Chapter Five

Narrative Techniques

A fiction is an intentionally invented description of something. It is a literary work based on imagination rather than on fact, like a novel or short story. Narrative technique provide deeper meaning for the reader and help the reader use imagination to visualize situations. ‘Narrative’ is technical word for a ‘story’. It is a term taken from Latin verb ‘narrate’ which means ‘to recount’. Novels, short stories, poems, blog posts and essays are considered as the forms of narrative. Even if the form of the writing changes, the function of telling a story remains the same. Novels and short stories are the most popular forms of the narratives. This technique is one of the basic requisites of a literary writing. It is the bounded duty of a writer to use it in his/her work to make it meaningful and relevant. If there is no technique, there is no art, and hence no life. All the three are interrelated.

When a reader peruses a story, he develops a feeling that someone else is narrating it to him. According to Wayne C. Booth, this “someone else is called the implied author” (16). An author, while narrating a story, creates a second self of himself called the implied author and this implied author creates an illusion in the readers that they are listening to a ‘loud’ narration within. The implied author’s voice is the narrative voice in a fiction. The narrative voice is the author’s voice only, because it is the author who creates the very implied author. In narrative, the author has a tendency to interfere to pass comments on various fictional components and this interference is called the authorial intrusion. Frequent authorial intrusions spoil the fiction experience of the reader and as a result, the narrative voice becomes artistically unreliable in a fiction.
Narrative techniques offer deeper sense for the person who reads and help the reader to use mind's eye to imagine circumstances. Narrative techniques may include metaphors, similes, personification, imagery, hyperbole, alliteration, backstory, flashback, flash-forward, foretelling, and narrative perspective/point of view.

Symbolic language is a common element in narrative writing. A symbol is a thing that signifies something else. Symbols in fiction are often ambiguous. Metaphors and similes are expressions used to compare two things in an effort to help the reader have a better understanding of what the writer is attempting to convey. The difference between a simile and a metaphor is the simile uses the words 'like', 'as' or 'than' in the comparison, while the metaphor does not utilize these words. Imagery creates visuals for the reader that appeals to our senses and usually involves figurative language. Personification is seen when an inanimate object is given human or animal-like living qualities. Hyperbole is an over-exaggeration to make a point. Alliteration is seen when the writer uses the same letters together in a sentence.

There are many narrative techniques which the writers use in their writings. The present chapter deals with the narrative techniques which Mukherjee has used in her writings. Her experimentation with point of view, symbolism, imagery, irony, flashback, in a unique manner makes her a leader to the new generation of fiction writers. The problems of race, identity, politics and family dynamics are preoccupied in her thoughts. She found a better channel to artistically present them in her unique narrative techniques. Through her novels, short stories, she influenced the readers which further proved to shape the understanding of the problems of Diaspora.

Although there are many types of narrative techniques, the following few types of techniques that can be found in many fiction of Mukherjee. The first important technique used by her in narration is point of view. The narrator narrates a
story through his consciousness/prospective and it is known as the point of view. The influence of the narrator is always seen on the reader. The narrator’s feelings of happiness or sadness affect the reader. The nineteenth century reader was unaffected by the frequent shifting of point of view. But the twentieth century reader does not favour the idea of shifting the point of view often.

When an author confines the viewpoint of one character in a story, it will give an organic fiction experience to the reader. On the other hand, when a writer shifts the viewpoint frequently from character to character, there will be a tendency in him/her to make intrusions in the narrative. This will block reading and arrest the development of action in a fiction. As a result, the reader loses an organic fiction experience, which may otherwise be called a unified fiction experience.

Point of View talks about the scheme of opinions, standards and classifications by reference to which a person or society understands the world, while in narrative text, point of view talks about the set of standards, or belief system, communicated by the language of the text. A novel, for example, provides an explanation of the world it signifies, an information that is essential to the interpretative descriptions offered by literary critics. It also establishes a broad division between third person and the first person narratives. In a third person narrative, the narrative is somebody outside the story proper who denotes to all the characters in the story by name, or as ‘he’, ‘she’, ‘they’. In a first person narrative, the narrator speaks as ‘I’ and is himself/herself to a greater or lesser degree. He/she also turn out to be a participant in the story. In most of the works written by Mukherjee, the stories are always presented from a female perspective. Her choice of an exclusively female point of view is bound to have effects on the presentation of social order and its participants. Frequent shift in point
of view from character to character affects the rhetorical rendering of a story. As a result, the reader will not get an organic fiction experience.

The writer may tell the story as an omniscient narrator. This technique is essentially a third person narrative. Moreover omniscient narration is highly flexible, since there is no defined or prescribed limit as to what extent the narrator can share with the readers, what he considers as a subject of interest. The term ‘omniscience’ refers to the author’s privilege of knowing details about characters, situations, events and such other fictional components in a fiction. Gaining a knowledge of the past, the present and future of the character involved in a fiction, the author gives his readers the needed information about them. He may develop any of the two kinds of omniscience – the limited or the unlimited. If an author supplies all information about a character in a fiction, the author is said to be exercising unlimited omniscience over the supply of details he is said to be exercising limited omniscience over the character.

The writer may also adopt another method called ‘multiple view point’. A novelist can tell his story using any one of these methods or employ all the methods in single work. Mukherjee uses first and third person narrative. She withdraws herself from her works and lets the readers listen to the main narrative directly without intruding herself and the narrator in the fiction takes the readers along with him/her. Such a narrative technique renders the fiction even more realistic.

Mukherjee uses the first person narration and having found such mode of narration too complex, she naturally turned to the most traditional and convenient method of Omniscient author’s third person narrative for the rest of her novels. Her works which deals with expatriation such as The Tiger’s Daughter and Wife were written in the third person narration. In Darkness, very often expatriation is expressed
through the irony and an omniscient narrative with occasional shifts in perspective and also authorial comments. The immigrants often appear in first person narratives and reveal the author’s supple voice which can enter varied immigrant sensibilities. *Jasmine* is an immigrant novel and it was written in the first person narration but *The Middleman and other Stories*, a collection of eleven short stories are not with pre-dominated point of view. Mukherjee writes some stories from a very authoritative third person point of view, with others she uses an intimate, textured style and a first person point of view. Eight of the eleven short stories are in first person narrative.

Point of view reveals the structures of social life and its forthcoming happenings. The protagonists of Mukherjee’s fiction too reveal the life in the society. The protagonists in the novels *Wife* and *Jasmine* display an outstanding similarity in their reactions and actions, in spite of the wide differences between temperaments and circumstances. Both of them pass through twisting physical and mental anguish disturbing their whole being to such an extent that they are driven to violence.

Jasmine starts her life in the United States with a murder, while Dimple in the novel *Wife* rounds up her stay there with a murder. Thus when, social, familial and adopted limitations lose their force, and when the character is marginalised or herself chooses experimentally to step aside from her roles, Mukherjee makes use of violence for the female character as a line of defence and attack for the restrictions cast on female behaviour.

First person or third person narration is an old-fashioned pattern, a model or design which is worthy of imitation. Mukherjee’s fiction narrates the protagonists’ journey. Her protagonists are recognized as an expatriate or immigrant or transnational. They are caught between past and present and are forced to make decisions significant to them. They are in a situation to move from one state to
another immediately. The transformation is the figurative and mythic core of the story-telling tradition. Mukherjee’s immigrant or expatriate narratives depicts the distinctive American adventure of her heroine, who journeys to attain her dream as an individual and not on behalf of a group or tribe or civilization.

All the fiction of Mukherjee tell the heroines’ journey either in the first person or third person. She wrote her first two novels, *The Tiger’s Daughter* (1971) and *Wife* (1975) when she was in Canada. Her third person narrator of *The Tiger’s Daughter* conveys a story of Tara Banerjee, a young Bengali girl. She was born in Calcutta, studied and married in United States. After seven years she returns to India and she sees Indian in political commotion. She feels equally alienated in both the lands, adopted and homeland. Tara’s expatriate sensibility makes her to think “the foreignness of the spirit” (*TD* 37). Again she desires to return to the host land because of the political turmoil which takes place in India. She is in a dilemma between the ‘given identity ‘as an Indian Bengali Brahmin and the ‘made identity’ as an American. In her native home itself she finds herself as a nowhere woman, foreigner, and an outsider. Mukherjee’s own experiences in Canada is reflected in the character of Tara Banerjee.

Mukherjee’s third person narrator of her second novel *Wife* too narrates the story of a Bengali Brahmin girl, Dimple Dasgupta-Basu, who travels to America with her husband. She is also caught between the two worlds and its culture. She is unable to break away from the original culture and feels stuck to it. Mukherjee in an interview with Carb Alison asserted, “She turns neurotic and kills her own husband” (25).

In her first collection of short story named *Darkness*, the first story “The World According to Hsu” is mainly from the expatriate’s point of view, In “Isolated
Incidents”, the expatriate is viewed from immigrants’ point of view on the problems concerning Human Rights. In all the stories, the characters appear in first person narratives and reveal the author’s supple voice which can enter varied migrant sensibilities.


“Orbiting” is a first person narrative by Retna De Marcos, daughter of the first generation Italian immigrants. “Fighting for the Rebound” is also a story of first person narration which presents the immigrants through the eyes of a Native American. “Fathering” is said in the first person point of view, the narrator is a Native American, Jason, whose life with his girlfriend in a small town in upstate New York is disrupted when the half-Vietnamese child he had fathered in Saigon comes to visit. The stories such as “The Tenant”, “Jasmine” and “Buried Lives” are the only three stories which are in the third person omniscient narrative.

In the third novel, *Jasmine* (1989), she uses the first person narration. Jasmine, the first person narrator tells the story of her own. She is an Indian widow and migrates to United States and lives as Jase and Jane with Taylor and Bud as their live-
in-partner. As already predicted by the village astrologer, she undergoes widowhood and exile. First person narrator – Jasmine tells about her multiple identities. Her multiple names display multiple identities of an illegal immigrant in America. The narrator is born as Jyoti in Hasnapur, Punjab, India. The adventurous narrator Jasmine kills a dog, learns English, selects her husband and tries to challenge the destiny foretold her by a village astrologer. She marries Prakash Vijh, modernist, who plans to travel to the United States for higher Studies. Prakash renames her Jasmine to make her a city woman and modernist and to distinguish her from such traditional roles as an ideal good Indian wife. Jasmine recollects “he wanted to break down the Jyoti I’d been in Hasnapur and make me a new kind of city woman. To break off the pas, he gave me a new name” (JM 77). After her husband’s death she takes so many identities such as Jane, Jase, Jazzy etc. In all the three novels heroine’s journey is from India to United States and the tales are narrated by first person or third person narrator. The first two heroines, Tara and Dimple, are expatriates but the third, Jasmine, is an immigrant. They are typical representatives of Mosaic model and Melting pot model of America.

The remaining novels of Mukherjee are narrated in first person narration. Mukherjee redefines the meaning of America and what it meant to be America in her *The Holder of World* (1993). Beigh Masters is the narrator of the story. She tells her own story as well as the story of Hannah Easton. It is a remarkable story of an American transnational. Hannah Easton is the main plot and in its subplot the tale of Beigh Masters. Her young American asset hunter, a research Scholar, ‘Searcher-after-origin” (HW 9) and “... part of this story” (HW 21), thirty year old Beigh masters narrates the tale of a transnational diaspora. Hannah Easton was born in the American colonies in 1670. Hannah travels to Mughal India with her husband, an English trader.
She becomes Salem Bibi of Raja Jadav Singh. Hannah says “I was once a respectable married lady and look at me now—a Bibi in a sari. We can all change” (HW 256). Eventually she returns to homeland. In search of a legendary diamond Beigh Masters finds that Hannah is her distant relative. Beigh and Hannah – the main characters of Beigh’s narrative, contain multiple personalities on the forging of national identity.

Multi names of the protagonist Hannah Easton/ Fitch/ Salem Bibi/ the precious-as-pearl/ Mukta present Hannah’s identity as a transnational, transcending the national boundaries, geographic space and relating to several nations. The change in the surname instead of first name is applied in the first three names. Here also Mukherjee has changed the pattern of change in name. Caught into the dilemma of identity and faces the problem – Who am I? Hannah has assimilated into the adopted country, wherever she lives and turns as the transnational. Yet she also faces the same problem – Who am I? Hannah is the representative of Cosmopolitan model of Diaspora.

Mukherjee changes the way of the travel of her story in The Holder of World. The novel is not about the travel of an Indian immigrant to America struggling to establish identity in the Dreamland. It is the travel to India from New England, pre-American America. The narrator of the stories such as Desirable Daughters and The Tree Bride are Tara, the protagonist. Mukherjee uses the exact point of view for all her novels and the readers finds very easy to understand her narratives because of her use of effective narrative techniques in all her narratives. Her writing style and narrative techniques changes a lot after her immigration to the United States. In her interview, with Alison and Crab, Mukherjee explains that her writing styles and use of techniques has changed because she becomes more Americanized with each passing year.
The use of myths in fiction is another narrative technique followed by the writers in accordance with the demands of times. She uses a lot of myths in her fiction such as *Wife, Jasmine* and *The Holder of the World* and in the remaining fiction the myths were used in less proportion. Myths display the profound and lively interest that man has taken in the world and in himself, and the effort he has made to connect and understand the one by the other. It also shows the authenticity in an expressive metaphor. For the writers, most of the mythological worlds are crushed to build up new worlds from their perspective. The myths used by them are seen to be applicable to their vision of life. Consequently they can be said to be creating novelties by giving the myths a new organic meaning and importance in the modern worlds from their perception.

Literature is considered as a life-giving myth and likewise myth is also considered as life-giving literature. The word ‘myth’ is frequently used to mention to the stories seen in puranas. Myths are stories about legendary persons which influence the minds of those who believe in them in an unconscious manner. Myth modifications in literature on the one hand emphasis the imaginative prospective of the writer as the product of his/her background and on the other make the reader to reconsider and enquire about his/her own surroundings and stereotyped philosophies that holds his/her life. Myths are not only considers as a boundless encouragement but also continuing resource to the creative writers of any stage and any environment. Many researchers come to an understanding that it talk about a ‘traditional oral tale’. G.S. Kirk supports this idea in his academic article “On Defining myths”. His opinion is that whatsoever be the practice of such stories, their old-fashioned excellence and their narrative force cannot be broken. He explains:
If the applications are varied somewhat from generation to generation, or in the passage of a myth from one society into another, then its narrative core or plot must be such as to allow different emphases and interpretations according to different customs, needs and preoccupations. In one sense, a myth is changing, in another, its narrative structure persists. (54)

In the contemporary age there has been an increase of interest in mythology mostly due to the innovative understandings provided by educations in different branches of knowledge like anthropology and psychology and because of this new interest, numerous literary critics, literary theories and philosophers like Ernest Cassirer, Northrop Frye and Claude Levi-Straws have tried to examine the relation amongst myth and literature. The renewal of myth in our period is an effort to fulfil the human requirement for relatedness to fellow travellers on our common journey.

The contemporary creative writers attempt ‘Re-mythification’ by taking into consideration of the distinguishing features of the examples existing in the myth, legends, epics, the exclusive events that happen in these resources and accept them to outfit their proposed purpose. The out-dated religious, metaphors of Gods and Goddess leave a permanent mark in the minds of the creative writers and inspire their works as metaphors and symbols. Two such most important inspirations can be recognized in Mukherjee’s novels are Kali and Indian Epic-Woman figure, Sita of the *Ramayana*.

Kali is the goddess of dissolution and demolition, she is also known for destroying unawareness, and she supports persons who struggle for understanding god. Her name means ‘the Black one’ and the city of Calcutta is so-called in her honour. She has harsh eyes, a protruding tongue, uses a bloody sword, hold the
numerous head of demon and wears a belt of numerous heads. Alison Jasper in her article, makes a review of spiritual myths, metaphors, theologies and doctrines and forwards an opinion. “Within other religious traditions women similarly work to recover mythic constructions of the feminine that are not simply a product of privileged male imagination and desire” (131).

Kali shows that this woman figure often takes forms of actions that is not acceptable with the suitable role of women within Hindu tradition. This woman is a wife but she is hardly found with her spouse named Lord Shiva. She has no children, survives frequently in the open and has no permanent house. Kali appears ferocious and blood thirsty. A woman god performing in such a way would most undoubtedly be observed as courageous and strong.

However Mukherjee has not gone into detail much about the Kali myth in her works, she displays anxiety for her central character particularly in *The Tiger’s Daughter* and *Jasmine*. In those two novels, the writer extremely senses that the girls must be cultivated to increase more strength, control and understanding from the heavenly woman, Kali, who owns images to control the male-dominated society. The protagonist, Tara, in *The Tiger’s Daughter* is not brought up in an ordinary style and she is sent to America at the tender age of fifteen. This innocent girl is now thrown to a completely dissimilar ethos from the safe and secure boundaries of her home. Of course, she has been trained how to act lady like and exercise self-control in the course of difficulty by the holy sister of St. Blaise’s convent in Calcutta but this could be attained through practice and by holding her cultural roots. Tara at Vassar does this accurately. She sits in lonely room at Vassar a few years later recollects the contentedly arrangement of little gods and goddess her mother used to worship at
home and prays to Kali, the Hindu goddess of power, to tide her many uncooperative moments with the polite and unknowable Americans.

   She prayed to Kali for strength so she would not break before down these polite Americans. And Kali, who was a mother nursing her infant, serene, black, exquisite, and Kali, who was a mother devouring her infant, furious, black and exquisite, who sat under silk saris in suitcase at Vassar, smiled out at her mischievously. Later Tara was fond of saying that she had first started to think for herself in the dormitory at Vassar. (TD 11).

Tara, consequently could draw her nutrition from Kali, the nursing mother who would give her the milk of kind-heartedness, safety and security. At the same time she receives the spiritual power of Kali during the times of struggle.

   In the short story collection Darkness, “A Father” shows the importance of Kali myth. Mr. Bhowmick worship Goddess Kali, whose image he has painstakingly carved out and painted in his carpentry class, bonds him to the roots he had thought he had outgrown: Kali, it may be recalled, is especially revered among Bengalis. Kali is the terrible Mother-Goddess, Shakti incarnate. To avoid all the evils, he has ‘Kali Mata’ in the wooden shrine.

   The protagonist of the novel, Jasmine is different from Tara. Jasmine has to be rendered supreme strength and will power to face boldly all the dangers that slow down her pathway. She attempts to undergo a dangerous journey to the New World to satisfy her husband’s dream. She says, “My husband was obsessed with passing exams… We’d be on the other side of the earth, out of God’s sight” (JM 85).

   To achieve and fulfil her husband’s dream she took a lot of efforts and risks. She travelled in a ship which was led by the Captain, Half-face. However
subsequently landing in America when half-face demands his price, the lustful activities with Jasmine, she in an actually feminist gesture decides to kill the devil incarnate. Mukherjee vividly wraths two archetypal images to enact this killing: of Kali the goddess of Destruction and strength of the broken pitcher. “When a clay pitcher breast… The air inside in the same as the outsider… There is no insides and outsides. We are just shells of the same Absolute” (JM 15). Half-face commits the terrible act of raping her that makes her look nasty and isolated that she would put an end to herself. Though knowledge succeeds upon her and she decides that she would not yield herself to death. She feels: “I could not let my personal dishonour disrupt my mission. There would be plenty of time to die… I extended my tongues and sliced it” (JM 117-118). As she kills him, she becomes Kali incarnate, the divinity of punishing fury-death incarnate, and the killing becomes so easy and she enacts a kind of death for her too: the death of the old self, through the symbolic burning of her dishonoured clothes and out of the ashes rises phoenix-like a new self. Mukherjee also raises the archetypal image of the broken pitcher:

I said my prayer for the dead clutching my Ganapati. I thought, the pitcher is broken. Lord Yama, who had wanted me, who had courted me, and whom I’d flirted with on the long trip over, had now deserted me . . . . The vision of lying serenely on a bed of fire under palm trees in my whiter sari had motivated all the weeks of sleepless, half-starved passage, the number surrender to various men for the reward of an orange, a blanket, and a slice of cheese. I had protected this sari, and Praksahs suit, through it all. Then he had touched it. He had put on the suit, touched my sari, my photographs and Ganapati. My body was
merely the shell, soon to be discarded. Then I could be reborn, debts and sins all paid for. (JM 120-121)

The dropping of blood from Jasmine’s tongue in a way recognises itself to Kali’s terrifying act. Perhaps Mukherjee tries to mean that no man can even reach Jasmine with such intension.

Mukherjee compares the value systems hidden in Hindu and Western myths, as in the juxtaposition of world views: “. . . I had given Bud a new trilogy to contemplate; Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. And he has lent me his; Musical, Brock and Gibson” (JM 6). Jasmine, who freely gives her sequence shows their values as creator, preserver and destroyer. The opening sentence jams ancient Hindu myths against the latest western technology: “Lifetimes ago, under a banyan tree in the village of Hasnapur, an astrologer cupped his ears- his satellite dish to the stars- and foretold my widowhood and exile” (JM 1). His prediction proves both right and wrong: Jyoti/Jasmine is widowed and leaves India; but her embrace of America can hardly be called an ‘exile’. The astrologer replies to her shouted denial of his prediction by chucking her on the head and that causes her to fall on the firewood she is carrying. The fall in turn causes a twig to punch ‘a star shaped wound” (JM 1) on her head. As the astrologer re-enters his trace, regarding Jyoti as “a speck in the solar system”, she declares her ‘star’ to be her third eye- not a superficial “inch-long pale, puckered scar” (JM 1) and announces: “Now I’m a sage” peering into “invisible worlds” (JM 5). “Seeing through the third eye”, as Jasmine tells Taylor, leads to “enlightenment . . . and sensing designs in history’s muddles” (JM 52).

According to Basham, “Traditional stories of Shiva’s third eye associate is not only with wisdom and insight” (307) but also with fierceness and sexuality. According to one story by Ions “when the love god Kama attempts to inflame Shiva
with love of Parvathi while he is engaged in ascetic meditation, his third eye reduces Kama to Ashes” (81-82). Jasmine considers her third eye in the same way when half-face, the rapist boat captain, smashes her forehead against a motel television set so that she feels her “scar tightening, and the heat from the screen on my swelling” (JM 113).

Sita, the protagonist of *Ramayana* has a boundless influence on Indian women in common and the authors in particular. The quiet, dutiful Sita of the epic takes diverse expressions in the hands of the creative writers. In *Wife*, Sita reference appears to be somewhat surficial but the reference lead into the concealed irony in the description of the character Dimple, the protagonist of the novel. Indian women see Sita as an personification of virtue and chastity but, Dimple, the personification of inconsistency and fickleness says that she would like to lead a life like that of Sita.

Meera Manvi view that by the means of Sita myth, Mukherjee presents two means of existence of Sita namely, Sita’s heroic path of self-abnegation and sacrifice and Sita the liberated woman who raises against the injustice meted out to her by entering the bowls of earth. She says:

The narrative structure of *Wife* is conceptualized through Mukherjee’s evocation of the Sita myth at Strategic moments in the narrative; the examination of myth is further strengthened by the opposition that is successfully manipulated between passive resistance the violence, female desire the male authority, enclosure the freedom, marriage as bond the female eroticism, reality the after dream, love marriage. (141)

The idea of being like Sita becomes frequent in her mind so that she can show herself to be courageous. She thinks “Oh, to have walked through fire! Oh, to have had the courage and the passion to be dramatic!” (WF 30). Obviously, the author has
decided to create a protagonist who turn into negative; “a woman transformed” (WF 35), a woman who “had broken through her fortress of politeness” (WF 34). In other words, she is no more than Sita she wants to be. This ingenious connecting also enables the author to present a narrative structure, which would appropriately reflect the immigrant attitude. This type of structure also discloses the negative personality motivated by shadow archetypes.

The Sita myth elaborately subjugated in *The Holder of the World* is not only connotative but also appropriately practical. Bhagmati, the protagonist Hannah Easton’s Indian maid narrates the story of the *Ramayana* to her. Bhagmati-Hannah relationship is a good illustration of ‘female Bonding’. As Nalini Iyer observes that it is tempting to read the growing friendship between as a pean to universal sisterhood” (37). Nalini Iyer also talk over in detail how powerfully Sita myth has been paradoxically undermined that provides strength to characterization.

Mukherjee presents the story telling method through Bhagmati. For Bhagmati, Sita’s story is a part of an oral tradition kept alive, a story that represents for her an ideal of womanhood and marital relationships. She attempts to practice Sita’s story to adapt Hannah into Indian culture, but Hannah herself is unable to syncretize her experience of relocation and sexuality with Sita’s dislocation in Lanka and her fear of rape by Ravana, her captor. While Bhagmati narrates Sita’s story, Hannah wonders about Sita’s own form of the events, which she discovers fascinating in its absence. Her cultural back ground possibly makes her look into the breaks in the *Ramayana* story.

Mukherjee portrays Hannah’s story in contrast to that of Sita’s. Contrasting Sita, who is kidnapped by man from another culture, Hannah is saved, not kidnapped, by an alien man, Jadav Singh, and divergent to Sita who remains faithful to her
husband, Hannah seduces Jadav Singh, there by gains sanctuary in an alien land.
Unlike Rama, Sita’s faithful husband, Hannah’s husband, Gabriel, is neither faithful
nor concerned about Hannah’s welfare. The novel has got some intrusions into the
mythological world. Sita’s imprisonment in Lanka by the multi-headed monster
Ravana has got a mythological meaning in the novel. The narrative style of Bhagmati
in detailing the Ramayana to Hannah reveals what a mythological text means to
Indians.

Tara, in The Tree Bride, was constantly nostalgic about her childhood spent
with her grandparents who told her many mythological stories including the story of
Tree Bride alias Tara Lata Gangooly. Tara was fascinated by the story to the extent
that she wished to write a book on Tree Bride. Tara Lata Gangooly was a spirited
activist who was widowed at the age of five on her wedding day and therefore forced
to marry a tree in the jungle of Mishtigunj. Subsequently mentioned as Tree Bride she
devoted her life to the Indian freedom struggle and fought wholeheartedly till her last
breath. Her heroic unexpectedly comes to an end when after her arrest she dubiously
dies of heart attack in the jail. The circumstances of her death are not clearly stated by
the British government thereby suggesting a cold blooded murder of a freedom
fighter. Tara’s life is unknowingly weaved into the story of tree bride and this marks
her urges to visit India.

In Leave It Me, Debby is an Indian born orphan who has been raised in
America by American parents, after she was abandoned by her biological mother.
Debby start on a spiritual and initiary quest for roots that turns them into vengeful
Greek heroine Electra as well as multi-armed kali, the Hindu goddess of war, well-
known for her ability to behead whose blood she drinks so as to gain strength. Helped
in their quest by elephant-headed Ganesha, the Hindu god of travellers, and Thanatos,
the Greek personification of death, they follow an inexorable path inspired both Greek Fate and Hindu Dharma, the endless cycles of never-ending times usually represented by means of a wheel made of eight axes, each branch standing for a ‘vasu’, that is to say a natural element: earth, fire, space, wind, air, the sun, the constellations and the Moon. The Cosmic order represented by means of that wheel is of karman, which has a direct impact on ‘samsara’, the transmigration of soul, also called reincarnation.

By classifying her characters either with Electra or Kali, Bharti Mukherjee deals Hindu and Greek mythological heroines with new literary lives. Most myths typically obey the similar emotional drives and they all deal with human emotions such as anger, jealousy, or revenge for example. So the purpose of Greek and Hindu mythological figures in Mukherjee’s novels is to reflect the characters’ inner lives on the one hand, and to generate action on the other.

Debby, whose name is the short form of Deborah, one of the twelve judges of Israel in The Bible, wishes to change her name into Devi. In Sanskrit, the name Devi means goddess Kali, who is equally a harsh and rewarding character in Hinduism. The perversion of her parents’ souls and acts is paralleled by the amusing dishonesty of mythological figures such as Biblical Salome, the Hindu god Varuna and the Shakespearian hero Romeo. Debby’s father, who is called Romeo hides under Salome’s disguise and make believe to be named Ma Varuna. Varuna is a renowned Hindu male mythological figure who signifies universal agreement and order as well as thrilling. By distorting the traditional function of the mythological hero Varuna and by exposing Shakespearean Romeo’s nobleness of heart, the author vindicates the right for literature to question traditional narratives as well as pre-established social rules.
In *Desirable Daughters* and *The Tree Bride*, after having a lot of experiences in life, the protagonist, Tara, re-marries her ex-husband and turns into a dedicated wife. Tara is told a tale of a legendary king of Harish Chandra while she goes to India at the end of the novel. Hari Chandra did the whole thing to keep his promises and to complete his ‘dharma’, religious duty. Thus story makes Tara understand that people who perform their duty as is expected from them are the one who experiences the happiness of life and marriage. During the beginning of her marriage, Tara thought that marriage is all about sex and enjoyment and she laughs at seeing the women who has been introduced by her mother-in-law. That woman has been serving her husband who is suffering from Parkinson’s disease. Her mother-in law tells Tara that “she holds the bedpan under him. She cleans him with her own hands. And she has a master’s degree from the Delhi School of Economics.” (DD 83). Later she realizes her mistakes, helps Bish to restart his life, becomes a dedicated wife and she reunites with her ex-husband. The myth of the legendary figure makes Tara to understand the concept of marriage that it is not a mere physical satisfaction.

Mukherjee includes the myths that suit to the modern life. She deals with the issue of balancing the magnificence of myth with more critical mode of realism. It is fairly factual that dealing with pragmatism permits the author to build a term that can be made whole world to attain a harmonious balance between self and society and thus give some meaning to their reality and ethos. Mukherjee uses myth as the reference points or kind of code, or short cut but the Indian mythic modes does not in fact deliver women with a strategy for freedom from male supremacies.

The use of satire and irony is also a narrative technique found in the fiction. Satire and gentle irony are used profusely by Mukherjee when describing the experiences of Indian women abroad either as immigrants, or when they return to
India for visit. In *Tiger’s Daughter*, Tara has even started thinking like an American, getting disillusioned and suspicious about the indifferent conditions in India. She needs to share her experiences with her friends, particularly the disagreeable ones which she could not talk to David about, as he would never understand. But she senses that her friends want to know only about the glamour and good things of American life: "They were racial purists thought Tara desperately. They liked foreigners in movie magazines . . . They loved Englishmen like Worthington at the British Council. But they did not approve of foreign marriage partners . . .” (TD 86). Though she has longed for the respect of her friends as well as the sense of being liberated in daring to marry a foreigner, but she did not get it. She expects that at least David would appreciate her efforts at cleaning the toilet or bathtub, which was usually done by servants at her home in Calcutta. As she reflects: 'There was no heroism for her in New York. It appeared there would be no romance, no admiration in Calcutta either. It had been foolish, she knew, to expect admiration” (TD 86). The irony of her situation is that Tara really belongs neither to New York nor to her home land India. She has become rootless: “The years away from India had made her self-centered. She took everything, the heat, the beggars, as personal insults and challenges” (TD 86). There is yet another incident that she describes with poignant irony. She goes for a visit to her Aunt Jharna and her club-footed daughter. In an effort to reach out to them, she enquires solicitously whether they had tried plaster casts for the disabled legs. The Aunt feels offended, and misunderstands her intentions: “You think you are too educated for this, don't you?” Aunt Jharna laughed with a quiet violence. “You have come back to make fun of us, haven't you? What gives you the right? Your American money? Your mleccha husband?” (TD 36). Mukherjee appears to satirically speak about the unexpected change of Tara's thoughts on India. The return to India
has been what she has dreamt about for years, but now she finds it most upsetting. “First the corrosive hours on the Marine Drive, then the deformed beggars in the railway station, and now the inexorable train ride steadily undid what strength she had held in reserve” (TD 25).

In *Wife*, we are familiarized to the nervous sensibility of Dimple Dasgupta who is so conditioned by traditional Indian concepts, that she considers marriage to be the only objective of her existence. In satiric explanations and ironic circumstances and dialogue, we see the mental trouble of Dimple before her marriage and after that. There are numerous examples of verbal irony. Dimple desires for her husband to soft voice words of love to her, but when he is unable to do so, she says, “But I want you to say things to me. The way husbands are supposed to” and he replies: “I'm not good at saying things” (WF 22). Dimple satirically positions him along with: “blender, colour TV, cassette tape recorder, stereo, in their order of convenience” (WF 113). The lack of real communication between her husband and herself develops frighteningly lonely for her. She blames him for her condition. As a final point she chooses to obtain her freedom by killing him while he is eating, unaware of her intentions. Thus the tale of Dimple ends in macabre irony. She stabs him seven times, again ironic, as it is representative of the seven steps taken by a Hindu bridal couple during the marriage rite to invoke blessings for a long married life.

In her short stories, like “A Wife's Story”, there are satiric and ironic images of a husband who move toward to meet his wife in America, desire for a honeymoon. She has come there only for the purpose of higher study; but her attitudes have completely changed. Ironically, the husband is not conscious of this, for whose advantage, she puts on a show of wifely devotion and wears her mangalsutra. But she discloses to the readers satirically: “That part of my life is over, the way trucks have
replaced loins in my vocabulary, the way Charity Chin and her lurid love life have replaced inherited notions of marital duty” (DN 32)

In “The Tenant”, the immoral life of the chief character is satirised. Maya Sanyal, the protagonist, knows that her extravagance is just the “sad parade of need and demand” (DN 111) and that, “She feels ugly and unworthy. Her adult life no longer seems miraculously rebellious; it is grim, it is perverse. She has accomplished nothing” (DN 110). In fact, it is ironical that when she becomes unrestrained and disobedient by Western values, she senses very hollow and depressed. Mukherjee is satirising sexual freedom in the immigrant woman that has been occupied to the dangerous limits of extravagance in the western background.

In the story, “The Lady from Lucknow”, a young married Indian lady attract attention from Lucknow, living in the United States., tries to seduce an elderly, sixty five year old, married white man. She supposes that when his wife finds out the affair, she would be jealous, enthusiastic and outburst. But, on seeing them in bed, together, the wife dismisses the Indian lady, as of no consequence. The wife embarrasses their passion. The Indian lady is no threat to the white woman, she is: “. . . just another involvement of a white man in a pokey little outpost, something that ‘men do’ and then come to their senses while the memsahibs drink gin and tonic and fan their faces” (DN 33). The lady from Lucknow is come into contact with the irony of the situation and amusedly reflects: “I was a shadow without depth or colour, a shadow - temptress who would float back to a city of teeming millions when the affair with James had ended. I had thought myself provocative and fascinating. What had begun as an adventure had become shabby and complex” (DN 33).

There is a gruesomely ironic story, “A Father”, in which the daughter of a family settled in the United States gets pregnant all of a sudden. She is an unmarried
woman, and the parents especially the father, Mr. Bhowmick, who notices the change in her first, is worried. He then notices that she is moving around only with girls. When she is forced by her mother to reveal the name of the father of the unknown child, she screams. “Who needs a man?” she hissed. “The father of my baby is a bottle and syringe. Men louse up your lives. I just want a baby. Oh, don't worry - he's a certified fit donor” (DN 72). His wife says, “Like animals” (DN 72) then he hears horror in her voice for the first time. “Yes, yes, yes, she screamed, like livestock. Just like animals. You should be happy - that's what marriage is all about, isn't it? Matching blood lines, matching horoscopes, matching castes, matching, matching, matching” (DN 73). At these words of his daughter, Mr. Bhowmick is so disturbed and shocked at the scornful tone, where she is equating her pregnancy with the formalities of an arranged marriage; that he becomes mad with anger and hits at his daughter's stomach violently with murderous intentions. The ultra-progressive notions of his daughter, who decides to have a baby without physical relations with a man, are thus satirised here by Mukherjee.

In the story “Nostalgia”, Dr. Manny Patel an Indian, conventional at heart, falls for an Indian woman whom he thinks, is a typical, traditional Indian woman. But the woman turns out, ironically, to be a minor who has dumped him for his money. He has to hand over a cheque for seven hundred dollars to the pimp when he is caught red handed. Returning home after the humiliating episode, he decides, “And in August, he would take his wife on a cruise through the Caribbean and make up for this night with a second honeymoon” (DN 113).

In “Visitors” Mukherjee satirises the life of an externally successful Indian couple. Instead of feeling happy in her relationship with her husband, she muses satirically: “Why then is she moved by an irresistible force to steal out of his bed in
the haven of his expensive condominium, and run off into the alien American night where only shame and disaster can await her?” (DN 176). Her frustrations and longing for adventure and passion, which she can never hope to get from her predictably comfortable married life, is satirised here.

Memory is nothing but the recollection of the past. This technique is known as flashback technique. The use of memory as a narrative technique has been found very effective for enlightening awareness as a universal, everlasting and personal reality. Memory has come within reach for the woman writer in her effort to emphasis the attention of the protagonist in the novel. It also communicates a psychological ability to the characters and their actions, and changes the fiction into a world of subjectivity and private emotional response. Through memory the protagonist is interested by the longing to redefine the self after engaging it against a subjectively supposed personal past. Remembrance in these novels keeps the present in constant firmness with the past. There is an wide-ranging past sealed within each single moment in the present and the fiction’s philosophical and artistic objective is the fusion of the working present and the remembered past into the central character’s image of herself.

Memory plays a significant role in reclamation and recollection of the lost world. This gives writer an opportunity to use her own expatriate ‘insider/outsider’ view to give the reader a taste of the ‘double cultural shock’ as India comes alive in her work with the beggars, the dirt all around and the violent political scenario. The outside world often gives way to the world at home where the family treats her as an outcaste and her friends as a foreigner. This technique helps the writer to exercise her Indian dream and consequently break away from the native land.

Bharati Mukherjee operates at two levels of consciousness, frequently shifting their focus back and forth between the alien and the native world. Her diasporic
consciousness introduces both these worlds along with their past and present. In her novel, Wife, most of the passage by means of the technique of memory stalk from Dimple’s panic-stricken answers and her mirror image upon her helpless marital predicament. She dislikes her pregnancy and her husband who is responsible for it. Not only her husband but also his entire family is hated by her. She cannot give opening to her hatred in reality. This she satisfies in her imagination. Her imaginary games are suggestive of her neurotic activities:

There were games she played with these strangers; she threw bits of newspapers, hair balls, and nail clippings down on the heads below to make them jerk upwards in anger. From these trapped, angry faces she borrowed noses, warts, and eyebrows, to be assembled in fantasy in endless combinations of dread. Sleeping was worse than anything awake, for then she was sucked into the center of cone-shaped emotions that made her sweat, cry loudly, sit up in bed”. (WF 34)

In most of the short stories of Mukherjee, the characters think about their homeland and so the past and present were often shown in the stories. The memory about the past life is significant in the short stories. They are caught between two cultures. The expatriates long for the homeland and thinks about the past but the immigrants think about their past but celebrates the present.

In Jasmine, the narrative shifts at rare moments from the present to the past in which Jyoti spent her childhood in a small village in Hasnapur, Punjab. As she once worked as a caregiver at Taylor’s house, her memories go back to Hasnapur, to “the Mazhi woman’s their maidservant, and to her dried-out abode walls with water cow-dung” (JM 175). Jasmine, then, travels back into the past remembering her marriage to Prakash, the young ambitious man: “suddenly it all came back: Jullunder, Prakash,
a day just before the end, at Bata shoes. An image triggered the tears, the screams . . .” (JM 132). Again, in Badan, when Scott grins “with his perfect teeth”, she remembers that they had no “dentist in Hasnapur: For a long time (they) had no doctor either, except for vaccination- Sahib, who rode in and out of the village in a WHO jeep” (JM 19). It is interesting to note that in Mukherjee’s works the immigrants are shown predominantly moving in the present. Their escape into the past is temporary and so she fails to build up an atmosphere surcharged with the feeling of intense nostalgia. The present is more dominating in Mukherjee’s work.

In The Tiger’s Daughter, she employs the technique of describing the political riots in Calcutta through the mouth of a new cater: “This is All India Radio Calcutta. Here is the news read by Gopal Kumar Basu” (TD 71) and further, “These have been isolated Skirmishes between the police and the demonstrators on Rasbehari Avenue near Deshaprya park. Eight men have been taken to hospital” (TD 72). Then again, she lets this reporter-narrator say, “The marches are proceeding in somewhat disorderly fashion. They have passed Firpo’s and the grand Hotel. The Police have cordoned off the area of the maiden . . .” (TD 73). The use of the reporter and the journalistic style create an impression of objectivity and authencity and make the whole description look realistic.

Irony is another technique used to ridicule the actions of the immigrants. Mukherjee has an ironic dig at the immigrants who have created for themselves ghetto of nostalgia in America. They refuse to react to the environment or people around them. They are typical Indian immigrants who prefer watching Hindi films and reading Punjabi newspapers. Mukherjee has a subtle dig at these immigrants like Nirmala in Jasmine, who “to date in her years in America had exhausted the available
stock of Hindi films on tape and was now renting Urdu films . . . She faced a grim future of Bengali and Karnatak films” (JM 145).

Mukherjee also uses imagery as part of her technique. In “Loose Ends”, human beings have become “Locusts” (JM 45) to arrive in “Miami, a jungle” (JM 44). Hot water ports like Florida, Bangkok, Manila and Bombay is like “Snake Shit” (JM 49). Her works are full of violent scenes. This is one way in which she depicts the American as well as Indian society. In fact, it is through the use of violence that she brings out the differences in the societies of these two countries. In Jasmine, for example, she treats scenes of violence in a melodramatic manner. The protagonist Jasmine slits her tongue and “ribbons of bright blood” (JM 118) turn her into an image of Kali; and with her “mouth open, pouring blood, (her) red tongue out” (JM 118), she stabs Half-face.

The death scenes that follows is described thus: “No one to call to, no one to disturb us . . . my body bloodied’ (JM 119). This is followed by three more violent scenes, each of which is like scenes from a typical Western movie and equally senseless. Harlan Kroener shoots Bud “kissed’ Jasmine and whispered in her ear. “He is going to shoot me” (JM 193) and then walked in front of Harlan and got shot dead. After Harlan had shot Bud, “he blew his own head off” (JM 199). The suicide of Darrel Lutz at the end of the novel is not only melodramatic but also bizarre. He hung from the roof with his feet chewed by his crazed, carnivorous hogs:

On the road lies shadow, the halves of his body practically perpendicular. Straight ahead, a boiling sea of pink hogs: their heads, their backs, their legs jump above the open cinder-block wall. Bud is staring a head at the hogs. I find my eyes slowly rising to the roofs pinnacle. The frail man who is still slowly twisting and twisting from
the rafter with an extension cord wrapped around his stiffly angled neck. (JM 234)

In *Jasmine* there are gruesome scenes in India as well. For example Jasmine (Jyoti) being the fifth daughter is almost strangled to death by her own mother and the sister recalls “a ruby red choker of bruise around [her] throat and sapphire finger prints on [her] collarbone” (JM 40). Jyoti’s school teacher, Masterji, was shot dead in the separatist Sikh movement. They first knocked his turban off and called him insulting names. Holding his beard and his exposed white hair in his hands he cried: “I am a good Sikh . . . why are you doing this? We are peaceful people” (JM 65). Yet he was killed in the most melodramatic manner: “They pulled out the ceremonial comb, and his life-long hair fell over his shoulders, down. After they freed his rolled-up bread and chopped it, off, they spun him . . . emptying over thirty bullets in him (JM 86). Her husband was killed by Khalaza Lions through a bomb planted in a “music box” in the central bazaar of Jullundar: “The sidewalk surge, men scream . . . [her] hands touch a red wet cheek” (JM 93). And her father too died- abruptly in an accident attacked and killed by a bull in the field: “The Bull attacked him from behind: he never saw it coming” (JM 58).

These bizarre and gruesome incidents in India bring out the Indian society. First, the girl child is unwanted: “Daughters were curses. A daughter had to be married off before she could enter heaven, and dowries beggared families for generations’ (JM 39). Secondly, the fanatical Sikh uprising in the 1980s bring out the communal violence: “The Khalsa, the pure-bodied and the pure-hearted, must have their sovereign state. Khalistan, the land of the pure” (JM 65). The Khalasa Lions “hung out, hacking branches thick as staff to beat people . . . bikes and scooters”. Sometimes they would “cut down whole tress and drag them across the only road,
forcing motor traffic to stop”. They would also “threaten the passengers, sometimes robb[ed] them” (JM 54).

In *Jasmine*, Mukherjee has made a skilful use of violent to bring out the different aspects of two different societies. There are more unnatural deaths in her works; for example, in *Wife*, Dimple too murders her husband in an extremely melodramatic manner: ‘She touched the curves of [his] cheek . . . where to strike or pierce and make bleed in the dark” (WF 17). At the end, her murderous thought is executed in a dramatic manner. The melodramatic murder ends in an ever more melodramatic manner as she stares at the knife, “that was redder now than it had ever been when she had chopped chicken and mutton . . . on the same counter” (WF 213). This act of Dimple is symbolic of her self-liberation.

Violence is seen in most of the fiction of Bharati Mukherjee, In “The World According to Hsu”, Ratna thinks that she will be considered as the ‘other’ in Canada due to discrimination. Her husband consoles her that they will be safe in Canada, “. . . violence is everywhere. Toranto’s the safest city on the continent “ (DN 47). In “A Father”, Bhowmick killed her own daughter because of her unknown pregnancy. Violence is shown in the form of racial discrimination also. In most of the short stories, especially in “The World According to Hsu”, “Isolated Incident”, “Tamurlane”, the discrimination makes the characters to suffer a lot.

The titles of Mukherjee’s novels have a symbolic intelligence. Her first novel titled *The Tiger’s Daughter* represents the clutch of the father on his daughter’s life and hold of society on a person’s life. Tara Cartwright Banerjee, the female protagonist, has always been over observed by her father’s personality. The title also represents the irony of life. At the end of the novel, the daughter of an extremely powerful man of Bengal becomes raped by a corrupt politician. This signifies the
corruption of Indian politics and Tara signifies the discrimination and manipulation of democracy. Her next novel *Wife* ridicules at the old idea of marriage. It represents the shifting features of a female protagonist who is stuck between the old and new notions of marriage. The irony lies in the fact that a novel titled *Wife* ends with the wife killing her husband. Mukherjee’s third novel *Jasmine* is the story of the protagonist, Jasmine, the good-looking blossom whose perfume breezes throughout the air. It symbolizes the transformation of Jyoti (light) into Jasmine (flower). It portrays the fact that no matter what parents dream of for their children, they are intended to change. The title *Desirable Daughters* ridicules at those who are gender biased.

The title *The Tree Bride*, sequel to *Desirable Daughters*, symbolizes the lifetime imprisonment of a woman, named Tara Lata, by society. The irony is that the wife of a tree, mother of many villagers, a living divinity, really falls in love with a man and gets murdered while working for his assignment. This displays that the world can bind the human body but it can never restrain the human emotion and personality.

In Mukherjee’s fiction, the electrical appliances that the heroines pick up to use in America have their own importance. Even as they become more and more at ease with these appliances, these extremely expressive women start imitating some of the modernisation and efficiency of machines. Dimple considers of all the facilities provided by America as a wonder, and so does Jasmine, who, even when she is raped, does not fail to appreciate the hot water facility.

I [Jasmine] had never used a Western shower, standing instead of squatting, with automatic hot water coming hard from a nozzle instead of cold water from a hand- dipped pitcher. It seemed like a miracle, that even here in a place that looked deserted, a place like a mad house or a prison where the most hideous crimes took place, the water should
be hot, the tiles and porcelain should be clean, without smells, without bugs. It was a place that permitted a kind of purity. (JM 117)

Dimple also appreciates technology as a power. Nevertheless, it is true that the universal presence and use of modern appliances is making humans unemotional and detached, which in turn affects human relationships and human life. Dimple’s friendship with television stars and Jasmine being impressed by Du, her adopted son’s efficiency with electric gadgets, present the same idea.

The bombing of Tara’s house by a bomber in Desirable Daughters and the murder of Victoria Khanna, Tara’s doctor cum friend, with a mobile bomb in The Tree Bride makes Tara hate modern machines. It shows how human beings become victim to their own inventions. Mukherjee’s novel The Tree Bride sounds coming back with her demand to go back to the world of mortality. In Jasmine, Taylor, Jasmine’s first employer and lover, delivers the way out to Jasmine’s difficulty of getting rid of annoying produces presented on television. “He [Taylor] wrote on a package in thick marking pen ‘Return’ or ‘Sender’. That’s all you need to do, he explained. If something gets too frightening just pull down an imaginary shade that says Return on it and you can make it go away” (JM 186).

Mukherjee’s style has undergone a change over a period of time as is evident from her shift from the British English to American English. Educated in the exclusive Loreto Convent, Calcutta, in India. She found it quite natural to have a hold over British English. India had after all been a British colony for over two hundred years and has inherited the language of the former colonial rulers as legacy. We can see glimpses of the British English at the beginning of The Tiger’s Daughter:

Tara Bombay relatives were all at the airport to welcome her. They had brought garlands and sweetmeats to put her at ease, but after the long
flight, the awkward stops in transit lounges, and the clearing of customs she was groggy and nervous about meeting them. Little nephews whose names she did not catch were told to touch her feet in pronam when she was introduced to them as ‘the American auntie’.

The Bombay relatives hugged her and spoke to her. (TD 17)

Mukherjee skilfully shapes the language into the casual American shorthand. Jasmine, the village girl from India in Jasmine has picked up this style and we find her using it many a time. As in “The add-ons cozy me into thinking that all of us Ripplemeyers, even us new ones, belong” (JM 32); “Well shit, that’s not far at all, Kind of a scrawny little bastard, ain’t he?” (JM 114). Again, “I served the sweet, frothy tea in heavy brass tumblers and snuck a look at them” (JM 150). In Leave It to Me, Gabe sticks a note in American English: “Hope . . . Wish we’d met earlier. Just too fucked up” (LM 72).

Mukherjee uses American spellings in her later works. For instance, she spells the word ‘centre’ in American English as ‘center’ and ‘colour’ as ‘color’ etc. In British English proper full length sentences are used. We also observe that sentences are relatively sedate and slow moving unlike the racy sentences in American English. Then, unlike American English, British English is free from slang and swearwords while American English uses both rather liberally. Though Mukherjee uses American English in her later works, she sometimes slips into the British English, particularly in Jasmine, when she brings out Jasmine’s thoughts. “When I was child, born in a mud hut without water or electricity, the Green Revolution had just struck Punjab. Bicycles were giving way to scooters and to cars, radios to television. I was the last to be born to that of submission, that expectation of ignorance” (JM 229).
The frequent use of abbreviation also adds a broader dimension to Mukherjee’s narrative technique. Her works such as *Jasmine, The Holder of the World* and *Leave it to me*, brings out the content and style of Mukherjee’s writing while presenting the American world. However these abbreviations create confusion and at times break up the link as the reader grapples with the full form of these abbreviations. Though Mukherjee uses Hindi words in her later works as well, yet it is her early works which are heavily loaded with such words. In *The Tiger’s Daughter*, *Wife* and *Days and Nights in Calcutta*, such words are scattered all over. By using Hindi words she manages to re-create a credible Indian atmosphere.

Mukherjee’s writings, display a definite understanding of the multicultural life in North America, which is her new home. To give a realistic touch to her fiction, in *The Tiger’s Daughter*, Mukherjee uses the epistolary form first used by Richardson in his *Pamela*. This technique highlights the reality of the situation and brings out the thoughts and feelings of the character. Though the letters in Mukherjee are much shorter than those in *Pamela*, they depict a true picture of Indian society. It is through letters that David remains connected with his Indian wife during the entire novel. Newspaper articles and editorials also form a part of the novel and bring out the political situation in Bengal.

The technique used by Mukherjee brings out the American and the Indian atmosphere realistically in all her works. She bring out the feelings of nostalgia, alienation and depression. She shows her characters gradually rising above their alienation and working for assimilation in their new home. These narrative techniques assist one to understand the diasporic predicament in a better way.