites as a people. After forty-one years of wandering in the Sinai desert the Israelites under the command of Joshua conquered the land of Canaan, which was promised to the descendants of Abraham. The people of Modern-day Israel share the same language, culture and religion of the Jewish heritage passed through generations starting with their founding father, Abraham.

The rule of the Israelites in the land of Israel started with the conquest by Joshua around 1250 B.C. During this the period from 1000-587 B.C. is known as the period of kings. The most noteworthy among the kings was King David (1010-970 B.C.) who was responsible for making Jerusalem the capital of Israel as also his son Solomon who built the first temple in Jerusalem.

The year 586 B.C. marks a significant milestone in the history of the Jewish people because of the Babylonian captivity. This is the beginning of the period of exile in Babylonia after the destruction of Jerusalem. This exile which ended the national life of the Kingdom of Judah lasted seventy years. In 538 B.C. the Persians conquered Babylonia and allowed the Jews to return to Judah. However some of the Jews chose to remain in Babylonia. This was the beginning of the Jewish Diaspora. During their Babylonian exile the Jews maintained their distinct cultural identity, national spirit and religious tradition in spite of the cultural pressure in a foreign land.

However the real diaspora began in 6 A.D. when Judah become a Roman Province and in 70 A.D. the Romans put down a Jewish
revolt and razed Jerusalem. In 132 A.D. Simon Bar Cochela led another revolt of the Jews which was crushed by Emperor Hadrian killing 80,000 Jews. After that the Romans changed the name of Judah to Syria-Palestina and barred Jews from entering it. This was the beginning of real diaspora. After the destruction of Jerusalem many of the Jews joined the existing diaspora in Babylonia while many others spread to the Mediterranean and later on to the northern parts Europe.

During the last 2000 years the Jews have migrated extensively. They have been attacked, banished, confined to ghettos and forced to choose between death and conversion. Their persecution in Europe, particularly during the Second World War is a known history. During this period they have moved from place to place, sometimes voluntarily but most of the times by force in search of more tolerant communities. This has resulted in major shifts of international centres of Jewish life leading to dispersion of Jewish people all over the world. During this time the poorest and most fervent Jews among the Babylonian exiles returned to the land of Israel and reconstructed the temple in Jerusalem and reorganised themselves although Israel continued to be ruled by other people.

In 1948 the Jewish community established a sovereign state of Israel. That was the end of the dispersal for a significant number of Jews. However, even today many of the Jews continue to stay in various other countries which they had migrated to during the period of dispersal.
Until the twentieth century the term diaspora referred to the repeated dispersals of the Jews away from their homeland. However in the late twentieth century it has acquired new shades of meaning.

Walter Connor, for example, defines diaspora as simply "that segment of a people living outside the homeland" (3). Whereas Robert Cohen extends the meaning of the term diaspora to the communities of people living together in a migrated country who "acknowledge that the old country a nation buried deep in language, religion and customs or folktale always has some claim on their loyalty or emotion" (4).

Thus the original meaning of the term diaspora is also extended to include migrations, which may not necessarily be forced. In the case of the Jewish dispersal the term implied a more painful loss of the homeland, a violent relocation necessarily accompanied by an intense desire to return. On the contrary the terms migration is used to denote any movement away from the region of one's origin. This migration may be willful, forced or partially forced.

In the case of migration the sense of loss may not be as intense as it is in the case of diaspora in the original sense. It may not be present either in many cases particularly those of voluntary migration. The diaspora highlights the intense sense of loss, the loss of home, and the loss of culture among others. The word diaspora projects one's own culture, whereas migration signifies leaving behind the firm hold of cultural ties. The feelings of nostalgia and alienation are the results of the former while the purpose of migration may overshadow any such feeling in the case of the latter. In this way while the painful memories of the lost homeland and the longing for return may be
central to diaspora, migration signifies a forward movement wherein yearning to return to the left world is not always present or may sometimes be out of place.

Over the centuries the concept and meaning of diaspora has undergone many changes. Now diaspora addresses and assists the understanding of migration, post-migration problems, people's multiple sense of belonging and loyalties beyond the national boundaries. Since the development of the post-colonial theories the term diaspora has been used in its modern sense. Considering it as a central historical fact of colonization Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffins define diaspora as a "Voluntary or forcible movement of people from their homeland into new regions"(5). They consider colonialism itself as a radically diasporic movement dispersion and settlement of millions of Europeans all over the world.

With the onset of globalisation the large-scale heterogeneity in the world is being replaced by a homogenous global culture. In effect, this is the process described by the term 'global village'. In the twenty-first century we observed the phenomenon of extra-ordinary and accelerating movement of the people throughout the world. In this new context the word diaspora has also taken a new meaning of relocation of any people away from their homeland into a foreign land.

Diaspora in this sense refers to the migration of people from one country to another by slavery or imprisonment, by invasion or settlement, a willing or unwilling movement from a known to a relatively unknown location. It also signifies in a broad sense a specific migrant community e.g. Indian diaspora. It also implies a
decentralised relation to ethnicity and real or imagined relations between scattered people who sustain a sense of community through various forms of communication and contact. This, in the present conditions, does not necessarily depend on the desire for returning to the lost homeland. Diaspora today is the hybrid and ever-changing nature of identities that is not dependent on homogeneity, purity and stable localisation. William Saffron says.

"Today 'diaspora' and more specifically 'diaspora community' seem increasingly to be used as metaphoric designations for several categories of people - expatriates, expellers, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants and ethnic and racial minorities tout court."(6)

It appears that the nature of diaspora feelings is governed by the type of migration an individual undergoes whereas the migratory movements are governed by different types of forces in different times of history. Migration is commonly defined as a change of residence by an individual or a group from one's origin to another distant land. It may be an internal migration within the nation or an international migration to another country. Broadly these migrations can be classified under three classes:

i) Forced Migration

ii) Partially forced migration.

iii) Voluntary migration.

The Forced Migration refers to the people moved either by the state or by some other social institution that wields power over them. The most stringent forms of forced migration are deportation and
slave trade. Deportation has been employed by most governments at one time or the other to get rid of criminals, political opponents or other persons deemed undesirable by the state. During the Second World War the Nazis deported millions of people, most of them Jews.

Slave trade was widely practiced for thousands of years in Africa, the Middle East and Europe. During colonization the plantation or agricultural colonies were developed to grow foodstuff for the metropolitan population in places where the local population could not supply the labour needed on the plantations. From the sixteenth century to the Nineteenth millions of African slaves were forcibly taken to various parts of the American continent for this purpose.

Apart from deportation and slavery there have also been instances where people were induced to migrate through less severe methods. These can be classified as partially forced migration. These were executed through administrative transfer of staff in the colonial administration as well as in government and private companies. This also led to the migration of wives and children of the transferred staff.

Another migration of the same type is that of the refugees. The twentieth century has unfortunately witnessed a sharp rise in the number of refugees. Most of the refugee movements are due to unbearable political situation or an anticipation of such a situation in future. Movement of people from India to Pakistan and Vice Versa and also that of Arabs during 1947-48 are examples of this type.
The migrant in some cases willfully migrates and joins the diaspora to seek prosperity and better life. Colonization began a process of such migratons all over the world. In many countries of Europe emigration became a style and an established social pattern.

Another important voluntary migration was that of the indentured labour after slavery was outlawed. This was a movement of people from population rich regions like India and China to the colonial plantations requiring labour. The most recent and significant development in this field was the selective migration of skilled personnel - engineers, physicians and scientists - from less developed countries to more developed countries, also known as 'brain drain'. Many people from Asian and African countries have migrated to the Western countries like the U.S.A., Canada, Australia and U.K. in search of better standards of living and job prospects.

2. Expatriates and Migrants (Differentiating the terms related to Diasporic Writing):-

Before going further there is a need to examine closely the distinction between the terms such as expatriation, immigration, exile which are related to diasporic writings and which may differentiate the writers of diaspora from one another and help to present their relation to the home country. It may help us to ascertain the reasons why the writers like V.S. Naipaul and poets like A.K. Ramanujan are considered as exiles whereas Bharati Mukharjee is viewed as an expatriate in the early years of migration and as an immigrant
afterwards. Jasbir Jain’s comment forms a good distinction of these terms.

"Increasingly the terms which are gaining popularity are expatriate and diaspora----. The requirement of the two roles are different while one requires the projection of one’s culture and the ability to enhance its understanding the other seeks refuge and protection and relates more positively to the host culture. Further categories emerge through the use of such words as immigrant, exile, and refugee. Their use attempts to give some indication of the ideologies, choices, reasons and compulsions which may have governed the act of migration. While “immigrant” defines a location, a physical movement and a forward looking attitude, “exile” indicates a compulsory isolation and a nostalgic anchoring in the past. The word “exile” evokes multiple meanings, which cover a variety of relationship with the mother-country, alienation, forced exile, self-imposed exile, political exile and so on."

Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin define the term ‘exile’ as the condition, which “involves the idea of a separation and distancing from either literal homeland or from cultural and ethncial origin.” A further distinction between exile and expatriation should be drawn. Exile implies involuntary constrain, whereas expatriation a voluntary act or state.

Now a day, many use the terms expatriation and immigration as being synonymous. However, it is important to draw a line of demarcation by bringing out the differences in the two. As the term implies, expatriation focuses on the native land that has been left behind, while immigration denotes the country into which one has ventured as an immigrant. While the main thrust of the former is on the native country and tradition left behind, the latter lays all emphasis
on the cultural life of the host country. The expatriate dwells on his / her 'ex' status of the past, whereas the immigrant celebrates his / her present in the adopted land. Christine Gomez gives a still more perceptible definition of the term 'expatriation':

"Expatriation is actually a complex state of mind and emotion which includes a wistful longing for the past, often symbolized by the ancestral home, the pain of exile and homelessness, the struggle to maintain the difference between oneself and the new, unfriendly surrounding, an assumption of moral and cultural superiority over the host country and a refusal to accept the identity forced on one by the environment. The expatriate builds a cocoon around herself / himself as a refuge from cultural dilemmas and from the experienced hostility or unfriendliness in the new country."\(^{(9)}\)

Expatriation basically differs from immigration in its concept of assimilation. An expatriate will always carry his country with him, betraying notes of nostalgia or aversion as the case may be. While an expatriate, in an attempt to maintain his identity voluntarily or due to racism, follows the mosaic pattern, the immigrant embraces assimilation and plunges into the present new world. The latter 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 giving up a rigid hold of the past. It is recognition of a duality or, in the words of Bharati Mukherjee, that of a fluid identity. In her introduction to the collection of stories *Darkness* (1985) Mukherjee 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."\(^{(10)}\)
These distinctions between the terms related to the diasporic writing help to determine the peculiarities of the crisis of identity in the displaced writers. On the broad basis the term ‘immigrant’ is freely used to include both ‘exile’ and ‘expatriate’ writers; yet their differentiation is useful to categorize the writers and their diasporic dilemma.

3. Problems Arising Due to Migration

Generally migrations affect the personality of the migrants by arousing the following problems in their lives.

1) Displacement
2) Nostalgia
3) Alienation
4) Marginalization
5) Desire to be attached to one's ethnic community.
6) Rootlessness
7) Cultural shock
8) Fear of insulting treatment
9) Feeling of insecurity
10) Exile
11) Fractured consciousness
12) Crisis of Identity.

All the problems enlisted above have a resulting effect on the lives of the migrants, making them feel a split in their identity. The nostalgic wave along with the feeling of insecurity and fear of insulting treatment alienates the migrants from their surroundings,
leading to their marginalization and the desire to strengthen the bonds within their ethnic community. At the same time the feeling of being an exile and rootless exerts lots of pressure on the consciousness of their own, thus culminating in the crisis of identity. Gurubhagat Singh highlights the resulting effects of the migration on the personality of the migrant.

"This movement has produced a new person whose mind works at least with two epistemologies. He / She has lost the centre that used to unify. Contingencies of history have affected to the extent of dismantling the comforting and stable perspectives. The dismantling has led to some unknown and intermingled visions." (11)

The foremost post-colonial theorist Edward Said expresses very important views on this crossing over from one culture to another, from one centre to another. He himself is an example of the trail of an exile dealing with two centres. As a Palestinian, born in Jerusalem he is self-exiled to the U.S. The experience of movement that is partly self-chosen and partly imposed on him by history has become very important to him. His way of looking at culture and creativity has been altered. The whole notion of crossing over or moving from one identity to another is extremely important to Said. He describes it as a sort of hybridity, the intermixing that he believes shapes all of us. From his own existential situation he generalizes the hybridity. Said states that,
"The twentieth century mass society has destroyed identity in so powerful a way that it is worth a great deal to keep the specificity alive."

A major component of this research work comprises the study of the problems arising in the children of the migrants. V.S. Naipaul being a third generation descendent of a migrated community faces the problems which are distinct from those of his parents and grandparents. Even the concept of home and to some extent the problems of identity differ in the migrants and their descendents.

In most of the cases, the migrants try to maintain the atmosphere in their house as 'uncontaminated aboriginal' but their third and second generations are quite naturally exposed to the dominating culture in their school and surrounding places. They are born and brought up in the mixed culture, the influence of which is inevitable on their lives. If the parents are inflexible to the influences of the dominating culture, their children face a cultural dilemma. Where the parents are troubled by their identity problem, their children also face the same problem. Where parents are in confusion their children suffer from the complex which they are unable to detect. Uma Parmeswaran illustrates it by citing the example of one of her friends.

"The place of residence changes configuration; one of my young friends for example, talked about how life was much simpler when she was growing up in a rural community where her family were the only Indians. She was part of a larger stream, though everything within the house was Indian. Since her family moved to the city, she said, her parent's whole world has become Indian, and, not just Indian, but regionally affiliated.
with the culture of the state from which they had come. It was the constricting ghetto experience that she resented. She is not atypical of her generation. Most young people whose parents keep to the old ways feel trapped by these differences, not only at school but at home. However with this resilience of youth, most of them find a balance, and some even start appreciating aspects of their heritage culture. If only parents too could be more resilient and flexible to their own and their children's Canadian realities! What is more ironic is that the ghetto existence is self-imposed..."^{13}

In case of the children who are born and brought up in a liberal cultural environment, the process of adaptability to the dominant culture is quite easy. They also overcome various cultural barriers with equal ease. They are able to blend the two cultures for their advantage and hardly face any identity problem. In case of these second and third generation of immigrants the land of their origin becomes unreal,

"...just a space of imagination rather than of nostalgic recollection. They reconstruct their homeland from fragments of information gathered from hearsay or from the internet. For them home is not a place to return to but a place to fantasise about or may be to visit sometimes as a guest or a tourist."^{14}

4. A Brief Survey of Migration from India

Historical evidences show that the land of India experienced various invasions, such as the early nomadic invasions and the Islamic invasions. Even the British colonialism in India is considered as a kind of invasion by the foreigners. In the first two cases, a large
population of the invaders settled in the land of India. India, on her part, received and assimilated them.

But in the Indian history there is no such evidence of Indians invading a foreign territory with the purpose of making it a settlement colony of the country. Different reasons can be put forward for this, the discussion of which is not the demand of the present study. Most of the early migrations in India are of the interregional type from one region to another inside the country. The first mass migration of Indians out of the country took place during the British rule, when the labours from the country were transported to the Caribbean countries. But in the last few decades, the country experienced, and is experiencing, a large number of voluntary migrations to the Western countries. These migrations have invited attention towards the experiences of the immigrants and the problems posed to them due to the migrations. On the broad basis the historically important migrations from India can be categorized under the following two headings:

i) Migrations of Indentured labourers.

ii) Post -1950 migrations.

4.1 Migrations of Indentured Labourers

India saw the first mass migration of its people during the Nineteenth century. When the system of Indentured labour came into being under the indentured agreements a large population of poor Indian agricultural labourers saw passage to the Caribbean and South
East Asian countries, where they were needed as workers for British colonial plantations.

The first Indian indentured labourers from India arrived in Trinidad in May 1845, on the ship Fatel Razack. The Indian immigration to Trinidad spanned the period of 1845-1917. During this period over 140,000 Indians were transported to the island. The journey was long and arduous and living conditions were deplorable. The Indians were subjected to abuse, poor food and dangerous weather conditions. Nevertheless these adverse conditions enabled them to form a bond which overcame their differences of language, caste and regionalism. When the Fatel Razack sailed in the Gulf, it brought not only a new labour force but also a new culture, because the Indians had brought with them their food, dress, language, music, dance, religion and customs. This became the first major instance of 'Indian Diaspora'. Similarly, Indian diasporic community is also found in the South East Asian countries.

4.2 Post-1950 Migrations

As discussed earlier, the term "brain-drain" describes the voluntary type of migrations of skilled professionals from the developing countries to the developed countries. In the last few decades the world has witnessed the migrations of millions of Indian people to the countries like the U.S., the U.K., Australia, Canada and other European countries. The tradition of this brain drain from India dates back to the last decades of the nineteenth century, when a number of young Indians migrated to England for the purpose of
education. Some of them chose to stay back instead of returning to India; thus initiating the Indian diaspora in Europe.

With the Independence of India, the number of migrating people increased, some choosing the U.S. instead of England. The availability of a large number of work opportunities and the liberal atmosphere towards the immigrants, in comparison to England, has made Indians opt for the U.S. The ethnic Indian population of the United States has soared, boosted by a demand for English speaking scientists, technicians, engineers, doctors and other professionals. When the quota on Indian immigration was eliminated in the 1960s, it resulted in exponential growth in the number of Indian immigrants. This new wave of immigration, which is still continuing, contains Indians from varied professions and occupations. These Indian immigrants to the U.S. have now emerged as one of the most influential ethnic communities, economically, professionally and socially. From farmers in California, high-tech engineers and managers in major corporations, physicians in prestigious hospitals throughout the country, scientists in advanced laboratories, students and academics in internationally renowned universities, hotel owners and managers, and computer scientists and entrepreneurs in the info-tech fields, Indian Americans represent one of the most visible and advanced communities in the country. Amazingly, they have done most of this in only one generation from 1960s to present.

In the similar way the number of Indian immigrants is increasing to the countries like Canada, Australia, South East Asian countries, the Middle East and the European countries. These diverse
“Locating the site has become a narcissistic pre-occupation with the post-colonial writer, especially the post-colonial immigrant writer. Exiled by choice or circumstance, the immigrant finds himself displaced from his roots, his antecedent, and his center. He sheds his monolithic national and regional identity and becomes a repository of dualities and multiplicities. His position as the outsider in the country of his adoption leads him to create a distinct geographical and textual space.”

The literary writings form a very powerful means for the immigrant writers to express their love-hate relationship towards their country of adoption, their awareness of cultural disparity, their emotional integration with their homeland and the consequent identity crisis. They present the picture of harsh realities, which are in contrast to the high expectations prior to their migration. Their writings present the realization of a writer that the movement from one culture to another may be a liberating experience or may lead to instability which at some point defines the expatriate self.

“The geographical dislocation raises several questions with respect to the poetics of exile, the nature of expatriate writing, the writer’s relationship to his culture and his work, the specifics which govern identity construction and the concept of decentering. Is it, at one level, a move out of the expatriates dilemma of avoiding a schizophrenic split, of being pulled in two contradictory directions, and if so, does it promise release or does it inscribe a new kind of meaning?”

The diasporic writers face a multicultural situation which may be combined with a personal anguish due to discrimination or a sense of rootlessness, if rejected by the host culture. 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. Expatriate writers like Naipaul have also been concerned with the process of being uprooted and dislocated through their travel and travelogues. These writers, as they move from one culture to another need to locate themselves afresh in relation to the new culture. And hence there is a need to realize the significance of the cultural encounter expressed in diasporic writings. These cultural encounters enable the diasporic writings to generate a theory and define positions, as they construct a new identity which negotiates boundaries and confines and relates to different temporal and spatial metaphors.

6. A Brief Survey of the Writings of Indian Expatriates / Migrants:

In recent years, a great body of fiction, written by writers of Indian origin spread across the world, has emerged on the world literary scene. A large number of fiction written by these diasporic writers have brought credit to Indian English fiction as a distinctive force. These expatriate writers express longing for their motherland and even portray the cultural conflict that has arisen due to their settlement in the foreign land. Their writings present a picture of India depicted from a point of view which is partially Indian and to some extent affected by the foreign culture. Though these writers face the cultural conflict and identity crisis, their position as an expatriate enables them to portray an objective picture of their mother land, India. They perform the role both of refugee and ambassador and
possess a good number of stories to tell. In this regard Bharati Mukherjee says,

"We immigrants have fascinating tales to relate. Many of us have lived in newly independent or emerging countries which are placed by civil and religious conflicts ------. When we uproot ourselves from these countries and come here either by choice or out of necessity, we suddenly must absorb 200 years of America history and learn to adapt to American Society". (17)

This view of Mukherjee not merely highlights the necessity of adaptability on the part of the immigrants, but even hints at the potentiality of various diasporic experiences as the source of literary creations. Writings of Indian diaspora constitutes a major segment of the contemporary literature in English. It provides insight into the experiences of the Indians living across the world. They are many a time called as the writers living on the margins of two societies.

It has already been acknowledged that the Indian diaspora is the most varied one, representing various regions, religions and castes. Even the diasporic writing has a variety in itself. In comparison to other genre, the Indian diasporic fiction has been flourishing at a tremendous speed, but we even have claims of writers like Nirad Choudhari, Salman Rushdie, A.K. Ramanujan, R. Parthasarathy and Uma Parameswaran in the field of autobiography, Essay and poetry. In must be admitted that the crisis of identity is not equally intense in all the diasporic writers. In some cases there is not at all any such crisis. Some writers of Indian diaspora present their bonds with home country even after their long stay on foreign land. This hints at the writers deep rooted Indian consciousness. Though these writers deny
any identity crisis due to migration, their borrowing the thematic concerns from the cultural, social, political and even mythological matters of the native country indicates their intrinsic attachment to the ‘home’. Nirad Choudhari is one such writer. His *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* is more of a national than personal history, seen from a non-conformist stand point. The book is deeply rooted in the culture and mythology of India, showing the relation between the writer and his mother country. Being affected by the Western thinking, his stand point seems to be partial, as it sounds a bit anti-Indian, especially in his criticism of Hindu culture. His depiction of India and its people is similar to that of Naipaul’s. The unique trait of Choudhari’s critique is that he represents India as static and moribund culture. Though less cited here for the identity crisis, Choudhari’s example shows how a migrated writer is benifited by his position, as he can look at his native country and its culture from a detached and critical standpoint.

One of the highly controversial figures of world literary scene is Salman Rushdie. His narratives of nation seem to be influenced and shaped by “the physical fact of (his) discontinuity, of his present being in a different place from his past” (18). Rushdie was born in Bombay in 1947, the year of Indian Independence from British colonial rule. While his family subsequently moved to Karachi in Pakistan, he settled in England, having been sent there to study in 1961. In early 2000, Rushdie moved to New York City, where he continues to reside. Indeed the condition of diaspora which is predicated on “the very experience of uprooting, disjunctive and metamorphosis” (19) is the process by which Rushdie’s identity as a
writer has been produced. His *Imaginary Homelands* is the collection of essays, reviews and interviews brought together, wherein “the productive ambivalence of the location ‘in- between’ cultures and nations are aestheticized into a new cultural politics” (20). “[H]owever ambiguous and shifting this may be”, Rushdie argues, “it is not an infertile territory for a writer to occupy” (21). This view of Rushdie is significant enough to focus on the creative necessity of a diasporic writer. Rushdie recognizes that his whole self is already split into the English part and the Indian part, thus showing the conception of his national identity as fragmentary. He describes himself as an Indian writer in English and his identity as being “made up of bits and fragments from here, there” (22).

Rushdie has also been known as ‘homeless’ by choice, the epithet which he shares with A.K. Ramanujan. The most dominating figure of Indian English Poetry, Ramanujan spent the creative years of his life in the U.S. His literary creations form good examples of diasporic Indian poetry, wherein one notices the poet’s longing for his own culture and ethnic roots. In spite of being in the West for a long time, he did not offer any poetic evidence of his identification with the foreign environment and the milieu there. Instead his poetry points to his efforts to preserve his Indian and in particular ‘Hindu’ identity. This he did by writing about his family relations, and a few Hindu beliefs. His evocation of his past through poetry makes one realize his feelings of expatriations. The images he presents in his poetry are mostly Indians; Indian scene, its Temples, river, houses, raining, city life, beliefs, even Indian songs and its beggars. All of these indicate
his inability to bridge the gaps between the foreign culture and the
culture of his own, to come to terms with the atmosphere of the U.S.

Similar to Ramanujan, another important Indian English poet,
writing about cross-cultural conflicts and alienation in a foreign
country, is R. Parthasarathy. His only poetic creation, *Rough Passage*
dwells upon the problems of Indian writers learning a foreign
language leading subsequently to the loss of identity due to alienation
from one's native culture. In *Rough Passage*, Parthasarathy is
concerned with problems arising from the use of English and his
aspirations to be an English poet. This resulted in his being uprooted
and alienated from Tamil culture. Conscious of the fact that as a
writer he is not the product of the English culture, Parthasarathy
actually feels a loss of his identity. He has also expressed the
humiliating experiences or racial ignominy and the constant
consciousness of being a segregated exile in the foreign land or even
in one's own country. The 'Exile' section of *Rough Passage* is much
about alienation. It explores the impact of the West on India in terms
of foreign settings and the poet's personal development. His
disillusionment in England raises a consciousness of his being an
Indian.

"There is something to be said for exile
You learn roots are deep"(23)

More than the difficulty of cultural integration, the
discrimination and humiliation of him at the hands of native British
people is disappointing. He develops disgust towards English life. He
also disgusts English people for their being proud of British Empire. He exposes the partiality and empty morality of Britisher in their insisting on freedom for themselves and slavery for others. This reminds the poet of his own country and native language. He feels that his roots lay very deep in his native Tamil culture. He learns that,

"-----Language is a tree, loses colour under another sky" (24)

The diasporic writings have flourished rather speedily, in the fertile soil of fiction, which offers the writer larger space and extra scope to express feelings of alienation, expatriation or assimilation in the foreign country. Even a cursory glance at the Indian fiction in English, makes one realize that most of the fiction writers either live or have lived abroad. While Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Chandra, Meena Alexander, Ruth Prawar Jhabvala, Jhumpa Lahiri, Gita Mehetia, Bharati Mukherjee, Vikram Seth, Shashi Tharoor live in the U.S. the writers like Amit Chaudhari, Kamala Markandaya, Suniti Namjoshi are expressing their diasporic feelings from England. Ashis Gupta, Rohinton Mistry and Uma Parameshwaran are living in Canada. It highlights the fact that most of the Indian fiction in English today is written by those who possess an expatriate sensibility. Such a sensibility certainly affects their creative power and guides their thematic choice as well. The endeavour to write a novel about one’s native country on the basis of memory has been an irresistible challenge and a compelling necessity for a number of exiled or immigrant writers, who have been cut off from their ethnic roots. Their backward glance at home conceals their desire for their lost
home and their criticism of the reality of home reaffirms their attachment though in an inverted manner.

In his attempt to look at the relationship of the expatriate to his home country, Ashis Gupta, the novelist of *Dying Traditions* realizes that one never leaves one’s own country behind; yet one cannot live in the past. For him the fractured self is a reality. His *Dying Tradition* located in India but reaching out to Bangladesh, America and to the pre partition India, works simultaneously at several levels historical, personal, cynical. Ashis Gupta views himself in the inevitable position of an expatriate.

“Today, I live in Canada, having left my home in Calcutta, not fifty, but a little more than twenty five years ago. I honestly do not know if I am any more ‘independent’ today that I would have been had I never left India in 1971. Regardless of whether one considers me a ‘writer’ or not, I suppose I carry the brand name ‘expatriate’. It was as an expatriate writer that I was asked to articulate some thought”.

Gupta is not in the least hesitant when he articulates the complexity that lies within his heart.

“---- My family and I enjoy an easy life, have friends in all segments of North American life, and return to India very often. But my fugitive Indian personality haunts me incessantly”.

Amitav Ghose, in his *The Glass Palace* reconstructs the experiences of Indian immigrant labours. He turns to India for mythologising of history.
Similarly, Canada based, Indian (Parsi) writer, Rohinton Mistry’s literary voyage continues to bring him to India. In his latest novel, *A Fine Balance*, which is reminiscent of his earlier works *Tales from Firozsha Baag* and *Such a Long Journey*, he again tries to revision the history of his homeland, his community and family and reveals his diasporic consciousness. The book forms a nostalgic perspective of the political and social chaos underlying India’s colonial and post colonial experiences. Together all these expatriate writers present the expatriate vision with the intensity of nostalgia and play of memory.

One of the important aspects of the diasporic writing is its gender factor. The diasporic experience is also a gender experience when it comes to the writings of Indian women abroad; say Meena Alexander, Panna Naik, Malati Rao, Sudha Chandola, Sujata Bhatt, Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, Suniti Namjoshi, Jhumpa Lahiri. They have been articulate enough in narrating the complexities of the life of immigrants, the life which is influenced by the fact of their gender. They can dive deep in the unconscious and subconscious psyche of both male and female expatriates and reveal their feelings towards their native land. Their depiction of characters and situation does not remain merely one sided because apart from a detailed picture of factual, external life they give the inside of the characters exposing their emotional complexity. One finds the identity crisis and cultural conflicts stated more explicitly in the writings of women than that of men.
Settled in New York City, Meena Alexander, an immigrant Syrian-Christian-Indian writer, teaches English and creative writing at Hunter College, New York. Her frequent visits to Kerala, her grand patents home, involved her passionately with issues like immigration, ethnicity, culture, and race. Her novel *Manhattan Music* focuses on the pain and violence of dislocation. The consciousness of her being a foreigner in America is stated in these lines;

“In India, no one would ask me if I were Asian-American or Asian. Here we are part of minority and the vision of being ‘unsolved’ comes into our consciousness. It is from this consciousness that I create my work of art”. (27)

The same pain and violence of dislocation is the subterranean motif in her first novel *Nampally Road*, where the protagonist suffers from dislocation and comes back to India to have continuity with what she was.

Alexander regards that both dislocation and relocation are certainly marked by violence, affecting equally the artist and the artistic process. Her autobiographical work *Fault Lines* epitomizes a quest, wherein the writer plants herself in her early days in Kerala, recounting events from distant childhood, the source of her beginnings. History, memory and myth interact as she recreates strongly felt images of her childhood in Kerala. The painful confusion of continuos dislocation is sharpened by the experience of racial hatred and colonization. The novel *Manhattan Music* problematizes the issue of dislocation, its pain and violence and the possibility of relocation and a partial resolution of the immigrant dilemma towards
the end. The novel is the story of Sandhya, a Syrian Christian Malayali immigrant in New York. It examines the repercussions of migration, the disruption of certitudes and the continual intrusion of memory. All these elements in the novel create and recreate, construct and reconstruct a new and unblemished Sandhya. Through dislocation physical and psychological, through frangmentation and a fractured psyche, Sandhya finally has an identity which is not totally fragmented or fractured but a reconstructed whole and towards the end of the novel she is almost relocated.

Commenting on Meena Alexander's inhabiting multiple spaces at the same time, Neerja Chand says:

"Alexander expresses this dilemma powerfully in a deeply felt 'aesthetics of dislocation' that places her protagonist as well as the artist herself both within ancestral history and in an immigrant relocation in the U.S.A. simultaneously. In doing so, she successfully emerges as a powerful writer whose sensibility is enriched by the simultaneity of geography which involves the possibilities living here in body and else where in mind and imagination, inhibiting multiple space at the same time" (28)

This highlights the newly emerging concept in regard with diaspora — multiple identities, the acknowledgment of having identities more than one, locating a habitat in more than one place and admitting the multiculturalism.

It has already been stated that migratory problems and experiences vary from person to person according to their efforts of adjustment. One of the novels that best illustrates it is Anita Desai's *Bye Bye Black Bird*. The novel presents the change that occurs in the
attitude of an immigrant towards the homeland and the adopted country. Moreover it also delineates the picture of discriminatory treatment that the immigrants receive in the foreign land. The novel deals with the migration of the Indians to England and the disillusionment that follows it. Desai effectively handles the theme of identity crisis, exposing the vanity of the immigrants, exploitation of the job seekers, nostalgia that follows immigration and a variety of other issues.

When the novel opens, we are introduced to Dev, who comes to England to pursue his studies but as the plot develops we find him disillusioned in his vision of London. The immigrants are not at all happy with their lives in England. Through him the novelist exposes the discriminating attitude of English people towards Indians in London. This attitude becomes amply clear when Dev is disqualified in an interview only because he is not a Christian.

"Not a Catholic? ----- I am sorry, Dear me, I ought to have mentioned it at once------ we simply must have a catholic or at least a high church man. Its public relations----- I’m afraid it wouldn’t do to have a Hindu gentleman in this job". (29)

This discriminatory behavior of the natives develops in him disgust even for English language and its literature. In London Dev undergoes various experiences and cultural shocks. His self-consciousness makes him aware of the disparity between the cultures of India and England. In this big city he becomes much conscious about his identity as an Indian. He finds himself alienated and become restless and rootless as well. He cannot pocket the insults and
is perturbed when he is called a ‘wog’. He feels unwelcome and unwanted there.

Dev is not the only character who faces this identity crisis. Adit, who appears as a romantic admirer of England and his wife, Sarah also face the same problem. Through them the novelist shows how the immigrants undergo changes during their stay. Some hide their love for their own country under the pretence of appropriation in the foreign land and its culture. But at a certain time their love and longing for their motherland explode and find themselves surfaced, shadowing every other thing. In contrast some immigrants see themselves changing in their attitudes towards the foreign culture. Their initial hatred and nostalgia is converted into desire for settlement in that culture. In *Bye Bye Black Bird* we find in the beginning, Adit loving everything that is English. When Dev finds faults with English life, for Adit Indian means everything that is bad. Adit finds it difficult to notice drawbacks in the English system. But in the course of the novel, the same Adit, who regards himself as an ambassador from India finds a sudden love and longing for India. We find that his attachment or craving for India is not sudden but it was there all the while. The sudden outbreak of Adit puzzles his wife Sarah. He begins to talk about everything Indian, of the pigeons that were kept on the roof top, of the Puja seasons in Calcutta and other Indian things. Sarah wonders;

“----how he had kept this amount of yearning shut up and enclosed inside him for so long releasing it now like a dam that releases its water when it is full of bursting”(30)
This shows how the roots are deep and strong in case of some immigrants. But Dev shows another category of immigrants, who determine to settle in the foreign culture even in adverse circumstances. The insulting experiences develop in Dev hatred towards the English people and he determines to conquer them as they once conquered India. He begins to develop his liking for the foreign land and decides to stay in England. He is determined to seek, discover and win the England of his dreams. At the end of the novel we find him reconciling to his lot in England. His identity crisis seems to be settled. Desai very skillfully depicts the conflicting elements in the mentality of the two characters, Dev and Adit, thus presenting the diasporic experiences and identity crisis from different perspectives.

Another significant woman writer, writing of the Indian diaspora, is Jhumpa Lahiri, who is born and brought up not in India but abroad. She was born in London, of Bengali parents and grew up in Rhode Island in the U.S. Naturally her connections with India may be through her parents, and grand-parents. So her knowledge of India is bound to be confined to the stories from her grandparents, parents, friends, books and newspaper. In this regard, the view of K. Mukherjee is very considerable. K. Mukherjee observes that to the authors like Naipaul and Jhumpa Lahiri India would appear

"----- full of wonders, sometimes full of beggars. But the writers who live outside India and confidently write or comment on the economic, social, political and religious scenario may appear very often exaggerating or under rating. They are liable to lack honesty and authenticity which a writer should possess" (31)
But in the very next line A.K. Mukherjee admits that Jhumpa Lahiri is honest and authentic to her experiences. She writes about the Indians who have settled either in the U.S. or England and does not comment on something that she is not well versed in. The Indians who have settled abroad feel themselves exiled, as they are unable to cut off completely their umbilical chords that still bind them in their emotional crisis.

*Interpreter of Maladies*, a collection of nine stories, is a maiden venture of Jhumpa Lahiri. In her stories she presents various maladies of the Indians abroad. She records the predicament of the Indians when their cultural beliefs clash with the Western culture. She makes us aware of the initial hurdles an immigrant faces in an attempt to settle in the new country, to adjust and after sometime trying to be more native than the natives. Her stories attempt to depict the fear and anxiety that remains with the migrants despite their best efforts to beat the natives in dress, gesture and posture. All the time there is a feeling of being alienated. It is primarily so because the migrant cannot cut off the sweet silken bond that ties him to the land of his origin or that of his parents. Jhumpa Lahiri is concerned with the maladies of migrants and tries to be an interpreter. We find that in her short stories she has portrayed some of the problems engendered by the experiences of migration and diaspora such as displacement, rootlessness, fragmentation, discrimination, marginalization and crisis of identity. She negotiates the dilemmas of the cultural spaces lying across the continents with a master’s touch. Though endowed with a distinct universal appeal, her stories do bring out rather successfully the predicament of the Indians who are trapped between and across
two cultures, one inherited and left behind and the other encountered but not completely assimilated. She has also shown the way to go beyond these feelings and confusions and to find new ways of adaptation and thinking as per the new environment and new demands especially through her last story “The Third and Final Continent”.

Most of the writers noted above are the first generation immigrants, whose views on their motherland are based on their own, first hand experiences. V. S. Naipaul is a writer whose position as a diasporic writer is a unique one; born of Indian parents on the West Indian Island, Trinidad and presently living in London as an exile. His knowledge of India the land of his ancestors, is a second hand knowledge, got from his parents, grandparents, books and other sources. He is third generation diasporic writer whose grandparents had migrated to Trinidad as indentured labourers. Although born and brought up in Trinidad, he does not seem to be attached to the West Indian land in any way. It is India that matters him more than Trinidad. The childhood impressions of Indian background are more lasting than the impressions of Trinidadian society. Still he is far from the land of his ancestors. Moreover his relationship with India is a controversial issue. Although he acknowledges the impact of India on his sensibility, he looks at it always from a foreigner’s standpoint. His choice for the present comparative study is made because of this unique position he occupies as the writer of Indian diaspora.

On the other hand the choice of Bharati Mukherjee for this study is determined by the more than one factors related to her. While Naipaul is a third generation migrant, Bharati Mukherjee is a first generation migrant. This position of her provides a different
perspective to the study of the problems of identity among immigrants. At the same time her choice enables us to analyse the role of gender in the settlement of the immigrants in a foreign land. Moreover her journey from India to the U.S.A. via Canada has given her the experiences of three different countries, thus broadening her vision as a diasporic writer. Her first three novels solely deal with the theme of geographical displacement and its resulting effects on the personality of the immigrants. Her novels present the migratory movements in its positive as well as negative aspects. In fact her novels depict a journey from alienation to assimilation, from pessimism to optimism, from the presentation of split identity to the recognition of fluid identity.

A comparative study of Mukherjee and Naipaul may serve more than one purpose. Though the problem they deal with is the same one, the position they occupy as the diasporic writers, the perspective from which they look at it and the way they deal with it are different. It is the study of those who have voluntarily left behind the country of their own and of those who found themselves in a foreign culture as a matter of their fate. It helps us to see how migration may lead either to settlement after initial hazardous experiences or to permanent displacement. This comparative study may also enable us to see how gender factor plays a significant role in the migratory experiences.

Among the following chapters, the second chapter studies the fiction and travelogues of Naipaul in order to bring out his crisis of identity and to focus on his changing stance on his Indian background. The third chapter traces the journey of Bharati Mukherjee from what
she perceives to be expatriation to immigration. It concentrates on her first three novels, namely *The Tiger’s Daughter*, *Wife* and *Jasmine*. A comparative study of the perspectives and position of these two writers is made in the fourth chapter of the thesis, thus enabling us to examine diasporic problems on a broad basis.

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