Chapter 3
The Phase of Immigration
CHAPTER – III

The Phase of Immigration

Mukherjee, through her literary fiction, tries to recreate the sense of the past and believes that she is free to share her inner vision with the readers. Her subject matter tries to cover the whole range of human experience and imagination. She portrays true-to-life characters and events and pictures the true shadow of her characters.

Mukherjee’s creativity is sparked off by the milieu around her. She, on the initial step in creativity, internalizes the external world. Having experienced this stage of creativity, the creative force undergoes the process of externalizing the internalized world. This externalization of the world is conditioned by the psychology formed by physiological, social, environmental, legal, religious, cultural, political, and economic experiences and forces.

The creative journey of Bharati Mukherjee moved towards the phase of immigration from expatriation, when her later novels had been published. From the sublime traditional taboos of Indian life, Mukherjee’s later protagonists had traveled a long distance and gained their confidence to face any kind of challenges in their
life. The days in Canada are associated with Expatriation and whereas the movement to America is experienced as immigration. During her odyssey as a writer for almost three decades, her creative sensibility has undergone many changes.

There has been an ongoing quest from expatriation to immigration in her writings. The expatriate dwells on his 'ex' status of the past, while the immigrant celebrates his present status in the new country. This widespread phenomenon is used by many expatriate writers when they become the immigrants of the living country.

For the expatriate expression, V.S Naipaul was her model and when she experienced the immigrant's strength, she considered Bernard Malamud as her model as Kumar, Nagendra quotes Mukherjee:

Like Malamud, I write about a minority community which escapes the ghetto and adapts itself to the patterns of the dominant American culture. Like Malamud's, my work seems to find quite naturally a moral center. Isaac Babel is another author who is a literary ancestor for me ... but Malamud most of all
speaks to me as a writer and I admire his work a great deal. (20)

Like Mukherjee, her characters also gain the valour and confidence to face the world and they re-shape their lives. She considers herself as the storehouse and exemplar of the experiences rendered by immigration. She firmly believed that immigrants are confident, poised and energetic. Luo, Shao-Pin quoted Edward Said in the Essay about Exile:

… seeing ‘the entire world as a foreign land’ makes possible originality of vision. Most people are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home; exiles are aware of at-least two, and this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions, an awareness that is contrapuntal. (78)

After the racial disturbances in Canada, Mukherjee’s stay in USA is considered as ‘willing immigrant’ writer and to assume a new identity in the USA. Mukherjee is always firm in stating that she is different from other writers. Dimri, Jaiwanti quotes Mukherjee’s statement:
I am very different from other non-European writers in saying that, to me the loss of old culture is exciting. Is exhilarating. Is a plus rather a minus. Just describing the extraordinary wealth and comfort that was natural part of my childhood and which I would have inherited in whatever damaged ways, if I had stayed on in India – made me realize that I was thrilled to have the opportunity to give up, to assume a new identity. That kind of Third World hierarchy where your opportunities are closed by caste, gender, or family was horrendous to me. (71)

The immigrant writers understand the intricacies of power, its methods of manipulation, and try to reshape their lives and give a new life to the Characters. Mukherjee also introduces the character Jasmine in her novel *Jasmine* in the phase of immigration and introduces the concept of ‘fluid identities’. Jasmine is a young Indian woman in the U.S. who, trying to adapt the American way of life in order to survive changes identities several times. Her marriage to a young Indian in their hometown ends abruptly when he is killed in a bombing. Jasmine flees India
and after an odyssey, arrives in Florida, on a small boat and enters into the U.S as an illegal immigrant.

Her first stay in America with other illegal Aliens in a disused Motel is a bad experience and she kills the Captain of the ship after he has raped her. Jasmine killing a Half-face is a kind of self-assertion. After this incident, she starts her journey afresh and the first person she encounters is Lillian Gordon, a kind Quaker lady who is committed to help the illegal immigrants. After being given some basic introduction to the U.S society, she sets out to look for a fatherly friend of her dead husband's who is said to be working as a University Professor. From that point of time, Jasmine experiences many difficulties. This is the first immigrant experience.

Disillusioned by this experience, Jasmine wonders on and on and as a true immigrant she is tossed between a desire for remembering her past and the present to forget it. It is like nausea and a kind of transformation.

The next stop Jasmine gets down is an apartment on Claremont Avenue, Manhattan. She joins Taylor & Wylie Hayes as a caregiver to their adopted daughter Duff. She has been
transformed as Jase by them and experiences the best days in her life and she appreciates the humanity of Taylor as:

I mean, I fell in Love with what he represented to me, a Professor who served biscuits to a servant, smiled at her, and admitted her to the broad democracy of his joking, even when she didn't understand it. (Jasmine, 167)

Jasmine’s adjustments and achievements of her life form and re-form only to explode again. She embraces the fluidity and permeability and enters one of the ‘archipelagos of ghettos’ (Jasmine, 40). She feels that it is the cocoon of security, safety and confidence. But it is short lived. When she comes to know about Wylie’s decision to leave Taylor, she feels disgusted and again faces a bitter experience and mourns:

In America, nothing lasts. I can say that now and it doesn’t shock me, but I think it was the hardest lesson of all for me to learn. We arrive so eager to learn, to adjust, to participate, only to find the monuments are plastic, agreements are annulled. Nothing is forever,
nothing is so terrible or so wonderful, that it won't disintegrate. *(Jasmine, 181)*

However, life with them sinks deeper and the image of America seems to be a wonderland for Jasmine. The renamed Jase admits her change:

But Jyoti was now a Sati-Goddess; she had burned herself in a trash-can-funeral pyre behind a boarded-up motel in Florida. Jasmine lived for the future, for Vijh & wife. Jase went to movies and lived for today. *(176)*

Her positive outlook made her to believe that she had landed but her destination is not yet reached. She absorbs the alien culture confidently and comes out of alienation. This change has been noted by Rao. P. Mallikarjuna:

The sartorial changes we notice in her are symptomatic of her inner stage. She gets more Americanized and feels 'rooted'. She becomes from a diffident alien with forged documents into an adventurous Jase. *(44)*
She flees from New York to Iowa because of the hovering presence of death in the form of Sukhwinder, the assassin of her husband. She runs for the safety of Taylor & Duff and it is not an escapism. Each stage of her journey brings a new identity with it, she is molded by the people she encounters and her desire for assimilation is gradually realized through the relationships she develops. When Jasmine becomes Jane, she has emerged as a stronger woman, with a greater understanding of her needs and desires. In Iowa, mother Ripple Meyer got her the job in the bank of her sons as a teller girl. Soon she becomes the wife of Bud without marrying him and this gives her a new identity and fate plays a role as problem-solving device. She herself comments:

I have had a husband for each of the women I have been. Prakash for Jasmine, Taylor for Jase, Bud for Jane. Half-face for Kali. (197)

Jane likes Iowa because it is very much like Hasnapur and she becomes Bud’s Asian wife and mother of his adopted son Du, a Vietnamese boy. With her kind composure, she makes everyone to like her and soon she is free like an American and becomes a part of it. Kumar, Nagendra examines:
An immigrant’s life is in fact a series of incarnations. She lives through several lives in a single life time. This truth explains the condition of Bharati Mukherjee as well as that of Jasmine. As Mukherjee confides in one of her interviews “I have been murdered and reborn at-least three times, the very correct young women I was trained to be, and was very happy being, is very different from the politicized, shrill, civil rights activist I was in Canada, and from the urgent writer that I have become in the last few years in the United States. (116)

As Du’s transformation is hyphenated Vietnamese-American, he continues to have contacts with other Vietnamese. Due to this, Du leaves them and joins his sister. This sudden departure shatters them and she thinks that losing Du is a miscarriage. At this moment Taylor and Duff came to take her to California where the new world, the promise of America, is eagerly awaiting her. She never feels guilty about it and says that:

It isn’t guilt that I feel, it’s relief. I realize I have already stopped thinking of myself as Jane. Adventure, risk,
transformation: the frontier is pushing indoors through uncaulked windows. (240).

Jasmine always believed that she is a caregiver, recipe giver, and preserver who is ready to sacrifice her own happiness and dreams. Even though she shuttles between different identities, a tenacious Indianness is there within and the memories of India haunt her often. As Arul Chothy, Vanitha remarks:

Mukherjee attempts to capture the conditions inherent in being a refugee, an immigrant and an American in today's world-one where the transitoriness of all experience makes spiritual wanderers of us all. No one is spared. But the refugee or third world immigrant, Mukherjee makes clear, is heir to a legacy more bitterly than most. (92)

Jasmine's journey motif can be compared to Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Like Marlow, Jasmine's journey crosses the Ocean in search of a new and mysterious land, but for a very unique reason. Leaving Jyoti behind, Jasmine travels a long and indirect route to Florida where she intends to throw
herself into a funeral pyre in the custom of a traditional Indian widow. Marlow and Jasmine feel more alienated from the world and the people around them. Viewing the coastline of Africa for the first time, Marlow describes it as an enigma and the journey further brings forth greater understanding. For Jasmine, her westward journey becomes the catalyst for many new transformations. Both their journeys are exemplary of the challenges people face in life. Marlow returns to Europe as a changed man and Jasmine leaves the antiquated society of India for the United States. Their journey reflects the fluid and unpredictable nature of our existence and ends with pride and confidence within the self.

The immigrant writers’ ‘fluid set of identities’ of the third World Literature, gives the artists the ability to enter into the lives, over and across the country and see the psychological transformation, self-reinvention and tolerance into greater extents. In the Hollywood land, this charmed landscape, self-hood and identity of the immigrant are mystified; most of the immigrants have an impossible negotiation between destiny and
opportunity, placement and displacement, and assimilation and dissimilation.

Mukherjee had made important contributions to the multi-ethnic literary quilt of the United States. As a writer, she has moved from one geographical and cultural space to another, from India to the American continent. Her writings speak of the inevitable changes involved in such transitions. There is a revisioning of ideas and concepts which belong to two different worlds separated by vast oceanic distances.

In her later novels, Mukherjee focuses on multicultural encounters that take place in America. The protagonists differ from those of her early novels. They are not necessarily South Asian, but new arrivals in the United States. Her novel The Holder of The World moves through space and time, between India and the U.S.A., and between historical and contemporary times of Seventeenth Century with a flow of romantic relationship across different socio-cultural barriers.

Journey motif, transformation, and migration had been extended in her later novels also. The Holder of The World introduces a foreign protagonist Hannah Easton, a white puritan
woman from Salem, Massachusetts Bay Colony who makes a journey to the exotic Coromandel shores in the late Seventeenth Century and finally becomes the mistress of an Indian monarch, Rajah Jadhav Singh. The inspiration behind this incredible story was an ordinary incident on an ordinary day. Shakuntala Bharvani quotes Mukherjee’s words:

The novel got started because I was at an auction of Sotheby in New York.... whatever money my husband and I save is spent on Indian miniature painting and my aesthetics for the novel evolves out of my love for Indian miniature painting. (188)

The miniature was titled 'A European woman in Aurangazeb’s Court’ and this Caucasian woman in full Mughal dress was the dream girl of Mukherjee and she herself states that:

I suddenly realized that I was looking at a woman who three hundred years back had taken a lot of risks, had transformed herself. (188)
So this motivated Mukherjee to change the enroute of her protagonists and now the journey had started from the West to East.

The story has two main voices, one is Beigh Masters and another is Hannah Easton. Beigh Masters, a modern-day American woman, who does 'assets research', reads Auctions and Acquisitions and ferrets around for antiques and precious stones, both as a hobby and for the money. Her lover is Venn Iyer, a South Indian computer specialist who animates information. She herself describes her job as, 'uniting people and possessions: it's like matching orphaned socks, through time' (HW, 5). She again states her intention as:

I live in three time zones simultaneously, and I don’t mean Eastern, Central and Pacific. I mean the past, present and the future. (HW, 5)

She came to know about a large gem acquired by a small museum situated between Salem and Marblehead. She tries to locate the most perfect diamond in the world, 'The Emperor's Tear'. In this hunt, she got passionate with Hannah’s life more than the diamond itself. She states:
It isn’t the gem that interests me. It’s the inscription and the provenance. Anything having to do with Mughal India gets my attention. Anything about the Salem Bibi, precious-as-pearl, feeds me. (5)

Immigration and Travel takes up a major role in the later novels of Bharati Mukherjee. The Third World passengers migrating with their dreams to U.S. have increased and the displacement arises with the link between first and Third worlds. It is the dream of the people to have better life, liberty, and happiness. In this juncture, Mukherjee has taken a diversion and her protagonists are migrating from West to East in quest of identity, transformation, and translation.

_The Holder of The World_ is the literal translation of Alamgir, a name for the Mughal emperor, Aurangzeb. Beigh, being one of the narrators, with the help of Venn, animates information which is beyond virtual reality and recreates the world. Beigh and Venn are the dealers of the Antiques and they claim “the past presents itself to us, always, some how simplified” (6).
The Travel motif plays a great role with the blend of western is revealed in the words of Venn as:

Every time-traveler will create a different reality - just as we all do now. No two travelers will be able to retrieve the same reality, or even a fraction of the available realities. History's a big savings bank, says Venn, we can all make infinite reality withdrawals. (6)

This time travel helps Beigh to disentangle the mystery of 'The Emperor's Tear.' She travels to various places and collects information from museums, East-India company documents, engravings, trade records, journals, pictures, paintings and auction sales. Venn's computer information about Salem Bibi, otherwise named as Hannah Easton, makes Beigh Masters to believe that she had even got hold of 'Emperor's Tear', the precious jewel that Aurangzeb always carried in his palm.

Mukherjee presents the different world of America and India, as a clash of value systems of the past Puritan. These colliding worlds must have staggered each other when they met in trade and commerce, and Hannah must have traveled to those utmost
shores from Salem to the Coromandel coast of India, along with her sea-faring husband.

She is a Puritan woman of the seventeenth century and she is quoted by Mukherjee as:

... Hannah is a person undreamed of in Puritan society... she is from a different time, the first person, let alone the first woman, to have had these thoughts, and this experience, to have been formed in this particular crucible. (59)

The detailed description of the settlement and adventures of the musters on the Ellis Island, make Beigh claim that Hannah is related to her in the distant family past. She visits the museums of Maritime Trade in Boston and finds that the old items collected from those Mughal times have clashed with some other items from the Puritan past. Seeing this she wonders:

what must these worlds have thought, colliding with each other? How mutually staggered they must have been; one wonders which side first thought the other one mad. (12)
When Beigh examines the inscription in the museum and the light is thrown upon the Western and Eastern culture, it tells about the Asian and his love for gold as it is put in by the author:

Our men wore animal skins or jerkins of crude muslin and our women's virtue was guarded by bonnets and caps and full skirts. Those Indian guys wore earrings and dresses and necklaces. When they ran out of space on their bodies they punched holes in their wives' noses to hang more gold and pearl chains. (12-13).

Beigh gives the historical background of Hannah. East India Company ledger books, letters, books, papers in the India office in White Hall provides plenty of information about Hannah's ancestors. She discovers that Edward is Hannah's father who was a clerk for Reverend Joseph Rowlandson, Lancaster's first minister. Now she feels proud that she is forwarding in her discovery and states:

... I was, perhaps the only scholar in the world who had traced the work of an obscure clerk from London to Massachusetts. I could sense all the movements in
his life, his determination to remake his life before it was too late, to go west to the colony instead of east where surely his East India clerkship could have led him. (25)

Hannah's journey started in her childhood when she was orphaned by her mother in a Brookfield forest, going away with her American lover. Robert and Susannah Fitch, brought Hannah to Salem and she was brought up with love and affection. At the age of twelve, her extraordinary skill in crafting work brought her fame among the masses. Hannah was married to Gabriel Legge who is described as:

... the son of the owner of the Swallow, three hundred and twenty tons. He had come from London, but hailed from Ireland, to scout the colonies for investment, for new forms of imports and exports to the New Word to mark its granting stature, its great wealth and taste for finer things. (62)

Her next journey starts when he proposes her to accompany him to India where he works as a Junior Factor in the East India Company. Her first step in 1695 to the Coromandel
Coast has changed her life and the transmigration and transformation starts here. She felt that:

... She'd been transported to the other side of the world, but the transportation was more than mere ‘conveyancing’, as it was for Gabriel and the others. Many years later she called the trip, and her long residence in India, her ‘translation’. (104)

Even the narrator admires the pleasure Hannah had in India. She witnessed people worshiping many Gods, using many languages and about bibihood. The bibi, Hannah is told, has to be admitted as a natural consequence of married life for “accommodation was synonymous with expatriate femininity” (134). In one episode, she learns about the life of her servant, Bhagmati:

Bhagmati had had a vital life, distinct from waiting on firangi households. Why had Hannah not sensed that before? ... They are humans; they have a richer life than I do. (222)

Gabriel Legge becomes a pirate and Hannah is showered by the white society. Bhagmati becomes her only friend and well
wisher. Having forsaken Legge, Jadav Singh, the Raja of Devgad kept her at his court and Hannah now feels that:

She was in a totally Hindu world, Bhagmati seemed no longer a servant. Perhaps she, Hannah, was about to become one. (220)

The secret woman looked beautiful and fresh with her long hair and looked confident and humane. She becomes the inspiration to Hannah and she transforms herself into a confident lady after Legge has been forsaken. Now she turns herself as a transformed lady. Manju, Kak declares that:

It is Bhagmati, her Indian ayah, who brings to her the glimmerings of understanding of an aged civilization. (25)

When Hannah becomes a ‘bibi’ to Jadav Singh, the Raja of Devgad, a total transformation of personality takes place because she is satisfied with the encounter with Raja Jadav Singh. Mehta, Sandhya Rao states:

Jadav Singh offers Hannah a life of limitless possibilities, of passion with abandon and sensuous pleasures undreamt of in the English world. It is this
experience of being overwhelmed in love, of being possessed to the point of distraction that Hannah embraces with the totality of her being and little moral speculation. (194)

Hannah herself discovers the emotional and mental change when Raja serves as an agent of providence and now she is ready to sacrifice anything for his touch and the love they made. She wants to embrace this new world and alter herself as a true lover and a Hindu, ultimately, Hannah concludes that, “the survivor is the one who improvises, not follows, the rules” (HW 234).

After the death of Jadav Singh, Hannah has an encounter with Emperor Aurangazeb, who is the true Holder of the world. Even the title of the novel, *The Holder of The World*, is after the name of Aurangazeb who was also called Alamgir in Urdu and the world Holder in English. She goes to the war tent of Aurangazeb as a peace maker and slips out of the army camp with the world’s most precious diamond, the “Emperor’s Tear”, as Beigh Masters reports at the end of the novel in her experience of the virtual reality in the cyber space. Hannah tries her best to
dissuade the Mughal Emperor from the bloody war and she pleads:

If all is equal in the eye of Brahma as the Hindus say, if Allah is all-seeing and all-merciful as you say, then who has committed atrocities on the children, the women, the old people? Who has poisoned the hearts of men? (268)

Hannah was praised as a precious pearl by Alamgir and even Beigh Masters felicitates her character:

Wherever she stayed, I am convinced she would have changed history, for she was one of those extraordinary lives through which history runs a four-lane highway. (189)

The Travel motif adopted by Bharati Mukherjee reflects the cultural translation, the Self-fashioning and transformation in this life. Her characters are beyond the virtual reality and they recreate themselves to fit in the environments.

Mukherjee’s next novel *Leave It to Me* appeared in 1997. This novel continues the theme of immigration. It is the story of a child born to a hippie from California, on a love-and-peace flower
trip to India, and a ‘Guru’ who has the dubious distinction of leaving behind a trail of used and abused women, illegitimate children, rapes and murders across the Indian subcontinent. She was dropped near an orphanage, where she was called Faustian and later adopted by as Italian – American family, and christened as Debby Dimartino.

Despite the love and affection of her foster family, Debby grows up with the awareness of being different, the feeling that she is an unwanted obstacle in a world that hurtles on towards its mysterious destinations. She learns very quickly that if anyone inherits nothing, they are entitled to everything and she sets out in search of her part, her origins and the unknown “bio-parents” who had callously abandoned her. She knows only the barest facts about them- that her mother was a California flower child, her father an ‘Asian national’ serving life in an Indian prison for murder. When she came to know about it, instead of love and affection, only revenge remained in her.

Mukherjee’s visit to India in late 70’s, made her to know about the hippies who had been brutalized in India at Nepal, motivated her to write her novel Leave It to Me bringing Debby
Dimartino into limelight to find her bio-parents. She feels lucky to be an orphan and introduces herself as a fun-loving girl:

I was adopted into a decent Italian-American family in the Hudson valley. That is the upside of adoption. 

\textit{(LM, 10)}

Despite being brought up in mainstream America, Debby is aware of being an exotic misfit, especially after her brief affair with Frankie Fong, her boss at a telemarketing job. After her break up with Frankie, she ‘nukes’ his memory from her psyche, by setting fire to his Mansion, and then leaves west in search of her “bio-parents”. Her identities change and her journey starts with a new transformation as a recyclable product. She moves to America as Devi Dee with zero innocence. In her search for a biomom, she is led towards the Haight Ashbury, the notorious hangout of the hippies and drug peddlers of San Francisco. Devi Dee slips into the street culture and make friends with Stoopman and Loco Larry and other marginalized people. She feels secure and she depends on Haight’s philosophy and states:
The Haight's lesson was: Nothing in appearance or behaviour need cost a drop of dignity. I didn't look jobless and didn't feel homeless. (69)

When she explores the city, she takes life as a 'board game' and comments:

The car was room, and board came from neighborhood soup kitchens. Faustine and Debby were brought up Catholics, but Devi followed her nose: the Hare Krishnas, Buddhists, Baptists, Black Muslims and some religions that entwined love and profit, charity and sex, faith and ecology, space and time, combinations I hadn't stumbled upon upstate. (69)

Debby's experiences made her to take up a multi-cultural personal for herself. Her changed identities and search for her bio-mom, brings her in contact with Ham, a film producer and later her lover, with Fred Pointer, a detective she hires to find her mother, and also with Jews, who may actually be "bio-moms". Debby ends up working for Jess's escort agency, called Leave It to Me, which specializes in making "Star Authors".
Debby's search for her Bio-mom states the journey motif which has started with Jasmine and ends with Debby Devi.

Mukherjee's female characters are affected by a crisis of identity when they face a new world which is neither brave nor beautiful; when they are rootless in the new environment, they feel that they are under siege and have to be force-fed and defended. Many immigrants experience a growing insecurity in their hearts, a lack of assurance everywhere. Mukherjee focuses on the complicated tensions in the lives of her characters, with their varied backgrounds, ambitions and reactions; she draws a sensitive yet detached portrait of the trauma of displacement from the country of one's origin and of the painful search for a fresh personal and communal identity.

The post 1970 years saw a changing image of women. They came out of their cloistered existence to come forward and be counted. On the one hand, the Indian woman has been depicted as an embodiment of power-'shakthi'; on the other hand, she is described a second class human being. Indian women writers like Kamala Markandaya, Gita Meta, Anita Desai, Bharati
Mukherjee, Shobha De, Shashi Despande etc., capture the feelings, intellect, and emotions of the women.

Bharati Mukherjee’s novel *The Tiger’s Daughter, Wife, Jasmine, The Holder of The World, and Leave It to Me* have clearly portrayed the virtues of their protagonists namely, Tara, Dimple, Jasmine, Hannah and Debby Devi, the changing condition of women in India. Tara, the protagonist in *The Tiger’s Daughter*, struggles to find her identity in America and in India. This process of finding their identities must be a maker of intensive struggle; with hopes, aspirations, wonders and horrors of a new culture and desires. Mukherjee’s women have their own voice to be identified and battle with the images of their own selves. The background of these women with traditional beliefs and western ideas always confuse them. They try to seek comfort with traditional faiths and so the new identity continues. Mukherjee herself describes the critical situation of her women in *Darkness*:

Though the characters in these stories are, or were, “Indian”, I see most of these as stories of broken identities and discarded languages, and the will to
bond oneself to a new community, against the ever-present fear of failure and betrayal. (3)

Tara Banerjee Cart Wright has been pictured as an independent person in the bewilderingly alien environments. The novel also traces her conflicts of identity and her struggle between a sense of exile both in her childhood ‘home’ and newly acquired ‘home’ of the United States, Ketu H. Katrak observes:

Mukherjee’s explorations of the personal dimensions of female identity and belonging within marriage, an integral part of traditional Indian socialization for females, now resonates in a new key, as Tara’s husband belongs ‘else where’ and so her home ‘should’ be with him, even though that space is not yet ‘home’. (212)

Her female characters are made to adjustment. Tara had to adjust to things which had been outside the purview of her previous idea of life as a whole and doing mental, physical, household work was one such adjustment. Mukherjee sketches Tara as an Intelligent, highly educated woman capable of self-analysis. She is conscious of her instability, insecurity, and unhappiness.
The environment disturbs her very much and she feels alienated without her husband and even though she is in her home town it is sad to note that she is home-sick. Her situation is clearly observed by Bose, Brinda:

Tara will feel herself to be an expatriate and an alien for as long as she conceives of India as the only country she can really belong to, and the only way the movement toward becoming an exuberant immigrant can be launched is by burying the ghosts of the past. (52)

All her women characters need a transformation to accommodate themselves in the bicultural land. This kind of sweeping adaptation is required for every immigrant. Tara is a western educated lady with self-control struggles to find herself taking up a series of reincarnations, deaths of earlier existences followed by rebirths, full of promise.

Dimple, another woman of Mukherjee is a guinea pig to the shameful trivialities involved in the lives of immigrants abroad for the very fact that they are Indians. Dimple is different from Tara and she is incapable of rising above the mundane, absurd
existence. She is eager to get married to enter into the blessed state of holy matrimony. Her experience in America is not pleasant and promising. She even feels that her husband had forsaken her and she floats in and out of dreams. She suffers from phobias and feels trapped in fanatic depression. Mukherjee tries to justify that her women characters’ mission and motto must be that “they should become American in their thoughts and action to survive in America”. This exhibits that Mukherjee is encouraging a transformation and transmutation. The fluctuation of thoughts makes Dimple to change her view from suicide to murder her husband. This kind of thoughts arises when her women characters are not capable of adapting to the situation and the environment.

Bose, Brinda quotes Mukherjee:

... the kinds of women who attract me, who intrigue me, are those who are adaptable. We’ve all been trained to please, trained to be adaptable as wives, and that adaptability is working to the women’s advantage when we come over as immigrants. ... For an Indian woman to learn to drive, put on pants, cash
checks is a big leap. They are ... exhilarated by that change. They are no longer having to do what mothers-in-law tyrannically forced them to do. (55)

So, Dimple is pictured as a neurotic and frigid character who, is always in the state of emotional euphoria. She always feels bored and frustrated by the humdrum of life. She considers her marriage as a clash of irreconcilable temperaments. She develops certain complexes and fails to face the challenges of life. She could not adjust with her husband and she behaves like a frantic and frenzied person. Carabas, J. Thomas comments about Mukherjee's women:

Mukherjee's Asian women are willing to drop husband and family to pursue a dream they desire passionately, but many of their American counterparts seem not only to lack passion, but they seem willing to give up almost everything in order to minimize the disturbance in their lives. (59)

Mukherjee is always compared to Bernard Malamud because she considered him as her model. But there is a slight difference been the two where Malamud earns sympathy by
focusing male characters with the Yiddish tradition, Mukherjee breaks her readers' identification by portraying the female immigrant as a conquering heroine. In Mukherjee's literary space, her characters have no fixed place and they move in the age of jet travel in a strange land without friends or relatives. *Jasmine* is another novel in which she introduced her protagonist who arrives in the US. She is stated as a bright, pretty girl with personal courage. Breaking from the usual time-honoured tradition, she chooses Prakash Viji who shapes her into Jasmine from Jyoti. In order to complete Prakash's mission, she undertakes her odyssey and transforms herself in many forms.

Mukherjee's heroines are ready to give up history, tradition and body-hurtling through time. They move from a feudal village to the global metropolis and are able to survive and live. Jasmine is a singular character, superior to the other dearest women, who cannot fend for themselves. Grewal Gurleen states that:

Mukherjee reinforces images of the Third world woman who is constrained by her gender and by the 'backward' culture and economy of the Third World.

(187)
Jasmine faces different influences, tortured processes of self-recognition and self-assimilation right from the beginning. Jasmine is appreciated for her courage, compared to Tara and Dimple and when the difficulty arises from an inability to divorce oneself completely from one’s part. Jasmine assumes the responsibilities to look after herself and in order to fulfill the mission of her husband, she moves to USA and becomes the agent of violent mishappenings, and reforms again as a new breed of city woman. This kind of reincarnation or rebirth makes her to recall her Hasnapur where Vimla commits Sati and comments:

   The villagers say when a clay pitcher breaks, you see that the air inside it is the same as outside. Vimla set herself on fire because she had broken her pitcher; she saw there were no insides and outsides. We are just shells of the same Absolute (Jasmine, 15).

Bose, Brinda quotes Mukherjee:

   When asked ‘Do you see immigration as an experience of reincarnation? Mukherjee has
answered, “Absolutely! I have been murdered and reborn at heart three times’. (55)

In the same way, even Dimple and Jasmine have mentally and sometimes physically been tortured and murdered in order to be reborn. Jasmine does not have sentimental longing to return to her homeland and she accepts the immigrant ship with true spirits. Though Jasmine comes to America with the crazy notion of erecting a funeral pyre for her dead husband’s clothes on his university campus and after that burning herself, America provides other possibilities. By accepting the new life Jasmine feels compelled to sacrifice most of her original say. She needs to discard her ethnicity – the only option to cope with the freedom of choices thrust upon her to become an American woman. Jasmine becomes Jase who wears silk pants and glittering shoes. She attempts to transplant the traditional Hindu doctrine and walks into the modern American ward to mobilize herself and retain her individual opportunity. But for sometime, an impossible negotiation happens between the destiny and opportunity and between sacred Hindu and secular American beliefs. Grewal, Gurleen states:
The inscription of an Indian woman into the frontier pattern is exotic as well as heroic and makes for some dramatic moments ... As the female Brahma, she is her own creator, pregnant with new life: as care giver. She matches Vishnu, the preserver; as Siva’s counterpart, Kali, she has killed the demon Half-Face, her rapist. (191)

Jasmine was non-conforming, a rebel according to her choice, and defying social constraints at every turn. She had the ability to judge her actions according to her own humanistic standards. Through her immigrant heroines, Mukherjee portrays the images of Third world women who are ignorant, traditional, domestic, and also victims of several issues. Because of this, confinement becomes a major issue in Mukherjee’s work as her women demonstrate this quest for freedom in aspects of lives. Mukherjee’s The Holder of The World is about Hannah Easton, a puritan woman who journeys from 17th century New England to England, and to India, then back to America after many transformations as Christian–Hindu–Muslim lady. Hannah is
portrayed as a rebellious and adventurous person more or less like Jasmine.

Hannah is different from other girls and excels in crafts and enjoys day-dreaming. She undergoes a total transformation after her marriage. At the age of thirty she is widowed and becomes the mistress of a Raja and has an illegitimate child. Still Hannah can be quoted as an aspirated and ambitious person.

Hannah is a woman of energy and boundless hope. She escapes from the old world, not necessarily to embrace the new world but to attempt to escape from the limitations and catastrophic influence of the native world. Hannah, as an expatriate, embraces the new world which is new to her. She is a hardworking person, naturally simple and charitable with a mind to serve. Hannah is intelligent and shrewd, in order to escape from the routine world, she marries Gabriel.

Mukherjee's women stand firm in their ideals and they are not timid or submissive. When Hannah had a chance to stay along with English women who were self-conscious with superior nature, she was not ready to support that kind of culture. After that accidentally she had an encounter with Raja Jadav Singh
who later on became her caretaker and Hannah lived a life of sensuous pleasures. Total transformation takes place in her life and after the death of Jadav Singh, suspending all morality and conventional relationships; she has an encounter with Emperor Aurangazeb. The supervision of morality and the openness to new experiences makes Hannah to tackle Aurangazeb and even to bow to his gifts of pearls. When she feels that she had accomplished what she wanted, she returns to Salem, not as an American but as a rebel living on the fringes of the society.

Trikha, Pradeep observes:

Mukherjee devotes her attention to female issues in the historical times as well as in the contemporary society. ... This makes Mukherjee and Masters Beigh involve deeply in the Salem Bibi in making sense from the historical evidences because conventional answers no longer satisfy. They feel social and cultural change is a recursive process and women have to play steering role. (211)

Leave It to Me is an experimental novel which pictures the individual’s dilemma in the American multiethnic odds and ends
with a fresh background. Mukherjee always prefers to be an American writer, despite her denials, she belongs, not to the dominant culture but one of the Asian American sub-cultures. She remains an outsider being a product of two sub-cultures and aspires for assimilation. So, her women characters in her novels are sometimes central and at other times marginalized. Mukherjee tries to move from the margin to the centre, toward their empowerment and toward an affirmation of their identities.

Debby Dimartino, the heroine of the novel is adopted as a child, grows as an exotic girl in an American town and finds herself a misfit. In order to find her Bio-mom she leaves for San Francisco to have a new life changing her name as Devi Dee. Devi Dee encounters several individuals like Ham Cohar, Loco Larry, and Fred Pointer, to show the way to her parents.

Mukherjee delves into the search of identity of Debby Dimartino which has turned out to be the revelation of sheer evil in her life, consciously and unconsciously moulding her life, to add more to the existing horrid bitterness. She encounters many difficulties to trace her parents and the shift from Schenectady's society to Haights Counter-culture is a reflection of her stable
mind as Dimartino to the unstable and indecent Devi Dee. Debby is violent as Mukherjee presents violence in her novels as it is in the real world. Even she is in a multi-cuisine world. She had the longing for her roots as other characters of Mukherjee’s novels had. She states her desire:

... Frankie made an Asian childhood sound great fun, something I wanted to claim, and something I had been robbed of... . (LM, 45)

Devi’s desire to be independent, to be courageous, and to dress and behave like a man enables her to grow up both strong and confident. It is only because she has trained herself to be different that the much eulogized characteristics of women i.e., weak will, dependence, and shyness are alien to her perception. The free will and the lack of training in meekness enable Devi to pursue her ambition. Debby Dimartino is portrayed as an emotionally empowered person with intense struggle in order to realize her adoption. She says:

You see, this is one more side effect of adoption. I can imagine myself into any life; I can wrench myself
away from a thousand backgrounds. I can assess damage, then just walk way. (28)

Debbie broods about the Vietnam War, and unconsciously associates herself with the veterans of Vietnam War during her journey towards her search for roots. The real accomplishment of Debbie-Devi is nothing but the recognition of her identity, her real ‘self’.

The pages of contemporary fiction from Mahesveta Devi to Bharati Mukherjee are testimonies of social and cultural changes in the actual lives of Indian women. In order to win the confidence, women must come out of the inferiority complex. The exaggerated affection of authority, sometimes results in insecurity and women do not inspire the feeling of security.

Bharati Mukherjee always stresses that women must not be over dependent. Even over independence will lead a woman to a vain and bored life. Some women, who begin this life as an adventure, later on, turn to a shabby and complex life. However, if good opportunity is given to her, then a woman is as rational and as efficient as a man. But it is in her part as a dependent woman that she is unable to attain an emotional balance. All the women
uniformly wish to go back to their roots and their aloneness is very obvious.

Throughout in fiction on women, every writer has touched upon the ambiguities of ‘give’ and ‘take’ policy. Bharati Mukherjee’s bored woman is one who wishes to get rid of the burden of time. Mukherjee always wishes that women must be provided with a living strength of their own and let them have the means to attack the world and wrench for their own survival so that their dependence will be abolished. She allows her women to work out their own destiny in a foreign land. Her voice is the universal cry of Indian women in the West to overcome the inner terror of truth. Mukherjee’s images about women are the eye openers to the changing phases of women in Indian writing in English.

The concept of woman is essential in the woman centered novels. The image of woman is macro in level when compared to male portrayal in her novels. Her women have personal courage to overcome the difficulties and the novelist spreads a burning awareness of women’s condition in our society and suggests the revolt of the new generation of women against a world dominated
by harsh and cruel men. All her women characters are in their quest for identity, liberty, and individuality and react in radical ways against conventional conduct. They are reflective about their condition and their protest is not for equality but for the right to be acknowledged as individuals.

Writers bring about a complete change in public attitude towards man-women relationship. A novel is not a literary work with mere diction, but it is rich with multiple meanings and relationships. It makes people to think and realize that lovemaking and domesticity are not concerned with women alone but with men also.

Mukherjee is concerned with thought, emotion, and achievement than with action and experience. Mukherjee's portrayal of Man-Woman relationship had been influenced and conditioned by the existing intricate social situation. Interpersonal relationship seems to be of particular interest to her. She concentrates on the predicament of modern woman in this male dominated society and her destruction at the altar of marriage. When compared to men, woman's attitudes are different even as they are sentimental and emotional. They look at things in
different ways and react to the situation differently. Character contrast is something very important in literature because literature deals with human nature, and character contacts serve to add to our knowledge and our understanding of human nature in general. Not only is the man himself different, but as often happens in the society of changing values, his family ways, his surroundings, to which she is expected to adjust herself, are entirely different.

Mukherjee's first two expatriate novels reveal interpersonal relationship between Tara-David, and Dimple-Amit. The immigrant novels reveal the man-woman relationship between Jasmine and others, Hannah and others and Debby and others.

Tara leaves America in search of her dream because of her homesickness. It was her fate that she married an American named David. He was totally a western product and there is a strange fusion of the Americanness and Indianness to confront each other. Sometimes she makes futile efforts to establish her American self and she fails to be neither in her Indian self nor her new discovered American self. David is a foreigner and asked naive questions and commented on Indian customs and
traditions. David even fails to understand Tara's real love and upbraids her for over dependence. Mukherjee clearly highlights the relationship between Indian girls and their foreign husbands.

The interpersonal relationship is strengthened in her second novel in the beginning and loses its charm gradually. The relationship between Dimple and Amit was one of excitement like that of a newly married couple. Amit was not Dimple's dream man and even she aborts her pregnancy out of her hatred for Amit who fails to feed her fantasy world. Even when they migrate to USA, Dimple's happiness is smothered and Amit is also frustrated because he finds himself still jobless. This becomes the root cause for misunderstanding and petty-fogging becomes the order of the day. When Dimple's dream world is shattered, she gets disturbed by the habits of Amit and feels that:

In Calcutta she had trained herself not to see in hand (always the left) as it stopped carefully at each button, then slid up and down a few times before hanging limply at his side. But in New York these little gestures had begun to irritate her. (Wife, 88)
The realization of the absence of love between her and Amit made her miserable and Amit is blamed for his ignorance of female psychology. He takes her out of four-walls very rarely and goes on admonishing instead. He says:

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

This has made an adverse reaction in Dimple’s nature and she goes out and tries to adopt American culture and extramarital affair. The problem between Dimple and Amit is the lack of emotional bondage and failing to understand the reality which leads them to utter desolation.

In *Jasmine*, Mukherjee portrays a different picture about inter-personal relationships. When Jasmine enters into the unknown, obscure island, she gains a sense of passion that she has landed in the USA to fulfill the dreams of her husband. She explores the American experience through various persons. When she first meets Vadhera’s family, she felt desperately alone. Her second relationship starts with Taylor Framing where she is named as Jase. It is a short sojourn for Jasmine because
the relationship of Taylor and Wylie are broken and they decided to sign the bond. She comes to realise in diluted and transitory human relationships in America and she weeps as:

There was no word I could learn, no one could consult, to understand what Wylie was saying or why she had done it. She wasn't happy? She looked happy, sounded happy, acted happy ... the microwave pinged its readiness and I started crying for my own helplessness and stupidity. (Jasmine, 181-182)

Interpersonal relationship is different in America from Indian ethos and Jasmine relates herself to that setup. She moves from New York to Iowa and the renamed Jane feels very comfortable since it is very much like Hasnapur. Americans neither come in hand- to- hand with family touch, or reveal the relationship. But Jasmine due to her Indian nature easily identifies herself with Du, the adopted son of Ripple Mayor. But that relationship is short lived because of Du's departure. Her relationship with Bud Ripple mayor is not encouraging but she survives as a path-finder and becomes a fluid person.
Indian bondage with persons is strengthened with morality and caretaking. American culture is fluid and devoid of love and intimacy since they adjust and change according to the environment.

Mukherjee’s courageous heroine the young Hannah Easton has been transformed and transported from the austere 17th century puritan New England of her birth to the festooned Indian court of the last Mughal Emperor Aurangazeb. Hannah, born in Brookfield, in the Bay Colony, lost her father when she was barely one and her mother in an undreamed of rebellion against the rigid and inflexible rules of her puritan society turns off with her Nipmuc lover.

Hannah was adopted by the Fitches, and here solidarity leads her to learn crafts. She is married to a British and comes to India with her husband Gabriel Legge who later on becomes a pirate and dies without any bondage with Hannah. She didn’t have any good personal relationship with her husband. Adopting the Indian culture, she experienced the secret of love and fondling when she became the Bibi to Jadav Singh. A tremendous change occurs in her life and she experienced
illuminating passion, exposing the shallowness of every other kind of experience in her previous life. Hannah’s empowering love affair leads to summon all her strengths and skills, continues to discover the extent of her power. This is the strong love extended to her new lover and a new meaning in her life has blossomed.

Hannah is different from Jasmine because, after her husband’s death Hannah lives with only one person, where else Jasmine transforms herself and had many affairs. This is the cultural effect where Jasmine born in India leaves to USA to adopt foreign culture and in Hannah’s story the reverse pattern has happened. To foreigners, India is not an alien land but to an Indian, a foreign country is an unknown world.

Devi Dee in *Leave It to Me* encounters several individuals to know her bio-mom. She believes that her search for her own identity was started by a poem which has been assigned by her master.

He’d made us read a Robert Frost poem about a bird flying off a snow-dusted bough. “The Muse”, he’d encouraged us, “notices the humblest object and the
tritest movement and turns them into the gold of passion and poesy”. (*LM*, 17)

Debi’s search turns her to face horrid bitterness in the world and lacks morality. In her search, she turns out to be indecent as suggested by her foster mom Serena Dimartino. The shift from Schenectady’s society to Haight’s counter culture is a reflection of her stable mind as Dimartino to the unstable and indecent Devi Dee. She and Jase love the same man, work at the same job and use drugs.

Through her characters, Mukherjee gives an implied suggestion that the private vision of every individual is made open so that humankind may have a sigh of relief from the endless tortures of the unconscious. All the novels stress the void of detachment among the personal relationship, and the panicked search for life barriers between the families make the characters to suffer the slings and arrows of taunts and tortures in the life. The abnormal man-woman relationships of the characters picture their miserable and pathetic condition, and show how they lose their identity and name. The inter-personal relationship is spoiled because of the frustrated self. Mukherjee’s man-woman
relationship is sometimes violent and she concentrates on the predicament of modern women in this male dominated society and their physical destruction. Each one of the frustrated characters adopts his or her manner of facing the problem of alienation, suffering, and boredom. Human affection and love are the highest value in life where in the modern world, it has deteriorated and interpersonal relationship has become meaningless.

A writer's vision in general is the result of the artist's striving to promote human values and these have to be pictured and argued as to how these can contribute to healthy living. What such values have in common is that they are fundamental to the way of life of an individual or a society and it is not surprising that they should be closely connected. If any one is exposed to a host of writers and he is left to analyze their wholesome purpose and vision of life while writing their fiction-along with their vision of life in its totality, then the religious, historical, prophetic, moral and political vision also emerges. The readers should take such writings as their models to be followed in their lives in order to live a healthy and happy life. As Lawrence describes:
The novel is a perfect medium for revealing to us the changing rainbow of our living relationships. The novel can help us to live, as nothing else can .... (60)

Mukherjee, through her women protagonists unravels the trauma and exacerbations of the expatriates in the divergent land. She never looks back to her country with pain and nostalgia but she shares the immigrant’s grievances. A typical Indian Hindu wife can never think of separation from her husband. But the society imparts a sort of culture where no human being escapes from that. The first two novels of Mukherjee move towards trauma and her later novels march towards triumph. The psyche of an immigrant is always tragic as the tension is created in the mind in an unknown land. An immigrant recreates a new personality and forms emotional ties with the place and, the birthplace becomes alien. The novels explore and dramatize the love-hate relationship, the standpoints of the immigrants with the society of their adoption. It reveals both realistically and psychologically, how the protagonists cope with their sense of alienation, marginality, and otherness, making several adjustments to integrate but realizing the impossibility of
total assimilation in another culture. They take up directly or indirectly against the absurdities of their experience.

Tara, the young girl married to an American, encounters a strange fusion of different cultures. The output of this makes her a split personality. The clash with the culture is deeply felt by her and even when she returns to India, it becomes difficult to adjust with her family and friends and this leaves her frustrated. Right from her childhood, Tara has always been sheltered and now the touch with the crowd traumatizes her greatly. She pleads to go back to David, her husband, but at the end of the novel, she sits shivering in the Fiat, surrounded by mobs wondering whether she will ever see her husband again. Like the turmoil outside, the traumatic psyche of Tara is also in great confusion. Brady, Veronica examines Tara's situation as:

In her own way Tara is a representative figure, not just of the Indian expatriate, but of the crisis of modernity also. If modernity represents the end of older processes of filiations rooted in culture and biology, the challenge for her is to find some form of affiliation and so to form relationships which, if not as
enduring and sustaining, will allow more freedom and flexibility. (115-116)

Mukherjee’s second novel *Wife* pictures the psychic disturbances of Dimple Dasgupta before her marriage and after marriage. There is no co-ordination between her mind and body, which makes her senses dislocate. Her behaviour denotes the conflicts between her mind and body, which leads to the quest for freedom. She emotionally feels sick and her migration to the U.S. with Amit adds to her anxiety:

> She felt a sudden panic that, just as she was being introduced to happy people, she was being taken away again to become a resident alien. (*Wife*, 47)

The encounter with an alien system causes a rupture in the consciousness, and the process of insecurity is felt by Dimple. Dimple feels restless and hates ever thing and everyone. Her senses distance Dimple and Amit. She is disillusioned about her marriage and a sense of betrayal stings her. TV and magazines make Dimple to have violent thoughts and the constant news reports about the murders in the town reduce her sense of guilt in committing a crime. With lack of control, she kills her husband
and justifies that the action is typical of the character in a TV serial and she acts out of her role. She feels that a real murder is not committed by her real self but like an actress she has enacted it.

The problem for Dimple is the pre-marital and post-marital anxiety culminating in the traumatic end in the novel. The disoriented nature of Dimple is pathetic and the novel has a disturbing effect. It arouses pity, horror, surprise, and shock and a sense of futility too.

In order to get out of the crises, Mukherjee’s characters learn that the lives of immigrants do not have straight lines and smooth life, they transform themselves, and this kind of realization and transformation had a positive outlet over the traumatic condition towards the triumph. Her later novels move towards this direction and bring an immense change in the lives of her protagonists. Jasmine is the first person to inaugurate the triumphant movement through her journey towards the U.S.A. with the crazy notion of erecting a funeral pyre for her dead husband’s clothes on his intended university campus, and burning herself on it. It is rejected when America offers other
possibilities. She constructs a new American woman, inside her heart. Her every step and movement is calculated and with each development, an essential change is noted in her personality. From Vedhera's family, she moves to Manhattan to live with Taylor and Wylie Hayes as a caregiver to their adopted daughter Duff. Jasmine is renamed as Jase by them and she experiences the best moments of stay in America with them. She is comforted emotionally and psychologically and involves herself in the new environment. This is the achievement in the life of Jasmine.

The achievement of Jasmine is rooted up when she moves to Iowa and joins Ripple Meyers. The warmth and support given by them tangles her with emotional tie-up and creates an impact in the lives of the Native Americans. Jasmine continues to enjoy her adventures and now she challenges the mocking astrologer who had declared about her widowhood and exile in Hasnapur:

  Watch me reposition the stars, I whisper to the astrologer who floats cross-legged above my Kitchen stove. (Jasmine, 240)

Every moment of her adds self-confidence and her experience directs her future course of action. She realizes that
alternate reality is the only way for her survival. Rao. P. Mallikarjuna states that:

Identities such as nation, language are only temporary; they root one to a place and does not allow any motion. Hence, Ms. Mukherjee celebrates this drift from one Continent to the other, from one country to another, from one identity to another; it is a world without a fixed gravity, its centers of gravity change, in other words, she celebrates the changing identities in this novel. (46)

Hannah Easton, the heroine of *The Holder of The World* travels from West to East. There is a blend with Mughal India to computech age. Hannah escapes from the rule bound, claustrophobic influence of puritan world. This escape leads her to marry Gabriel Legge and her life succeeds in questioning and discovering new ways of defining reality in the world. After the death of Gabriel, her transformation takes place and she enters with a new identity as Bibi to Rajah Jadav Singh.

Beigh Masters reveals her mystery of life along with the diamond and throws light on Hannah’s realization as an individual
and her personal recognition. Hannah moves over from the traumatic childhood towards the achievement in her life and takes up a new level and height in her progress.

Through her characters Mukherjee always emphasises that her protagonists are survivors and they survive wherever they are. With the same intention, *Leave It to Me* is written to highlight Devi Dee’s encounters with life and later on how she succeeds in the end. Like Columbus Dimartino navigates everywhere to trace her Bio-Parents. According to her,

\[ \text{... when getting a life is your goal, why put off till tomorrow what you can do this nanosecond? (} \text{LM, 61)} \]

Debby Dee / Devi Dee, an Indian girl raised by an Italian up-state family leaves America for India to ascertain her identity. Violence, depression, and disappointment chase her as she departs for a better predicament. Even though her characters undergo the traumatic process, the total output is the progress, achievement and accomplishment. She faces many contradictions and returns to her country with renewed determination to claim her heritage. Debby slowly transforms into
a stronger, sharper, more intuitive force, eventually turning almost shrewd in her mission. As Atwood has remarked in her book *Survival*:

... Any map is better than no map as long as it is accurate, and knowing your starting points and your frame of reference is better than being suspended in a void. A tradition doesn’t necessarily exist to bury you: it can also be used as a material for new departures.

(245-46)

Mukherjee’s protagonists wrestle with their problems, engage themselves in finding solutions to them, and express their affirmation towards life. Despondency, failures, and frustrations, particularly in the matter of human relationship give rise to complete chaos and anarchy. On the other hand, it is perceived that the struggles of the protagonists as heroic attempts that finally bring glory to the individual and add dignity to the spirit of freedom.

Like other expatriate writers like Rohinton Mistry, Vassanji etc. Mukherjee, having undergone the experience of immigration, and belonging to a non-ethnic minority group, presents the
troubled psyche of the people resulting in a feeling of displacement, nostalgia, cultural rooting and uprooting, multiculturalism, identity problems and alienation. The traumatic nature of their experience calling for a powerful articulation on the part of writers, who have, either as part of a minority community or as outsiders, produced poignant portrayals of the lives of the suffering groups.