Protagonists of the novels of India-born writers find themselves at the centre of a flux, of constant variation of cultures and languages. Continuously tossed about, these characters, like their authors, weigh anchor in metaphors. Since a two-valued logic of truth and falsehood is no longer tenable in a technologically advanced age, a many valued logic can best express the truth functions of metaphors in the context of a fuzzy set theory that ranges over semantics, because metaphors possess a fluidity with respect to truth and falsehood. Deviant, and violating of linguistic structures metaphors abound in anomalies and contradiction at the surface level of language and find interpretation in the most varied of contexts. The metaphorical mode of expression therefore enables India-born writers to find consolations in their loss of cultures, as well as enables them to recreate the loss, thereby gaining a newer, richer perspective on life and living in changing times. Globalized literary imagination is intensely characterized by polyvalency or synaesthesia and their central assertion is that nothing is simply one thing: it is an assertion for which metaphor is the natural means of expression. This mode contrasts with the use of analogy
by traditionally realistic novelists who usually maintain a clear distinction between what is actually "there" and what is merely illustrative.

Under the influence of multiple cultural patterns and verbal styles, these writers generate metaphors bridging disparate spheres of thought and action in developing their discourse on the principles of similarity and contiguity. Captured in the circuit of their particular emotions, disparate images, totally disassociated, combine and conduce to create vividness and accuracy of statement in defining and recreating their emotions. Their creative process draws from widely disparate referents to produce new possibilities for knowledge. As cognitive processes, their metaphors mediate between cultures and between culture and minds, influencing their ongoing evolution into newer beings. Thus as a cognitive device, metaphors suggest new hypothesis. The meanings result from the semantical aspects of communication, the context in cultural settings and the creation of new concepts. "Their metaphors are meeting points at which regions of experience which can never combine in sensation or intuition, come together. They are the occasion and the means of that growth which is the mind's endless endeavor to order itself."
Because India born writers of the 80s have opted for the unpredictable and the wild, and have consciously escaped the traditional grooves of existence, they create not only new metaphors and new meanings but spectrums of meaning where it shades of diachronically and synchronically from connotation, these metaphors enmesh and encode the text and hold it structurally and thematically together.

The of perception enables these culturally diverse writers to recreate and perce: out of the Bedlam of voices. Their meta diate between the multiple cultures, reconceptualize and reorganize experience. To them metaphor becomes a response to life and not a reference. Their novels are therefore not finished entities but relationships in flux. As first language writers their preoccupations are not narrative but the medium itself. No longer comfortable with language as product, their continual striving is towards the process, constantly activated, energized. Thus metaphor used in multiple ways allows these writers to be futuristic, because everything is open to the future. Thus metaphors provide a more conscious attitude to language.

Creative writing has emerged as a central tool for expatriates: making of fictions is a mode of inquiry from
many dimensions: culture as a whole is composed of 
"seriously contented codes and representations and 
understanding it has become a challenge for writers of 
fiction".²

With the mushrooming of post-colonial societies, a 
multitude of codes and norms are emerging: Ethics and 
morality are no longer viewed through the binary vision of 
truth and falsehood black and white, good and bad. This is 
the age of the fuzzy set theories where truths are partial 
and incomplete. Primarily, local in its focus, fiction 
writing is now also global in its concerns as it reflects 
global inequalities of power, political, social and 
linguistic, as it redisCOVERS the other man within the 
cultures of the west. It draws on new areas of science and 
technology, sociology and psychology. It has become a 
hybrid textual activity which transverses many disciplines. 
It therefore stands at a cross roads. It draws upon insight 
ofered by a range of disciplines in order to survive as a 
modern work of art that has sprung from life, acting as a 
functional modern day existence. Fiction in the 
80s like Rushdie, Mukherjee and Dhondy 
is a structure of powerful stories that 
trans and recontextualise other powerful stories 
creation of fantasy, but the start and 
continuing of a journey, a metaphorical manifestation of
arrivals and departments, embedding many cross-cultural, intra-cultural experiences and encounters. Their fictions reflect the growing pluralism of social realities and the rapidly changing perceptions of people. Other images and metaphors that surface in their writing is that of "voices" and "masks" of "actors" and "acting" of appearance and reality. Anguished Hamlets, caught in the binary opposition of being and becoming, these writers and their narrator/protagonists seek refuge behind masks, identities, not of their selves in their voices, which they mimic and make-up, switching codes to suit a variety of cultures. Like seasoned actors they strut and prance on make shift stages all over the globe, in their case all the stages are their worlds! It is indeed no coincidence that The Satanic Verses and Bombay Duck deal with actors, film and stage ones, at the thematic level too. In the former, Saladin Chumcha and Gibreel Farishta are professional voice giver and film actor, respectively. In the latter, the entire first half of the novel revolves round a drama troupe of "International" repute and constitution - David Stream is a satirical screen for Peter Brooks and his attempts to portray an eastern epic in a western context with an international cast. The first challenge that faces immigrants is language. The need to find a language which integrates the old cultural vocabulary with the new one.
Language therefore becomes a metaphor both of belonging and not belonging. In the writings of immigrant authors these characters wrestle with the idea of how language enfranchises and disenfranchises them.

Language as metaphor for an imposed sense of "otherness", can be seen in the urban world of Iowa. Bud Ripplemayer in *Jasmine*, carelessly, confuses Hindu and Hindi. Jane begins to see language as a new caste system, "No matter what language I speak, it will come out slightly foreign, no matter how perfectly I mouth it, there's a whole world of us now, speaking Hindu". This forbidding sense that words can imprison as well as release is a keystone for writers. Reinforcing an imposed silence is the Asian virtue of quiet forbearance. "Language alone can free. To break the stone of silence she must learn the truth, command the language and reveal the facts".

Arrivals and departures is another potent metaphor of India-born writers. When does an individual leave the immigrant category and truly arrive as a full citizen? The yearning to acculturate pushes against the desire to embrace cultural ghosts. Whether in dance, music or literature the contemporary art scene can best be defined by the word flux. Contemporary modern dance is a fusion of modern ballet and asian Bharatnatyam, for instance, as seen in Roger Sinha's
"Burning Skin". Sinha's multicultural ancestry has been the inspiration behind it. Raised in a limbo, he has drawn inspiration from people with similar experiences, like Hanif Khureshi and James Baldwin. The image, the metaphor of the burning skin comes from his naive perceptions of life initially, "for years I tried to deny myself my Indian self". In Rushdie we find a parallel metaphor of the glass skin that cracks. As the broken shards fall off, the protagonist Saladin's skin and flesh also come away with the glass, causing excruciating agony, presenting a gory sight.

Ileana Citaristi, an Italian living in Cuttack on the east coast of India re-interpreted 'Narcissus' through a fine blend of Chau and Odissi. Population movements that take place during the modernizing process involve the separation of families and the loss of familiar neighborhoods and ecological niches. Novelists describe the feelings of bereavement and states of withdrawal among those mourning for old attachments and suspicious of creating new ones, during the vast internal migrations from the rural to the urban, as well as the permanent sense of transience.

There is a lack of cultural norms in dealing with relative strangers whose behavioral clues cannot easily be deciphered, so different from the ritualized predictability of interactions in the communities left behind, which compel
the person to be on guard. He is in a state of permanent
psychic mobilization. There is the additional humiliation
of the defeat of their civilizations in the post colonial
encounter with the west. Not merely an abstraction or a
historical memory, the defeat is confirmed by their
peripheral role in the economic and political order of the
post-colonial world. Their consciousness of being second
class citizens in the global order is reinforced by their
many encounters with the more self-confident western
colleagues in the various international forums. Either they
abjure their cultural identity altogether, as identification
with the aggressor or turn back to embrace their ethnic
identity with a revivalist flavor.

Metaphor is not only a fusion, or bringing together of
similar or disparate fields of experience or perception, it
is also a kind of fission. An explosion, a release of heat
and light too. A totally new perception of the world is
generated as an act of cognition. Not only is new
understanding and new knowledge created, but a new action is
triggered by the creation of metaphor.

Met. destroys old complements about
language. Complements in a bend of
perplex also stir the emotions. The
Illocutionary force of metaphors create a perlocutionary effect which gives rise to meaning. The perlocutionary aspect adds emotive import and purport to the cognitive aspect of meaning. Socio-cultural backgrounds of the context, the beliefs, the situation and the culture aspect metaphor and meaning.

Mediator between the mind and the world, metaphor influences cultural and biological evolution. If literal language orders by categorization and classification, metaphoric language reorders by first creating disorder. By creating tension between two components of systems or perceptions metaphor releases new meaning a new ordering from the interplay of components. Metaphor enables displaced, post-diaspora writers to accommodate and assimilate experience to their conceptual organisation of the world.

An increased use of the metaphorical modes of discourse distinguish India-born writers of the 80s, from those who write earlier, largely, because their role models, view of the world and experience are unlike theirs, as well as their heightened, acute sensitivity to language as narrative, rather than medium or conduit to carry their experiences. No longer mainstream but marginalized, devoid of certainties and rules, displaced by the diaspora, these
writers are culturally and even biologically and linguistically in the process of evolution and therefore resort to metaphor to recreate new worlds, to voice their new found lives.

Metaphor enables them to absorb the shock of a head-on collision of cultures, and to respond to issues of race, politics and religion. These writers with a different sense of self, of existence and mortality believe that souls can be reborn in another body, that birds and animals can debate ethical questions, that monsters and men can change shapes. They believe in the existence of alternate realities. This cultural load gets transliterated into the metaphors that they create and around which their writing revokes Metaphors of 'avatar', of fantasy, of voices, arrivals and departures.

Metaphors are their schemata, their cognitive constructs, which allow for the organizing and recreating of their experiences. They are able to map their schemata on to actual reality to make sense of the new reality and to provide it with a coherent pattern. It is this schema that enables them to organize their utterances.

As is a novel out of the experience of Midnights' Children and Shame, this novel factionalized history of countries, as the
fictional history of a couple of migrants replete with multicultural ambiguities. The text is a reconstruction of the confluence of cultures: the occident and the orient. It unfolds as a series of crises as the protagonist attempts to assimilate in the new country.

Though the context is Britain, other lands weave themselves into the fabric of the text. Saudi Arabia and India figure prominently as the text creates fictional cities like Jahilia, Bombay, London, Titlipur, Mecca, Medina etc. A sprawling mass of geography and a galaxy of characters are skillfully juxtaposed, shaped and reshaped. Artfully put together to give the semblance of a natural flow of narrative, that extends spatially and temporally to create a mosaic of meanings rather than follow a linear pattern. Through metaphors, Rushdie is able to effectively create symbols that connect and make accessible the differently shaped portions of the mosaic, to form a complete picture. While sand cities, glass skins, and butterflies and lamps form the more immediate, and the sharper images, journeys, travels, movements, mutations, and reincarnations are more diffusely spread across the novel.

The fact that the novel opens at a truncated journey, abruptly halted in mid-air, is indicative and symbolic of the looseness of structure. The novel opens on a metaphoric
note: A fall, a drifting, a miraculous saving. A spatial and temporal metaphor of migration and acclimatization in a new culture. The Fall, thematically, from "Bostan", an exploded Jet-air, in midair is likened to a giant seed pod, a dandelion that spews the seeds any which way, randomly. It is a metaphoric conveying of the vegetative nature of mass migration in the 80s and the 90s - a global phenomenon over which busy man, has perforce very little control. "The air craft cracked in half, a seed-pod giving up its spores, an egg yielding its mystery" P.4. It's also, a little later, compared to a burnt-out, broken old cigar", with the passengers floating out like titbits of tobacco. Further still the Jetliner is not unlike a careless open-beaked stork, spilling out an over loaded cargo of babies.

Endlessly criss-crossed by the innumerable journeys under taken by the various characters, the text in theme and form, suggests flux. Change and motion convey modern man's global quest for roots. Constantly discarding the linguistic and cultural baggage of countries already lived in, and visited, he endlessly picks up ever newer weights to carry, balancing it against the recent shedding. Because these journeys are not mere transfers of cities and residences, but of the very identities of selves, Rushdie, naturally falls back on the metaphor of metamorphosis and transformation. The creation of fantasy is but a thin line
separating his fictions and his facts. Drawing simultaneously on the twin sources of science and ancient myth, Rushdie brings mutations and reincarnations into play to localize and give a local habitation and a name to ever newer experiences of migration and immigration that for modern man becomes a compulsion. It is ironical that technologically advanced man has to find new meanings out of old, discarded concepts of gods/goddesses combinations of animal/human imagery: the goat, the manticore, the halo, the horns. Resorting to the surreal and the phantas-magorial, Rushdie's statement about migrant lives, can only be made by farce, satire and parody. Denuded of the heroic and the uplifting, by mass communication and crass commercialism, man's reduction to the anti-hero and the cipher can only be creatively conceived through the fantastic and the unreal. Constantly changing form to keep in step with the thematic changes, Rushdie preserves the connection by the use of metaphor and analogy. As 3rd person narrator the writer exercises great freedom to realize the metaphors in flesh and blood as events and characters, rather than as imaginative linguistic conceits. Because of this the writer is able to execute transitions from one culturally realized linguistic entity to that of another.

Straddling two diverse cultures, Rushdie seeks to put across the shame and the guilt of abandoning one's own home
culture, through the metaphor of the fall, a concept that he
draws upon from the biblical fall of Adam and Eve, as well
as from the Islamic. The 2nd metaphor of reincarnation or
rebirth, he draws from the hindu lore of his home culture-
India.

Woven into the large pattern of rebirth is the
subsidiary one of renunciation and sacrifice, without which
salvation is impossible. Snatches of Bombay film songs sung
by Farishta, are metaphors that connect the one to the
other. These cross-cultural metaphors are Rushdie's
ambassadors that make known, and explicate, one culture to
another. The text Satanic Verses is the more enriched for
that, than if Rushdie had drawn from a mono-linguistic,
mono-cultural background. Religio-philosophical concepts of
three diverse, ancient cultures: Christianity, Islam,
Hinduism converge and intermingle to make sense of the
predicament of modern man forced to be continually on the
move, rearranging, realigning his sights and his loyalties.
While the 'fall' metaphor provides a meaningful context to
the movement of migration, that of rebirth, provides a
psychological reassurance, saving the immigrant from the
mindlessness and irrationality of modern times. Cross-
cultural metaphors for India-born writers, are not only
linguistic strategies or narrative modes to carry the
concept across, as also survival strategies for the
His choice of metaphors helps Rushdie to focus on particular threads till they explain the universal pattern. His text seeks to illumine the present day predicament of modern man who is no longer confined in barriers of language, religion or race but is participative of a global clashing together of many religious, languages and cultures. Exploring the global phenomena around him with his metaphors, Rushdie has managed to create space around him, clear the forest as it were, for standing room. This is turn many prove a spring board for a further leap, a further exploration, spatially and temporally. Being a displaced, immigrant self, himself, Rushdie's treatment of his position is admirable and artistic and positive. In the process of being transformed by new experiences, he also hopes to give something in return, "We have been made again, but I say we shall also be the ones to remake this society, to shape it from the bottom to the top. We shall be the hewers of the dead wood and the gardeners of the new. It is our turn now". Metaphorically he offers the wonderful lamp "a certain copper and brass lamp, reputed to have the power of wish fulfillment". The lamp that illuminates life. A metaphorical return to the old legends of djinns and affreets.
"He's hidden a gun inside .......... and now Gibreel rubbed his hand along the side of the magic lamp: Once, twice, thrice. The revolver jumped up, into his other hand. A fearsome Jinee of monstrous stature appeared "what is your wish? I am the slave of him who holds the Lamp".

Rooted in the tales of the Arabian Nights, which Saladin considers to be his heritage (the arabic component - apart from the Indian), the metaphor of the magic lamp, is drawn from the contexts of situation of the narrator/protagonist. Extending the metaphor further, the modern day Jinn is no benevolent slave but a technological monster, a gun, "how banal in comparison was this modern spook, this degraded descendent of mighty ancestors, this feeble slave of a 20th century lamp. It does not even possess the "power to open the gates of the infinite, to make all things possible, to render all wonders capable of being attained". At the most it can assist a homicidal maniac to free himself from his distorting psychosis and from the legal predicament and themselves and of their relationships with one another.

These fictions seek not only to record the diversity but to shape and create an order and a semblance of sanity from the ever flourishing chaos. They belong to the international culture of ideas and images, a kind of
Olympics of the imagination. "These writers seem to have a more interesting politics than my own to construe, landscapes in sharper relief, nightmares and heresies worth caring about and dying for ........... it is as if they would rewrite the whole world .......... as if by the abrasive of sex and race and culture we rub up something combustible; give light to see by .......... there writers are citizens of the world". 6 As most of these writers lead a dual existence, alternatively between home country and the country of domicile, they have spent a considerable portion of their existence on the move, shuttling, traveling by air, road and rail. It is no wonder then that travel forms a very strong, very recurrent motif in their works of fiction: their narrator / protagonists, too are continually, restlessly, on the move. These writers bring into play their own much traveled sensibilities to explore the metaphor of mobility to its inner-most core; to make their protagonists undertake frequent geographical and spiritual voyages and trips that seek relevances to the codified counters of life.

This travel motif, in turn generates other related metaphors of mutation, transmigration and metamorphoses. In order to "arrive" at his real self, the protagonist / narrator has to peal off several selves, identities, layers which he has acquired, which is thrust upon him, in the
global context. The work of fiction then is an all artistic, structured attempt to find the self, to give oneself a certain objective perspective. In the attempt the artist falls back on images and concepts native to his root culture, drawing from his religious faith, from his own personal, private socio-cultural semiotic, as well as from the recent nativization of self in the west - from the worlds of science and technology. "Only through this voyage into the foreign and strange can we win back our own selfhood .... ........" says J. L. Mehta.

From the sacred to the profane from the political to the personal and vice-versa, by breaking up the polarities peculiar to stable secure existences, Rushdie is able to recreate the blur, or rather the duality of modern existence, where black and white, good and evil, tragic and comic are not distinct and separate but a mingling and a single unit with changing faces. Old distinctions of hero and villain, saint and sinner, learned and ignorant, intellectual and spastic, dwindle and fade away, giving place to characters who are increasingly defined by their context of cultures and circumstances where survival is the supreme act of heroism. Death and dignity have been robbed of their glory only to be replaced by states of being and becoming. The new code of conduct in the new, changing world is survive and succeed, not die and prove the point.
Since old values are tinted by ambiguities and ambivalence the same is recreated in the form as well as the characters of the novel: Saladin and Gibreel are good and evil, tragic and comic, heroes and clowns, dreamers and realists, animals and men, simultaneously. The cities of Bombay, London, Mecca, Medina are real as well as fictional. The narrative itself is fact and fantasy within the larger context of fictions.

By investing his two main protagonists with the identities of actor and voice-over, by fluctuating them through masks and voices and passing them through various non-human, animal, and angelic, devilish forms, Rushdie tries to forge an essentially human identity out of the trauma of several selves acquired in the course of migration. Traumatized and tossed around by circumstances, Saladin learns the excruciating way by breaking the glass that is his skin, to peel away the bloodied shards, by losing his father and his faith by death and disbelief, only to gain them back the painful way. Severed from the healing powers of nature and greenery (the chopped walnut tree in the enclosed garden in Bombay symbolizes the bond with childhood, innocence and natural affinities) Saladin and Gibreel are essentially urban and therefore artificial. Starved and deprived of their roots (rural, cultural), these men haunt equally urban areas like Bombay or London as
masks, ghosts, voices with the real, inner self, hidden permanently behind invented selves in invented cities. Ghosts, without a place to haunt (because the places they find are equally ghostly, equally fictional or invented) these characters become quick-change chameleons into animals or saints. The transition of Saladin into goat and of Gibreel into angel with halo are completely in keeping with the character of modern day migrants and the unnatural demands made on their fragile psyches. Ephemeral and transitory like Jahilia, the city of sand which can melt with the first drops of water, these metropolitan cities may melt with the first drops of the milk of human kindness. Their sky-scraping edifices seem to be held in place by the sheer tautness of anger, hate, envy and ennui created by the characters.

Rushdie's character's movement away from his cultural roots is systematically mapped by change in nomenclature and address. Thus the multiple cultural roots of the characters are coded linguistically in the syntax, the lexis, and in the nomenclature to recreate, or simulate the dislocation of selves and languages of the post-diaspora man.

Indianism like 'Baba' (meaning sir) and Hoji, Hoji! seeking confirmation of his statement, or alternately seeking attention of the listener, quickly slide into Indian
English: 'Baba, if you want to get born again....... and a little later he expresses his surprise at seeing Saladin falling from the sky with him thus, "Ohe" salad Baba, its you, too good. What ho, old chumch." The initial, impulsive surprise is in the Ll Syntax, while the 2nd half of the statement is R.P.: a typical British greeting, cum-understatement. The Surname Chumchawala is instantly anglicized to 'Chumch': a corruption of the lexis chum (meaning friend, which he is) and the surname. By addressing him thus Gibreel acknowledges the other's alieness, and reveals his consciousness of the "other" - in this case the Indian who has turned British: The brown Sahib, 'a fastidious Shadow falling head first in a grey suit ...... bowler hat on his head". - PI. (Satanic verses). Saladin's surname undergoes a further lexical contortion whom Gibreel addresses thus "Hey, Spoono" derisively dismissed as a bottle-holder, and a satellite Spoon is chamcha or lowly flatterer in Hindi; because by becoming British, Saladin has sucked up to the rulers, become a chamcha.

The landing of the two Indians, hitting the water with a splash is onomatopoeically recreated in the Hindi lexis and syntax while using the English words. "Dharraa aammmmm! Wham, na, What an entrance, yaar. I swear." - P.I. (Satanic Verses).
"Splat"- The fracturing and dislocation of the psyche, upon entering head-first into a new culture, in an unorthodox manner, can only be created by an equally fractured, dislocated language. Falling back on earth is both a linguistic and a personal rebirth for the two protagonists, or anti-heroes, Gibreel and Saladin. This continual dislocation is humorously realized in the nomenclature too. "Salad Baba" turns the correct, very propah Englishman, Saladin into a mixed Culinary dish of chopped fruits and vegetables: The man is a Salad not merely a short-form or nick name but a value judgment passed by the addresser - on the addressee Saladin - who is one. The former uses the term in satiric deference to the latter's superiority and "imported" status.

While the use of the word Salad serves to label and codify the character, the word Saladin itself is a corruption of the first name Salahuddin - meaning the prayerful one, which is of pure Arabic, Islamic origin, while 'Saladin' conjures up images of the famous moorish warrior befriended by Richard I of England. Benevolent and erudite Saladin the moor was a liberal who sought to build a bridge between the East and the West, who strove to surmount the divide between diverse cultures. His magnanimity in war, towards his enemy is now legendary, but criticism of his action by his fellow moors is lost in the mists of history:
derided in no small terms as sycophant of the Kafirs (the christian army), the turn-coat who could not be true to his side. In the Satanic Verses- saladin is chumcha or sycophant of the British, himself being a mohamaddan Indian of an Islamic past. Thus Saladin here is a linguistic creation based on the writer himself.

Thus two innocuous forms of address, clubbed together form the linguistic battle ground for power domination of cultures. Similarly, the lexical item 'Chumcha' - a combination of two nominal, Chum and Chumcha (Spoon) from two distinct linguistic backgrounds are fused to create a third which carries the semantic load of two cultures, two languages. "The abrasiveness rubs up something combustible, firelight to see by, as John leonard puts it in one of his interview/Review (where are the nightingales - 22nd March - 1992.

In the Verses therefore Rushdie seeks to exorcise the ghosts of the several dead cultures, by synthesizing the warring factions of a cross cultural divide into which he finds himself. In his choice of name "Gibreel Farishta" for the other alter-ego of himself, Rushdie revives the old animosities of the crusades, linguistically, in terms of the anti-thesis between the crescent and the cross. Translated as the Angel Gabriel, the name is twisted satirically into a
surname - 'Farishta, which shares the phonemic/phonetic pattern of other Urdu/Hindi surnames like Ghumasta - for instance. Gabriel is corrupted to Gibreel - not very distantly removed from Gibberish. Thus the name intertwines and dislocates and relocates the Islamic/Christian cultural connotations. The fact that a large part of the Islamic religion rests on the tenets of Christianity, and the Bible adds to the linguistic layering.

"The closer you are to a conjurer," Salman bitterly replied, "the easier to spot the trick" - 363. As a South Asian reader, nurtured on a diet of English Studies in India, in mission schools and universities, reading Rushdie is retracing, the multicultural ethos and ambience of one's immediate and remote context of cultures. Rushdie's choice of metaphor springs from shared background and the text unfolds before the reader as a process of rediscovery. Edward Said endorses this in his stance, 'one way ........ is to analyze not its context, but its form, not what is said so much as how it is said, by whom, where and for whom........".

Rushdie's choice of metaphor as narrative device and the sociocultural origins from which he draws the analogies, enhances the quality of his discourse by simultaneously creating multilayered meanings. The several types of

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ambiguity that his technique and word-play gives rise to, effortlessly places him in the great tradition of World Literature a direct descendent of the Russian the Irish, the English and the post-colonial.

Among the most prominent of metaphors, is the use of nomenclature: Salahuddin chamchawala, like the author, is an Indian Mohamaddin, who again, like the author, is called Saladin in England, because of his staunch anglophile views - the brown sahib syndrome. 'Saladin' reverberates positively with British History; Richard The Lion Hearted, as well as with the European, Dantesque associations of Saladin, the only muslim to draw praise from Dante, as well as vibes with far eastern associations: Saladin the medieval founder of Palestine. His pro-British leanings give him the unenviable sobriquet of chamcha or spoono - an Anglicized version of spoon or "bottle holder" "groupie", "camp follower", "gutless", "satellite". At more genial times, he is also addressed as "Salad Baba" - the "green" or "inexperienced" one or the one who is actually a mixed bowl of many affinities, many cultures.

When out of favour, he is often referred to as "Salah Chamch" - an abusive familiarity that robs him of his superiority, but the same abuse which he may like to
interpret as the 'prayerful', "religious one" because "sala" in Islam is ritual prayer.  

The fluctuating identities of the two anti-heroes - Saladin and Gibreel, are metaphorically conveyed through the quick change in nomenclature and forms of address.

During the free fall from the exploded Jet liner the two friends are to be portrayed as parodies of insignificant modern man, unceremoniously pushed around by circumstances, from one culture to another. Not so much human as comical clowns in the grotesque global circus that life is, Rushdie is able to dismiss them as Stoppardian figures in the tradition of Rosentcrantz and Guildernstern by merely interchanging their names to Saladin Farishta, Gibreel Chamcha. Alteregos of a single split, schizophrenic psyche these two parodies of modern man create their own metaphors for rootlessness and diaspora.

If Rushdie and Mukherjee are recent day immigrants, Kanga and Dhondy have been so for 1300 years from now! Rushdie and Mukherjee's call for total assimilation into the culture of domicile was taken up by Kanga & Dhondy hundreds of years ago and put into practice. Pursued by protesting fanatics of Islam, a small band of devout Aryans fled their native land and sought refuge in Gujarat in India in the 7th cent A.D.). While they adopted the language and several
sociocultural practices, they carried forward their paranoia of ethnic purity like the same flame which they brought from Iran. Racially the Parsees pickled and preserved their "blood" down the centuries with consanguineous marriages, excommunicating and disowning the black sheep who dared to stray. Adaptable and enterprising, the Community's contribution to the socio-political scene improved everyday.

Though, their achievements began to be inversely proportionate to the dwindling numbers of the community, several sociocultural factors contributed to the drastic decline in head counts, chief among them was racial and religious insularity. Having started with a white-skin advantage, they continued to exercise a benign racial superiority over the native Indians amongst whom they made their home. Generous with their expertise acumen, they nevertheless jealously guarded the purity of race by severe segregation from the native population. Followers of a 6000 years old Zorastrian religion, these fire-worshipers cordoned off access to their faith from the native population, while they audaciously worshipped at mosques temples and churches. This back-handed compliment was more often than not affectionately explained away by the host inhabitants, as tinged with lunacy. The other sobriquet given to the Parsees was 'eccentric', if not raving mad. Alternately amused and charmed by this 'alien tribe', the
native Indians allowed them to settle and proliferate. Thus the interpersonal/between the 'foreigner' and the natives was one of benign superiority and amused tolerance. Armed with the advantage of white-skin and therefore the upper hand, the community continued to create little pockets of Iran within the larger land. While they severed all political links with the mother country, they still looked lovingly back at 'home' - the native land, Iran. Greater the distance in time, stronger the nostalgia for the 'desh' - until to the succeeding generation it remained merely an imaginary homeland - still longed for, but never seen. With the coming of the British and Europeans white-skinned & blue eyed, in the 19th century, the loyalties were transferred from Iran to England. Linguistic loyalties too received a severe setback when Gujarati, the mother-tongue (persian long forgotten) was replaced by English. The British Royalty were adopted and patronized by these sons of ancient Iranian Magi and in the Parsees, the Empire found the most loyal subjects ever. So much so, that when the British were preparing to depart in 1946 - Churchill is known to have said, that if ever anybody "native" is capable of ruling this land, it is the Parsees.

Under the English, the Parsees leavened and rose to rare eminence in practically all areas of endeavor. Once again the rest of the Indians were amused at their meteoric
rise and affectionately teased them as the first cousins of the British. What began as a gentle flush, turned into a rash: Hives of Anglo-mania began to erupt on the allergy-prone skin of the community. Distorted and unrecognizable with this newly-acquired identity, the Parsee for the second time underwent a drastic, traumatic upheaval since they left the shores of Iran in the 7th cent. A.D.

Pledged to the English Culture, the burden of the Parsee increased over the years, as Kanga states in Heaven on wheels. "the suit cases of my imagination out-weigh my bags and wheelchair - packed with .......... literary memories, BBC voices, tabloid shrieks, throated Thatcherisms, Boadicea, Bosworth, the Blitz, oranges and lemons, Oscar Wilde and Robbie Ross, Pygmalion, Royal Ascot, Abdication, Windsor castle and the foodhall at Selfridges ......." P.1.

Thus Kanga and Dhondy, as expatriates are twice removed from their roots. In addition to the multicultural codes of Hindu, Islamic and Christian cultures that can be decoded in the writings of Rushdie and Mukherjee, there is yet another component, namely the Persian connection to be found in the texts of Kanga and Dhondy. A linguistic analysis is likely to reveal the extent to which, and the manner in which, the Parsee experience is woven into the
fabric of the text. Acutely conscious of their craft both Kanga and Dhondy have discussed metaphor as strategy as a way of manipulating perspectives on the world. "Inside me I had kept a universe spinning; metaphors, often gloriously mixed, were like little planks I used to bridge. The spaces in my understanding .......... " Heaven on wheels". (Kanga - 1991 Viking).

In *Darkness* Mukherjee and in *Digging up the mountains* Neil Bissondath, explore, like Rushdie in the *Satanic Verses* the themes of expatriation, alienation and immigration. The former two talk about post-diasporic characters caught between two stools. As a mode of survival, they create false fictions to live by. For them neither the new nor the old country are real any more. By creating imaginary homelands, they became unreal themselves. Rushdie depicts these unreal people as phantasmagoria. The goat, the manticore, the angel, the devil, the Butterfly people. Rushdie makes his metaphors real like Dickens, he embeds images of pure surrealism and phantasmagorical characters in beautifully observed naturalistic detail in known cities like Bombay, London, Mecca. Cities which are themselves seen and unseen - "A city visible but unseen". These elements work as intensification of the real, they work as metaphors of the real world when you can embed them in a believable setting.
The Socio-cultural, historical context of the Parsee community forms the axis, the chief head, around which several metaphors rotate and out of which they are created, in Dhondy's Bombay Duck. Homeless and adrift, Dhondy weighs anchor with these metaphors. Fractured and de-territorized he creates space in his post-modern pursuit of the local, the particular, the ethnic. As "white", "Superior" parsee in the midst of "brown" natives in India, and as "not-so-white and inferior amongst the white Anglo-saxons in England, Dhondy gropes for recognition and identity through the persona of Xerxes the parsee protagonist of his novel Bombay Duck. As his English girl friend Penny says of him, "Xerxes you and your stories and your confusion about not wanting to live in England and not knowing why you don't go back to India and become a real parsee, with a prayer cap on your head and a vulture under each arm". (p.189).

Xerxes the parsee researcher into Persian history, the story-writer and baby-snatcher is the key metaphor that explores the post-diaspora angst of modern man. "After all I am named after Xerxes, king of kings, son of Cyrus, grandson of Daraus the Great, the conqueror of Egypt" (P.187). Ancient Persian history is the scaffolding, the loom on which Xerxes/Dhondy, weaves the simultaneous stories of peoples in England and India, stories about Penny and
Eileen, Sonia and Tilak, Ullah and his son, Anjali and Gerald, as well as the story of his own wanderings through these tales. Old affinities between the Persians and the Jews stretching back to the Babylonian captivity and the freeing of the Jews by the Persians are metaphorically echoed in the recent stories of Jewish neighbors of Xerxes, in Poona, India.

Xerxes the king, and Xerxes the writer are both obsessed with the idea of conquest and dominion. It is by the power of his verbal persuasion that he seduces Penny, Sonia, Kamala and several others. He is able to win Penny away from Eileen and her lesbian association into more heterosexual associations, by telling her stories of his past in the bylanes of Bombay Byculla, by resurrecting old World War II songs ("Irene goodnight") sung by goan troubadours. As he interpolates to Penny, "Penny, I mean Eileen goodbye, we'll see you in our dreams" Xerxes the writer/researcher becomes the metaphor for the writer's search for roots.

As he confesses, "Penny says if all my essays of self-discovery into born-again Parseeism fails, then I should write a book on British-India etymology called "Bombay Dak". When Dhondy takes up this project and entitles it Bombay Duck - (which is a corruption of 'Dak') - his fiction
assumes the structure of the Russian Doll which carries within itself ever smaller replicas of itself in diminishing sizes. Thus in the writings of India-born writers, metaphors are not mere appendages nor embellishments, but devices that function to mould and structure the discourse of the text. While Rushdie, in the Satanic Verses, plunders Islam to make metaphors, to explore the fuzzy geography of modern man's mental landscapes (The angel Gabriel is the same person who dictates the satanic as well as the angelic verses), Dhondy falls back on Zoroastrianism and Ahura Mazda. The older the religion, the easier it is to plunder its myths, the less like blasphemy it sounds". P.289. One of his stories which he writes for De.Freitas, the publisher, is all about a dialogue between the spirit of good and evil fighting over the soul of one man, a Parsee umbrella seller, who has umbrellas in the blood, as his father and grandfather before him were umbrella sellers and the expansion of their empire from street corner stall to multi-city umbrella shops. As he admits himself, Xerxes says, "good story, the evil Ahriman turns himself into a bat and spreads himself into all umbrella fabric" (257)

Yet another intra-textual reference that Xerxes falls back on is the metaphor of the figure of Fedallah (who was as obsessed by the whale, as Ahab, who in fact precedes Ahab to a violent, watery grave :) "Lashed to the fish's back,
"his sable raiment frayed to shreds,......") to recreate narratively his own position in U.K. Puny but pugnacious, he too is fighting the big white world in which he finds himself, almost crucifying himself to the cause of the cross-cultural encounter. Pursuing the conceit further to the commentary on Melville :, "In that "Parsee" lurks an "arse", Xerxes dubbs himself an 'itchy arse'. Like Fedallah he too "envelopes and cupboards the precious outlet, the fundament of abuse, the 'arse'. This sordid analogy points to the perception of evil in his position here as outside the "whale", impaled on the cross-cultural projection of global encounter, betraying his roots, in India and in Persia, "Lashed to Perdition, lashed to that which, rising from the boundless deep, turns home". Both Xerxes and Fedallah knew that the whale and the white anglo saxon race, is a white evil, a form of Ahriman (from the persian painting, "Rustam Dev Saphade) in the Victoria & Albert museum in which the persian warrior slays the evil spirit who has appeared in the form of a white devil) which has to be pursued, inexhorably, to a fatal denouement.

Whether the timeless encounter is one of hate or love or love/hate is left open by Melville to the imagination of the reader, and by xerxes too! Dhondy's use of the intertextual metaphor does not cease with Melville but crosses over into Dicken's "Tale of Two cities" as well, when he
fantasizes about being rescued from prison where he is languishing on charges of child-lifting, "...... no I am not much good as Charles Darnay. No Sidney Carton would sacrifice a fucking bean for me." P. 287. Towards the end of the novel, echoes from Dickens still reverberate as the protagonist Xerxes, dreams, "the tumbrils roll, I am walking and riding a tumbril and the mob cheers as they put the .........................". P. 316.

In their narratives, Rushdie and Dhondy, both perceive nursery rhymes as metaphors to encompass the metaphysical dimensions of the cross-cultural encounter. Craftily exploited, these rhyme/are manipulated to inject the frivolous and the humorous into the sad and sartorial vision of life as citizen of the world.

In the 2nd BK of Bombay Duck, Dhondy gives the white anglo saxon, racist rhyme a Caribbean twist, "Eeny meeny miney mo, everybody come from original Joe," a kind of sharpened edge with which to cut to size not only the pompous superiority of the white anglo saxon British, as well as the white persian, Parsee Indian. As he says in the section titled with the rhyme,"...... so the first claim of the Parsee to be racially pure is suspect" (P.191), or a little further, pouring cold water over the centuries old pure flame burning in the fire-temples, he says, "A lovely
idea, but obviously nonsense. Priests fall asleep on the job and fires die and tinder is replaced by safety matches" (191).

The rhyme is a spade, he uses, to dig up and expose the colour of roots – which is a uniform pink sans the blackening, browning effect of exposure to the sun: Penny, the white girl, Sonia the asian, Dudley the Caribbean and he himself, the Persian – Indian's concerns are the same, as are their expectations from life in London. Xerxes comes to the obvious conclusion that despite the colour of the skin, "everybody come from original Joe".

In the Satanic Verses Rushdie falls back on a childish game played by children: while one child turns slowly once a complete circle, spelling L-O-N-D-O-N, the rest of the group is supposed to creep up and freeze by the time the word is spelt out aloud, anybody found moving is expelled from the game.

Phonetically reproduced in Indian English as "Ellowen Deeowen", the title of one of the sections of the Book becomes a metaphor for the gradual, inevitable, inexorable anglicizing process of Saladin Chamcha, "the noise of some approaching doom, drawing closer, letter by letter, ellowen, deeowen, London". (Ch.II).
Bombay Duck, the very title of the text, is misleading and ambiguous: Neither bird, nor native to the city, the name denotes a fish, special to the Arabian sea. Soft-spined and offensive looking, with a strong fishy smell, the sea creature is not unlike a limp penis, as Gerald describes it in the text. Called 'Bombil' in the vernacular, this popular sea-food of the west-coast, acquired the rather incongruous name 'Dak'—meaning post or letters, because it began to be sent all over the country in 'Dak' or mail trains, during the time of the British in India. The English, further corrupted the word 'Dak' to Duck, phonetically, and from then on the euphemism has stuck. Dhondy transforms this terminology into a powerful metaphor to create the discourse of globalization in the 80s and the 90s. The term is symbolic of the disparity between linguistic connotation and denotation, which can lead to a breakdown in communication in metropolitan cities like London or Bombay. Elsewhere in the text, the word Bombay Duck, creates a misunderstanding between Gerald and the Indian waiter in the London restaurant, a misunderstanding that could have led to violence and disruption of relationships. The speech event that recreates the treachery of language is explained at length in Ch. III.

Bombay Duck' the term is also symbolic of the corruption of large metropolitan cities like Bombay. To
Xerxes, the smell of the fish is the stench of the decaying, dying city of Bombay itself. As he says towards the end of the novel, "Bombay's hushed under a crescent moon, the breezes float in from Africa, but there isn't the scent of a great continent upon them, or the lovely odour of the shy sea: there's only the corrupt smell of bombay duck drying on the sands". P.316. The corruption of Bombay is transferred to the fish with the foul smell. It becomes symbolic of a decadent city, "lured by a dream they come seeking her tit, the whore on the shore of the Arabian Sea" P.316.

Yet another source for metaphors is the present transcultural world scene: Peter Brook's theatrical presentation of the 'Mahabharata' becomes a potent metaphor for the globalization of the world, in the thematics of the text, Bombay Duck. David Stream's Ramayana is an attempt to recreate an international version of an Indian epic. He recruits the cast from a multilingual, multicultural background. This strategy gives Dhondy the opportunity to create several voices of distinct socio-cultural origin: Gerald Bloom is a West Indian Caribbean, Anjali an Asian Indian, Sara a Scotswoman etc etc.

This metaphor of the epic, expresses Dhondy's concerns as a writer, as it does David Stream's, within the text,
"yes, I was looking for a metaphor for what I felt was new in internationality". P.25.

Bombay Duck by Dhondy explores the phenomena of globalization of cultures and languages through the dual perspectives of a West Indian and an Asian Indian. Part I is a hilarious and horrid take-off on Peter Brooke's Mahabharata, thinly disguised as "David Stream's Ramayana", an attempt to recreate an international version of an Indian epic. The story of the staging and the touring of the epic is conveyed alternately through the narrative of Gerald Blossom the west-Indian and through the doings, jottings of Sera, the Scottish journalist. Part II of the book is the story of Xerxes, a Zoroastrian immigrant in Britain as narrated by the protagonist himself. Thinly connected to the first part, the 2nd half of the book explores the personal, private play of emotions within the larger drama or framework of the epic. This dual strategy gives the author an opportunity to create several voices of diverse and distinct socio-cultural origins. Recruiting a multi-cultural cast for the epic, and creating polydialecical characters in the two stories is the author's way of "looking for a metaphor for what I felt was new in internationality" (Bombay Duck – P 25).
The novel is Dhondy's attempt to deal with the human debris of colonial history that he finds in London and Bombay: the twin locales of his stories. Dhondy's anguish about modern man gets artistically split into the creative angst of a dual perspective further split into multiple voices, in much the same manner as Rushdie's world view is realised in the dual voices of his two protagonists fluctuating between two almost identical locales - London and Bombay.

Like Dhondy in Bombay Duck Kanga too, draws his analogies from his own persian, mythic past, "I am like Zuhaak. Because everytime I think my chains are off I find myself in an unholy tangle again". P. 217. As he explains just a little before, in the chapter, "once upon a time, there lived a giant called Zuhaak ............... They captured him and bound him with a massive chain to the Elburz mountains ...........".

If Persian mythology is one source of analogy, English literature, history and the English way of life, form other potent sources for Kanga. Talking of his dwarfed dimensions he says, "I didn't look like sneezy or Grumpy". The jovial jesuit at Campion school puts him in mind of Friar Tuck, "who happened to be a twin of Friar Tuck" (P.42). The comfortable friar's stomach against Brit's back is "soft as
boiled custard". P.42. His mother's gynecologist appears to her huge, when she comes out of the anaesthetic fog, "she saw her Saint-Bernard-faced doctor looking more Saint Bernard than ever". Their nosy neighbour, whose life was held in the wool between her needles, is nicknamed "Madame Defarge". His mother's words of abuse are also surprisingly British, instead of parsee. "Bloody rot and poppy cock". P.59. All the same the Indian ethos too is as much a part of Kanga's background as the Persian and the British or Western. His heart beats fast and furious "with the erratic rhythm of a tabla, and his mouth felt parched as the papads Sera put out to dry" - P.43, when he has to appear for his entrance examinations. While his mother's militant spirit is not unlike the Rani of Jhansi, the lovers at sea-face Bombay were not unlike Anarkali and Jehangir.

Cloistered behind the walls of the parsee communities categories, despite his aggravated status as minority - parsee, handicap, gay - Kanga manages to celebrate life and living. Metaphors enable him to outgrow his wheelchair and his several disabilities. He not only laughs in the face of marginalization, he seems to be celebrating the fact. His sense of humor survives it all, as the Jewish joke has survived the exodus, the diaspora and the holocaust.
Bharati Mukherjee today is globally considered an American writer. In fact she herself wishes to be considered mainstream American, "when I am an American writer I am saying it in order to break down racism in the west or Canada or England where the tendency is to say that if you have a brown face your immigrant experience is not worth anything". But the fact remains that she is an India-born writer too. Born to an aristocratic, privileged family in Bengal, Mukherjee received a liberal western education and training at some of the most elite institutions of the country, where she came into contact with the varied regional cultures that make up the ethos of the country India.

Published in 1990, *Jasmine* is a proud and positive recreation of an Indian immigrant woman to the States and her subsequent efforts to be successful and mainstream. *Jasmine*, the protagonist, a small town girl is 'destined' to transmigrate from one life to another from Jyoti to Jasmine to Jase and into Jane: an arduous, scabrous journey from 'avtar' to 'avtar'. She sheds identities and names as a model would clothes, to survive and surface (she has burnt her boats in India). Her single minded ambition is not to drown in the whirling waters of multilingual, multicultural rapids.
Rhetorically the novel works out the tragedy and the triumph of a single soul, journeying from the orient to the occident, from the known and the perceived, to the unimaginable and unthinkable. As a person Jasmine is also a prototype of all immigrants who battle with the horror & the terror of uprooting and re-establishing the self. In 1975 in "Wife" Mukherjee sounded the first note and the initial consequence of the immigrant who goes under, loses sanity and resorts to mindless violence. Jasmine unlike Dimple is a salute to and a celebration of a woman's spirit and resilience.

Essentially a village girl, "my whole world was the village of Hasnapur" - Ch. 7 P. 44 (Penguin ed. 1990). Jasmine was compelled by destiny to migrate to the States after the death of her young husband within months of her marriage. "An astrologer .................foretold my widow hood and exile." (Ch. 1 P. 3 Penguin ed. 1990). As an illegal migrant she stowed away on a nameless airline "Shadow world of air craft" she along with fellow illegal immigrants, constitutes "the wilted plumage of inter continental vagabondage." (Ch. 15. - p. 101).

This modern woman Ulysses, "on the first leg of my odyssey" - (Ch. 15) phantomed her way through three continents till she was jetsammed onto the shores of
Florida. An Indian beauty she invited rape from a half-face beast promptly on arrival and triggered off a murder. Like the Goddess Kali of her author's Bengali context, Jasmine slays the evil faced Mahisasur, blood dripping from her tongue, Kali fashion. Had she been assaulted like this, back home in her village, she would have slunk away in disgrace or committed suicide. But here in foreign lands without the comforts of a home culture, she takes upon herself the role of Goddess and revenger. From the oriental world of submission and denial, the protagonist is pitched into the action-oriented, individualistic world of the occident where man and not destiny is responsible for life and living.

The Quotation by James Gleick from "Chaos" which Mukherjee prefaces the book with, sums up the modern predicament of man on the move, "The new geometry 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."

The jacket illustration depicts an earthenware pitcher shattering into a hundred pieces. The heroine says in chapter 6 of the novel, "But that pitcher is broken. It is the same air this side as that. He will never see Lahore again (the perfect world of the past that her father lived in) and I never have. Only a fool would let it rule his life."
Before Jasmine finally settles down with her new "family" in the States she gives birth to several selves, several identities that she passes through, each more distinct and desperate than the rest. Greedy with wants and reckless from hope, towards the end of the novel, she rides rough-shod over people and places and terms herself "tornado" and "rubble maker" in guilt and in grief. Finally she manages to come clear and survives the odds, even if survival means translating, transmigrating, transmogrifying. Her Asian, Indian context of religion and mythology supplies the sanity, so essential to maintain, in this chaos of life. Unlike Dimple Dasgupta the protagonist of the earlier novel "Wife" (1975), Jasmine seeks solace in the concept of soul as inviolable and permanent and in the theory of transmigration to come to terms with the violent, the evanescent and the ephemeral. Her loss of self is explained and justified by the corresponding gain in the other life. The loss of Jyoti is compensated for by the gain, "Jane". At the end of the novel, viewed as linguistic and cultural change, the transformation from Jyoti to Jane is artistically and fictionally created by Mukherjee. Confining herself to particular parameters, the author is trying to restore the fictionality in fiction by creating constructs out of the very contexts of situations of the characters. This lends tautness and texture to the work rescuing it from sociology or journalism.
If Jyoti the a'feian oriental was preserved and conserved by totem and taboo in India, the existential ethos of the States and the occident, finished her off, only to be transposed as Jane who set aside the niceties of code and conduct to grab for herself life and a love of living. Jane grapples with old words like "family", "dull", etc. to wrench new meanings in the context of her new culture which is polydialectical and multidimensional.

As representative of the new emergent voice in world fiction today, Mukherjee seeks to clear space for herself and those that write like her, "those of us who are breaking fresh ground are in the minority......" Herself an India-born immigrant, but with dissimilar socio-cultural backgrounds, Mukherjee sympathizes with the fractured psyches that she comes across, in hundreds, in the States. In Jasmine she is able to crystallize, the essence of the immigrant experience and the cross-cultural encounters and experiences imaginatively, by creating constructs, structures and textures that together make up a work of fiction. While Jasmine is not a fictional representation of the author's personal life, a biographical contextual account of the author can become a mode of entry into the reading of the text. The discourse of the text unconsciously encodes the discourse of context of the worlds in which the author resides, and therefore in order to decode the speech
acts or exchange frames or the metaphors, or analogical modes of representation, it is necessary to decode and throw light on the context of situation.

Just as the Satanic Verses encapsulate and encode the varied contexts of situation of the author: India, Islam, England, so also in Jasmine we find the Hindu, India and the United States encoded, woven into the fabric of the fiction, because they also constitute the multiple backgrounds of the writer.

To assert that Jasmine the character is not Bharati the writer is to indulge in a half truth: after all, the protagonist and her creator are both women, Indian, and Hindu by race and religion. Jasmine, in her attempts to come to terms with a different, distinct reality in the States, resorts to Indian philosophy and mythology to explain and justify her "strange and unnatural acts". Reference to "avtar", Shiva's third eye and transmigration are only a few concepts that even Rushdie uses as metaphors to construct his fiction. The socio-cultural Indian context of the writer is embedded in the deep structures of her rhetoric and in the speech exchanges of the characters.

In their drive towards total assimilation into the host culture, both Mukherjee and Jasmine choose to marry Americans and accept the American way of life and living.
Mobility and change become the central realistic issue as well as metaphors. Connotation of the word "family" undergoes a sea change and a rechange of meanings. The modern American family is no longer mother, father and two children of Anglo Saxon, English speaking, origin, but parents from diverse origins and races, with adopted children. "No one is related to another by blood. They are all orphans in some way. And it happens all the time in the States. The person that Jasmine in the end is going to turn to is her adopted son Du, the Vietnamese kindred spirit. That's where the real home is."  

Thus novel contexts of situations generate new experiences that necessitate new metaphors and new modes of encoding the experience. Jasmine experiences her predicament as a crisis of language, as much as of cultures. A simultaneous chaos of incongruent voices haunts the author too, because the constellation of voices that made up her position in India are no longer the same now in the United States. Alternately receding and moving into the forefront, subdued or dominant, these voices need to be voiced, encoded within the discourse of the text. Thus writers like Rushdie and Mukherjee are redefining and expanding traditional discourse and canons of literature.
The metaphor "avtar" is the meeting point at which diverse experiences converge to give meaning to what the protagonist has undergone and what she has been instrumental in carrying out. Thus the choice of metaphor springs from a functional necessity and recurs as a leit motif to dovetail into other metaphors, to form a structural back bone of the narrative discourse. And finally it is this metaphor that enables her to carry or cast-off the cultural loads of abandonment, guilt and betrayal to become truly American: to be a single, separate person.

Jasmine was initiated into electronics at an early age—at fifteen when she married Prakash, an electronic engineer. But a little before she came into contact with him she had felt 'disconnected' with the rest of the crowd in her village, and had waited eagerly for a young man to come along and woo her, "I waited for 'sparks' I waited & waited". (Ch 10 Jasmine). At last, when Mr. Right came along, he was an engineer, not just of electricity, he said, but of all the machinery in the world, seen and unseen."

A wizard with wires, Jasmine soon realised her husband's potential for making connections, both social and electrical. Watching him at his work, engrossed in circuitry, she had to admit that in the upcoming city of Jullender "an inventive repairman could devise electronics
using native skill and native resources and designed for native conditions (ch. 13 Jasmine) Childless for the first few years of their married life, the strongest bond of intimacy between husband and wife was working on electrical gadgets. "Those were happy times for us. Prakash brought home ruined toasters, alarm clocks and I learned to probe and heal. We lived for our fantasy. Vij and wife". "In a drawer he keeps locked with a mechanism he improvised out of tossed-out farm equipment. He's an inventor, a little like Prakash, exceptional and impatient" - Ch. 4. "What he owns seem to matter to him less than owning itself. He needs to own. Owning is rebellion, it means not sharing it means survival, He ate bugs and worms and rodents. He lived. He's a quick study alright."

Working in tandem with her beloved husband, she soon learns the mysteries of circuitry and becomes an adapt at soldering and connecting circuits. "He gave me a pair of delicate pliers and guided them through a maze of tiny lines and wires. ch. 13- Jasmine.

Later, as an immigrant in the States, when she and Bud Ripplemayer adopt a vietnamese boy, Du, this heightened sense of circuitry, this training given by her husband form the rock-bed of her affinity and closeness with her adopted child. Coincidentally Du, her son, turns out to be a child
prodigy in electronics, "All Saturday Du shuts himself in his room, reshuffling circuits, combining new functions. Why should a radio produce only sound, a light switch, only light? Du's light automatically brings music, since for him the two are intimately connected. "All his lights are on dimmers, the dimmers scan the FM band as they control the lights. 'Efficiency', he would say why should dimmers confine themselves to one, boring function? He can disconnect as well. Why should a bathroom fan be attached to the light, forcing people to shit in the dark if they don't like the noise or don't mind the smell. Like Prakash he has a surgeon's touch. He transforms the crude appliances that he touches". (Ch. 21. Jasmine).

Naturally, and genetically gifted with a genius for electronics, Jasmine does not think it coincidence but fate that he should come to her as a son. "He is the son Prakash and I might have had". Circuitry that had soldiered husband and wife in a close bond of affection and understanding, now forms a vital link in the mother-son relationships. Both Asians and immigrants, who had fought very hard, to survive and make good, have also their unmentionable pasts, in common, with each other. Both in their own ways had learned to survive rape and murder and starvation, only through an inborn resilience, a strong streak of adaptation. "Bud notices a lot of Du's genius is for scavenging, adaptation,
appropriate technology" (Ch. 21). They were able to adapt because they both shared a native ability to "engineer": people, circumstances, events and their very own lives. As Du explained to his foster mother "It's not engineering, it is recombinant electronics. I have altered the gene pool of the common American appliance. I have applied the gene of a Black-and-Decker paint sprayer into the gear drive of a repaired Mixmaster ....... I didn't have to learn it, it's what I do. Like Dad handles money ...." (Ch. 21) Jasmine.

Thus recombinant electronics becomes a powerful metaphor for survival for Asian immigrants in the U.S.A. Jasmine, the protagonist goes a step further when she sees her flair for electronics and repair as a form of healing, and forgiving and starting anew. "and I learned to probe and heal." What the people of the Hitec west want is wisdom of the East, the wisdom and empathy to forgive and forget, to start anew, the ability to grow life where none existed is a special knowhow and technology that only the east can import to the west. "Upstairs Du is getting another scavenged tuner. He has plans, he says. My suggestion was to fill it with soil and plant some corn or beans inside. Keep the dials and the knobs on the outside. From the streets of Saigon to Iowa State Engineering School".

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Du's and Jasmine's understanding of circuitry, "I understand circuitry", (Ch. 21). and their ability to handle a soldiering gun, "I have handled a soldiering gun" are invaluable dual strategies in their struggle for gaining not only immigrant status but for turning into "real" american "Greedy with wants and reckless from hopes" (Ch. 26 Jasmine). Their success for survival has always rested with their fluid abilities to adapt, to change, to reconcile, to mutate into other selves, other identities, other forms. "We've seen the worst and survived. Like creatures in fairy tales, we've shrunk and we've swollen and we've swallowed the cosmos whole". (Ch.25).

With their origins deep in ancient civilizations, and old in experience and wisdom, these two, mother and son, are justified in playing God, in wanting to mutate their raw young environment in which they find themselves. They are perhaps justified in their attempts to murder, to destroy in order to create life, a new cosmos -"Cocooning a Cosmos". As Jasmine asserts "Watch me reposition the stars", she is in a position now, as an expatriate, to change not only her own destiny but that of the others' around her. "Time will tell if I am a tornado, rubble maker, arising from no where and disappearing into a cloud." (Ch. 26 - Jasmine).
Thus electronics as a subject is not just a thematic component of the novel but an all pervading metaphor and a way of life that enables the migrant to make sense of the new and the hypothetical, the unrecognizable and the irreconcilable. Drawn from the earlier, native culture, and reinforced and revitalized by the new immigrant context of situation the metaphor "recombinant electronics" straddles two cultures and builds a bridge across cultures to make easy transition from one to the other in a new global context.

Denying the existence of Indo-English literature as a category, but asserting it as a voice, B. Mukherjee as a writer, asserts that her concerns are more linguistic than thematic, "To me there are no Indian, American or English themes, What I am trying to produce is a voice. The word 'voice' has a special place in my aesthetics."

Jasmine, the fictional self of the author too, shares this fascination with voices. In fact she first falls in love with her future husband's voice, before setting eyes on him. She is listening to Prakash arguing with her two brothers and a friend, Sukhvinder. "The new voice spoke without rushing and exclaiming". She is able to form a first impression and subsequent opinion of him without being carried away with looks or knowledge of his social or educational background. To Jasmine, the voice is a sure
Prakash's confidence and maturity come through as he tackles the mindless fanaticism of Sukhvinder, "you're a fool, Sukhi," - 'a laugh prolonged the indictment'. By ameliorating the truth with humor, Prakash is able to hold his own against the irrational rantings of the future terrorist, Sukhi. Sukhvinder is strident and shouts because his opinions are not his own. Unlettered and grossly excited, his voice is a sharp contrast to Prakash's balanced pronouncements. By referring to Prakash, initially as "The authoritative voice of the new guest", the new man whom my brothers called Prakash", Like Desdimona she too is drawn to the voice that tries to make unreason (Sukhvinder) see reason, "Sukhi, there's no Hindu state, Sikh state! India is for everyone......"

Jasmine quickly graduates to falling in love with the voice that is not raised, but is quiet in his strength, "I fell in love with that voice. It was low, gravely, unfooled. I was prepared to marry the man who belonged to that voice" - (p 66). The voice, a metaphoric representation of the man, is skillfully used as a technique by Mukherjee to highlight character as well as depict the progression of the plot, "prose which is forwarded essentially by contiguity, tends towards metonymy". Not unmixed with humor, the technique highlights the disparity and the divide between, normal ways of falling in love and
the Hasnapur's way, as Jasmine ironically says, "Love rushes through thick mud walls. Love before first sight: that's our Hasnapur's way". (p 67). Shades of Pyramis and Thisby and the wall and Romeo's "with loves' light wings, did I over perch these walls", are humorously subverted by Mukherjee.

If voice is one obsession, assertion of voice in a foreign tongue is the other, of Jasmine, the protagonist, and of Mukherjee the author. Her initial probings about the antecedents of Prakash are not about his social standing or levels of education but about his ability to speak English. "The friend who came over ........ does he speak English?" As she confesses to the reader, 'I couldn't marry a man who did not speak English, or at least who did not want to speak English. To want English was to want more than you had been given at birth, it was to want the world". - P 68. Oriented to voice, speech, and language, Jasmine recognizes, early in life, the empowering potential of language to mould the very contours of character and situations. To Jasmine, a knowledge of the English language was a window to the world, of infinite possibilities, capabilities, "I felt ready to leave for Germany, the United States. It didn't occur to me that Germans didn't speak English". P. 69.
In *Jasmine* change of any kind, social, personal or cultural is concomitant with a simultaneous linguistic change. Jasmine's patriotic, progressive young husband, Prakash, wishes to modernize his wife from rural feudal Punjab. The first step that he takes is linguistic. He wishes to be addressed by his first name, Prakash and not by a pronoun. "In Hasnapur wives used only pronouns to address their husbands". P 77. His rebuke at Jasmine's persistence with the old feudal practice of coughing to get his attention, or "are you listening?" ploy, is also linguistic, "Do I hear a crow trying human speech?" - P. 77. His further attempts to transform his shy and blushing bride into a confident young woman also is language based. "To break off the past, he gave me a new name : Jasmine". P.77. He was perceptive enough to judge that a change in nomenclature would bring about a change in psyche. In his limited way he could sense the power of the spoken word, made flesh in the identity of a person. By calling her Jasmine, he is not only breaking down the Jyoti she was in Hasnapur, but is fashioning a new kind of city woman. To him the word Jyoti had the power to conjure up the feudal and the docile, if not the pliable: It was a common enough name in rural India anywhere without any distinctions or identity. Whereas 'Jasmine' connotes a flower "small and sweet and heady, one that quickens the whole world with its perfume".
In the novel Jasmine, the protagonist initially belongs to a distinct world - geographically and semiotically. Born and brought up in India, in the east, the orient, till she is 20, she moves to a diametrically, different world - to the United States, the occident, to the west, with its unique and distinct culture. The work of fiction is a recreation of her cross-cultural and intra-cultural encounters as a native of India, and as an expatriate in the States.

The protagonist's speech acts or narrative discourse encodes these cross-cultural encounters graphically, effectively in the analogous modes of expression, or more specifically the metaphors that she uses to straddle two worlds, two cultures that are distinct and different.

Ancient Hindu myth and religion effortlessly merge with modern day technology to give the reader a perspective on the global condition with insight, humor and realism. The opening lines of ch. I of the novel recreates simultaneously the two disparate worlds of the 'protagonist and fuses them into a single amusing image'. "Lifetimes ago, under a banyan tree in the village of Hasnapur, an astrologer cupped his ears - his satellite dish to the stars - and foretold my widowhood and exile". (ch I p.3)
Astrology has been a pseudo-institution of prediction of the future of man in India, as elsewhere in the world for thousands of years, not unlike the modern day meteorologist who predicts rain and sunshine by studying satellite pictures of the stratosphere. The vagaries of fate in one culture, are to be found in the weather in another culture, and the indispensable role of the astrologer and the weatherman are now legion, culturally. The communication link with the heavens is common to both the predictors and the degree of accuracy is equally chancy. The age-old knowledge of an ancient civilization like India's has its scientific counterpart in the recent technological developments of the west. Jasmine as an Indian expatriate in the States has not only "Seen it all" when she tells her story, she is able to see the similarities in the dissimilarities. The forceful yoking together of two very dissimilar worlds recreates a new conceptual world: an amalgam of cultures, a new possibility of global understanding and awareness of merging of disparate existences.

In the first sentence of the novel the author recreates the register of story telling with a subversive twist. Instead of long long ago, it is 'lifetimes' ago. This creates the illusion of a Hindu God or Goddess who narrates the narrative of many lives or incarnations lived, many
thousands of years ago, "I feel so potent, a goddess". The banyan tree, the village and the astrologer complete the picture, lexically, of the perfect setting for the telling of a story. The ancient Hindu epics - the Ramayana and the Mahabharata were recounted similarly, by sages squatting under a spreading tree, many, many years ago. Into this perfect picture of ancient serenity the writer introduces the satellite dish - a very recent technological, discordant development. The resultant clash of images sparks off a new light of understanding about - concepts of exile and death. Suddenly a new pace is introduced "I was fast and venturesome" into the discourse which is neither slow moving nor time stopping.

This creation of incongruence of thought enables the writer Mukherjee to artistically distance herself from her protagonist Jasmine, who is also the narrator of the novel. In so doing, a new voice - the 'other' voice emerges, that is not dependent on the author. With this voice the narrative permanently passes out of the author's hands, to survive independently and distinctly on its own. Having fused the disparate worlds of cognition and perception, the other voice reorders the readers' perception of regarding the world. It is now possible for a pseudo-science like astrology, the product of ancient civilizations to rub
shoulders with the more recent advance in the science and technology of the new worlds.

The clash of two cultures can be noticed a little further into the chapter when the protagonist narrates, "A twig, sticking out of the bundle of firewood I had scavenged, punched a star shaped wound into my forehead. I lay still. The astrologer re-entered his trance. I was nothing, a speck in the solar system. Bad times were on their way. I was helpless, doomed, the star bled ...... they sponged the bleeding star on my forehead .......... I broke away from their solicitous grip. "It's not a scar, "I shouted, "Its my third eye".......... "Now I am a sage" .......... (Ch.I. Jasmine).

When the astrologer withdraws and pulls up into his trance, he reduces the girl to nothing but an insignificant speck - a mote, a dust particle. It is only when she becomes aware of the "star" on her forehead that she acquires a sense of herself. In the middle of the forehead, the star, turns into the 3rd eye of Shiva, empowering the girl with the vision of all ages past, present and future. From an insignificant speck she is instantly promoted to the category of sages and seers who not only had infinite powers of vision, but like Shiva could destroy creation with the lazor rays of this "eye". "My third eye glows, a spot light
trained on lives to come. This is not a vision to share with Bud."

"But I feel old, very old, millennia old, a bug-eyed viewer of beginnings and ends. In the old Hindu books they say that in the eye of the creator, mountains rise and fall like waves on the ocean" - (Ch.5 - Jasmine);

Enlightenment meant seeing through the third eye and sensing designs in history's muddles" (Ch.9 - Jasmine); 'we would start with new fates, new stars". (Ch.12 - Jasmine).

An ordinary wound is metamorphosed to a star, and an eye with connotations of beacons, laser, x-ray from the world of physical and medical technology. The narrator by creating her metaphor brings about a transaction between diverse contexts of culture and situation. She is able to construct a bridge to combine the occident and the orient, not without a touch of humor, a tongue-in-cheek perception of the global condition of modern man in transition, in the flux of rapidly changing values and moves. Here the metaphor functions not only as a mode of cognition but as a survival strategy. By transforming a wound into a star and an omniscient eye, the narrator, linguistically empowers herself to cope with an adverse socio-cultural diasporic predicament.
The other two works of fiction: "Trying to grow" and "Bombay Duck" are also by India-born writers. Though Indian, they belong to a common culture and religion which is not really Indian. Neither Hindu nor Islamic, nor Buddhist, these writers are essentially Parsees: One more distinct and diverse component of a secular country India. A miniscule minority, down to its last 60,000, the Parsee community is not even considered in the National Census for several decades now. Expatriates from Iran 1300 years ago, this alien community has been in India since the 7th century AD, but has continued to be not of the country and until a half a century ago preserved a distinct religious, cultural and linguistic identity. An island unto themselves, they had managed to construct a moat of ethnic purity that strictly forbade conversion to their religion and intermarriage with any other Indian or non-Indian races. Followers of a six thousand year old pantheistic religion called Zoroastrianism, this community traces its origin to the Assiro-babylonian civilization that flourished in the Sumerian-mesopotamian river basins thousands of years ago: An off-shoot of that branch of the Indo-European race which is known as Aryan: "Noble" and residents of Iran or Eran - the land of Aryans, this race of Parsees are originally
inhabitants of southern USSR. As nomadic horsemen they passed into Asia, into the regions of the central steppes by way of the Caucasus and the Dardanells to settle in Iran.

They traced their ancestry to two major tribes: The Parsua or persians who were localized in the mountains of Kurdistan and the Madai or Medes who established themselves on the plains. The successors of these two tribes allied themselves with the Assyro-babylonians to establish the Achiaemenian Empire from 558 – 330 BC and subsequently came under the influence of Greece and Partha to carry forward as the Parthian Empire (250 BC to 191 AD) and finally the glorious Sassanian rule from 224 – 729 AD.

"The last Parthian King, Artabanus V, was overthrown about AD 224 by Arashir.... said to have been a descendent of one Sasan who gave his name to the Sassanian dynasty founded by Arashir, the Sassanians were to rule Iran for more than 400 years. They saw themselves as successors to the Achamnians, after the Hellenistic and Parthian interlude, and perceived it as their role to restore the greatness of Iran - (Ancient Persia - John Curtis British museum publications - 1989).

In AD 637 the Sassanians were overruled by crusading Arabs and the last Sassanian King Yazdigird III (AD 632 – 51) was murdered and the islamic era began in Iran. The
conqueror converted more or less the entire population except a handful who remained zealously faithful to the zoroastrian religion and had to expatriate themselves, to preserve their faith and their identity, to India. They arrived all along the west coast of the host country, very diplomatically sought entry, and have never looked back since then.

Referred to as fire-worshipers and builders of fire-temples or Agyaris, these Parsees in Iran were referred to as "Atesh perest"—or fire worshipers. Several Parthian princes bore the title "Fratakara"—the fire maker. Over several thousand years the various Iranian religions maintained this basic and primitive cult, with the result that light and purity have enjoyed incomparable prestige in all that bears the mark of Iranianism. The myth of ATAR—Fire—that of the sky, lightening, and of wood, brings comfort, wisdom and virility. To burn dead flesh directly on fire is the supreme insult to this life principle.

Parallel to the fire cult, there existed the Mazdaism cult or the worship of Mazda. Evolved by the Magi or Median tribes and associated with clergy, (historians believe that the Magi who came to worship the Christ child were Mazdais), this cult eclipsed all other divinities because Mazda was the god of the Achaemenian kings, the dispenser of
"transcendent powers" or "mastim" illumination or "mada" intoxication; represented as a man with a venerable beard in the Assyrian style. His body is plumed with symmetrical and majestic wings and the vertical tale of a bird.

In the 6th century BC the cult of the fire and that of Mazda were reconciled into a single unified faith by a new prophet Zoroaster (Greek). The Medes and the Persians were amalgamated into the Zend - Avesta, the holy book written in the 6th century in the Armainic script. The omniscient Lord Ahura Mazda, by a fusion of his two names became Ormazd. Angra Mainu - "agonized or negative thought became "Ahriman". These two personages marked the two poles of existence: the first created life, the second, death; the former consisted of light and truth, the latter of darkness and false hood. They could be defined by their antagonism: the god as antidemon, and the demon as anti-god. All was conflict between these two principles. Among the evil spirits of Ahriman there existed Azizahak or Zohak, who evolved into a serpent with three heads, six eyes and three pairs of fangs - the constant enemy of Persia. This demon was overthrown by Feridun the hero and chained him under mount Demavand. Legend has it that all through the night he licks the chains to melt them and just as he is about to destroy the last link the cock crows and the melted iron turns to cold iron once again. Subversive activities are
suppressed and good triumphs over evil in a symbolic cycle of night and day.

The date of the prophet Zarathustra is keenly disputed: he is traditionally regarded as having lived from 628 - 551 BC, but some scholars believe he flourished in a much earlier period, some time in the 2nd millennium BC. According to his doctrine, a dualistic system existed with opposing forces of good, created by the supreme god, Ahuramazda, and evil symbolized by Ahriman. Other deities such as Anahita and mithra, whose cult spread across the Roman empire were regarded as manifestations of Ahuramazda. Fire played an important part in the Zoroastrian religion, as indicated by the many fire - temples (chahar - tag) surviving from Sassanian times and fire altars shown on Sassanian coins. Under the Hellinistic and Parthian kings Zoroastrianism had been in decline, and even though the religion was wide spread in Achamenid times it is not certain that the kings themselves were orthodox Zoroastrians. But under the Sassanians the religion received a new lease of life under King Ardashir who made it the state religion. (John Curtis - Ancient - Persia - 1989 - British museum publication).

Thus, exiled into foreign lands, considering themselves the chosen custodians of a primitive pantheistic faith of
fire - worshipers, the parsees even today are objects of curiosity and concern, because of their practice of an esoteric religion and because of the imminent threat to their very existence and identity as Zoroastrians. Dwindled to a ridiculous number in an over populated land like India!, these fire worshipers are fighting a losing battle to preserve ethnic purity. Fiercely distinct in their looks, religion, rituals and social customs over several hundred years in India, this community in the last half a century, finds the forces of secularism corroding their final bastions of faith & blood. Increasing intermarriages have long been contentious, with a continuing debate over the right of the children of such unions to embrace the Zoroastrian faith through the Navjote ceremony: (A thread ceremony as an initiation into the religion). A serious side effect of this parochialism has been an abominable increase in consanguineous marriages. Generations of in-breeding within the community has not only depleted the once healthy stock of genes, but has ushered in innumerable diseases, genetically transmitted. Today the incidence of the highest rate of cancer in the world is found among the parsees in India and among those who have migrated from India to the rest of the world. The other major area affected is of course the brain and the neurological system with the result that parsees today are humorously grouped into two -
they are either genius or moron. There is no such thing as a 'normal' parsee.

As one of the characters of "Bombay Duck", Xerxes a parsee, puts it sarcastically "Zoroastrianism is the oldest religion in the world and the first monotheistic civilization as we know of. The quarter of a million Zoroastrians who remain are, as it were cast on an island of their own making. They are the Parsees of India. This small valiant, tightly knit race of racist settlers, peasants, industrialists, workers, fire-worshipers, bigots who throw their dead to the vultures on the towers of silence, who do not admit to their community any converts who bring their children up to believe in their messianic place in history, are in danger of losing this very place in history through quite simply becoming extinct, disappearing into the melting pot as Parsees intermarry with non-Parsees and go their way. Often they are compared to Jews. "The Parsees are the Jews of India"