The final phase of Mukherjee’s literary career begins with the publication of *The Holder of The World, Leave It to Me, Desirable Daughters* and *The Tree Bride*. In this phase the search for her roots which has initiated in the early phase of her career seems to be continued though the cultural encounter between India and America has been viewed through the American viewpoint and “moreover the tide is reversed, the so-called American dream lies in the Orient and American seeks it” (Kak 24-25).

The focus on cultural encounters between India and the U.S. has moved towards multi-dimensionalism that is instead of bicultural encounter it has become multicultural encounters that take place within America. Now for her protagonists, nationality has got no importance, and what is important is their arrival in the American Dreamland.

Beginning with Tara Banerjee of *The Tiger’s Daughter*, the search is carried onto the final phase by Tara Chatterjee of the *Desirable Daughters* and again Tara Chatterjee of the *The Tree Bride*, the novel which deals with the search and research of the life of Tara Lata Gangooly. The name ‘Tara’ itself shows a sort of fascination for Mukherjee. It seems that it holds a special interest
for her. In an article “On Being an American Writer”, she writes : “My three novels of the past three decade, *The Holder of The World,* *Leave It to Me,* and *Desirable Daughters,* take up, question that seem to me a continuation of the same thematic concern” (51). May be with her next publication, Mukherjee is going to complete that cycle, which she has started with *The Tiger’s Daughter.*

The protagonist Hannah of *The Holder of The World* and Devi Dee of *Leave It to Me* are Americans having association with India. Mukherjee wants to visualize different aspects of cultural dislocation and relocation from a different dimension that is from the external perspective. How an outsider reacts towards dislocation, alienation and the efforts made for relocation. Though both the novels deal with the same recurring theme of search for identity yet they differ in their approach towards their subject-matter. If *The Holder of The World* is a beautiful blending of Eastern and Western Culture, *Leave It to Me* appears to be a quest of a restless, confused soul resulting only in disaster and chaos. In this final phase, Mukherjee makes it clear that both the journey as well as the destination is important. The encounter between the naïve outsider in search of self and how far s(he) is influenced and transformed by this cultural synthesis has become the main purpose of the writer.

*The Holder of the World* published in 1993, shows the genius of Mukherjee as a writer, who excels in using history for the development of her plot. Mukherjee like a skilled craftsman has beautifully interwoven threads of history, time and space for the creation and designing of *The Holder of the World*:
The novel has a wide canvas that sweeps across continents and centuries, cultures and religions. Immigration, exile, alienation and screwing lands have always been the colour of Mukherjee’s palate and with *The Holder of the World*, she uses the familiar tones and shades to create a Universe of infinite possibility and eternal time (Sattar 6).

With the use of history and imagination, the meeting between the Puritan Seventeenth and early Eighteenth century American world and the Mughal Indian world of Eighteenth century takes place. In this way recurring themes of dislocation, migration and transformation are skillfully used by Mukherjee. Instead of clash with ideas, a new dimension has been added to the novel by showing what effect it made on two different, contemporary cultures when they come into contact with each other. Regarding the novel Mukherjee feels:

I love history and I am fascinated by the handling of data, what is called information management. As the novel grew draft by draft, I saw a way to bring these together. Many authors see science as adversial. I don’t. To me this was an experiment in virtual reality, a way of revising, reliving history instead of rewriting it, I wanted to set up for American and Indian audience how much Asia contributed to the notion of an American or European identity. Contact with the other, changes the way you see yourself (Pinto 35).

An ordinary incident on an ordinary day became the inspiration behind this novel. In an interview Mukherjee disclosed it that “the novel got started because I was at an auction of Southeby in New York… Whatever money my husband and I save is spent on Indian miniature painting and my aesthetics for the novel evolves out of my love for Indian miniature painting” (Mukherjee 188). The miniature titled, "A European Woman in Aurangzab's Court” caught Mukherjee’s attention and, the Caucasian woman, who stood in full Mughal dress resplendent, suddenly made
her realize that "I was looking at a woman who three hundred years back had taken a lot of risks, had transformed herself" (188). So, the path of journey which was always from East to West with the outcome of chameleon-like change, got its course diverted. Mukherjee made a new journey from West to East with the skilled blending of imaginary creations with historical facts. In a review of the novel, Uma Parameswaran praises the use of Mukherjee’s concept of virtual reality:

In reconstructing a piece of Raj History, Mukherjee joins other novelists from her native India, such as Manohar Malgonkar (*The Princes, The Devil's Wind*), Kamala Markandaya (*The Golden Honeycomb*), and more recently, Gita Mehta (*Raj*). She adds another dimension to linear narrativization by using the concept of virtual reality (637).

*The Holder of the World* deals with the story of Hannah Easton, 'the Salem Bibi.' The narrator is Beigh Masters, who does the job of assets research, reads about 'Auction and Acquisitions' and search around for antiques and precious stones, the profession which she enjoys as a hobby. She loves Venn Iyer of MIT, who is a computer engineer from Madras. Being a computer expert, Venn provides her ample help and enables her to find and disclose the mystery behind the diamond named 'The Emperor's Tear'. Beigh Masters reads in the magazine *Auctions and Acquisitions* that though people get separated from their property, "Nothing is ever lost, but continents and centuries sometimes get in the way" (*HW* 5). It gives her a clue about the precious diamond that belonged to the last of the great Mughal emperors Aurangzeb and was stolen from him by Hannah Easton, the lover, mistress and Bibi of the Hindu king Raja Jadav Singh. In her efforts to trace the diamond, Beigh Masters gets obsessed with Hannah’s life than the diamond. She says:
It isn't the gem that interest me. It's the inscription and the provenance. Anything having to do with Mughal India gets my attention. Anything about the Salem Bibi, precious - as - pearl feeds me (5).

For both Beigh Masters and Venn Iyer, past holds attraction and fascination. They claim that "the past present itself to us" (6). Venn is of the view that "every time - traveller will create a different reality - just as we all do now. No two travellers will be able to retrieve the same reality... History is a big saving bank" (6). Beigh Masters consults five hundred books, endless number of paintings and engravings, trade records and picture journals and artifacts to collect information about Hannah Easton, the 'Salem Bibi'. In 1670, Hannah was born in the American colonies, in the wilds of Massachusetts to Edward Easton and Rebecca. When she is hardly one year old, her father died and when she is five, her mother elopes with a lover from the Nipmuc tribe and leaves an ineradicable imprint on Hannah's young mind:

The ultimate unnatural crime of Puritan life... She [Hannah] witnessed the Fall, not Adam's Fall, Rebecca's Fall...She is the Witness not merely of the occasion of the sin, but the birth of the sin itself...in the scorched sceptic month of August (30).

Hannah throughout her life silently bore the claustrophobic memories of this event. Being an orphan, she is brought to Salem by Robert and Susannah Fitch, who with love and affection bring her up under Puritanical restrictions. By the time Hannah learns needle work and her extraordinary talent for needle and embroidery makes her famous. Though her foster mother praises her needle work yet she is afraid of the wantonness of spirit it betrays. It is this wantonness of spirit
which provokes Hannah to accept a swashbuckling adventurer, Gabriel Legge as her husband:

Guilt, perhaps a need to punish herself for the secret she was forced to carry? Unconscious imitation of her mother, a way of joining her by running off with a treacherous alien? Gabriel Legge with his tales of exotic adventure was as close to the Nipmuc lover as any man in Salem. She sought to neutralize her shame by emulating her mother's behavior (69).

After her marriage, to her surprise Gabriel appears to her as a good for nothing. He leaves her and goes to his mysterious mission. She meanwhile, learns the skill of a good nurse. She is now able to use the same needle for sewing human skin, which she once used on clothes and in a short time she earns a good name in Stepney, England. Gabriel comes back from his mysterious voyage and proposes her to accompany him to India, where he works for East India Company. Hannah arrives in India in 1695, a period of significant political and economic activity of Indian history. Hannah does not enjoy the company and attitude of the English women, the wives of other factors as she is aware of the fact that British industrialists in India “had not come to India in order to breed and colonize or even to convert. They were here to plunder, to enrich themselves” (99). To Hannah this new world appears to be more attractive and meaningful as it fills in her a sense of belonging and she decides not to "aspire to return to England upon the completion of Gabriel's tour" (104). Hannah knows that “she'd been transported to the other side of the world, but the transportation was more than mere ‘conveyancing’, as it was for Gabriel and others. Many years later she called the trip, and her long residence in India, her ‘translation’” (104).
Meanwhile Gabriel Legge being a misfit in East India Company, joins a group of sea-pirates and becomes 'the Robinhood of the Coromandel Coast' (167). Gabriel's faithlessness and news of his death makes Hannah to decide for herself and she tries to escape with Bhagmati, her Indian maid-servant and accomplice. On their way, the bridge collapsed, she should have been drowned but is saved by Raja Jadav Singh of Devgad. Her encounter with Raja, fulfills her yearning for a kind of passionate salvation which she has been nurturing in her heart from a long time. "Her courtship with the Raja indicates a relationship based entirely on Indian, 'Eastern' values and morality with little reference to the life left behind" (Mehta 197). Both fall in love with each other and Raja offers her a life and experience of being overwhelmed in love, and she too like her mother embraces her alien lover to the extent of identifying herself completely with her Indian lover. Pradeep Trikha feels that "Hannah delves for new roots, due to her fine quality of adaptability she steps in the New World of Hinduism” (209).

Nawab Haider Beg, Governor of Aurangzeb’s state, dispatched Morad Farah, the ruthless mercenary commander to crush and imprison, Raja Jadav Singh, to usurp the Emperor's Tear, the diamond and to bring the Firangi lady Hannah. On getting the news of his enemy's attack on Devgadh, Hannah and Bhagmati are sent into one palanquin and a disguised Raja bundles himself into another one. He attacks the Mughal army and eventually becomes badly injured. Hannah kills Murad Farah and by bringing injured Raja back to Panpur Fort, she saves his life. On the other hand Hannah herself goes to negotiate with the Emperor Arrange and leaves no stone unturned to make peace between the
Emperor and the king. But Aurangzeb is bent upon taking revenge and finally king Jadav Singh becomes victim of his violence and dies. Hannah’s failure to pacify Aurangzeb does not make her lose courage and she somehow manages to take the diamond - the Emperor’s Tear from Aurangzeb’s war tent and escapes towards Panpur fort. She gives that diamond to Bhagmati, which she thrusts into her dying womb and thus, the precious diamond remains safe with her dead body. Hannah pays her deepest tributes to Bhagmati by burying her under the name of her English lover, whom Bhagmati had so passionately served. Finally Hannah, returns to Salem, as a transformed human being, living as a rebel with Pearl Singh, her daughter from Raja Jadav Singh, along with her mother’s five half Nipmuc children. In this way, the story of ‘Salem Bibi’ that is Hannah Easton is revealed to us and Beigh Masters is able to get the Emperor’s Tear, the most perfect diamond in the world.

No doubt that Hannah Easton’s life and stories related with her deeds in the Salem, Massachusetts, act as a source of inspiration for the portrayal of Hester Prynne, the main protagonist of The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne:

A historical evidence that brings a remote connection between Salem Bibi’s Indian experience and the writings of Nathaniel Hawthorne. Hawthorne’s morbid introspection into guilt and repression in his now-famous books harks back to the need for openness and understanding already stressed in the story of Salem Bibi (Parasuram 201).

Both dared to commit adultery despite being the fairer sex and lived like a rebel on the fringes of Puritan Society. Though their act was considered immoral and unconventional at that time yet they decided to single – handedly rear up their
illegitimate child. Now a days it is a common practice seen in the present day modern society but in the sixteenth and seventeenth century it was a taboo almost unheard and unimagined. Therefore, it would be no exaggeration to call characters like Hannah Easton and Hester Prynne, the trend-setters of this sort of social practice.

Bharati Mukherjee too has used the colourful character of Hannah Easton, ‘Salem Bibi’ to disclose the rebellious nature of a female protagonist in the Puritan society of the seventeenth century. She dares to question and discovers the new ways of defining life in a world, which was essentially orthodox and male dominated. Appiah, K. Anthony maintains that Mukherjee, while celebrating “the borderlands in her novel, also appears as a close relative of Nathaniel Hawthorne” (7).

Hester Prynne, the main protagonist of *The Scarlet Letter* seems to be much influenced and based on the life of Hannah Easton, the ‘Salem Bibi’, who had got the nerves to challenge the Puritan society and was much ahead of her times. The writer herself “goes so far as to establish a claim that Hannah’s life might have served as model for the story of Hester Prynne which is told by Nathaniel Hawthorne in *The Scarlet Letter!*” (Bharvane 190).

The characterization of Hester Prynne is likewise an attempt by Hawthorne to depict the hypocrisy of the Puritan society of Salem, Massachusetts, America of the late Seventeenth and the Eighteenth century. Casey Ethan has characterized “*The Holder of the World* as an audacious feminist rewriting of Nathaniel Hawthorne’s novel *The Scarlet Letter*” (401-405). Bharati Mukherjee has drawn
several parallels between Hannah and Hester. Both are ‘outsiders’ in their communities. Hannah is born and brought up in America and after her marriage she has settled at Stepney, England. Hester is born in England and after marriage she is settled at Salem, Massachusetts, America. Thus, both have left their native places to adjust in the new and alien world. Both the women excel in the art of embroidery and used it as a means to earn their livelihood. They also used it as a medium to display their inner desire for escaping from the dull and monotonous, Puritan orthodoxy.

This also reveals the wantonness of their inner spirit and desires. Both the women are bold enough to challenge the male-chauvinism and living like an outcaste they show the hypocrisy of the male-dominated conservative society where they have been ‘more sinned against than sinning’. In this way Mukherjee rewrites the American canon by claiming that Hannah was Hester. “who can blame Nathaniel Hawthorne for shying away from the real story of the brave Salem mother and her illegitimate daughter?” (HW 285).

Hannah’s upbringing in an orthodox Fitch household helps her in gaining all the conventional wisdom and housekeeping. Gradually, she develops an extraordinary skill for needle work as it provides an outlet for depicting her internal conflict, her hidden, subdued and suppressed emotions. She used to weave her colourful, bright-tapestries with passion and feeling which enhances the beauty of her embroidery. Even at the age of twelve, she becomes a well known name for her work. Mukherjee writes:
A twelve year old puritan orphan who had never been out of Massachusetts imagined an ocean, palm trees, thatched colleges, and black skinned men casting nets and colorfully garbed, bare breasted women mending them; native barbs and on the horizon, high masted schooners... through bright-green foliage, a ghostly white-building it could even be the Taj Mahal – is rising (44).

Hannah in this way, tries to objectively correlate her emotional self through embroidery. It also reflects light on her hidden and imaginary world, which is full of colourful, passionate imagination. G.A. Ghanshyam feels that, “the embroidery is the embodiment of desire to escape from the dull, grey of Puritan outpost” (127).

For Hannah, embroidery serves two purposes that is both as a means to display her hidden desires, the wantonness of spirit and as an end to escape from the rule-bound, claustrophobic influence of Puritan world. This Puritan world is described at length in comparison with Mughal India of the Seventeenth century by Bharati mukherjee in *The Holder of the World*:

Mukherjee beautifully blends Mughal India along with its contemporary Western world: The novel is a form of ‘computerized history’. Man’s search of his identity, in a world of rootlessness and uncertainty, takes him back to history or past, which gives him a base to hold on to. This is exactly what Bharati mukherjee seems to bring out in this novel (Ghanshyam and Iyengar 127).

*The Holder of the World* is a complex novel with greater depth of meaning, revealing the interconnectedness between cultures and lands. Mukherjee by adding a dynamic aspect to it makes it to move in two time spans and three centuries apart. Thus, presenting it with a new angle and dimension in which history plays an important role. According to Alam “Mukherjee’s novel envisages and engages history as a complex space across which lives are not
merely connected, but are also intricately intertwined and intensely lived intertemporally – a space against which the superficial divides that separate us. Can be perpetually questioned and dismantled” (124).

Alam has accurately judged the use of history in *The Holder of the World* as history is commonly used in postcolonial texts because they deal with one’s search for past identity and in *The Holder of the World* this hunger for connectivity through past is clearly shown. The novel itself acts as a bridge between different time zones that is the past, the present and the future: “I live in three time zones simultaneously, and I don’t mean Eastern, Central and Pacific. I mean the past, the present and the future” (*HW* 5). This opening sentence of the novel reflects the importance of time factor in the development of the plot. It can be taken as:

"The attempt of the writer Bharati Mukherjee to look at the past in the present to preserve it for the future through the Super Computer. The novel should be acclaimed for research and artistic recapturing of the past reality, not the retrieval of information (Sudheer 213)."

Mukherjee has herself considered that the task of probing into the history of three hundred year’s old period, its people, their life style and experience is like “uniting people and possessions :it’s like matching orphaned socks, through time” (*HD* 5).

Mukherjee has succeeded in her attempt at uniting people and possessions in *The Holder of the World*. The novel is divided into two plots. The principal plot deals with “the strange and surprising adventures of Hannah Easton” and the subsidiary plot is related with “the story of Beig Masters” (Alam 120). It is Beig
Masters who is able to solve the mystery surrounding Hannah’s life and the diamond, the Emperor’s Tear. With the efforts of Beigh Masters the story of Hannah, the Salem Bibi is revealed interestingly and in a chronological order. Along with Hannah, the Puritan world in the new England is also described. Hannah’s Puritan upbringing and her marriage with Gabriel Legge gives her an opportunity to visit Moghal India of the seventeenth century. She is mesmerized with the Indian culture and its richness and “after an avalanche of life in India before she translates herself into Salem Bibi of Raja Jadav Singh of Devagad” (Sudheer 214).

As a peace-maker, fate provides her the chance to meet the Mughal Emperor Auranzjeb. She fails in her attempt to persuade the Emperor to stop bloody war and create peace but she anyhow manages to slip out of the army camp of the Emperor with the world’s most precious diamond ‘the Emperor’s Tear’. In this way, Hannah emerges out as a dynamic character and personality.

It is Hannah which acquaints to the west with the prevailing social customs and traditions of the Moghal India in all hues and colours. Mukherjee has indeed shown her artistic genius of recapturing history and correlating it to present times in a unique way. Mukherjee has herself described *The Holder of the World* as a “post-modern historical novel (Indian Express 6). Therefore, it is doubtless to call it as a historical novel in the true sense of the term:

*The Holder of the World* is a picturesque depiction of history. The poetic insight with which she has etched the characters, situations and events, has lent a dash of colour and extra excitement to dull historical recording. Thus she has succeeded in recreating
history and related it to the present social set-up (Sudheer 216).

Mukherjee’s efforts to create history and then to apply and correlate it with the present times shows her genius at using the historicity of the text and the textuality of history. For her, “history is no longer a static background, rather it is time-less, alive, absurd and mysterious in its entirety” (Nayak 76). In this way she has used history in the modern sense. The events which took place centuries ago are used for textual representation, by reconstructing the past and present concerns, thus, making history immortal and eternal. For Mukherjee “the appropriation of history, the historicization of the past, the narrativization of society, all of which give [...] the accumulation and differentiation of the social space, space to be used for social purpose” (Said 78).

Mukherjee feels that the historical conditions and circumstances are not necessary for reading a text on the basis of historicity of text and the textuality of history because through them the past is reprocessed with emphasis on the political and social needs of the present. She has written The Holders of the World, an interesting real story on the basis of historical records in order to cater the requirements of the present day readers. She has made the historicity of text as real by using it to present the problematics of history in contemporary equivalences and “the text as a historical reality with its historicity is based on the annals, chronicles, and the past events with a desire to raise socio-political consciousness (Nayak 77).

Mukherjee has played the role of a historicist by ensuring eternity and immortality to the facts and events in the text. She has used the characters of
Hannah Easton and Beig Masters to act as a bridge between the past and the present. She has focused at the use of historicity of text and textuality of history in social-political paradigms because history deals with the process of making real out of a static background. *The Holder of the World* can be read as a discourse on historical narrative in the analysis of its historicity because “historical narration without analysis is trivial, historical analysis without narration is incomplete“ (White 268). Mukherjee has tried to give history a new look from the point of view of her readers. She has used history for narrating human actions, emotions, feelings and for giving moral messages to the readers without disturbing the course of history and making the historicity of the text and the textuality of history as inseparable. Bhagabat Nayak feels:

The historicity of the text and textuality of history imply to rethink history, the text and the interaction between the two, to bring out that history is longer merely static background but rather something timeless, living, and mysterious in its entirety, and speaking through many devices of which the literary text is one (91).

No doubt people are closely related with their culture which is a part and parcel of their life. Their confrontation with another culture arise in them a cross-cultural consciousness which either enriches their socio-cultural experiences or bewilders them if they are not able to cope with that cultural shock. Likewise, *The Holder of the World* is a story of an immigrant American Hannah Easton, who comes to India in Seventeenth century and finds herself imbibed in its culture:

*The Holder of the World* succeeds in introducing a set of new elements in Mukherjee’s cross-cultural vision. She communicates through it a new kind of global consciousness that provides a sense of connectedness beyond the barriers of time and
geography... The world in it is on which the metaphoric freely merges with the literal and India becomes there a supreme example for such merging of realities to assume the status of a work of art (Parasuram 201).

_The Holder of the World_ talks about the influence of dislocation, cross-cultural confrontation resulting in transformation when two cultures come into contact with each other and “People are continually remaking their culture, and in so doing redefining the past, reconstituting the present, and reconceptualizing what they desire from the future” (Long 202). In the novel Mukherjee has tried her best to explore consequences of cultural confrontation, when the Puritan Seventeenth century and early Eighteenth century American world meets with its contemporary Mughal Indian world, with the fantastic mingling of history and imagination:

Mukherjee’s _The Holder of the World_ is an attempt to turn the tables on the familiar situation of an Indian in America to one of an American in India so that we may discover an approach to cross-cultural consciousness that has a universal relevance. The book is an attempt to release consciousness from the shackles of Time and Space and bring a sense of global connectedness (Parsuram 197).

It is through Hannah Easton, the main protagonist of the novel, who lived several years in India of colonial times and comes to be known as ‘Salem Bibi’; Mukherjee has shown the cross-cultural vision. Hannah by crossing the cultural barriers is able to adapt and translate herself into different cultural roles. She succeeds in establishing connectedness across cultural boundaries. The trauma of her mother’s disappearance into those native jungles along with her Nipmuc Indian lover, made her bold and the fear of the unknown or the unexplored is never felt by
her. She at once feels a bond of kinship with whatever unfamiliar or exotic seems to her. This feeling of connectedness to the realities of human life at all levels and places helps her easily adapt herself in the alien country. Her translation into the ‘Salem Bibi’, the mistress of Raja Jadav Singh, provides her with a new perspective of looking at the New World of Hinduism. It is Bhagmati, her maid and good friend, who helps her in understanding an aged civilization. The stories of The Ramayana fascinate Hannah because of congruous themes of abduction, betrayal and vengeance, the traits which are present in her own life and nature. After Jadav Singh’s death, her meeting with Aurangzeb enhances her cross-cultural experiences. Awe-struck with her beauty and boldness, the Emperor confers on her the title ‘Precious as Pearl’. Accomplishing her duty, Hannah goes back to Salem. But before going back she gives her dead friend Bhagmati a proper burial and with it she bids her and India goodbye. Even in Salem she continues to live with the morality and traits which she has imbibed during her stay at India:

Hannah and Bhagmati in The Holder of the World recurrently defy estrangement in the society they live and get the answer in rejecting cultural stereotypes they develop the life of their own outside the home (Chafe 242).

The nomadic impulses of emigration and travel are very well reflected through the works of Bharati Mukherjee. She also highlights the tensions of adaptation and assimilation which are the consequences of deliberately going for materially better future prospects. Mukherjee has tried to give this ‘motif’, which is purely based on material consideration, a deeper and wholesome meaning by correlating this journey ‘motif’ with a purpose that is quest for an identity or
achievement of some goal and *The Holder of the World* re-enforces expatriation as a journey of the human mind. “Like *Jasmine* who travels westward, Hannah Easton’s voyage to the orient is a pre-determined truth which effectively voices and manifests the latent tensions, aspirations and ambitions of the protagonist” (Sandhya 191).

Hannah has been denied although her childhood and early youth that passionate lively life which she has always longed for. Her strict Puritan upbringing makes her to lead a simple life, doing Christian service, charity and hard work. Even as a five year old child she is made to sing Psalms along with her mother Rebecca. But the bold step taken by her mother of eloping with her Nipmuc lover becomes a memorable event through her life and “it is necessary not only to retain to the memory of her beloved, absent mother, but to deny its final blinding, lustful image” (*HW* 30). The memory far from being blinded, keeps haunting her and gets reflected in tapestries woven in rich vibrant colours. Like her mother she secretly nurtures a desire of being swept off into the arms of an alien lover, enjoying a passionate and lustful life almost unknown to her Puritan world. Hannah succumbs to Gabriel Legge’s marriage proposal not because of love but grabbing it as an opportunity to go out of her Puritan society. Its only her inner desire for quest and adventure which make her accept Legge as her spouse, though she did not believe him, but she too longed for escape (*HW* 67). Again when Gabriel proposes her to accompany him to India, she at once agrees for she realizes that it is going to be a chance for more active and vital life. Her primary concern on arriving India becomes a quest for a meaningful life. Even in the alien new world she feels a sort
of bond and sense of belongingness. Instead of enjoying her time with the company’s other English women, she abhors their attitude and English snobbery. What strikes her most is their primary topic of conversation that is, “‘Bibis’ and it seemed to Hannah that bibis, suspected and real, were at the centre of most female conversation in white town” (131). She comes to know that Bibis are to be ignored, overlooked and above all avoided. They are the natural consequence of married life for “accommodation was synonymous with expatriate feminity” (134). She sees Bhagmati dressed in sheer white muslin as a bibi and gets mesmerized by the sensuality, magical attraction and passionate appeal of her bibihood. When Gabriel adopts his older ways of illegal deeds, owns a bibi and joins a band of sea-pirates. Hannah leaves him and in a few months she herself willingly becomes bibi of Raja Jadav Singh. Her encounter with Raja Jadav Singh fulfills her long cherished desire for that kind of passionate salvation for which her mother Rebecca has shunned everything. In Jadav Singh’s company Hannah is able to satisfy her life-long wish. Jadav Singh too showers upon her all the sensuous pleasures which she has never been dreamt of. Raja’s too much indulgence with her gives his enemy, the Mughals an opportunity to attack Devgadh. Though fighting bravely, Raja gets fatally injured. Hannah showing her presence of mind and strength of spirit kills Murad Farah and saves Raja. When Raja recovers, he disassociates from her, considering her a distraction in the affairs of the Kingdom. Even her disassociation with Raja could not decrease her love for him. For his sake she tries to negotiate with the Emperor Aurangzeb and tries her best to disdain Emperor from violence. Impressed by her boldness, Emperor calls her as precious as pearl beauty. In this way, her journey to the mysterious East, imbibed
the Indian values and morality in her character. Like *Jasmine*, Hannah’s quest results in her metamorphosis, her assimilation in Indian tradition and values. Her inmate wild desires get satisfied and she finds her final contentment and joy here. Therefore, the journey which Hannah undertakes to quench her quest proves for her fruitful and she returns back to her native country with a new vision towards life:

*The Holder of the World* is a novel of expatriation, of a quest and a journey, not only to geographically diverse lands but to culturally variant societies which help to question and abandon conventional moral and social values. Hannah’s life succeeds in questioning and discovering new ways of defining reality in a world which was essentially orthodox (Sandhya 195).

Hannah’s acquisition of this new vision has made *The Holder of the World* as anti-war novel and thus, it could be visualized from another dimension, which makes it more universal in its approach. Hannah Easton, acts as the ambassador of peace and non-violence. That is why Subhash Chandra feels that “the novel, inter-alia, is a strident denunciation of greed for power, violence and war which generate disharmony in society and destroy precious human lives in the name of ideals which are hollow” (Subhash 217). She has been exposed to violence since her childhood, which has filled in her heart abhorrence for violence and bloodshed and deep sympathy for the innocent victims of violence. She has witnessed the frequent raids of the Nipmuc warriors on the New England settlers, causing lot of destruction and loss of life. Hannah, thus, watched “ripping apart, thieves and cutthroats walking the streets in open defiance of common decency, crafty, devious merchants without a ha’penny of godfear piling up ducats and dobblovs and pleading too great a poverty to contribute to the Sunday offering” (*HW* 41).
Her husband Gabriel Legge, being a man of dubious character and a pirate used to kill and plunder innocent people and Hannah has to silently bear this secret. She finds that the basic principle of existence is same whether in Coromandel or in the New England, Salem that is - aggression, violence, destruction and blood-shed. Even in the arms of Raja Jadav Singh, Hannah constantly faces war - threats and she has to go through its aftermath, which makes her to utter that “Human beings are beasts, base - driven, Venomous unfeeling” (246-47). She feels that war only brings destruction and blood-shed on a large scale, so she decides to offer her life in lieu of putting an end to the war. She shows the boldness of going to transact with the Emperor Aurangzeb, though she is taken hostage by him. In her defense she presents an example of fine oratory which is based on the theme of how war ravages the innocent people:

Duty! Duty, judgement! I have heard enough of duty. And of judgement. You cloak your lust for vengeance and for gold and diamonds in the noble words of duty and judgement and protection and sacrifice. But it is the weakest and poorest and the most innocent who suffer, who sacrifice, whose every minute of everyday is obedience to duty (269).

Despite her efforts, she fails to make alliance between the Emperor and the Raja, yet she succeeds in serving the purpose of the writer, who has used Hannah as a peace-maker, condemning war and violence. Hannah appears as a visionary striving for peace and propagating the message of Universal brotherhood. In Mukherjee’s words: “The life inside her compelled it, she would offer her life, if necessary, to end the war” (HW 259).
Hannah Easton is indeed one of the most remarkable characters created by Bharati Mukherjee. Like any other characters of Mukherjee’s, she too offers “a frontal challenge to patriarchal thought, social organization and control mechanism” (Sushila 65). Being a historical figure she also makes it clear that Mukherjee has devote her attention to female issues both in historical times as well as in the contemporary society:

Mukherjee’s character portrayal is remarkable, particularly that of Hannah, who with her dynamic beauty is called as precious as pearl by the Emperor, but at the end she comes before the readers as a philosopher with her message of peace, condemnation of idolatry, equality and equanimity (Sudheer 215).

Mukherjee has used another female character Beig Masters to unravel the mystery which surrounds Hannah’s life and the diamond the Emperor’s Tear and “the transmigration of Salem Bibi’s soul through time and space becomes an allegory of Beig Master’s personal discovery” (Shankar 195-96). Hannah the person who moves forward and reached to the centre from margin. She is the answer of the famous Postcolonial overwhelming question – “Can the subaltern speak”?

The character of Hannah Easton eventually appears to achieve the position of self-actualization. Therefore, even the title of the novel The Holder of the World which symbolically refers to Alamgir, Aurangzeb in its deeper sense also hints at Hannah who emerges before us as the beauty bewitching even The Holder of the World that is Aurangzeb. So, it is indeed Hannah Easton, the real Holder of the World, who discovers the truth that “the survivor is the one who
improvises, not follows, the rules” (*HW* 234). This can also be taken as the indirect message of Bharati Mukherjee to her readers. Hannah in order to satisfy her inner desire for adventure and make her life meaningful leaves her country and comes to an alien land. Then by leaving her husband, she voluntarily accepts her new role as a ‘Salem Bibi’ of Raja Jadav Singh. Thus, she buries her Puritan past and without caring for morality or ethical codes of society, she emerges as a real fighter who aims for her self-actualization at any cost. Raja Jadav Singh’s love satisfies her quest for life and gives her the strength to face the great Mughal Emperor, Aurangzeb, and present before him her plea for peace and non-violence. Again, after returning back to her native country, she lives with her daughter Pearl from Jadav Singh and her mother’s five half Nipmuc children, on her own without caring for her Puritan society and its norms like a rebel. In this way Hannah appears before us a self-actualized character, living and leading her life on her own terms and conditions. Wherever “she stayed... she would have changed history for she was one of those extraordinary lives through which history runs a four-lane highway” (189).

**II**

*Leave It To Me*, again echoes the same theme of search, though written in a highly American tone and colour. On the one level it deals with the restless search of the protagonist Devi for her roots that is for her bio-parents and on the other
level it reveals layer by layer the postcolonial complexities of the modern world, where identity has become a complex phenomenon of multi-dimensions. Devi is also one such character reflecting multiple personalities. She is an adopted Italian-American, born in Devigaon, India. Thus, she inherits a curious ancestry of a hippie, American mother and a dubious, ‘guru’ of Eurasian origin. Being an unwanted female child, she is callously left at the nearest orphanage, where she is given the name Faustine, after the typhoon, by the sisters of the orphanage. Later she is adopted by an Italian-American family Dimartino’s, by the efforts of the sisters of the orphanage. Now she becomes Debby DiMartino. Her foster parents provide her sufficient affection, care and love. Despite of this, Debby considers herself different from her foster parents and family. She feels herself dislocated from her surroundings. She is aware of the fact that she is an unwanted obstacle in a world that hurtles on towards its mysterious destinations. Abandoning her foster parents, she starts her search for her past, her origins, and the mysterious bio-parents; who have dropped her like a hot brick at the orphanage. In this way, in a picaresque fashion the narrative of the novel progresses with the entry of a variety of characters which may or may not be helpful to Devi, the protagonist in her search for her “bio-mom”. In Leave It To Me, Mukherjee has beautifully blended the mythical technique with the narrative. She takes the mythical figure of Devi², the eight armed, flame bright, lion-riding, dispenser of divine justice, who with all her inner strength kills the Buffalo-Demon; who is set on the mission of destroying all the gods and Goddess. Debby DiMartino, the main protagonist, changes her name to Devi, thus, assuming the role of the mythical Goddess Devi,
for the search and destruction of her bio-parents, who through their evil deeds stands for the buffalo-demon.

Debby DiMartino is the protagonist of the story. She is twenty three years old, a fun-loving American girl, adopted by Italian, American family DiMartinos; Manfred and Serena DiMartino. She considers her adoption as the upside of adoption because of the security and care, which her decent foster family has provided her. The downside situation for her is the rejection of her very existence by her bio-parents:

I owe my short life to were lousy people who’d considered me lousier still and who’d left me to be sniffed at by wild dogs, like a carcass in the mangy shade” (*LM* 10).

Debby recalls the turning point in her life at the age of thirteen, when she with Celia Montoya, her companion, committed theft over a hundred dollars. Both are sent to court, which results in a police record and Debby faces the penalty of doing some social service if she wants to erase that record, under Wyatt; who is getting his master’s in social work, Debby becomes his project. Wyatt asks her about adoption and whatever she knows related with adoption. She makes it clear to him that whatever has happened in her life since her birth is the result of her fate. Wyatt tells and makes her realize that her adoption is a big chance in her life that is going to change her life: “You might never have made it out of the orphanage. Someone must have seen something” (13).

Wyatt left Debby with the most important prediction of her life, “You know, Debby, I can tell you’re going to be tall and beautiful very soon, and some day you’re going to be rich and powerful” (14). After Wyatt’s departure from her life she
begins to consider her orphanage as a luck because, “from the families, I’d been given, I’d scavenge the traits. I needed and dump the rest” (14). She also feels that instead of just one life which we get from our birth, if a person is given lives to live, then the person will be far better of for living those lives which (s)he hasn’t even touched.

Her English teacher Mr. Bullock finds the natural poetic talent in her. His influence on her also changed the course of her life. One day when he has given them a routine assignment she realizes that, “if a junior high English teacher with hair in his ears is an agent of destiny?” (17). When she has done her assignment, she suddenly feels herself dislocated from her family and life: “I felt cheated of places, I couldn’t draw and of parents didn’t miss. I blamed the poem for robbing me of what I’d never owned” (17).

She hears a message for herself through the poem, “You’re just on loan to the Di Martinos. Treat them nice, pay your rent, but keep your bags packed.” (17). In Schenectady, she waits for the right time, “to satisfy the monstrous cravings of other Debby hiding inside” (18). Now Debby starts believing that there is a life for her beyond the state lines, waiting for her to slip into: “All I’d have to do was be beautiful, be available, and my other life, my real life, would find me” (18).

She starts telemarketing for Fong Home products, a multinational fitness equipment company, whose founder and CEO of Elastonomics, Francis A. Fong becomes her intimate lover. Fong appears smart, attractive and a man of so many qualities, “the Flash” Fong, star/director/producer of dozens of Hong-Kong kick-boxing extravaganzas” (24). Through Fong, she discovers Asia, as he is of
Chinese Origin, “Frankie needs to remember, and I needed to discover. He talked. But I wanted more; I wanted details” (28).

Fong narrates his childhood days and reminiscences so many events that he had enjoyed in that phase: “Frankie made an Asian-childhood sound great fun, something I wanted to claim, something I’d been robbed of. But by whom? By the California hippie who’d fucked a Eurasian thug so I could be born in that place, over there, where nightmare and poem merge? (26). Thus, through Fong, Debby seems to know Asia, “hot, land, full of cheats and drugs and whose; the nightclubs were always places of viciousness and degradation and carnality” (27). She finds herself relocated with Asia. For her Asia seems to be no more different and exotic. “Thanks to those stories, for the first time I felt connected. The DiMartinos were the aliens” (27).

She feels that Frankie’s tales are the truth about Asia. Due to her adaptive nature which is one more side effect of adoption, the stories of Frankie do not seem her false and absurd. “I can imagine myself into any life; I can wrench myself away from a thousand backgrounds. I can assess damage, then just walk away” (28). In her enthusiasm to know more about Asia, she asks Fong about Bombay and Devigaon village, where she was born. Instead of answering, Fong stares at her and says, “You’re from there, aren’t you?” (33). She reveals everything about her to him, “I am adopted. Not I was adopted, but I am adopted, meaning I want you to know that we’ve both invented ourselves; you couldn’t have found another, women as much like you as I am if you’d taken our personals” on knowing about Debby’s origins, Fong (33-4) starts planning for her career as a model and a
Hollywood actress, “a new Flash movie, costarring me as an orphan who looks for, and with kick-boxing help finds, her long lost parents” (34). Debby falls in love with Fong, an Asian in which she tries to relocate herself and her origins, “The charm of Frankie Fong started out as the charm of foreignness, of a continent. I couldn’t claim but which threatened to claim me. It ended up the opposite” (36).

Debby’s fondness for Fong makes her ready to settle with him as husband and wife but for her destiny has decided something else. Her motive of search would have remained unfinished, so fate makes her to part her ways with Fong. His entry in her life is not a mere coincidence but it is an episode planned by providence, as it proves fruitful in her later search for her origins. “No such person as Frankie never had been a Frankie, no super cool super rich Asian lover who opened up a whole continent for me. I’d made him up out needs I didn’t know I had” (45). At this juncture of her life she remembers Wyatt, her first male friend and students of social works, who “gave me a base to build form. He didn’t realize that a few of us are given chance after chances because we have life after life to get it right” (45).

Debby tells her foster mother that she has signed as a client with Finders/Keepers, a family-reuniting service in Albany. Her mother replies with a sigh, why are you wasting your money? Are we not your family? Debby insists on the need to know about her bio-parents. “About crossed signals and conflicting impulses. They say there’s a time every adopted kid suddenly has to know” (49). Her foster mother though reluctant in the beginning tells her that her bio-parents
had a police record. Debby recognizes that a police record will help her find her bio-parents:

“That’s a break for me, Mama. If they had a police record, something to go on”. “Being a criminal is a break? What kind of talk is that?”

“Just kidding, Mama. You brought me up to be decent” (51).

Her mother also gives her some important information about her bio-mother’s American nationality. It helps Debby in the sense that she too becomes a natural American citizen. Her bio-mother did a deal for signing her adoption papers by claiming her airfare back to the States to be paid by DeMartinos. After adoption DeMartinos changed her name Faustine, which means cyclonic typhoon, given to her by the nuns to Debby DiMartino. Her foster mother asks her why she is doing all this? ‘Debby replies, “It’s not because I miss them Mama. It’s about medical history. And psychic legacies” (52).

Debby enters California in search of her bio-parents. She enquires about San Francisco information for Finders/keepers but of no use. Then she decides to start her search on her own, with a nomenclature Devi Dee. “Debby DiMartino died and Devi Dee birked herself on the Donner Pass at the precise moment a top-down, spider veloce with Devi Vanities” (62). She enjoys her new existence and new surroundings and feels pride in it. “The Golden state offered freaky-costumed freedom, and more; it offered immunity from past and future sins. Goodbye, Debby DeMartino Long Live Devi Dee” (65). She makes her motto clear,” running away from shame, running to revenge” (67). After roaming and exploring, she finally
locates herself at Haight. “It was the Haight. I finally picked as my space. My space. My turf, my homeland” (68).

While scouting the city on her own for Bio-Mom, Devi makes friendship with many people. Stoop man, Duvet man, who reminds her Wyatt as he not only looks like him but he also talks like him. She tries to take their help in her mission. Finally, she meet Hamilton Cohan that is Ham, the producer. At this meeting juncture her knowledge and intimacy with Fong proves boon for Devil. Now onwards Ham plays an important role not only in the life of Devi but also in the development of the plot till its end. Devi hires a detective Fred Pointer and gets a job of cocktail waitress. She moves into a second-floor no lease rental in a rooming house on Beulah Street off Cole. Here among so many people of different nations, Devi feels like, “everything was flow, a spontaneous web without compartments. Somalia, Vanuatu, Vietnam, Belgium, India - Schenectady” (98).

She learns there sharing and developing an attitude of *Faithandhope*: I made that my daily mantra. Trust coincidence, aim for revenge *Faithandhope* (98). Fred Pointer, the detective tells Devi the information collected so far regarding her bio-parents. Her father was a sex guru, serial killer and he has a harem of white hippies; in the seventies and there is a possibility that her mother was in that harem. Devi meets another important character of the novel, Jess DuPree, the Jess of media escort agency called ‘Leave It to Me’ and comes to know about her relationship with Ham that they were lovers and Ham tells Devi that he had lost track of Jess after her abortion. Devi wants to know that whether the baby was his and did he love Jess? Here she correlates the abortion of Jess with her own
situation: “Abortion, abandonment, adoption: all options in Bio-Mom’s era had begun with the letter a” (116).

Devi feels a sort of attraction for Jess and she requests Ham to get herself together with Jess. On the other hand with the efforts of Fred Pointer and his fellow associate detective in India, Mr. Raj, he gathers more information regarding Devi’s bio-parents. Raj meets Hari, the watchman of the courthouse who had witnessed the gruesome act of the foreigners that is, “The sahib and the memsahibs. The ones who danced naked before they sacrificed one man and one baby” (119). Hari reported the matter to the nuns of the Devigaon, who had saved the baby that is Devi. Fred explains Devi:

Your father is one of the most notorious serial murderers in modern history. He’s rotting in an Indian jail even as we speak. One of his early victims, infact, was his baby daughter. In other words you. Hari saw you die. You died, Devi and you turned into a ghost. You’re still haunting poor old Hari’s village (121).

Devi gets a lot of information regarding her Bio-Dad’s black deeds. She concludes that, “Bio-Dad killed at first to be admired, then kept killing to be noticed” (102). In his adventurous, hair raising mission after committing many murders, his lover quarreled and reported to the Singapore police about the matter. She accused him of killing seventeen men and women but the cops got her imprisoned on drug-peddling charges and sent her stories to Interpol. She was interviewed by two Interpol agents and one of them believed her story. On close investigations, Romeo Hawk was caught in a hill station in India. He confessed of five kills, but was convicted of nine killings and was sentenced to nine consecutive life sentences. Mr. Raj visits him in jail but he put a condition before him that is to
bring him the latest Tom Clancy and a carton of cigarettes: “Rajeev says the guys
a nutrition purist and a work-outaholic. The cigarettes were for bribing guard,” Fred
explained. Mr. Raj has his conversation with sister Madeleine. She told him that
she went to jail to meet the child’s mother.

Fred Pointer brings the news of Devi’s Bio-Dad’s death in the prison. He
discloses her that it seems to him out of Caucasian females in the report, he
knows one of them.

“what! you know my mother?”

“There’s fifty-fifty chance that I know your mother. Okay who is she?”

“Your mother could be Jess DuPree of this city, currently doing million dollar plus
business as CEO of a hot another-escorting agency” (146). Fred says that he has
also shown Jess a copy of a court-room transcript, and she replies, “Sweetdick,
fuck the Golden gate, will you? “ (146).

After getting this information, Devi quits her job of waitress so that she can
focus on getting Jess. She meets Ham and with his help gets herself hired for
Jess’s agency ‘Leave It to Me.’ When Devi visits Jess’s office, by the way of its
interior decoration, she makes it out that, “this wasn’t California. It wasn’t even
America” (148). Jess gives her a list of do’s and don’ts and other information
related with her work. Then she gives her a list of authors whom Devi has to take
care of. Jess tells her the story of her Indian visit in 1974,

Thus, Devi is able to get vital information about her Bio – Mom that, is Jess
DuPree and her Bio – Dad’s relationship and it appears that Jess too has
deliberately narrated all this to her. In a shocking way, Devi meets her Bio – Dad, Mr. Romeo Hawk and he compels her to lead her to Jess. In the houseboat, ‘Last Chance’ the family reunion takes place, and it follows with a series of violent outbursts. After killing Jess, Romeo comes back on the houseboat and mercilessly kills Ham too. Devi, who has been a silent watcher so far, in a fit of rage, assuming the role of mythical Devi, kills the monster, the Devil, Romeo Hawk, her Bio – Dad.

The novel ends on this point not clearly indicating whether Devi lives and survives for further creation or herself dies, disappears with the destructive elements after wiping out them.

Like *Jasmine, Leave It to Me* is also based on the chaos theory, which appears to be one of the main phenomenon in Mukherjee’s writings. According to James Gleick ‘chaos’ stands for new geometry “that mirrors a universe that is rough, not rounded, scabrous, not smooth. It is a geometry of the pitted, pocked and broken up, the twisted, tangled, and intertwined” (94). In this way Gleick has foregrounded a very different interpretation of chaos, by which he means, whatever seems to be anarchic, and chaotic leads towards constituting instead of a form and order which is creationless. Chaos is a positive term, it is not meaningless infact it is, “a sea of inexhaustible information and an active force in its own right, no mere void” (Newman 151). A deep structure of order can be found in the most turbulent behaviour or event. According to Gleick, a hurricane does not stand for a huge strom but a continuum, which is made up of a swirling of litter in the street to vast and devastating cyclonic systems. Chaos theory makes it clear that there is a correlation between our everyday experiences and laws of nature.
It also reveals subtle relationship between orderliness and randomness. Bharati Mukherjee has applied chaos theory to *Leave It to Me* through its different aspects that is determinism, individualism, and the relationship of local to the global.

*Leave It to Me* is basically the story of its protagonist Devi Dee’s determinism to search and find out her origins. Its her determinism which plays a key role in the development of the plot. Judie Newman rightly observes that, “chaoticists tend to speculate about determinism and free will, being and becoming, seeing themselves as turning back the trend towards reductionism” (154). Determination is followed by individualism in the chaos theory. Individualism stands for identity, for her individuality of a person and *Leave It to Me* is but the odyssey taken by Devi Dee for her identity, for her individuality. Knowing the fact that she is adopted, she becomes desperate for her identity. She found herself on the margin and tried her best to moved on to the centre, where her origin ought to lend her strength instead of mess and chaos. For a female the question of identity is of utmost importance, therefore, the chaos theory shows its concern for the status of women. Hayles feels that, “In the Western tradition, chaos has played the role of the ‘Other’ – the unrepresented, the unformed, the unthought” (Chaos Bound 173). True to its nature, *Leave It to Me* deals with the female representation, her efforts for digging out her past, her identity. It is through and through the story of a female representation and her valorization like a goddess. Another aspect of chaos theory that is relation of local to global deals with the postcolonial representation. It means the relation of the ‘centre to the margin’. Thus, chaos theory has obvious links with the postcolonial world. Hayles rightly
observes that, “through its concern with conditions that made movement from local sites to global systems possible; it exposes presuppositions within older paradigms that made universalisation appears axiomatic (16). *Leave It to Me* approves of this aspect of chaos theory. The birth of Devi Dee is shown in a remote village of Devigaon, India, a local site, she moves towards a large global site that is America through adoption. Again in order to relocate herself she abandons stable Schenectady society to embrace the Haight's active culture. Initially she has been shown as an abandoned, marginalized, adopted girl child but with the progress of the plot, she assumes a central position of a goddess, Devi. Judie Newman rightly remarks that, “in chaos theory, apparent disorder is generative; marginality translates as possibility, and transforms the ‘larger’ world beyond it (156).

In *Leave It to Me*, Mukherjee has employed throughout the novel, a set of metaphors and concepts taken from chaos theory to prove that, ‘destruction is creation’s necessary prelude.’ Chaos leads to creation. Good and Evil are created. Evil due to its deeds leads towards destruction. After destruction its again vagueness, anarchy and chaos. Within this chaos seeds for further creation are embedded. Therefore, chaotic confusion that is anarchy, madness, violence are different modes of purification. They symbolize preparatory stage for some sort of creation. That’s why violence is the ‘leitmotiff’, the recurring event that takes place in her works. She considers it a powerful weapon for the transformation of character. For her, “murder evolves into an acceptable signifier for discarding nostalgia and starting over: It is neither an end nor even merely the means to an end: it is a beginning” (Bose 53).
Violence has always been an integral part of Bharati Mukherjee’s writings. Though there are different reasons for its adoption in her different works, and in *Leave It to Me* “the violence is presented as being more macabre, more planned and more deliberate. The novelist describes the execution of violence in painstaking detail” (Nityanandam 66). *Leave It to Me* deals with and leads into the hippie trail to Asia, therefore, violence becomes inevitable because it forms an intrinsic part of life and society of these people. Romeo Hawk, Devi Dee’s Bio-Dad is shown as a shrewd and ruthless murderer for whom committing murder is just an ordinary day to day task. After killing Jess DuPree, the way he murders Ham, shows his insanity reaching its culmination:

Ham lunged for Romeo’s tie. Romeo was a man of quicker reflexes. He gripped Ham’s throat in those killer hands... Ham’s eyes bulged, his knees sagged, his voice box let out gasp, growl sounds, when Romeo finally let go, the body thudded to the floor (LM 233).

Devi Dee too inherits from Romeo Hawk, her Bio-Dad, this violent and malicious nature. Seeking revenge on him, she claims her inheritance by killing him with the same cleaver by which he has murdered Ham, a short while ago. Earlier she has shown glimpses of her violent nature, when Frankie Fong and his mother have jilted her. In a fit of rage and revenge she sets his house on fire and watches “river of flame lick at vintage velvet drapes, then split off and multiply, and crawl like amoebas across massive oak doors and curved-glass windows. A spectacular extravaganza of light, sound, heat (53). Devi Dee believes in her own philosophy of justice and she is “convinced that there is a world of difference between justice and vengeance and she sees with clarity that what she strove for justice, she believes” (Nitayanandan 66-67). Stark Swann reads the passage from
his new novel, Devi Dee realizes that “Bio-Mom has scripted her life and mine on a romance novel off the rack” (162). She is offended by her Bio-mom’s act and takes her revenge in her own violent way by accompanying Stark Swann to his hotel and his room, she shares a drink with him and then, “… I had him roll over and lie on his stomach, and when he was out so cold he wouldn’t feel the tickle of the K-bar knifepoint… I knicked an endearment on his left buttock: CW” (163).

Again while killing Beth, her friend and Lary Locco, Devi reflects psycho-killer instincts which she has inherited from her bio-Dad. Thus, *Leave It to Me* appears to be full of meaningless and excessive violence and the novel is “sex and violence rip from the grandstands to centre-stage and the maelstrom engulfs all” (Shalini, xx).

Bharati Mukherjee gives her own justification for using too much violence in *Leave It to Me*. Her own violence evolves out as a requirement of the story of the novel, as the story itself starts and develops keeping in view the revenge motive. Therefore, Devi’s adoption of every fair or unfair means to achieve her goal and carry out her revenge plan to the final end makes it clear:

> The quarks and electrons we’re laid to rest in, and the earth we molder in, and the maggots we fatten, and the stars that shine on us after our worlds Vanishes (*LM* 239).

Devi Dee appears to inherit the complexities of her time and world and her character truly reflects that complex phenomenon. Likewise *Leave It to Me* is a complex novel revealing a complicated transnational definition of self by destroying the concept of ethnicity altogether. Comparing it with her works, it is quintessential than the others and not entirely coherent. All along Mukherjee
attempts to break the barriers of tradition, she is now confronting the reader with a work in which there is no centre of interest, technically speaking, as in reality. She does not make her meaning and intention all together clear, hence confusion of diasporic convention leaves the reader confused. With an effort to make tremendous experiments, it is also something of a tremendous failure. The novel not only reveals the postcolonial complexities of identity - crisis, location, dislocation, re-location but also proves a document of the writer’s autobiographical complexities. This is perhaps the reality of modern era of virtual reality where boundaries are becoming fluid and where the communication modes are shrinking the world…, assimilation in varying degrees, is the ultimate, natural consequence of dislocation/relocation (Kapoor 28).

How true it is in case of Leave It to Me, where the protagonist Devi Dee, goes through the phenomenon of location, dislocation and relocation. The novel is the description of her efforts which she makes trying to locate and relocate herself with her surroundings. Her situation is well expressed by Jasbir Jain, when she writes, “The expatriate as he moves from one culture to another way need to locate himself/herself in relation to the centre” (Introduction 16). In diasporic writings the main emphasis thus becomes of locating oneself with relation to the mainstream or centre position, because diapora in itself presents, “an experience of dislocation and Re-location” (28). Diapora tries to counterpose his dislocatedness with a ‘relocatedness’ which provides ground for stability and equipoise. In other words, Diaspora is not only defined by ‘dislocatedness’ but the ‘locatedness’ can also define it : “It is this ‘locatedness that can lead to a truly emancipatory diasporic space that can then be seen as one of the many possible spaces within
a spatial spectrum defying the overwhelmingly absolutist of ‘internationalism’” (Atanu 142).

In *Leave It to Me*, Devi Dee reflects multiple personalities. She is an adopted Italian-American, born in Devigaon, ‘guru’ of Eurasian origin. Being an unwanted female child; she is callously left at the nearest orphanage. It is the first instance of her dislocation from her parents, that is, from her origin. By the sisters of orphanage, she is given the name Faustine that means the violent typhoon. Later by the efforts of the sisters, she is adopted by an Italian-American family, who give her the new name and identity as Debby DiMartino. Thus, in the second instance of her dislocation, she is taken away from her roots. Her foster parents provide her sufficient affection, love and care, despite of all this, Devi considers herself different from her foster parents and family. She feels herself dislocated and alienated from her surroundings. She is aware of the fact that she is an unwanted obstacle in a world that hurtles on towards its mysterious destinations. Feeling of unbelongingness fills in her urge to find herself, her roots in order to relocate herself. “Some days while shoveling snow off the stoop in Schenectady, I have smelled heady hibiscus-scented breezes; I have felt tropical heat and humidity (*LM* 9-10). She begins to realize a sort of familiarity with the tropical heat and humid environment and tries to relocate her with that place. Thus, she is compelled by her urge for re(location) to abandon her foster parents and to start her search for her past, her origins and the mysterious bio-parents; who have dropped her like a hot brick at the orphanage. In her search odyssey she meets an Asian-Chinese Frankie A. Fong and its Fong who introduces her with Asia. “Frankie’s make-believe Asia of dogs and bats, heat, beggars, police sweeps,
corruption, squalor disease, transvestites, prostitutes, crows, wheeling low over flat roofs, bong stray cattle ambling down muddy sidewalks, did stir up my desire for what might have been – must have been – a careless hippie mom’s Asia” (28).

Devi starts feeling a sort of fascination for Asia, and tries to relocate herself with Asia, the place from where, “Gray Nuns had placed her oceans away from her orphan origins” (26). She wants to claim for that childhood, which she had been robbed of due to her dislocation from her place of origin and birth. By assuming new name and identity of Devi Dee, she tries again to relocate herself with Asia. “As Devi, I came into possession of my mystery genes. Thank you, Clear Water. And you, too, thank you, “Asian National.” And thank you, Baby Fong, and what the heck, Frankie, too, for forcing me to deal with my not being a real DiMartino” (64). She considers herself a part and parcel of Asia: “Because I’d known that I didn’t fit into Hudson Valley any more comfortably than I did into the Asia of hippie mothers and Catholic missionaries” (65). Devi also seems to share a sort of affinity and connectivity with the Vietnam war victim kid. “Vietnam wasn’t a war; it was a divide. On one side, the self-involved idealists; on the other, we the napalna-scarred kids” (167). That is why Devi shares a good rapport with Locco Larry, a veteran Vietnamese, who lives in her neighbourhood and at times supplies her drugs. According to Publishers Weekly: “Stunning… Mukherjee is inspired in connecting the residues of 1960 and culture: the self-described idealists who used civil disobedience as a road to selfish excess; the scarred veterans of Vietnam; and between them, the damaged children of that generation…”

Devi seems to correlate herself with the Vietnamese war victim kids as she thinks both have been deprived from enjoying their childhood at their origins. It is
due to her dislocation and adoption that she has developed her own, Devi Dee philosophy that is, “when you inherit nothing, you are entitled to everything” (LM 67) That’s why Leave It to Me is basically the search of the alienated protagonist for her origin. It is the story of Devi’s quest for her biological parents with whom she feels natural affinity and relationship. Even persons who are either Asian or show some connection or information about Asia attracts her and through them she tries to locate herself with Asia. Her search mission becomes an obsession for her. Instead of love and affection she nurtures a sort of hatred for her bio-parents, who had abandoned her right from her birth and thus, denied her true identity and existence. It is due to her abandonment that she has gone through the pain and agony of dislocation. She is able to detect her bio-mom, Jess DuPree, but she disowns her, it fills her with the feeling of Vengeance and alienation and instead of saving her life, she silently helps her Bio-Dad, Romeo Hawk in her murder. Finally killing him she takes her revenge. ‘Faustine’ born in India, crossed boundaries and reached bay area bringing destruction and finally paving way for creation.

Devi was born in India, Asia, the place which defines her roots, her location but she has been dislocated right from birth through adoption, which results in her Displacement. Leave It to Me basically explores those complexities that have born due to displacement and alienation, and “the recession into the past, into moments of gelid history, into moments of darkness, are necessary for the acceptance of an alien site of dislocation” (Atanu 149). This feeling of dislocation fills in her an urge to search for her origins that is her location. This results in the creation of a double identity through difference, "both lived and imagined" (Atanu 148).
Finally the character of Devi Dee evolves out as a self-actualized one. For whom fulfillment of her goal becomes her top priority in her life. That is why locating her original parents and seeking revenge on them becomes her motive in life because they have considered her something dispensable and unwanted “just for a garbage sack thrown out on the hippie trail” (LM 13).

At the age of twenty three, she is motivated by her inner urge to find her roots and origin. She starts thinking about her own identity and the line of action for accomplishing her goal. It becomes her need and requirement of the day. Her actions are related with the goal of self-attainment in life for the achievement of this goal nothing is fair or unfair for her. For her ‘everything is fair in war and love’. So, she is least bothered about her ways rather she is interested in achieving her goal and sense of fulfillment.

Even at the end it is not clear whether Devil finally succeeded to relocate herself. Infact, it is the beauty of Mukherjee’s narratives of diaspora. The essentialist discourse of ethnic difference and its correlation with the politics of margin make Mukherjee’s narratives of diaspora different from other South-Asian writers of diaspora. She seems hardly interested in assimilation but tends towards dismantling the established boundaries between the Third World immigrants and the hegemony of American national identity. She redefines and reshapes both the models of mosaic and melting pot of multiculturalism where the touch of difference is used to politicize her belonging and unbelonging. The overlap of cultural spaces and criss – crossing flows in which there is no centre. It is an indication at a real multicultural construction of ethnicity and postcolonial national identity that is not
framed within a mutually exclusive, binary opposition between assimilation within or exclusion from the dominant cultural discourse of identity.
Notes

1. **Bibi** – In the seventeenth century, the common practice followed by the employees of the British East India Company, of having an illegitimate black wife, who being the local Indian native, is called as “bibi”.

2. **Devi** – The Indian mythical figure of Power and Vengeance, the goddess of destruction, Kali, who blows the conch – shell, and brandish in her many arms, a lasso, a trident, a fire – tipped spear, a demon – splitting disc, and a bow and arrows, a death – dealing staff, a thunder sparking axe, a pitcher of water and necklace of blessed beads, and her soldiers on lion-back. She is an incarnation of Durga, the goddess of strength and has wiped out a number of monsters like Shumbh, Nishumbh, Chund, Mund and Mahisasur. In *Leave It to Me*, Mukherjee’s protagonist Debby DiMartino has been rechristened as Devi Dee, perhaps a name given after the image of Devi. Like her, she seeks revenge on her Bio – parents, who had left her almost dead like a hot brick near an orphanage.
Works Cited


