CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this era of constantly contracting and shrinking boundaries diasporic reciprocation has become one of the first and foremost postcolonial complexity. Postcolonialism is often referred to as ‘the theory of migrancy’ since it deals with the major themes of migration, immigration and displacement. Therefore, diasporic situation can be used as a metaphor which presents physical displacement, cultural confrontation, rootlessness and a socio-psychological identity question.

In the later part of the twentieth century a great upheaval took place in the realm of intellectual reasoning. Along with the economic globalization the need for social and aesthetic globalization is also felt which give rise to a sort of tendency that have started questioning and doubting about the authenticity of Eurocentric hegemony. The so called passive and mute people of ex-colonies have refused to abide by theories and laws propounded by them. Their inquisitiveness and zeal for innovative temperament pose a challenge before them. This intellectual awakening and the feeling of being included and recognized in the mainstream day to day business of life both in the local as well as world wide arena is known as Postcolonial fervour.

This is an era of “globalising spread” (Meenakshi Mukherjee 3). After having been accustomed to the prolonged silence in the Eurocentric/Universalist aesthetic as well as materialistic norms; the prolonged silent people of the ex-colonies had
started speaking and interrogating about themselves, thus, spreading and enhancing their identity globally. In this way they have made their existence being felt. Their narrow, local existence has eventually become the part of a broader historical process of global magnitude worthy of being theorized as postcolonialism.

Today every sphere of life is filled with this fervour but it is more evident in the realm of literature, as literature like a compass directs or shows the prevailing trends and ideologies of a society. It presents before us the true picture of the society. Like a mirror it truly reflects the prevailing social, economic, political and literary trends. The influence of colonialism and imperialism is felt by more than two-third of the population of the world. Their sufferings, oppression, exploitation, subordination, subjugation all are very well reflected in the contemporary literature. Thus, literature plays an important role of providing an outlet which expresses the sentiments, emotions and feelings of the people.

In the newly independent countries of Africa and Asia, the advent of independence, after a long period of struggle had given birth to a new kind of literature which came to be known as 'Post-colonial Literature'. This new literature deals with the impact of European Imperial domination on contemporary writings. So, the literature written in all the ex-colonies, common-wealth countries like India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Canada, the West Indies, taken as a whole is termed as Postcolonial literature. The literature of these ex-colonized, independent countries shows the difference in outlook and socio-cultural values from the assumptions of the imperial centre, thus making them truly postcolonial. The complexities and
varied cultural experience of the independent nations have given birth to a new
critical theory called postcolonial literary theory. Imperialism questioned and
challenged the rationale behind the native sense of pride in its own culture by
imposing its own alien thought patterns upon it and changing the structures of
local culture itself:

Postcolonial literature emerged in their present form out of the experience of colonization and asserted themselves by foregrounding the tension within the imperial power, and by emphasizing their differences from the assumption of the imperial centre (Ashcroft 2).

Thus, postcolonial writings mean the rejection and dismissal of the colonial imperial discourses along with their value system. The proponents of the postcolonial writings have started questioning about the validity of European theories. Chronologically Postcolonialism can be defined as the period after the demise of empires but on the ideological level it has got a wider meaning. It is a new approach which enables us to feel and see a drastic change in the academic practice of literary studies. Meenakshi Mukherjee in Interrogating Post–colonialism considers it “as an emancipatory concept particularly for the students of literature outside the western world, because it makes us to interrogate many aspects of the study of literature that we were made to take for granted; enabling us not only to read our own texts in our own terms but also to re-interpret some of the old canonical texts from Europe from the perspective of our specific historical and geographical locations” (3-4).

Until the mid-twentieth century all critical discourse were produced from the point of view of the imperial centre of power. Now the so far passive, mute and
silent have got their say and their voice is being heard. They speak and interrogate about themselves from their own indigenous perspective. Thus, postcolonialism refers to a set of theoretical approach which focus on the direct effects of aftermaths of colonization. As a literary theory or critical approach it deals with literature produced in countries that were, or are now, colonies of other countries. It may also deal with literature written in or by citizens of colonizing countries that take colonies or their people as its subject matter. In the present global power-dynamics colonialism is evident through its different meaning and existence. The territorial form of colonialism has given way to other and subtle forms of domination in the realms of economy, industry, entertainment, culture and ideas. Therefore, although empires have ceased to exist yet postcolonialism can be explained with reference to a perspective which acknowledges that while colonialism ended on some levels, it persists on other levels. Now-a-days colonialism stands for new form of economic and cultural oppression that have succeeded modern colonialism; sometimes called neo-colonialism.

In the present times the multinational manufacturing companies have evolved in place of the empires. "They first create a desire, and then supply its attractive merchandise without which people had blissfully survived so far but now find it indispensable" (Meenakshi 10). This is an economic sort of colonialism. In the social arena it is castism, apartheid, oppression, subordination of the women and their marginalization in the patriarchal society. Infact all the social evils form this sort of colonialism. However, in the postcolonial era the dispossessed, the
peripheral and the oppressed are being taken into consideration. In *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha says:

A range of contemporary critical theories suggest that it is from those who have suffered the sentence history-subjugation, domination, diaspora, displacement - that we learn our most enduring lessons for living and thinking. There is even a growing conviction that the affective experience of social marginality... [T]ransforms our critical strategies (172).

The voices, identities and situations that were ignored by the colonial powers are however, perceived, defined and given due weightage in the postcolonial era. The oppressed dominated, subjugated, displaced and diasporic people are the main constituents of the postcolonialism. Infact so far ignored and marginalized have gained the central position in the present age of postcolonialism and the vision of questioning and doubting have started challenging the Eurocentric hegemony.

For a country to become truly postcolonial, it has to shed its colonial hangover along with the inherited socio-cultural value. "Colonial identity has to be decreated for postcolonial identity to flourish" (Bennet 168). Postcolonialism thus emphasizes on the self-recognition, indigenous culture and the structures of national identity. As mentioned earlier it is the literature which very well reflects postcolonial tendencies and ideologies. Postcolonial literature is the outcome of resistance of the postcolonial subject to colonial subjugation and so postcolonial literature is read as 'resistance' to 'the colonizer' that is the ‘common experience’ shared by colonized people. According to Arun Prabha Mukherjee in her *Postcolonialism : My Living*:
Postcolonial texts are seen as radical challenges to the mainstream curriculum because they are said to challenge Western hegemony. Psychoanalytical concepts are applied to diagnose the ills of the psyches of 'the colonized'. There is a spate of theoretical readings that utilize terms such as 'mimicry', 'hybridity' 'ambivalence' 'resistance', etc. to generalize about the postcolonial condition (14).

Thus, postcolonialism has provided a perspective through which we have started questioning about the aptness of the western hegemony in every sphere of life and different theories have evolved regarding different aspects of postcolonialism. It deals with and covers the different aspects of colonialism at length:

These themes can be described as the break-down of indigenous cultures under the onslaught of colonialism; the loss of history, the alienated individual who searches for his or her authentic self, the struggle against the colonizer, the writing of texts that record that struggle and the writing of texts that, in the famous phrase of Salman Rushdie 'write back' (Arun Prabha 5).

Since the mid sixties the term 'Commonwealth Literature' has been used as the comprehensive label for all English writing that has evolved from the various British Colonies, both during and after the age of imperial control. The term 'Commonwealth Literature' “gained academic currency” although it was not a “happy coinage” (Meenakshi 5). Due to lack of a better descriptive term it gradually came in vogue. However, with the passage of time a new term 'Postcolonial' is being, used slowly pushing out the old and seemingly a political name 'Common Wealth Literature':

Changes in nomenclature may sometimes reflect passing fashions in academic jargon, but more often
they are symptoms of major shifts in the terms of discourse, or a realignment of the epistemic grids through which literary texts and their contexts are institutionally organized (Meenakshi 6).

The term Commonwealth Literature was being replaced by Postcolonial literature as it was having some structural flaws in it. The rubric commonwealth literature was resented by the writers due to its restrictive frame, as it only provided a pedagogic convenience rather than a theoretical or creative concept. Salman Rushdie's condemnation of this 'phantom category' in his *Imaginary Homelands* is well known and manifold:

Its assumption that literature is an expression of nationality is its tendency to create a ghetto that could be patronized by the literary establishment, its insistence on lumping together very disparate writers just because they happened to write in English but keeping the British writers out of it, would never do to include English literature, the great sacred thing itself, with this bunch of upstarts, huddling together under this new and badly made umbrella (62).

Due to this type of structural flaws the term ‘Commonwealth Literature’ has finally fallen into academic disfavour. Meenakshi Mukherjee has said in *Interrogating Post-colonialism* about this biggest flaw that “the pre-supposition that an umbilical cord tied all the diverse bodies of writing - from Australia, Canada, India, Nigeria, Kenya, Trinidad, Jamaica, Barbados and the rest - to the mother country England but this centre which set the evaluative norms was absent or not taken in it because literature from Britain was never seen as part of this package. Whereas, Postcolonial literature is quite free of such centralist undertones. It suggests de-centering plurality; hybridity, a dismantling of authority - Thus, in many ways it is an enabling and protean term” (Meenakshi 6-7). The term
‘Postcolonial Literature’ is more apt as it is more comprehensive refined and flawless than the term commonwealth literature.

It would be more apt to call postcolonialism as the prevailing trend of English literature. Previously whatever the colonized people thought, wrote, did, analysed was all according to a set pattern established by the colonizers or by their rulers. The advent of independence and the post - independence atmosphere has made a drastic impact and effect on the thinking and visualization of colonial minds. Now these colonized people have started asking or questioning about the logic behind every principle and theory created by the colonizers. Infact these people have started challenging the Eurocentric hegemony. Further they want to get recognition for their identity and existence. They are now ready to spread their wings and become a global human being, a true cosmopolitan; but without losing their original texture.

Critical assessment or view is the weapon which thoroughly assess the meaning, relevance and aptness of a theory, ideology or the prevailing trend. Therefore, critics play an important role in the proper propagation of an ideology or a theory. So, is apt in the case of Postcolonialism which “said to have located its beginnings in Frantz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), its theorizing in Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978), and its critical assessment in Ashcroft , Griffith and Tiffin ‘s *The Empire Writes Back* (1989)” (Jain 15).

Frantz Fanon was not only the leading anti-colonial thinker of the twentieth century but also one of the pioneers of post colonialism. *The Wretched of The
Earth is the manifestation of his revolutionary ideas, which established him as an influencing force on anti-colonial and liberation movement throughout the world. According to Fanon, the writers who write about the exploitation of the natives of the colonized nation are “a race of angels”. They are “colourless, stateless, rootless” (176). They take up a “universal stand point at the cost of psycho-affective injuries” (218). He says that in order to establish a national culture, the national past that has been distorted by the colonial process has to be unearthed and made visible by the postcolonials, for the establishment of a national culture. The “passionate search for a national culture which existed before the colonial era finds its legitimate reason in the anxiety shared by native intellectuals to shrink away from that Western Culture in which they all risk being swamped” (265). Fanon preached the canon of total liberation that is the refusal to give recognition to the colonial supremacy. "Total liberation is that which concerns all sectors of the personality" (250).This aim of total liberation was treated by Fanon as an imaginative pretext for showing cultural differentiation from Europe and the colonizer’s ability to resist the cultural viscosity of Europe. He warns the oppressed from the dangers of a new type of colonialism that is globalization.

The seeds of thinking sowed by Fanon are further germinated by Edward Said; the most influential voice in the postcolonial studies. Said’s Orientalism forms an important background for postcolonial studies. Said had made a division of the world into two unequal halves – Orient and Occident and he had further defined Orientalism “as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, having authority over the Orient. Naturally, Edward Said’s version of Orientalism
becomes totally Euro-centric and confirms the theoretical concept of the ruler and the ruled, the exploiter and the exploited, and the colonizer and the colonized” (Dwivedi 82).

According to Said, West has created a binary opposition between the east and the west. West is considered to be rational, humane and superior whereas the East is underdeveloped, aberrant and inferior. Since the east is incapable of defining itself, its the duty of the west to define them. Thus, the western ‘Orientalism’ misrepresented the orient. Said’s *Orientalism* unmasksthe ideological disguises of imperialism and presents the true picture of East instead of that hypothetical one created by Europe. Therefore, the wrong assumptions and the theories based upon them, lost their meaning and *Orientalism* proved out to be so influential that it gave birth to a new subject of investigation - ‘decolonization’. Makrand Paranjape has rightly observed that, “Said is a critic who represent the human face of the west and who enable us to contemplate the possibility of a more universal, cosmopolitan culture” (41).

After Edward Said, the other major theorist and most cited critic of postcolonialism is Homi K. Bhabha. Western post-structuralism has been a great influence on him and finds expression in his works. Bhabha feels that the feeling of dislocation, of not belonging anywhere and rootless is the condition of being 'unhomed'. In his work *The Location Of Culture*, he says:

> To be unhomed is not to be homeless, nor can the 'unhomely' be easily accommodated in that familiar division of social life into private and public spheres. The unhomely moment (instead) creeps up on you stealthily as your own shadow... (9).
This unhomely moment is, thus, liable for the birth of the processes through which diasporic homes are produced. The discourse of the wandering people of the diaspora marks a "shifting boundary that alienates the frontiers of the modern nation" (K. Satchidanandan 19). Therefore, in-between nations or at the margins of nations is another kind of dissemination that is scattering. "There are communities living in these interstitial spaces, whose counter-narratives continually evoke and erase the totalizing boundaries of the modern nation-state" (149). These narratives act as supplementary literature to those of the nation-state. Diasporic writers deconstruct the notions of 'nation' and show a dismissive or parodic attitude towards the project of national culture. Bhabha identifies this trend as a process of 'Dissemination' (291-332). For Bhabha, individual and local experiences of diasporic writers form a part of the larger processes of historical change. He shifts and transforms the diasporic scattering to a gathering. "Gatherings of exiles and emigres and refugees, gathering on the edge of 'foreign' cultures; gathering at the frontiers; gathering in the ghettos or Cafes of city centres" (139-40). In case of diaspora, regarding the relationship between the centre and the periphery, Bhabha is more concerned with the instability which at some point defines the expatriate self. Thus, in his writings the poetics of expatriate elaborates itself without centre making the expatriate's existence of the "aesthetic image." Besides, this the migrants also acquire a hybrid identity which is the consequence of interaction between different cultures. He elevates the hybrid to the level of a new consciousness:

The colonial hybrid is the articulation of the ambivalent space where the rite of power is enacted on the site of
desire, making its objects at once disciplinary and disseminatory - or...a negative transparency (112).

According to Bhabha, the cultural solitude of the exile gives birth to third space, which provides for escape from the immigrant self and an absorption into a new construct. In *The Location of Culture*, he calls it "a hybrid location, of antagonism, perpetual tension and pregnant chaos" (K. Satchidanandan 17). One of the major contributions of Bhabha to postcolonial studies was the identification of ambivalence in colonial dominance, which challenges the idea of treating Third World Countries as a homogenous block. For Bhabha, cultural production is most productive exactly when it is also most ambivalent. In this lineage of postcolonial critics, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is another famous voice, who echoes the postcolonial sentiments in the form of postcolonial theories. She is well known for the use of deconstructive strategies to various theoretical and textual analysis from Feminism, Marxism and literary criticism to Postcolonialism. It was Spivak who for the first time effectively posed the key postcolonial question: "Can the subaltern speak?" The answer she arrives is no. She further clarifies it that since the subaltern cannot speak that does not mean (S)he needs an advocate to speak for himself/herself. Infact, what is required is the space to allow him/her to speak. In 1994, she published her major work *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* which shows that the subaltern are not only being excluded from the discussion but they are also prevented from occupying positions as full human subjects. Thus she took issue with western intellectuals almost confessional account of their inability to medicate the historical experience of the working classes and the unprivileged of society. According to Spivak, in postcolonial terms, "everything that has limited or
no access to the cultural imperialism is subaltern - a space of difference. Now who would say that’s just oppressed? It’s not subaltern” (271-313).

The line of thinking initiated with the Fanon’s *The Wretched of The Earth* is widespread. Many prolific writers like Arif Dirlik, Ashish Nandy, Meenakshi Mukherjee, Makrand Paranjape; Arun Prabha Mukherjee have proved themselves as influential postcolonial critics. They are analysing, propagating and prospering many postcolonial theories and themes at large. Its their sheer dint of intelligence and capability that they have made the subaltern speak for themselves. Today, this audibility and visibility of the subaltern is not only heard, accepted and seen but also admired by the western, Euro-centric hegemony.

Primarily postcolonial literature is an articulation of national, regional and racial consciousness. The structure of the texts wants to liberate from the resistance process in the colonized societies and need to realize the “Truths of the Nation” (Fanon 23). Although, all the critics mentioned above stress and elaborate the narratives of the nation but at the same time cautioned against essentialist formulations that might lead to nationalist and racial orthodoxy. In order to re-establish the national cultural heritage with native myth and idioms, the postcolonial writers have to relocate and reimage the history and culture of their communities. Postcolonialism is a vast project of decolonization of mind and spirit. As a part of the process of decolonization the essential efforts of postcolonial writers are to dismantle historical and textual monoliths and encourage the possibilities of new narratives and perspectives. In this way the postcolonial writing
challenged the single voiced authority of colonialism and postcolonial writings express multiplicity, hybridity and plurality.

II

The spirit of postcolonialism adds another dimension when come under the influence of a foreign culture or in a state of diaspora. Writers like Salman Rushdie, V.S. Naipaul, Rohinton Mistry, Anita Desai, Ruth Jhabvala have opened up possibilities of a new language and new way of seeing the world, as an alternative to the monolithic construct of colonial perspective, these writers are engaged in promoting multicultural, cross-cultural hybridity which acted as the source of literary and cultural redefinition. In the process the national boundaries disappear and a composite culture with an essential touch of national/ethical difference emerged in their writings. But the postcolonial writers and critique, who are in a state of diaspora directly or indirectly participate in the discourse operated by imperial power. The failure to be a postcolonial writer ultimately gives birth to the complexities in narrative structure. When Salman Rushdie upholds the elevated status of Indian writing in English at the cost of regional literatures, the same mechanism is at work. Most of the South Asian diasporic writers look at their country of origin from the first world’s point of view and try to recolonize the third world in this age of globalization. ‘The First World within the Third world’ is a part
of the recolonization and the diasporic writers are the willing partners in the enterprise of the so called cosmopolitanism and globalization.

Salman Rushdie has successfully created the First Worldist point of view into the Third World structure in his *Satanic Verses*: “Rushdie had misjudged his audiences and willingly offered himself up for Western appreciation – they conceded that Rushdie had provided a fruitful internal critique that could eventually lead to reform through debate and critical scrutiny of Islam” (Needham 92). The same applies to another major writer of diaspora Rohinton Mistry. His two novels *Such A Long Journey* and *A Fine Balance* “are elegiac, not nostalgic in tone” (Paranjape 167). Either of the novels are not celebrating the homeland but regret and mourn at its millions of tragedies and imbalances:

Mistry’s winning the Governor-General’s medal and other honors in Canadian society for his works on India suggests not just the rewards of writing novels which are critical of homelands, but do not threaten the country. It also indicates Mistry’s effort to say farewell to India and to accelerate his development as a Canadian citizen (169).

In the present conditions many of the writers in postcolonial societies are not ‘writing back’ but ‘writing home’ thus they are becoming diasporic. Therefore, a theory based on the notions of colonizer/colonized, centre/margin, metropolis/periphery have become irrelevant. Now the emphasis is being given to the social, political and cultural conditions operating at ‘home’ in order to fully understand their texts. They are no more concerned with ‘subverting’ or ‘appropriating’ Eurocentric codes, instead, they are now concerned with writing about their societies’ material and ideological conditions. This fervour is described
as diasporic consciousness in the postcolonial texts and the literature of twenty
first century is more or less a description of this feeling in words. Diaspora studies
are one of the striking features of the postcolonial approaches. Explorations and
researches show that the writers who live away from the land of their origins are
writing in different kinds and forms; but are collectively presented under the
umbrella of postcolonialism. It would be more appropriate to take diaspora writing
as 'the offshoot of the big tree called postcolonialism'.

The word 'diaspora' true to its literal meaning shows far and wide,
'scattering of human beings', who acts both as an ambassador and a refugee
performing two different roles. While one role requires the projection of one's
culture, the other needs refuge and protection and relates more positively to the
host culture. Therefore, the rubric diaspora best explains the phenomena related
with migration. Etymologically the term `diaspora' is derived from the Greek term
dispersion, from dia- "across" (through) and sperien "to sow or scatter seeds",
literally meaning scattering or dispersion. In the present times the term 'Diaspora'
is used to refer who have been dislocated from their native homeland through the
movements of migration, immigration or exile and thus, came to be known as the
members of displaced community.

Diaspora was first used in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the
Hebrew Scripture explicitly intended for the Hellenic Jewish Communities in
Alexandria (circa third century BCE) to describe the Jews living in exile from the
homeland of Palestine. Diaspora suggests a dislocation from the nations-states,
territories or geographical locations of origin and a relocation in one or more
nation-states; territories or countries. The term ‘diaspora’ then, has religious significance and pervaded medieval rabbinical writings on the Jewish diaspora, to describe the plight of Jews living outside of Palestine. In the current parlance, the term ‘diaspora’ is used to describe any group of people who are so dispersed:

The ‘diaspora’ is in itself a complex term. The scattering like that of the Jews scattering can also grow roots and also bear fruits.... Expatriate may longingly look back while immigrant relate more positively to the culture of their adoption and seek a meaningful role in its political and cultural life (Jain 146).

Hence, diaspora situation presents a double challenge of not only preserving one’s own indigenous culture but also a perfect assimilation or fusion with the other culture so as to avoid loneliness and cultural conflicts. In the Indian context the migratory movements are governed by different reasons at different times of history, and different reasons even contemporaneously. The first generation of the diasporans were forced to immigrate. Theirs was an unwilling and inconvenient immigration. They were uneducated, coarse labourers, whom destiny had unfortunately thrown in the claws of an alien culture and circumstances. But the second generation of the diasporans belonged to the literate, skilled and qualified class, willingly gone for the search of more greener pastures. Their aspirations and their skill helped them to carve a niche for themselves in the alien framework. Though it was not an easy job as they too had faced many upheavals on their part:

The diasporic Indian is like the banyan tree, the traditional symbol of the Indian way of life, he spreads out his roots in several soils, drawing nourishment from one when the rest dry up - Far from being homeless,
he has several homes, and this is the only way he has increasingly come to feel at home in the world (Parekh 106).

Postcolonialism is often referred to as the theory of ‘migrancy’ since it deals with the major theme of the migration, immigration and expatriation. In contemporary literature, the term ‘diasporic writing’ has come to be associated with works produced by globally dispersed communities that have common ancestral homelands. Despite the diasporans longing for their homelands, it is not feasible for them to return back, wherever the dispersion has left them. They are supposed to continue with that. However, they are consciously or subconsciously attached to traditions, customs, values, religions and languages of their ancestral home. In diasporic writings the individual’s or community attachment to centrifugal homeland becomes its invariable theme. But side by side a yearning for a sense of belonging to the current place of abode, countered this attachment:

In this state of transition; some respond ambivalently to their dual often antithetical culture or societies. Some attempt to assimilate and integrate. For others the liminal or transitional state is too prolonged or too excruciating to cope with and they may withdraw to their ancestral identity or homeland (Ramraj 214-29).

The bond of attachment to their ancestral homeland differs among the diasporans and moreover, it depends upon their readiness for accepting the new culture and its environment and, “those tending towards assimilations are less concerned with sustaining ancestral ties than with coming to terms with their new environment and acquiring a new identity” (Ramraj 214-29). Assimilation eventually gives birth to the acquisition of a new identity, thus diasporans try to create a sort of fine balance amidst so many social, psychological, physical and
cultural imbalances. In the second half of the twentieth century, particularly in the post colonial societies, the foregoing incidence of expatriation has given birth to expatriate writing. Therefore, in present times, expatriate writing occupies a significant position between cultures and countries.

An expatriate shares the experience of exile. Life in an alien country is deliberately chosen by an expatriate and the possibility of return to the motherland can not be entirely given up and it seems that, “a clear cut distinction between an expatriate and an immigrant can not be made as no clean break from one's culture has ever been possible or real. A total delink is only a myth. In the final analysis, the supposed distinction between exile, expatriation, emigration and immigration may be acceptable in analytical terminology, but they are rarely absolute in the experience of them” (Vijayasree 221). Dispossession, sense of loss and relocation are shared experiences of exile, expatriation, emigration, and immigration. Besides, an expatriate consciousness is also reflected through a constant shuffling of physical and emotional residence. It is a “psychological state of being between two worlds without belonging completely to either one or the other, operating in a space permeated by perpetually shifting alternatives” (222). An expatriate has to go through many upheavals, as the condition of diaspora put before him so many challenges or dilemmas. The diasporic condition requires transference at all levels including the moral and the emotional. Rushdie refers to the diaspora as ‘translated’ men, a fact which affects the relationship of the diaspora with the history, homeland and self. In *Imaginary Homelands*, he writes:
To be an Indian writer in this society is to face everyday, problems of definition. What does it mean to be 'Indian' outside India? How can culture be preserved without being ossified? How should we discuss the need for change within ourselves and our community without seeing to play into the hand of our racial enemies?... These questions are all a single essential question: How are we to live in the world?. (17-18).

Transplantation in a new environment compels the diasporans to define their identity in the new perspective. Thus, self-definition occupies a vital role in an expatriate condition and the issue of identity is at the heart of the expatriate consciousness. Thus, an expatriate has to face three possible alternatives one is to retain one’s own indigenous cultural identity and remain indifferent to the ‘other’. Second is to seek total assimilation and shun all ties with one’s original identity and third is to create a balance between the new and the old world.

In expatriate writing identity crisis hence becomes an important aesthetic concern and construct. The multiple and shifting identities of the expatriate writers is very well reflected through "search for home, renewal of family ties, evocation of imaginary homelands, interrogation of contemporary notions of nation and nationalism and a dialectic of cultural difference and multiculturalism" (Vijayasree 225). Construction of home plays a vital role in expatriate imagination as it keeps on haunting his body, mind and soul. In this body of writing the dominant motif is the search for home as the sense of lost home produces restlessness.¹ An expatriate writer tries to replace the adopted country for his own lost motherland thus, creating a balance between rootlessness and rootedness. The nostalgia for a home behind is reflected “through a recreation of home as an image metaphor or
fictional trope. Some thematize an actual return to the idealized home and record the irrecoverability of the lost patria (226).

Journey is used symbolically and traveling becomes a metaphor for quest, and "that not only presents the exile as inherent to the human condition but stands as a potent symbol for the physical and mental nomadism of diasporic life" (Bande 151). In this way the expatriate writers aestheticized their 'Homelessness'. These writers believe that in this permanently unsettled world, "home is what one creates only through a combination of memory and desire. There can only be imaginary homelands nothing real or permanent" (Vijayasree 227). Expatriates often suffer and miss the family bonds and its protective fold. This home sickness is more intense in the case of Indian writers because they belong to that culture in which family happens to be the most helping and supporting unit. They try to narrate family sagas through myth, memory and legend.

Past exerts a powerful influence on expatriate writer’s imagination. They are obsessive about their past. All their aesthetic formations show the common concern for an insistent backward glance. As Fredric Jameson points out, "psychologically, the drive toward unity takes the form of an obsession with the past and memory" (130). Their nostalgic reminiscences help them to write about their past and in this way they eventually become the historians of their country. As M.G. Vassanji states, "this reclamation of the past is the first serious act of writing. Having reclaimed it, having given himself a history, he liberates himself to write about the present" (63-67). The expatriate writer occupies a position of marginal or boarder line importance. Sitting on the periphery of the past, he ignites
the imagination of future to take concrete form. Therefore, standing on the borderline of the present, the expatriate writer has to perform a tight-rope walking; creating a fine balance between past and present so as to hope for a bright and better future:

Caught between the two worlds, the expatriate negotiates a new space, caught between two cultures and often languages, the expatriate writer negotiates a new literary space. Therefore, an anxious sense of dislocation is characteristic of expatriate writing. The shifting designation of `home' and the attendant anxieties about homelessness and the impossibility of going back are perennial themes in these stories (Abraham 51).

The dilemma of the Expatriate writer is thus to remain `original' while turning 'international' because internationalism has become an important component of Diasporic Consciousness. The diasporic writings which have enhanced the notion of the nation and narrations are meant for an international audience and an international mind set. The fictional world of expatriate writers is full of a wide range of hybrid figures created by cultural criss-crossing. Hybrid Identity is prominent in the body of writing and "these novelistic hybrids are not just double voice and double accented but also double languaged" (Patil 74).

By going away from the culture of adoption and the culture of origin, third space can be created. Third space means the projection of a world which rests on geographical and cultural dislocation and "brings into being a self-reflexive self and a self-reflexive text" (Jain 102).² Creating third space provides an escape from conflictual situations and self-division. It can also be understood as an attempt to negotiate alternate realities. As Homi Bhabha has pointed out:
The creation of a Third Space disrupts the logics of synchronicity and evolution which traditionally authorize the subject of cultural knowledge. It makes the structure of meaning and reference on ambivalent process and destroys this mirror of representation in which cultural knowledge is customarily revealed as an integrated, open, expanding code (Bhabha 37).

In diasporic writing, cultural encounter plays a significant role. The cultural pulls help in the creation of a new culture emerging out from the intermingling or synthesis. The cultural encounter is one of the most striking features of diasporic writing which gives birth to a new culture. This creation of a new culture revealed that culture is the part and parcel of our life and every sphere of our life is being influenced by it. Culture has great influence on literature and “genres are also often culture specific, some forms flourishes better in certain cultures, the romance as novel as the tale of an individual; has flourished in the West, while the novel as epic, as community dominant, has flourished in the East” (Jain 18).

Diasporic consciousness is thus the outcome of that feeling of alienation or dislocation which one goes through, when one is away from his own culture and faces another culture. In this way he is caught between two cultures, and this dilemma gets expression in postcolonial literature. That is why, its popular themes have been dislocation and consequent loss of identity. Diasporic consciousness of the writer leaves her/him with a sense of dislocation and this sense always prevails in their works through their protagonists. In this way a diaspora is left with the dilemma of what to retain, embrace and what to leave? Diasporic
consciousness thus, deals with the basic problem of the diasporic psyche that is unbelongingness and rootlessness.

The Indian diasporic Postcolonial writers are writing under the influence of colonial ideas as most of them are living away from their homeland or land of origin. They are describing the situation with the colonial mind about their societies, material and ideological situations. The exposer to western ideas, educational processes and power structures have resulted in the evolution of a man, who approaches his own society and culture through western norms. Thus, like them their fictional characters too are on the periphery and their selves are divided. The complexities faced by them in their postcolonial societies are very well shown in their literary expressions through their protagonists; they work as their mouthpiece. “On the one hand they are unable to step out of the historical content, on the other there is a deep unconscious need to step out of it. The need to discard the ‘self’ created by the foreign rule, to formulate a new ‘self’ not so alienated is very urgent” (Jain 5).

The literal meaning of word Postcolonial is the phase after colonialism where there is freedom in every respect, but it is farcical situation; postcolonial societies are still under the influence of their colonizers thus, presenting in themselves a complexity and “colonialism can also be seen as a phase where political freedom has been achieved but habits of thought have persisted, a period having begun in 1947 and continuing up to the present. While the “outer supports” to the colonial culture have ended; feeling of inferiority and insecurity, anchorage
to the west, a sense of subordination still continue. It is a colonialism which has survived the "demise of empires" (Nandy, Preface xi).

Two Indian champions of postcolonial theory, Gayatri Spivak, and Homi Bhabha are enriching the West. They are thus, helping West to become more multicultural and more magnanimous in appreciating other cultures. Their role in their indigenous culture is minimal and "they speak to the West, seek to modify or alter western modes of thinking and writing. If they had a real stake in Indian academics, they would publish in India, ensure that their work is readily available here. ... yet to find a single essay by either of them in an Indian periodical" (Paranjape 42). How far can they distance themselves from Western Values and express their identity with 'local values'? They should consider west as merely a geographical and material location to their and for our advantage. Post colonial writings should make it crystal clear that it is not an important task to interpret India to the west but its importance lies in the fact that how it is being interpreted to its natives that is the Indians because "the dignity of the brown-skinned scholarship depends more than how others view us" (43).

Postcolonial writings end up experiencing a hybrid identity, where the identity of a person is no longer restricted in relation to his country or culture but it has evolved out to become a hybrid, facing dilemma of being caught between different cultural aspects and "cultural crossovers pave way for a hybrid culture and a new process of cultural assimilation. A mixed cultural milieu makes room for vistas of communication and dialogue in this cosmopolitan world" (Sarangi 140).
Like their characters, the postcolonial diasporic immigrant writers are themselves journeyman caught between two or more cultures. Often comparison is made between the life styles, ways and values of native land and the new world or adopted land. Adjustment is required both by the uprooted immigrant writer and its fictional characters and that causes tensions. The fictional world of expatriate writers is full of a wide range of hybrid figures created by cultural criss-crossing people. These characters represent a race of displaced and dispossessed people and their schizophrenic existence.

This new role of hybridity is often confronted with the problems of apartheid, racism and ethnic violence. Reception and acceptance in the country of adoption is therefore not free from partial and biased minds. “There are diasporas and diasporas. The land of hope to which they migrate often turns out to be a living hell of racial discrimination” (Jain 77). Postcolonialism has given birth to socio-psychological and cultural-shock theories. These have directly hit the female consciousness, thus, female identity is interfacing sharp contrast. Their encounters with an alien culture shocks them. They get puzzled and lost control over both their inner and outer self. Bharati Mukherjee’s *Wife* and Suniti Namjoshi’s *Conversation of Cow* are the best exponents of this complexity. Female characters are presented as showing “an unconscious social behaviour – the veneer of westernization, the liking for imported goods, the respect for the ‘white’ foreigner, the dependence upon western advice, the adherence to western theories – infact all things ‘modern’” (Jain 5). They became doubtful about their culture and suspicious regarding native indigenous cultural and social values floats
in their minds. They have to face double dilemma of the self and the other. Their representation is manifold, conflicted and often anti-mimetic. They show a considerable degree of cross-cultural sensitivity and a kind of ironic modernity. Thus female identity is facing complex circumstances in the postcolonial times and eventually becoming a complexity in itself. It would be more apt to call postcolonial Asian women as “cyborg goddesses in this sense that they do not seek release through breaking out of the ‘frame’ of the narrative which circumscribes them” (Ghosh 189).

Postcolonial writers sometimes become too much local and specific giving their text local and specific colour through the description of homeland and its domestic problems. These socially shared narratives which are related to time and place are not paid due universal attention and “Postcolonial theory which focuses on cross-cultural similarities and ignores differences fails to play attention to the importance of these socially shared narratives which bind the text to its own time and place” (Arun Prabha 13). Many of the writers in postcolonial societies are writing about their home. Therefore, in order to understand their texts, it is essential to be acquainted with the social, political and cultural conditions operating there. “Texts which concern themselves with patriarchy or intercaste or interreligious relations in contemporary India are beyond the ken of postcolonial theory which is so heavily invested in making the colonial experience its central premise” (9). A sort of cultural imperialism is created by ignoring the indigenous aspects of the text. This cultural imperialism is further get boosted by “the postcolonial theorists’ insistence on tying the postcolonial texts to metropolitan
texts by insisting that the postcolonial texts mimic, parody, subvert, resist, intertextualize and appropriate metropolitan texts” (14).

In the postcolonial situation, Diaspora and immigrant literature, hence, acquires an extra edge and poignancy and an air of importance. South Asian Diaspora being its counterpart reveals the same fervour. The term South Asian Diaspora stands for the immigrants who are either from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, SriLanka or from Africa, Mauritius, Fiji, the Caribbean, Guyana, Great Britain and European countries; who trace their origins to the Indian subcontinent. Two waves of emigration from South Asia took place and it consists of three phases. In the first phase shipping of indentured labourers to the unknown destination took place. South Asia provided cheap labour which was required to work at the plantations of the Caribbean, South Africa, East Africa and Fiji. Therefore, in the first phase of immigration the people were basically illiterate and victim of forced diaspora. In the second phase of the first wave, traders were immigrated in order to provide basic cultural and business services to the earlier groups. In this way they made their living and fortune through their countrymen. The third phase consisted of people with a higher level of education or business expertise. Hence declaring an end to the age of indentured labour. Due to their education there was a richer soil for literary pursuits. The second wave of emigration started in the early 1950’s is in the existence till date. Educated, South Asians of newly-independent countries set out to find their fortune in countries that were in need of technological brainpower, consequently theory of ‘brain drain’ has evolved out. Border - crossing whether real or imagined forms the major theme of
the diasporic writings. Career, professional opportunities, materialistic approach of the modern man has augmented the pace and blind race for border-crossing and “it has added an exploratory dimension, coupled with authenticity of the experience and expression, to this new body of writing that is often accepted as postcolonial” (Mohanty 193).

South Asian diaspora represents the Indian sub-continent at large in which Indian diaspora has emerged out to be one of its strong and powerful stream. Since ancient ages Indian diaspora has been preaching and propagating the philosophy of Vishwabhandatva and Brihad Bharata which today correlates itself with the modern concept of cosmopolitanism and internationalism, and with the spread of Globalisation, it has become more appropriate. “It is estimated that there are nearly fourteen million overseas Indians all over the world who include Indian citizens settled abroad as also persons of Indian origin who have taken foreign citizenship” (Annual Report, Govt. of India:1996, 744).

Since long history has witnessed the mass migration of the people of Indian sub-continent to different countries making Indian diaspora as the oldest and the third largest diaspora in the world. Being the oldest and the largest in magnitude it enjoys an air of importance in the global scenario. Studies have revealed that the single largest ethnic community is comprised people of Indian origin in Fiji (49%), Guyana (53%), Mauritius (74%), Trinidad and Tobago (40%) and Surinam (37%). In Asian Countries like HongKong, Malaysia, Singapore and SriLanka; and in South Africa and East Africa; people of Indian origin form substantial minority communities. In Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States of
America, the people of Indian origin are in significant number. Indian diaspora has thus evolved out as unique wave reaching every nook and corner of the globe: “Having almost unique socio-cultural histories and being subjected to different economic and political situations, the Indian Communities abroad have evolved as distinct diasporic entities. They are nevertheless Indian as they manifest in varying degrees of survival, persistence, or retention of several social patterns and cultural elements whose roots and substance can be traced to India” (Jayram 17). In the history of Indian Diaspora there are two phases of emigration: Overseas emigration in the Nineteenth century’ and ‘Twentieth century migration to industrially developed countries’. They are also known as colonial and postcolonial phases of Indian diaspora. During colonial time the cheap, docile and dependable labour force of Indians were send to work and meet the requirements in the mines and plantations of Asia and Africa. Hugh Tinker has done comprehensive study about the emigration of Indian labour overseas during the colonial era. So, according to him three distinct patterns of Indian emigration are prevalent in this period: (a) Indenture labour emigration, (b) Kangani and maistry labour emigration and (c) “passage” or “free emigration”. Though these systems flourished only in the first and third quarter of the nineteenth century, they were abolished in 1938. After the abolition of indenture and other systems of original export of labour, the emigration of the Indians became a regular phenomenon but now they were free and not bound by any contract. In 1947, after Indian independence, emigration became new and significant. In the post-independence scenario there are mainly three patterns of emigration. The first wave of emigration consisted of Anglo-
Indians to Australia and England because of the sense of marginalization in the aftermath of India’s independence. Australia became their second ‘homeland’ after their racial and ethical non-acceptance to the English. Second wave of the emigration comprised of professionals to the industrially advanced countries like USA, England, and Canada. Thus, making ‘brain-drain’ one of the most significant post-independence phenomenon. In the late 1960s and 1970s emigration of doctors, engineers, scientists and teachers to the industrially advanced countries of the west became a trend and it was essentially voluntary and mostly individual in nature. With the second and subsequent generations having emerged, and the emigrant population enjoying economic prosperity and socio-cultural rights, “this stream of emigration has resulted in the vibrant Indian Communities abroad” (Jayram 4). This second generation is enjoying the benefits of the rich harvest cultivated with hard toil and labour of the first generation of emigrants. The third wave of emigrants consisted of skilled and unskilled labourers to West Asia due to ‘oil boom’ there. Although it is voluntary in nature yet labour market vagaries determine its trends and conditions. About the Indian diaspora it can be said that during different periods, the magnitude of people migrating and their destination have varied under the influence of the policies governing immigration prevalent during those periods.

Older Immigrants or the immigrants of the colonial phase were not in a position to make a room for themselves, whereas, the immigrants of the postcolonial phase being educated and skilled were in a better and enviable position. Their self-chosen immigration for more greener pastures proved fruitful
for them. V.S. Naipaul, one of the diaspora writers refers to the Indian diaspora as a ‘Great Migration’ and emphasizing on its economic motivations, as "it was the quest for economic security rather than historical reversals that characterizes the Indian diaspora" (*India Today* 276-79).

Going by the Vedantic philosophy: ‘*Ano Bhadra Kritvo Yantu Vishwatah*’ that is let noble thoughts come to us from every direction, the Indian philosophy is known for its capacity to imbibe and assimilate cultural influences. Being the wave of that big sea called India, Indian diaspora is also imbibing the elements of the local culture and yet preserving their sentimental bond with India. Their gradual assimilation has developed into a new cultural identity in close interaction with the local cultural forms, which gets further expression in their literature revealing their turmoil and triumphs. Today Indian diaspora is competent enough in making its place under the Sun and many diasporic Indian writers have been under academic focus. In his article *The Adventure of Indenture: A Diasporic Identity*, Satendra Nandan has remarked about Indian diaspora that “in one hundred years of servitude; the rootless Indian became the invisible presence, the blood in the body; it bled only when cut. He became the wandering Indian” (311). Indian diaspora constitutes the major part of the South Asian diaspora. Writers of the Indian diaspora have established themselves as the significant representative voice of the Indian sub – continent.

Today, Bharati Mukherjee holds not only an enviable position but she is also an authentic voice of the diasporic tradition. She is conspicuous from her contemporary writers of the diaspora in the sense as she considers it a gain
instead of a loss. She enjoys it by interpreting it as the politics of space. Neither she regrets nor glorifies what diaspora literally meant for diaspora writers. Her every successive publication reflects her maturity and assimilating tendencies which is a rare feel seen in writers diaspora. It also makes her different from her clan of contemporary diasporic writers. Though more or less they speak or echo same sentiments regarding diaspora barring V.S. Naipaul and M.G. Vassanji who present a case of double diaspora. They give their own justifications and reasons for being in a diaspora which they have deliberately chosen for more green pastures. Their dislocation fills in them an urge for relocation and it also becomes the recurring theme of their works. Mukherjee’s similarities and dissimilarities with her contemporaries make her an interesting subject of study and research. The more illustrious and eminent writers of South Asian Diaspora consists of a galaxy of talented writers, who have made their existence felt and bewitched the global man with his new incarnation as a global identity. V.S Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Bapsi Sidhwa, Jhumpa Lahiri, Kiran Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, Rohinton Mistry, Neil Bissoodath, M.G Vassanji, Michael Ondaatje, Uma Parameswaran, Sunita Namjoshi are all shining stars of the South Asian Diasporic Galaxy.

III

Since the birth of the literary documentation man has been fascinated by the social life and history which in turn work as food for his imagination. Therefore, literature means the social documentation of human relationships. Literature
performs the dual duty of not only reflecting the social reality but also discovering the means by which men and women organize themselves in relation with their socio-cultural patterns. Today novel has emerged out to be the most popular and acceptable form of literary expression with relation to time. Being socially oriented, novel depicts human relationships in its totality that is why it is considered the best of all the literary forms. It has been used as an effective emancipatory tool by none other than Bharati Mukherjee, one of the eminent writers and conspicuous stars of post colonial diasporian sky. Her fiction truly reflects the temperament of the present American Society as experienced by immigrants in America.

Bharati Mukherjee, the Indian born American novelist occupies a unique position among her literary colleagues as "the foremost chronicler of the multicultural New America" (Nicholson 84-5). Now she is an established name as a fiction writer as well as a social commentator. She was born on 27July, 1940 to a family of professionals of Sudhir Lal and Beena Mukherjee in Calcutta, India. She had her schooling or classical education in Calcutta at Loretto Convent. In 1959 she did her graduation from the University of Calcutta and her Master's in English and Ancient Indian Culture from University of Baroda in 1961. She visited the University of Iowa in 1961 to attend the writer's workshop and it "changed her life and focused her intently on what she had dreamed of becoming: a professional writer. Mukherjee had planned to return to India; however, while at Iowa she met and married Clark Blaise, the Canadian/American writer, a decision that guaranteed that, thereafter her life would be part of two worlds" ("On Being an American Writer 53). In 1963 she earned her M.F.A in creative writing and her
Ph.D. in English and comparative literature in 1969. With Clark Blaise, she moved to Canada and lived there till 1980 as Canadian citizen, a period which is marked by her as her 'Dark Days'. In 1980, they took a bold decision of moving to USA, and since then they have been living as US citizens. At present she is a professor at the University of California, Berkeley.

In today's modern world when immigration and cultural alienation have evolved out as global phenomenon, Bharati Mukherjee like her counterparts has used her writing skill as a tool for liberating herself. She points out: “Immigration was a two way process and both the whites and immigrants were growing into a third thing by this interchange and experience” (*Hindustan Times* 3). She continues to write about India and Indian immigrants to the west, even after completing forty six years of immigration. The publication of her latest work *The Tree Bride* (2004) shows that the literary voyage, she began with her maiden work *The Tiger's Daughter* (1972) is still sailing with same vigour. The creative sensibility which Mukherjee has shown with the publication of *The Tiger's Daughter* (1972) has been artistically used by her in her successive publications. In her literary career of more than thirty years, she has successfully explored the complexities of expatriate experiences in the seven novels and two short story collections published so far.

Mukherjee's biographer Alam Fakrul has categorized her life into three phases. First phase 'Expatriation' is about *The Tiger's Daughter*, her maiden novel. It is autobiographical in nature, and an account of Tara Banerjee's return journey to India after many years of being away only to find herself disappointed.
Her memoir *Days and Nights in Calcutta*, written jointly with her husband Clark Blaise, is also based on the same plot, showing her attempt of finding her identity in her Indian heritage and identity in her Indian Heritage and cultural roots. The second phase of her writing is the ‘Transition’ phase. Her next novel *Wife*, the collection of Canadian short stories, *Darkness*, an essay entitled “An Invisible Woman” and a joint publication, *The Sorrow and Terror* are produced in this phase. *Wife* deals with the failure of the heroine Dimple to adjust in the alien culture, consequently murdering her husband and the complexity of postcolonial period is being highlighted here. The Canadian stories of *Darkness* speak about the same ‘complexities’. Her non fictional work reveal her own experience of racial discrimination in Canada, where she had gone through the humiliation despite being a professor. She considered herself a "Housebound fearful, affrieved, obsessive, and unforgiving queen of bitterness" (Alam 10). Third phase of ‘Immigration’ is being celebrated by her in her works like *The Middle Man and Other Stories, Jasmine, Holder of the World, Leave It to Me, Desirable Daughters* and the *Tree Bride*.

In 1977 in the initial phase of her writing, Mukherjee considered V.S. Naipaul as her role model. Like him she writes about the impossibility of living permanent settled life or having a home, Bharati Mukherjee too reflects the same sentiments. "In myself I detect a pale and immature reflection of Naipaul, it is he who has written most movingly about the pain and absurdity of art and exile, of 'third world art, and exile among the former colonizers; the tolerant
incomprehension of hosts, the absolute impossibility of ever having home, a “desh” (*DNC* 287).

An expatriate writers like V.S Naipaul, influenced her with the use of stylistic device called irony, which he himself used bluntly. Mukherjee has mentioned in the introduction of her short stories *Darkness*:

Like V.S. Naipaul in whom I imagined a model I tried to explore state of the art expatriation. Like Naipul I used a mordent and self protective irony in describing my character’s pain. Irony promised both detachment from, and imperiority over, those well bred post colonials much myself, a drift in the new world wondering if they would ever belong (2).

But later as Mukherjee found the style self-hating, restrictive and self defeating, adversely affecting her sensibility. She gave it up by rejecting Naipaul as a model, instead she took another American immigrant writer Bernard Malamud for inspiration, who represents the lives of East European Jewish immigrants. In an interview to Alison B. Carb she reveals:

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 centre. Issue Babel is another who is a literary ancestor for me. I also feel a kinship with Joseph Conrad and Anton Chekhov. But Malamud most of all speaks to me as a writer and I admire his work a great deal. Immersing myself in his work gave me the self confidence to write about my own community (Carb 650).

Bharati Mukherjee is a postcolonial writer with certain complexities because of her diasporic sensibility. The basic problems of the writer of diaspora are rootlessness,
the feeling of not belonging anywhere, of dislocation and fluctuation between time and space. In December, 1996 in her USIS talk in Bombay, she said: “My art has been shaped by my experiences of un-housement and re-housement.” This feeling of ‘un-housement’ in fact comments the home and the world, and this particular situation provides for the perspective through which diasporic homes are produced; “Diasporic writings are invariably concerned with the individual’s or community’s attachment to the centrifugal homeland. But this attachment is countered by a yearning for a sense of belonging to the current place of abode (Ramraj 216).

Diasporas are in this way directly connected with homelands and both are structurally interdependent. Homelands have given birth to diasporas, and diasporas in their turn have described them in their full capacity, to what Rushdie calls ‘imaginary homelands’ because “most writers seem to suggest that in a permanently unsettled world, ‘home’ is what one creates only through a combination of memory and desire. There can only be “imaginary homelands” nothing ‘real’ or permanent” (Vijaysree 227). In order to preserve their identity, the diasporic writers write about their homelands. They act as the ‘privileged native informers’ (Spivak 256), the phrase used by Gayatri Spivak. But they are often criticized for being inauthentic, for misrepresenting reality so that they can cater to the needs of the market forces and policies of writing and it is an acknowledged fact by several writers that due to their receding memory it is impossible for them to recapitulate the lost homeland. Their works are critiqued on the ground of their having lost touch with reality. Despite all these pitfalls their homeland provides
them food for thought which helps them in the augmentation of their creative sensibility.

Bharati Mukherjee, too, uses this technique for her narratives and her novels mainly deal with India, Indian mythology and their splendid blending with history. That is why she is accused of “catering to a First World audience while still mining the Third World for fictional material (Debjani 173). She churns out raw material from her birth country not only to satisfy her creative urge but also as a diplomatic move to get attention of the Western World. This is one of the most common factor of expatriate writing and Uma Parameswaran considers this aspect as “one of the traits peculiar to the expatriare sensibility – their refusal to let go of India” (Parameswaran 45).

She tries to negotiate for a space by describing her trauma of double marginalization that is as a woman and as an immigrant. The technique of Space Politics is very well used by her. She enjoys being on the margin and periphery and side by side celebrates her ‘Otherisation’ both as a woman and an immigrant. She seems to enjoy this aspect and she knows how to gain media-attention by giving not only central position but also influential voice to the so-called peripheral, marginalized and subaltern. Although she accepts her assimilation in the Melting-Pot5, American society, but that appears only to be a superficial viewpoint as she does not favour assimilation, instead she celebrates the sense of ‘Otherisation’ and a touch of difference.5 She is a product of postcolonial time yet her refusal to belong to that category makes her an interesting case of the postcolonial complexity. Mukherjee considers “diasporality as a kind of continuum with
immigrants and immigrationists at one end of the scale and expatriate or exilic figures and postcolonialists at the other” (Jouvert 36). Mukherjee makes a clear-cut separation between immigrationists and postcolonial writer, whom she equalizes with the ‘expatriate exilic’ writer and above all she does not consider herself to belong either of these. She claimed herself to be a writer “in the process of re-housement.”, who has finally built for herself a ‘house of words’ (Jain 80). Her work emphasizes on female-dominated plots but she is not a champion of feminism in the true sense of the word. "The representation of the Indian Women in Bharati Mukherjee's fiction is manifold, conflicted and often anti-mimetic. The author shows a considerable degree of cross cultural sensitivity and a kind of ironic modernity, because of which she serves to separate the traditional from the westernized characters in her fiction" (Sunitha 262).

When Mukherjee's literary career launched, the feminist movement was in the full swing in the West. Mukherjee's works mainly speak of females and is female orientated, but she is not a hard-core feminist. Due to ingrained Indianness, which is deep-rooted in her psyche, feminism for her means a middle path between domination and submissiveness. The behaviour of most of her women protagonist show their docility and submissiveness to their husbands and families. They have to face and tackle their family problems but they rarely show their dominating instincts. They need their space to grow without being a disturbing element in their family equations.

By writing about gender issues, and fighting for the women cause, she tries not to evolve as a champion for women's cause but by avoiding these
controversial issues; she channelises her creative skills for the depiction of immigration and its aftermath. Unlike her first two heroines Tara Banerjee and Dimple Basu, all the other heroines reflect the tendency to succeed, for they stand for ‘survival of the fittest’, the true diasporic inherent characteristic. They are presented as an epitome of energy and strength, quickly adapting themselves with the changing circumstances: “Like Jasmine who ‘rebirths’ herself with each new identity, and goes from being Jyoti to Jasmine to Jase to Jane, Mukherjee too evolves through her fictional protagonist from being, like Tara in *The Tiger’s Daughter* to Panna in *Darkness* to Jasmine in *Jasmine*, to Beigh Masters in *The Holder of the World*. Each of these are different steps in Mukherjee’s identity building process, and are consequently reflected in her fiction” (Sampat 73).

Mukherjee’s heroines left a long lasting influence on readers mind as they finally emerged out to be having an impressive marginalisd category of the society i.e, the weaker sex. Their encounter with the west strengthens their existence and enhances their personality, in this way they are capable of challenging their subjugation. Female orientation is also reflected in her works as most of the novels have the title based on female protagonist like, *The Tiger’s Daughter, Wife, Jasmine, Desirable Daughter* and *The Tree Bride*.

Mukherjee and her heroines are identical, with their development she celebrates her own assimilation in the American Society and ”Mukherjee comes to see herself in her characters, so that we can no longer separate the writer from the writing, tell the dancer from the dance; we can only intuit the nature, of the dancer, by looking at the dance itself” (Sri 113). Mukherjee admits in an interview (Rom
Hogan 1997) that her work “from Darkness onward, [i.e.] from about 1985 to the present, is hard for some readers to understand because I don’t fit into an easy slots. I’m a woman who was born in Calcutta, but I’ve lived in America my entire adult life and consider myself an American. My literary soul was formed by literature from around the world, but especially American literature. I’m an American writer of Indian origin” (The Beatrice Interview 1997).

Indian origin is deep rooted in her aesthetics, which urge to “make the familiar exotic; the exotic familiar” (“A Four-Hundred Year-Old Woman” 35). Her frequent use of Indian fables and Hindu mythology shows her own deep faith in the ‘Hindu imagination’. Her own personality as well as her novels, present a beautiful blending of “a decidedly Hindu imagination with an Americanized sense of the craft of fiction” (DNC 286). Jasmine, Leave It to Me, Desirable Daughters and her recent novel The Tree Bride show this cultural synthesis.

To deal with the writers of diaspora in terms with Postcoloniality is a complex situation. The important question raised in this thesis is how far the use of certain ideological strategy actually helps postcolonial complexities deal effectively with the trauma of being a writer in an alien land. A related question is whether or not the choice of a particular strategy or mode by a postcolonial writer will be successful in challenging the strategy of ‘containment’ adopted by most Western “Orientalist” writers and their texts on “other” peoples and cultures. The main argument developed in this thesis is that despite reflecting contradictory and complex ideological tensions in Bharati Mukherjee’s Writings, her works demonstrate the use of ideology ultimately as a “liberating” rather than a
“containing” strategy (Afzal Khan 1-2). The Western Orientalists tried to contain the colonized other in their narrative frameworks only to justify their group’s Imperialist activities. In his book *Orientalism* Edward Said observes:

> The oriental is depicted in western political and literary texts as something one studies and depicts (as in a curriculum), as something one judges (as in a court of law), as something one disciplines (as in a school or prison), something one illustrates as a zoological manual. The point is that in each of these cases, the Orient is contained and represented by dominating frameworks. (40, emphasis added).

Bharati Mukherjee being a diasporic writer crosses the national boundaries in her narrative structure and in her works when historical and cultural meaning fuses with the different time zones and horizons within which the work operates. “At such a moment, we enter the alien world of the artifact, but at the same time gather it into our own realm, reaching a more complete understanding of ourselves” (Gadamer 245-53).

Even being in a state of diaspora, “leaving home”, Gadamer remarks, “we come home”. Bharati Mukherjee’s claim of being an American writer comes under scrutiny while going through the typical subjectivity in her writings. Her swinging between self and other makes her postcolonial status more complex and contradictory. Gadamer justifies the complex situation of a diasporic writer and says that “understanding is not to be thought of so much as an action of one’s subjectivity, but as the placing of oneself within a process of tradition, in which past and present [self and other] are constantly fused” (258).
To liberate herself from the western narrative structure Mukherjee tries to belong the romantic mode in its mythical/magical/ethical pattern and marked by its extraordinary persistent nostalgia for India. Being a postcolonial writer she is aware of the fact that exploring the cultural and historical past through the mythical and mystical mode she could liberate her people from an imperial ideology but at the same time the mythification creates a society that is, “historically static, or petrified because it is forever fixed in a mythical past” (Mohammed 183). Thus, Tara Chatterjee of *The Tiger’s Daughter* could not be fixed or lost in the mythical past of Calcutta instead her journey is to be continued through different times and spaces. Tara Chatterjee reborn in her later novels. Mukherjee is considered to be a postcolonial global writer because she succeeded to make a balance between myth and reality and able to follow the mode of ‘mythic realism’ in her narrative structure. Her narratives seem to be moved on through different times and spaces. The mode of mythic realism, “is a genre that is concerned with showing the tension in a society between man as an individual entity and man as social phenomenon and ultimately to resolve that tension by allowing its characters to achieve a balance between the two modes of existence, thus, ensuring a harmonious survival of society” (Lukacs 54-56).

Mukherjee with her time present and time past scheme used the tool of realism for dealing with the present, current problems of man in a society; thus avoiding the fixation on the static past. At the same time, the realistic present, sometimes painful, takes the characters easily and constantly rooted in the ongoing process of the past. So, the mode of mythic realism used by Mukherjee
seems safe for her to deal a postcolonial complexities in a state of diaspora. It is her strategy of liberation from the effects of stereo-types of Orientalism. Her characters like Jasmine, Hannah and Tara Lata Ganguly are the class of themselves.

Mukherjee’s evolution both as a writer and a person is influenced by the synthesis of myth and realism and this influence is also clearly seen in her style. Initially she was quite fiery and acidic in her tone and style but with each subsequent publication she seems to cool down. That fire has now subsided. As a writer she has emerged as powerful voice and spokesperson of all immigrants in America with tinge of American style and Indian sensibility:

Her recent works display a dark sense of humour through the use of short energetic sentences which are often laden with manifold meanings that need to be decoded. These later works also project her own assimilation into her adopted country, as the protagonists of these works reflect the changes in her own personality (Sampat 73).
Notes

1. **Motif** - It is type of incident, a particular situation, an ethical problem, or the like, which may be treated in a work of imagination. It is also applied to the frequent repetition of a significant phrase or set description in a single work as in the Operas of Richard Wagner, or in the novels of James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and William Faulkner. Bharati Mukherjee has frequently used ‘journey’ as a motif.

2. **Third Space** – A sense of place is one of the imperatives of writer’s being dislocated through extra-territoriality. Therefore, the writers of the postcolonial age create a space or a phase, moving away both from the culture of their origin and their adopted culture. In this way they try to escape from conflictual situations and self-division. In the *Location of Culture* Homi Bhabha calls it a ‘third space’, a hybrid location of antagonism, perpetual tension and pregnant chaos.

3. **Dark Days** – It refers to the time period which Mukherjee had lived in Canada, under constant racial- discrimination and abuse. Being a tormenting experience, this phase had been visualized by her as of utter bleakness, where there is no ray of hope. At this time she felt most alienated from her surroundings.

4. Bharati Mukherjee’s biographer, Alam Fakrul, has categorized her literary career into three phases, Expatriation, Transition and Immigration. Previously, many researchers too have followed this categorization, but the present thesis established that instead of total assimilation, Mukherjee maintains or creates a sort
of ethnic difference. This difference acts as a catalyst for attracting western readers.

5. **Melting Pot** – It refers to the process of assimilation, where the different cultural and ethnic communities in a Nation are conceived as coming together to create new “American” race or culture. The word “melting” goes as far back as the eighteenth century when St. Jean de Creveour referred to the American as “the new man” is being “melted into a new race of men”. It gained currency when the Anglo-Jewish writer, Israel Langwill, coined the analogy of the “melting pot” to refer to the manner in which nineteenth century immigrants to the US were encouraged to abandon their cultures of origin until, as in a melting pot, their difference would gradually melt away and they would develop into a new race of “Americans” sharing a common culture.

6. The postcolonial writer has only two ideological choices in the wake of the colonial aftermath: accept the ideology of containment, by which (s)he and her/his culture is represented in orientalist texts, or to refute this ideology with one of liberation. The writer thus liberates her/his peoples from an imperialist ideology that had sought to contain them.

7. **Mythical Realism** - It is a fictive strategy used by Third World writers by balancing the glory of myth with the more critical mode of realism. The mythic response to life usually endorses faith, religion and may even lead to mysticism and deep spirituality- all associated with a ‘higher’ level of human consciousness and therefore, desirable ends. Realism, on the other hand, is a mode of much less, moral ambiguity than myth. It is the voice of the present and the future, and
of modernity. It represents all that is synonymous with western style “progress” : rationalism, materialism, industrialism, technological innovation. An opposed to the stasis of myth, realism is associated with flux, change and achievement.

8. **Abbreviations** – For denoting the works of Bharati Mukherjee, the following abbreviations are used by the researcher in the thesis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Tiger’s Daughter</td>
<td>TD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wife</td>
<td>W</td>
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<tr>
<td>Darkness</td>
<td>D</td>
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<td>The Middleman and Other Stories</td>
<td>M</td>
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<td>Jasmine</td>
<td>J</td>
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<td>The Holder of The World</td>
<td>HW</td>
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<td>Leave It to Me</td>
<td>LM</td>
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<td>Desirable Daughter</td>
<td>DD</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Tree Bride</td>
<td>TB</td>
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Works Cited


__________. Reading and Talk by Mukherjee Bharati, organized by USIS, at NCPA Bombay, on December 18, 1996.


__________. “Home is Where your Feet are, and May Your Heart be There too!” *Writers of the Indian Diaspora*. Op. Cit. 30-39.


