Chapter III

Cross - Cultural Tension

_The Postcolonial Indian English Writers of fiction have been engaged in the intellectual exploration depicting both the specific Indian culture and the hybridization of Indian Culture on account of the Western impact._ (Ramakrishna 45)

India is a vast country with a multi-racial culture. Over the centuries, she has faced a series of invasions, migrations and colonisations. The concept of nationalism was alien to India before nineteenth century. It was alien to all other Asian and African countries also. This idea dawned upon the Indian horizon in the nineteenth century as an impact of and as a reaction to the British colonial rule in India. In India as in other Asian and African countries, nationalism was adopted as a weapon to win freedom from European imperialism and colonial regimes. As Edward Said observes, in _Culture and Imperialism_, "As imperialism increased in scope and in depth, so too, in the colonies themselves, the resistance mounted" (268). The liquidation of Empire began in 1947 when India got independence. By the 1960s, the process of decolonisation was almost complete.
The overthrow of British power in 1947 under the pressure of a massive national movement did not neutralize the impact of colonialism. The colonial hangover lingers on in the nation even today. The restructured scenario of the East today is because of the impact of the Western rule. The East has undergone changes in its literary, cultural, social, political and economic fields. Since the East and the West belong to two polar opposites, East-West relationship aroused much complexity. As Bart Moore Gilbert and others explain in *Post-Colonial Criticism*,

... they too have undergone the dislocations associated with imperialism and colonialism and that the literatures generated in this environment represent an attempt to define the national, to generate a new self-identity in the face of the imperial power. (40)

A direct result of the British presence in India has been the impingement of English culture and values on every aspect of Indian life. The impact of Europe on Indian culture was more far-reaching and disturbing than that of earlier invasions or conquests. Europe's influence affected not only overt social structures but also the people's traditional ways of life. Of course, the impact of the invasion was on a slower phase without
much opposition. Even, those frontier strugglers on the move had no say on these disturbing invasions. In Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient, Edward Said claims that, "... European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self" (3). English education became the medium for the initiation of Indians not only into Western culture, literature, science and technology, but also into a new value system. Since India had her own ancient treasures of culture, tradition, religion and literature, British cultural imperialism did not bring about a total ethno-cultural supplanting. The encounter with the British resulted in cross-cultural tension at all levels. In "Western Thought and Indian Thought: Some Comparative Steps", Fred Dallmayur observes, "Under the relentless impact of globalism, indigenous cultures are increasingly pushed into a context of cross-cultural encounter or confrontation, an encounter that forces them to interrogate both themselves and their competitors" (135).

Indian English novel, by the very circumstance of its cross-cultural origin, gives importance to the theme of East-West encounter in its various socio-economic, political, religious, philosophical and cultural
dimensions. Indian English novelists have tried to depict in some form or other, this compelling and challenging encounter between two cultures, which are antagonistic in their attitudes, approaches and values. As Maya explains in *Narrating Colonialism: Post Colonial Images of the British in Indian English Fiction*, the Indian English novelist "feels the pull of two entirely different cultural mores - the umbilical pull towards the inherited culture and the attraction of the value system of the West to which he has been constantly exposed" (162).

The cultural encounters have given way to an acceptance of diversity and difference on equal terms. It questions and revalues the "superiority" of Western culture, while incorporating the cultures of a variety of peoples, living in different parts of the World. The hybridization of cultures is one of the most significant aspects of the post colonial experience. It results in the survival of the distinct elements of the cultures of the colonized in diverse cross-cultural formations. Post colonial hybridity results either from conscious cultural suppression or the dispossession of indigenous peoples of their cultural forms and the subsequent compulsion to assimilate new social patterns. According to Leela Gandhi, though the mutual transculturation of the colonizer and the
colonized is a major agenda of all post colonial writings, "celebrations of hybridity generally refer to the destabilizing of colonised culture" (136). The crisis between the "alien" and native cultures is unavoidable. It affects those who have involved in it and the Indian English novelists having experienced the crisis, bring this out through their characters.

The East and the West are positioned in an unequal dichotomy. The West occupies a superior rank while the East is its "other" in a subservient position. This makes the relations between them asymmetrical. To rediscover their country and their own special identity is one of the reasons for the recurring theme of East - West encounter in the works of Indian English writers. In some novels, Indo-British conflict is taken up as an issue between two characters, in some as a conflict of attitudes or values. The absolute submission to the alien culture, negating the native culture, is a commonly observed phenomenon in post colonial nations. Centuries of foreign domination and constant exposure to the foreign language, literature, culture and values affect the fundamental basis of cultural growth. It leads to a total alienation from native roots and a blind acceptance of the foreign culture. The alien value system has a stronger hold on some Indians who seem to have adopted it by choice.
Others adopt it by compulsion. In both these adoptions, change is easily predictable. Sometimes, the values of East have gone to the level of insignificance. This cultural transfer is visible in the characters of Indian novels in English. The characters, in turn, carry the burden of displaying contradictory cultures. They have subordinated themselves to the alien culture in mind and spirit, losing their national and cultural identity. In "Modern and Traditional India as seen in Godan, Kanthapura and A Goddess Named Gold", David Mc Culloch says, "the process of change from the traditional to the modern is not abrupt but a continuous means of salvaging the 'gems' of tradition" (22).

Another significant phenomenon in Indian English fiction is to reject Western values completely and to assert the superiority of Eastern values over the West. The Indian writers try to establish the superiority of Eastern values over the West, by juxtaposing the contrastive values. They seem to be biased or one-sided in presenting this stand but that is what every native writer does. They never degrade their cultural, ethical and moral values, hiding the influence of alien cultures. They do want to malign the "foreign element" in the native tradition. This tendency is present in the contemporaries of Bhattacharya.
In the novels of Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan, B. Rajan and Chaman Nahal, Eastern values are juxtaposed against Western materialism. Mulk Raj Anand does not believe in the old systems and hence he looks forward to an ever more perfectible world. He believes in progress. He considers the enlightened modernity as an effective tool to fight against the age-old evils of village community. He is a rational humanist believing in the power of science to improve material conditions and in the equality of all men and his manifest intention is to propagate his beliefs through his novels. In his novel, Untouchable, one of his characters, Iqbal Nath says, "the old, mechanical formulae of our lives must go; the old, stereotyped forms must give place to a new dynamism" (173), echoing the authorial viewpoint. What Anand claims through his novels is that he welcomes modernism in the living conditions but alerts the natives to avoid the West's domination.

In Bhattacharya's novels, East-West encounter results in a merger of traditional and modern values, though initially presented as conflict between technological advancement and conservative backdrop, Eastern spiritualism and Western materialism. He firmly believes that after acquiring political independence, when the country has to make its
choices - in either becoming totally modernized or remaining purely traditional - the fair and wise course would be to adopt the best values from the East and the West. In his introduction to Perspectives on Bhabani Bhattacharya, Srivastava comments,

Bhabani Bhattacharya's achievements lie not in the removal of the old, the orthodox, the traditional nor in heralding completely the new and the modern but in bringing about a synthesis of the two. His novels are the literary bridges that span two sets of contrary views. (XIII)

The trend, neglecting the West, has changed with the emergence of next generation writers. Bhattacharya senses the intermingling of the East and the West and their ongoing existence. He favours, through his novels, the mixture of the two major forces. This idea emerges in him due to his knowledge of experience on both the values. In his novels, he brings out effectively the East-West encounter under the banner of tradition versus modernity. Through his characters, he points out that avoiding modernism is impossible. Already, the elements of colonialism have mixed up with the native values. Though the native tradition has
lost its flavour due to the domination of colony rule, it has its own contribution. Bhattacharya's portrayal of his characters who have got their changed dwellings due to familial situation, makes it very clear that they agree with the present situation. Rather he goes to the extent of saying that the elements of colony rule, such as metropolitan cultures, linguistic and governmental imperium have rooted into the native tradition. Waging a war against such a strong influence is highly unmaterialistic and so Bhattacharya openly favours the foreign invasion. Eventhough it has damaged the orthodox culture, it also paved ways for changes in people's attitude towards faith in religion. Bhattacharya is a bit optimistic that change or adoptability among the people in general would bring a novel way of leading life throughout India.

Being a diasporic writer, Bhattacharya examines the cross-cultural tension from a different perspective. Usually diasporic writings have the focus on the individual's or the community's attachment to the centrifugal homeland. This attachment is countered by a yearning for a sense of belonging to the current place of abode. The displaced people struggle to make sense in an unfamiliar world. They are caught between the strict traditions they have inherited and the new world they must
encounter everyday. As Victor J. Ramraj explains in "Diasporas and Multiculturalism",

In this state of transition, some respond ambivalently to their dual, often antithetical, cultures or societies. Some attempt to assimilate and integrate. For others, the liminal or transitional state is too prolonged or too excruciating to cope with and they may withdraw to their ancestral identity or homeland. (216 - 217)

The attachment to the ancestral homelands varies considerably among the diasporians. It depends upon whether the individuals and communities are willing to assimilate with their new environment or remain attached to ancestral customs, traditions, languages and religions. Those who assimilate with their new environment acquire a new identity. They are less concerned with ancestral customs, traditions and languages. But, in the present diasporic canon, writers like Meena Alexander yearn to live with the native ethos and values in their new environment. Their rare appearance among the natives make them revive their memories. This sort of putting their legs on two lands is expressed in their writings. Some diasporic writers stress on the negative aspects of their status, on
their marginality and the destruction of their culture; others see the positive aspects, concerning the processes of growth, transformation and the reformulation of old elements in new patterns. Bhattacharya searches for a compromise between these two forces in his novels. This is the mark of change between him and his contemporaries.

Bhattacharya, conscious of a double identity, tries to have a balanced attitude towards life. He sees everything with a Hegelian perspective: "The essential process in Hegel's dialectic is one of reconciling, yet at the same time preserving contradictions" (Jackson 47). Bhattacharya tries to bring reconciliation between the contradictory ideas and values. He believes that new ideas and cultural forms are built by taking up the old ones and at once encapsulating and transcending them in new forms. His international experience helps him to view all problems both as an insider and outsider. He neither supports nor denies the traditional and the modern values. He accepts the best from both the Oriental and the Occidental values. He has concentrated upon the great Indian tradition of integration of diverse and conflicting elements, viewpoints and cultures. As Michael Dash asserts in "Psychology, Creolization, and Hybridization", 
The idea of society as an integrated culture, organically whole, insulated by language and tradition from the relentless advance of modernity and its supposedly alienating values, has now become unpersuasive. Instead, the notion of timeless tradition has given way to a view of all societies as caught up in a process of contact, change and transformation. This realization has had a devastating effect on many of our received ideas. The reassuring dichotomies of 'primitive' as opposed to 'modern' of 'periphery' as opposed to 'centre' have yielded a pervasive sense of the cross-cultural that has increasingly undermined the concepts of cultural difference or otherness. (45)

Bhattacharya's creative work artistically embodies the Indian ideal of unity in diversity taking into account the pluralistic and complex aspects of Indian ethos. As Shyam Asnani explains in his review of Bhabani Bhattacharya: His Vision and Themes,

His [Bhattacharya's] fiction embodies in miniature the essential ideal of unity in diversity resulting from the
compromise between the two extreme aspects of life - tradition and modernity, East and West, scientific temper and religious faith, village and metropolis, Gandhigram and Steel town, spinning wheel and turbine. (181-182)

All Bhattacharya's novels project his sincere attempt to achieve a synthesis between traditional and modern values or Eastern and Western cultural attitudes. As Bill Ashcroft interprets in Post-Colonial Transformation, "Europe constructed itself as 'modern' and constructed the non-European as traditional, 'static', 'pre-historical" (211). In Hunger, Bhattacharya integrates the old and the new values through different sets of characters and episodes. The stories of Samarendra Basu's family in Calcutta and Kajoli's family in Baruni affirm his belief that life is all a compromise and there can be unity in diversity. According to K.K.Sharma, ",... life is all compromise and that people with discordant attitudes and visions can forge an integrated mode of life" (93). The male as well as the female members of the Basu family of Calcutta have different temperaments and outlooks on life. Though having opposing views, they live peacefully and happily together. The family becomes a sample unit picturing Bhattacharya's view of East-West in the native environment.
The eldest member of this family, Devesh Basu, is a true Gandhian who devotes his life for the upliftment of the villages. He is worshipped by the villagers as "Devata" because "the divine bliss fills his heart with riches" (23). He is "firm and majestic. A true veteran of the national movement. Three times he had gone to prison, seven years in prison, Devata, the village called him no wonder" (Hunger 26). He is a rare amalgam of loving tenderness and majestic firmness. He renounces the pleasures of the city and settles down in a village called Baruni. He unites all the villagers into an organic community. He prepares them for a noble life, shapes their aspirations and creates a feeling of oneness in them.

Devata's son, Samarendra Basu, in Hunger is quite opposite in nature and ways of life to his father. His only aim in life is to accumulate more money and to please his British rulers so as to earn glamorous titles from them. "... A title was a tattoo mark of loyalty. Having achieved that objective, his eyes lifted again to the Emperor, seeking enlightenment" (34). The outbreak of war means to him nothing but an opportunity to increase his wealth. "That mind was unshaken as ever, insensitive. It thought of the war only as a rare chance to reap a
harvest of gold" (30). In the process of doubling his wealth, Samarendra Basu hoards the poor man's commodity and sells at very high price during the demand, at the time of war. Bhattacharya portrays the opposite characters-father and son - the former, a staunch supporter of nationalistic movement and the latter shows favouritism towards the British rulers. Though they are different by temperament, they live within the family.

In *Hunger*, Rahoul, Samarendra's eldest son, is a scientist and an idealist, having a deep faith in the moral values of human life. He has a D.Sc degree in Astrophysics from Cambridge University. Devata's nationalistic spirit manifests itself in him. "Grandfather had cast a spell over him, moulding his ideas, stirring a fire in his heart" (21). He is a kind of insider - outsider in the world of misery. Though he is a member of the privileged class, his heart is with the people of rural Bengal, suffering untold agony because of an artificial famine. He is possessed with the desire to create a new enlightened world order out of a world in ruins. Being a visionary, he longs to achieve "cosmic light" and mental peace by transcending ordinary day-to-day life. He is convinced that the British government is incapable of solving the problems of his country and that the freedom is an imperative need. The cruelties of the alien
government on the innocent people of India compel him to involve himself in the national movement. Rahoul's self study and later his participation in the national movement are similar to the approach of his contemporaries. Every Indian, though different by cultural and linguistic barriers, was involved in freedom struggle.

In *Hunger*, Kunal, Rahoul's younger brother is a spirited lad undisturbed by idealism or patriotism. He loves the adventure and thrill of a soldier's life and joins the army. Besides the male members, the female members of the Basu family, namely Rahoul's mother and his wife, Manju also have different natures and views on life. Manju is a lady of the modern times unlike her mother-in-law who has an antiquated outlook. Though the characters in *Hunger* have altogether varying temperaments, attitudes and modes of life, one does not see any apparent clash between them. Leaving "Devata" aside, they all lead a peaceful life. In fact, Bhattacharya succeeds remarkably in depicting them as an integrated family. Though the family members do have differences, like Manju and her mother-in-law, they tolerably go with each other's views. But, when one looks for the same situation among the families, he fails to see the acceptability or adoptability within the members. Bhattacharya
also happens to notice the slow degradation of patience among the people and alerts them of the same.

The story of Kajoli's family in Baruni also portrays Bhattacharya's practice of blending the traditional and the modern elements of life. Both "Devata" and Kishore are outsiders belonging to the city of Calcutta and their ways and attitudes are also different from that of the peasant family they live with. Though Devata is highly educated, and an idealist having an entirely different background, he has established a harmonious relationship with Kajoli's family members. Similarly Kishore's marriage with Kajoli and their mutual adjustment with each other exemplifies Bhattacharya's idea of blending the traditional and the modern values. Kishore is a modern young man, educated and enlightened. He has progressive views and has been a popular labour leader of a cotton mill. On the contrary, Kajoli is a peasant girl of Baruni. She is not educated and sophisticated like a city bred girl. She has inherited the fundamental values and manners of India, unaffected and undefiled by modern attitudes and notions. Her marriage with Kishore, symbolizes the fusion of the old and the new values of life.)
In "Bhabani Bhattacharya : The Writer Who Rides a Tiger", S.K. Desai comments that Music is "a product of a happy tension between nostalgia for the past and an intellectual urge for modernization..." (126). Bhattacharya, a socially conscious writer, stresses the imperative need for reform as against the old traditional views. As Peter Worsley explains in "Culture and Development Theory",

All societies are open to foreign ideas, whether these are borrowed or imposed on them. But these always have to be adapted to existing, local cultures. The result is a dialectic; not imposition or the blind acceptance of ideas imported from abroad, but a synthesis of cultures, a hybridity. (36)

Bhattacharya favours this intermingling of cultures and stresses the need for it in his writings. Like the critic Worsley, Bhattacharya writes about the existing native culture which, in no way, should be affected by the foreign invasion. Bhattacharya puts forward the view that a reconciliation between the contrary ideals, values and cultures - modern and traditional can lead to a happy and harmonious life. He wants to subdue the misunderstandings and difference of opinion among his fellow beings and favour the reconciliation of the East and the West. In order to emphasize
this, he uses the dialectical method of contrast in depicting his characters. He juxtaposes different antagonistic characters in order to bring out their ideological conflict and then finally leads them towards a reconciliation so as to create a harmony in life.

In *Music*, at first, Mohini's father and her grandmother are contrasted. While her grandmother stands for tradition, Mohini's father is modern in spirit. Despite his mother's objection, he educates his children, Mohini and Heeralal, in a convent. When the old mother insists on the horoscope for Mohini, he retorts: "Horoscope, Mother? In this age of microscope, who needs a horoscope?" (*Music* 18). As a result of old mother's prompting, several proposals for Mohini's marriage are considered and the conventional inspection of the bride is conducted by a few parties. At last, the old mother decides to give Mohini in marriage with a handsome, well-educated and affluent young man by name Jayadev who is the head of an aristocratic family in the village Behula, called the Big House. The two horoscopes are carefully compared and the planets are found to be in favourable conjunction. Though Mohini's father is reluctant to marry her to a person living in the countryside, he at last gives in to the wishes of his mother. One finds, Bhattacharya
synthesizing the old values with the new ones in the character of Mohini's father and her grand mother showing that, "On many points of orthodox living, they had reached a fair adjustment" (16).

The conflict between the traditional and the modern values assumes intensity when Mohini comes to Behula as the new mistress of the Big house. Her mother-in-law forces her to follow the traditional way of life. She feels suffocated in such an atmosphere. Nicholas Harrison's analysis holds good for Mohini's predicament:

Women too live with distinction of social hierarchy - the masseuse, for instance, is exploited by, and feels exploited by her female boss - as well as distinctions inherited from, or recast by colonialism, including not just ethnic distinctions but also those between the young and the old. (116)

Soon after marriage, Jayadev's sister, Rooplekha tells Mohini, "You are city - bred, village - wed: I am village- bred, city - wed. We share one common lot; we've been pulled up by the roots" (Music 92). After marriage, Rooplekha is unable to adapt herself to the modern city life. After marriage, every Indian woman faces a total change in culture,
irrespective of whether it is from urban to rural environment or vice-versa. As Rooplekha says, "We who are so wed serve some real purpose. It's as though we made a bridge between two banks of a river. We connect culture with culture, Mohini, our old Eastern view of life with the new semi-Western outlook" (93-94). She tries to change herself from the traditional village life to a modern city life.

Mohini’s mother-in-law is so deeply steeped in tradition that she expects Mohini to conform to conventionalism. The Big House of Behula defies any changes in its traditional set up because of the eccentricities of Jayadev’s iron-willed mother. She discourages Mohini from singing secular songs and insists on wearing only gold bangles. Plain cotton saris made on handlooms are preferred to fine mill-made muslin. Even the style of hair-dressing is regulated by custom. The family eats only vegetarian food and it is indecorous for the ladies to sit down for a meal along with the men. Mohini is expected to preserve the sanctity of tradition. Her real problem arises from her urgent need for psychological adjustment to a totally alien tradition.

Mohini’s husband, Jayadev is "a silent, solitary man with heavy-lidded dreamy eyes in a young tranquil face" (67). His attitude
towards life is different from that of Mohini. He is a strange mixture of the old and the new. He is a visionary and an idealist who expects his wife to be different from an ordinary young woman with basic needs and requirements. He wants her to be a sincere associate in his intellectual adventures, but she confines herself to domestic activities - her world being preoccupied with loving and being loved. He has the reformer's zeal in him. He aims at making his village Behula, a model village.

Jayadev advises people to give up their old beliefs and welcome new ideas which will ensure human happiness. According to him, the country without social freedom is not truly free. As he explains, India, free to build up her destiny was not yet truly free. She was like a prisoner held too long in a dark cell. Unchained and released suddenly, she was bewildered by the light. But the stupor would pass. India would renew herself, and her strength would be the strength of the young - not more, not less. (Music 181)

Because of his involvement in social activities, he fails to meet even the basic needs of his wife. The illusions of both Jayadev and Mohini about marriage get shattered. Mohini is unable to speak her trouble out for she
is a woman who faces the suffering of her life in the true spirit of ideal Hindu womanhood. She has to suppress her human demands and adjust herself to the new way of life. She knows that her married life can be peaceful and meaningful only if she adjusts herself to the wishes of her husband by helping him in his programme of social re-construction. As S.P. Swain says in "Roots and Shadows: A Feminist Study",

A woman's role is not only confined to the centripetal needs of the family in which she lives but also to its centrifugal needs. It is here that a woman has to be more than her domestic role as a submissive housewife. She has to become a society lady!. (51-52)

The combined endeavour to promote the social programme paves the way for a greater intimacy and mutual understanding between Jayadev and Mohini.

Now Mohini feels that she is deeply attached to the Behula soil: "Life in Behula had been hard at first, even drab and tiresome, but she had conquered the strain and had built a life for her self with a great brightness, a life of fulfilment. This was her real home" (164). But the "home" is not a place of safety for her. But for the timely intervention of
her husband, Jayadev, she would have been fooled and superstitiously killed. Jayadev tells his mother, "We are not slaves of the stars... There is no room in the Big House for crazy beliefs. The village looks to us for ideals and a way of living. The pattern we set is not our private affair; it carries the strongest social sanction" (Music 179).

The news of Mohini's pregnancy helps the Mother to come to terms with reality. She realises the validity of her son's arguments and the invalidity of her old rigid views in the modern times. Mohini, though victimised by the taboos of the village and the Big House, her idealistic husband and dominating mother-in-law, is ultimately capable of freeing herself from all the clutches by amalgamating tradition and modernity in her character.

In Music, Bhattacharya pictures the traditional womanhood among its ruined status due to the modern invasion. Like Mohini in the novel, women at their mother-in-laws' nests loose their true identity and are ready to adopt the new one - in most of their cases the new one is imposed upon. Certainly they loose the personal likings and learn the new art-culture and living situation. By this giving up of old values and adopting the newer ones means, the women with their old values in mind
would not be able to achieve harmony in life. But to the outer world, Mohini acts as if she has achieved harmony by associating herself to Jayadev's work. A willing compromise, she has made with Jayadev and her sacrifice or giving up of her feelings and emotions is hidden with herself.

Bhattacharya makes this characteristic nature of Mohini very clear as the tendency of so many women in India. He feels that the invasion of West into the traditionally rich East change the attitude of men towards women in India. When Mohini enters Behula as a daughter-in-law, she has faced some hardships—new people, new environment and everything new. Yet she has achieved harmony by adjusting herself with her husband, her mother-in-law and the new environment. In Shimer's view, "This is the resolution Bhattacharya sees as a salvation of contemporary India and the promise of her future - the synthesis or balance of East and West; a present and a future firmly based upon the cultural varieties of the past" (45). Globalism does not eradicate the cultural divisions especially between the hegemonic culture and indigenous culture, it is better to adopt the best of both the Occidental and the Oriental values.
In this novel, the story of Harindra's family also reinforces the idea of compromise between old and new values. Harindra's father, the old Kabiraj, who practices traditional medicine holds to contempt modern Western medicine. His old views change radically when he fails to cure his wife and finds her responding to modern medicine. In "Bhattacharya's Music for Mohini: A Study", C. Tamilarasan explains the stand of Bhattacharya:

... harmony ought to be established between the modern and the traditional values of life, between the East and West, by discarding what is decayed and unhealthy and preserving what is precious and vital in both the sets of values for the betterment of India. (40)

In his novel Tiger, through the story of Kalo, Bhattacharya illustrates that the true happiness and fulfillment in life can be attained only after a moderation of temperament with a due regard for the established conventions and an equal awareness of the requirements of the modern age.

Kalo, the blacksmith of Jharna town has a firm faith in the traditional values of life. He is "a man of accepted conventions" having
roots "deep into age-old habits of mind and belief" (Tiger 41). But after sometime, the unhappy turn of events and odd circumstances shake his faith in the existing social set up. The oppressive awareness of his low birth, poverty, hunger, three months rigorous imprisonment for a petty offence, his work as a brothel agent, and finally his daughter Lekha's degradation and humiliation in the harlot - house are the factors which turn Kalo into a social rebel. He remembers Biten's words, "we are the scum of the earth. They hit us where it hurts badly. We've got to hit back" (53). He casts away the old values by which he has lived his past life and wages war against the entire social system. He metamorphoses himself as a Brahmin priest and in this way the conservative "Kamar" revolts against "tradition". But this situation does not continue for long and soon afterwards, the past starts haunting him. Though Kalo in the Brahminic garb moves on a new plane in society, the "Kamar" within him remains alive. This inner conflict continues in Kalo's mind until it becomes unbearable to him. His daughter Chandra Lekha, bent upon destroying herself for his sake, further forces his decision and finally, he reveals the truth: "I who made this temple was not born a Brahmin" (237). The crisis of his spirit ends and Kalo becomes his real self again.
Now there is a big change in him. His outlook has been broadened. He is disillusioned and awakened. No more does he feel inferior to anyone in caste or social status. The old and the new in his personality blend and he transcends tradition.

Though Kalo reveals his true identity at the end, at first he has fooled everyone by putting on the much revered saffron robe. He does not feel guilty, for the desire to avenge is very strong in him. He rejoices at his success. Through Kalo's activities, Bhattacharya mocks at the religious practices of Hindu religion which is wrongly used for making money and indulging in corrupt activities. He asserts that religion has quick returns and the robe of an ascetic is a symbol of veneration and power in modern India. To explain this, Bhattacharya introduces the Magistrate who first jailed Kalo, now comes as a devotee, prostrates before him, unable to identify him. By using religion, anyone can exploit others. In *Hawaii*, through his character Swami Yogananda, Bhattacharya says, "All through the history of civilizations, every spiritual system had attracted to it an aura of corruption, an enveloping vapour which threatened to suffocate the system itself" (105-106).
In his novel **Gold**, Bhattacharya again, brings out the compromise between the old and the new values. Lakshmi, the wife of Seth Samsundar represents the modern resurgent women who fight for their rights and against social injustice. She leads the village women in their march against her husband who refuses to sell cloth at a fair price. The whole village knew that, "words will melt a ripe coconut, but not the Seth’s heart in its cast-iron shell" (**Gold** 24). He was a thorough materialist for whom, "Glory could be real value only when it was to prove a solid investment" (34). Whenever Lakshmi protests in favour of the village people, her husband yields before her much against his will. She is against her husband because of his greed, money-making and unsympathetic attitude towards the poor. She is otherwise a traditional Indian woman who is very much devoted to her husband.

Atmaram, the wandering minstrel is another important character who has spiritual faith as well as a modern outlook. He is of the past and of the present simultaneously. He sings songs to village people and thus keeps the ancient folklore alive to them. Hence there is a continuity of the past in his character. He is also aware of the existing social conditions and the malpractices of the rich people who exploit the
common masses for their own interests. He is a Gandhian idealist who wants better living conditions for the masses in the country. Like Mahatma Gandhi, he lays all emphasis on the right means for the attainment of the right end and tells Meera, "you cannot right one wrong with another. You cannot fight malice with malice" (62). He is however a pragmatic person and is fully aware of the danger to his people from Sam's unscrupulous ways. The invention of the touch stone fable and the act of giving the amulet to Meera show the minstrel's practical wisdom. Through it, he is able to save not only his own family but the entire village from Sam's deadly clutches. At the end, the village people choose him as the candidate for the district Board election. It shows their trust in him that he is capable of defending their interests. "Owning nothing, he had the dignity of a king. He had more power than a king, for he could hold the hearts of people in his fist, he could make them laugh and cry at his will" (Gold 61). The minstrel goes on following a middle course between the old and the new ways of life.

Meera also combines the old values and modern outlook in her character. She is the symbol of womanhood in her buoyant spirit. She is indeed the backbone of the whole village and is the guiding force
of their destinies and inspires them to unity and action. All the village people have love and respect for her. "Each in her heart paid silent homage to the girl of sixteen, bowing to her strength of spirit" (23). Her motto is to use "old means for a new end". With the gold that she fancies to get after the touchstone has worked, she plans to help all the people of Sonamitti. She is against Sam who exploits the poor people and launches a successful campaign forcing him to sell cloth at fair price. It is her teen-age that has made her dwell in the dream land. "Her belief (in touchstone) came plainly from a wish every young girl has that some wonder happen to her and her life be changed" (175). She rids herself of her fancy as soon as she becomes aware of its bad consequences. She discards the amulet and throws it into the river.

In this novel, by exposing the greed and selfishness of the rich Seth, the profiteers and money-lenders of the village, Bhattacharya points out how the right of the masses are exploited in the name of freedom. They have become an impediment for the uplift of the poor and progress of the country. He stresses that India must reorient her national life on a new social system, a system which is free from economic bondage and age old slavery of the poor and the downtrodden.
He expresses his views of creating a new free India by adopting the best of both the traditional and the modern values of life.

In his short-stories also, Bhattacharya brings out the synthesis of the traditional and the modern values. In the short-story "The Acrobats", the story centres around two characters, the father and his son. The father stands for traditional values whereas the boy represents modernity. They live and perform their acrobatic feats together. They live as good companions and there is a good understanding between them. As time passes, the father's attention is diverted to a young woman and he starts neglecting his son. The boy feels isolated and slowly they lose the harmony which existed between them earlier. In order to reveal his unpleasant situation in the house, the boy deliberately breaks the law of balance while performing upon the pole and comes down with a thud. His right leg is broken and he is admitted in the hospital. The boy curses the young woman. The father can now understand, "some of the pain, the protest, the ravaged feelings, the core of his son's inward storm" (99). In order to forsake the woman, the father and the son go to some other place. Once again, a good relationship prevails between them and such an understanding between the two polarities is necessary for a smooth and harmonious living.
Bhattacharya's another short-story "The Quack", shows how the old and the new values are synthesized in the character of the old man. In order to cure his decaying teeth, the superstitious old man falls a prey to the quack. He buys four pockets of the miraculous black powder from him which is given by a great Yogi. Even though he has a deep awareness of the modern and the real facts of life, he believes that the miraculous black powder can cure his decaying teeth.

In the short-story "Steel Hawk", the old Grandma stands for traditional values, yet she admires the new inventions of modern science. When she was fourteen years old, she was so happy at the sight of a railway engine. She has the same curiosity even now. She rushes to the village pasture along with her grandson, Bishan to see the Steel Hawk, "Flying Wonder". Bishan thinks, "Grandma's spirit was catching up with him! She who was of yesterday was possessed by today. Then how could one who was of today be otherwise?" (142). Like his grandma, Bishan is not against modern ideas and attitudes. He imagines himself riding the aeroplane along with his grandma. "For the cartman of Sonamitti village had yielded to the impulse of the age and was riding the Steel Hawk with his Grandma, zooming away mightily" (143).
Having a double identity, Bhattacharya is able to understand the merits of both the traditional and the modern values and thereby bring out a compromise between the two. He believes that it will bring happiness and transformation in the lives of the common people. He also ventures to show the conflict between the traditional values and modern technology and between Eastern spiritualism and Western materialism. Although European culture may be technologically advanced, the cultures of the East possess a heightened spiritual aspect. Bhattacharya gives importance to both the technological greatness of the West and the spiritual greatness of the East. In "India and Europe: Some Reflections on Self and Other" Nirmal Verma explains "Indian culture was internally split, looking like Janus toward opposite directions, at the same time toward Europe for knowledge and material progress and toward its own tradition for moksha and salvation" (qtd. in Dallmayr 62).

**Ladakh,** again, is an attempt to bring about the integration of Gandhian and the Nehruvian ways of life, the East and the West, Gandhian asceticism and Tagorean aestheticism, village and city, the old and the new values. In **Bhabani Bhattacharya: A Study of His Novels,** G. Rai explains that Bhattacharya "stresses the need of an integration of
the values of the old and the new. The industrialisation of the country is a crying need; so is also the preservation of the spiritual content of the ancient culture enshrined in Gandhism" (109). For Bhattacharya, Mahatma Gandhi's advocacy of non-violence and cottage industries was both a political and economic weapon to transform the country into Ramrajya where each village would be self-sufficient and would not have to look to the city for guidance and help. Nehru wanted to place the country on the world map of technical, scientific and industrial advancement. In "Cultural Frames for social Transformation", Ashis Nandy explains, "Gandhi did not want to defend traditions; he lived with them. Nor did he, like Nehru, want to mesmerize culture with in a modern frame" (qtd. in Dallmayur 171).

The theme of the novel, Ladakh exhibits the clash between the traditional and the modern values in the form of the discord between Gandhigram and Steeltown and their guiding spirits, Satyajit and Bhaskar Roy, two men of great dedication and strong will. Gandhigram as the name reveals is a Gandhian village modelled on Gandhiji's Sevagram. It represents a miniature of the ideal rural India envisaged by Mahatma Gandhi. As K.Ramesh Srivastava explains in Six Indian Novelists in English, "Associated with primitive simplicity, Gandhigram
is Adam's paradise before his fall—an archetypal haven in its opposition to scientific and technological knowledge, believing in primitive life as opposed to modernity" (244). Steeltown represents modern India ensnared by Western industrialization. Satyajit and Bhaskar Roy, the men who guide the destiny of Gandhigram and Steeltown represent divergent values and there is a conflict between them. There is always a conflict between traditionalists wanting to construct an ideal past and modernizers embracing change. Satyajit, though educated at Cambridge is a true Gandhian in thought and action. Bhaskar Roy with his American training and progressive outlook has the energy and drive of the new world. He is convinced that large-scale industrialization is the answer to India's economic problems.

At first, the growth of Steeltown poses a threat to the very existence of Gandhigram. Bhaskar intends "to capture the spirit of Gandhigram, not merely the acres of earth (Ladakh 61). Satyajit tells his friend, Bireswar, "The challenge isn't just between Gandhigram and Steeltown. It's between two contrary thoughts, two contrary views of life" (343). He decides to resist Steeltown's expansionist designs. He announces a fast unto death to protest against the Government's decision
to liquidate Gandhigram. But in the meantime, Bhaskar undergoes a drastic change. He decides to resolve the conflict between Steeltown and Gandhigram by peaceful penetration. He announces withdrawal of his proposal to extend the factory to Gandhigram. Satyajit duly recognizes the vital role of Steeltown in the national prosperity. Now Satyajit is of the view that Steeltown and Gandhigram are complementary to each other and hence, there is no permanent gulf between the two:

Steeltown belongs to the present Gandhigram to the future.
Steeltown must do its work. But when that work is done, when the material benefits of production have been fully attained, Steeltown, decrepit and soulless, will have to seek new moorings. Then it will be Gandhigram's turn to come forward. (156)

Bhaskar wishes to achieve the integration of old and new values through the merging of Gandhigram into the life pattern of Steeltown. At the end of the novel, harmony is established between Gandhigram and Steeltown.

Bhaskar's union with Sumita also illustrates a blending of the antagonistic values. Bhaskar is a modern man, trained in America, who
has absorbed the Western life pattern. On the other hand, Sumita is a typical Indian girl of high ideals. Like her father, she too holds the traditional moral values in great esteem. She has deep faith in the Gandhian ideology. Simple living and high thinking form the core of her being. Though Bhaskar and Sumita have different attitudes to life, they are united at the end. In "Bhabani Bhattacharya: Novelist of Social Ferment", Harish Raizada rightly sums up "The marriage of Sumita, nourished on the values dear to Satyajit, with Bhaskar, wedded to West influenced modern views, symbolizes this synthesis needed by India for its development and progress" (166).

The married life of Satyajit and Suruchi embodies a reconciliation of the old and the new values. Bhattacharya suggests the fusion of asceticism with worldliness in their marriage. Satyajit has been striving constantly for higher spiritual attainment. Worldly gains and physical pleasures have never meant much to him. He decides to take the vow of brahmacharya. Though Suruchi, out of her loyalty to her husband, accepts his decision, she is never able to reconcile herself to his ascetic view of life. The clash between the two contrary forces, asceticism and worldliness continues to disturb her mind. She is not able to accept or
reject the ideals of Gandhigram totally. All that she wishes is a synthesis of the ascetic and the worldly, of the idealist and the practical man in Satyajit. Satyajit slowly realises that his "newly won release would seek expression in the honest acceptance of every human need" (353). At last both of them readjust their moral values, and create brighter prospects of a fulfilled life in future.

The novel emphasizes that synthesis resulting from correct understanding and adjustment is the only possible solution to all problems and this alone can ensure true and lasting happiness and peace. Govinda Prasad Sarma's words underscore the need for such a synthesis: "... in the contemporary context, none of the ideals of Gandhi and Nehru can be alone the national ideal; only a balanced combination of the two ideals would be an answer to the problems facing the nation today" (268).

As a result, many countries today are engaged in the difficult search for a mode of culture capable of reconciling their own traditions and the deeply rooted values of their life with European style economic progress. The traditional, spiritual values and the material requirements should be given equal importance in our life. When all the material requirements to make the country strong, peaceful and prosperous are
adequately met, one naturally gets an urge to turn the focus on spiritualism to give a meaning and contentment to the lives of the people.

In his last novel *Hawaii* also, Bhattacharya projects the view that there must be a blending of the old and the new values, the spiritualism of the East and the materialism of the West in order to attain fulfilment in life. Fred Dallmayr's words reveal the difference between the Eastern and the Western attitude: "... the West is seen as exclusively wedded to material goods and possessions, while India (or the East) has preserved the legacy of the human spirit and the higher "spiritual" aspirations of human kind" (138).

In this novel, Bhattacharya seems to be striving towards the realisation of a vision of life based upon a reconciliation of both the worlds - the East and the West. The East could not remain unaffected with this materialistic order of the West. But this impact was more or less outward. Indians are basically religious people. Their activities including the daily routines have a religious touch. There is no end to one's materialistic desires. The more they are accomplished, the more speedily they emerge and a man hankering after desires swiftly moves from one point to another. Though they believe in scientific advancement
to remove social problems, they also have an inherent desire for spiritual quest. As Jeff Haynes says in *Religion and Political Transformation*,

Loss of religious faith and secularisation devetailed with the idea that technological development and the application of science to overcome perennial social problems of poverty, environmental degradation, hunger and disease would result in long-term human progress. With the decline in the belief in the efficacy of technological development to cure all human ills came a wave of popular religiosity with political ramifications. (224)

Though modern science with all its advanced technology has offered modern man economic prosperity, stability and all other earthly comforts in life, they have failed to help man find a meaning in life. The result is disenchantment and man's fretful attempt to get spiritual nourishment in life. In "Man and Religion in A Dream in Hawaii", Arulandram observes "... there is an increasingly felt need for spiritual nourishment in life, which nourishment, they believe could fill in the vacuum, created by the modern life-style" (28).
In *Hawaii*, Bhattacharya's intention to harmonize the values of the East and the West becomes evident by his setting the novel in the most Westernized island of Hawaii. The island presents a "multiple image" where one may visualize the "unique East - West mix. The strong inter culturation" (54).

Swami Yogananda, the principal character of *Hawaii* is a professor turned Yogi. On his mission to "reorientate Vedanta to the needs of the American society" (15) the Swami lands in Hawaii, the gateway to the West. Although he preaches the spiritualism of the East, he also understands fully the Western pattern of values. He has nothing against modern science and technology. He knows them to be essential for the progress and prosperity of the world. But at the same time, he realizes that science and technology help man only in the material progress. They are unable to give any spiritual help or guidance to humanity. For him, an adequate knowledge of the material world is as significant for man as the profound spiritual wisdom. He is aware that the proper adjustment of the two cultures plays a vital role in life. This attitude of compromise and adjustment helps Swami Yogananda a
great deal in resolving the struggle of his own inner self, the struggle between the traditional Indian notions of asceticism and the modern conception of worldliness.

Swami Yogananda himself has experienced the conflict between these opposite forces from the very beginning of his career as a Professor of Philosophy. Though he renounces the world under the inspiration of Devjani, he finds it difficult to overcome his love for her. Sometimes he feels that his "release from his old self is final and complete" (15), but at times he also yearns for the life of the common man. Consciously he strives to attain something lofty on the spiritual plane but his subconscious mind occasionally revolts against such attempts and forces him to make love to Devjani in his dream. For a long time, Yogananda lives in a World of make-believe that having been reincarnated as a Yogi, he will have no desire left for physical love. He has finally learnt that human life is not fulfilled merely on the ascetic plane. Man must live life in its natural course, respecting all the fundamental urges. Both body and spirit must be gratified equally in order to make life happy. As a consequence of this discernment, he decides to return from America to India where he hopes to lead the life
of a common man, honestly accepting all the demands of body. Devjani understands his dilemma and approves his decision to leave America.

Just as Yogananda realises that human life is not fulfilled merely on the ascetic plane, the people from the West, who seem to approve of sexual permissiveness, realise the importance of spiritual wisdom. All the most important characters in this novel feel the need for spiritual nourishment which alone could help them to find a meaning in life. Jennifer is a young, wealthy socialite whose husband's death in a car accident has left her utterly lonely. Her attempts to achieve the satisfying sexual and emotional relationships with men from her own class end in futility. Even her sexual encounters with the teen-aged gigolo in New Delhi and the shoe-shine boys on the sunset Beach in Hawaii are fundamentally expressions of deep-seated "sickness". She looks to Yogananda to give direction to her life: "He could give her life a direction, a meaning. He could show her how to be free from the void, she had been trying to fill" (42).

Stella, a Ph.D. student in Hinduism, who feels a revulsion for orgiastic sex, demanded by her husband Walt Gregson, turns to Swami Yogananda to seek fulfilment of her spiritual needs. "That
encounter changed her deep within. It gave her what she needed most. Release. [...] He could set right her inner balance. Countless others in America were in need of such redress. Here was a chance for her to be tool of a rich human purpose" (25).

Walt Gregson, the professor of literature seeks correlations between the portrayal of sex in contemporary American fiction and the real life situations in which he himself is a participant. His quest for sexual thrill leads him from one bed-partner to another. He keeps longest with Sylvia Koo for the simple reason that she exudes sex at the level of sheer animality. Just as Swami Yogananda discards the yellow robe to participate in life as a normal man, there is in Gregson, a different change. Gregson, a symbol of sexual permissiveness, feels the need for spiritual nourishment in life. Though he is quite unaware of an inward change in himself, he slowly moves towards the realization of the spiritual aspects in life. The transformation of Gregson is brought out very effectively:

His awakening to a new facet of his personal problem - that alone could be meaningful. [...] He sat up in bed, thinking. And out of the chaos of contrary thoughtways,
a strange conviction was taking shape; despite all his bitter challenge he himself was in deeply felt personal need of Swami Yogananda! (220-221)

Devjani is a daughter of a famous nuclear scientist at Calcutta's Saha Institute. She devotes all her time and energy to her studies and obtains first class in M.A. She is aware of her inner strength and when she needs a change, she is offered a research grant by the East-West centre in Honolulu. She also seeks self-fulfilment through spirituality:

How puzzled and even worried she grew at a strange discovery: within her was a hunger for the spiritual life!

A hunger of which she had been totally unaware. All her life of twenty years had been built with things material.

This new impulse could not be ascribed to genes; nor to environment. And the impulse was growing all too fast—it was taking her breath away! (82)

Through this novel, Bhattacharya explains that man should exclude neither the spiritual claims nor the physical claims of the body: "Would the spiritual accept the needs of materiality? Would the material make room for what was beyond its calculations of demand
and supply?" (131). As Usha Bande explains in "Post-Colonial Anxiety in the novels of Arun Joshi", "Man's trouble emanate out of the conflicting, claims of his psyche; consciously, he wants to remain a Westernized Indian, immersed in materialism, but his sub - conscious drags him to the esoteric charms of is traditional culture" (82-83).

Bhattacharya affirms that integration of approaches and synthesis of opposing values is the best attitude to face the complexities arising from a duality of culture. Chandrasekharan correctly explains Bhattacharya's view point:

By far the most important philosophical idea that Bhattacharya conveys through his novels is that of integration of approaches and synthesis of values. When different points of view and attitudes are rigidly adhered to by persons, all of whom are equally convinced about their being in the right, the only result will be conflict and mutual destruction. The path which seems most promising to the novelist is the path of reconciliation and readjustment. (166)

Bhattacharya's wide, and diasporic experience enables him to believe that in order to lead a full-fledged life, one should not ignore
either the traditional values of the East or the modern outlook of the West. That is the only way to harmonise diverse cultures. "World culture could have no reality unless based on the broadest spectrum of interchange" (Hawaii 132).

In countries, which were under the colony rule for quite a long years, such as India, the occurrence of East-West conflict was unavoidable. Every man who was part of the rule, might have experienced the influence of one over the other. The dilemma of choosing between the two actually has developed in him an irrevocable situation. Those who were traditionally rich have maintained their native culture and lived with it. But those who were imbalanced have adopted the alien culture with that of their native one and found it very difficult to follow the two. The latter one is the most benefited, as so many writers have illustrated this view, that he knows the traditional way of life as well as the modern values. Bhattacharya, in his novels, through his major as well as minor characters argues that by having both the values together- East and West - one can lead a harmonious life. By adopting an alien with that of the traditional one in anyway does not mar the native values and sentiments. The characters of Bhattacharya undergo tough
tasks before adopting the modern West to the local moments. Particularly, the women of Bhattacharya are doubly affected by the Western materialism. Even if they escape from the impact of the West at the parental places, at their in-law's places they have to accommodate the new environment.

In the case of people migrating from villages to cities, they slowly learn everything they encounter and adopt them. The nation in its decolonized structure still carries the burden of West and those who are living in it do not find a way to relieve the burden. In the villages, there is no wave of this West prevailing but a very strong resistance has been given to it. Bhattacharya, while reading the East-West conflict between two characters, stresses the need for adjustability to lead a harmonious life. This adjustability does not come to one of the two characters quickly but in course of his/her repeated attempts to establish the identity. He/she accepts this adjustability by dissolving the original with the adopted one.

In the present situation, most of the Indian English writers choose to concentrate mainly on the Western ideologies while only passing references of East are made. They highlight their problems of fitting in the bi-cultural stand. What is unique of their presentation is that
they migrate to another country and settle there to face the crisis. Either they appear as characters or depute someone else to present their opinions. Rohinton Mistry, Meena Alexander and Uma Parameshwaran are novelists who transform their culture to that of the other, like Canada and U.S, to study the similar and dissimilar situations. They are settlers in an alien land but their mind is rooted in their native. The Indian elements and their regional flavours are very strong in their narration. In their narration, they mix up characters - Indian and Western, though they are different in caste, creed and culture. They are very distinct in their religious sentiments but the caste and culture do not reach the human visibility. In the novels of Bhattacharya, the Hindu view of life is richly presented. He introduces the duality of the orthodox values and modern materialism among his characters. Soon after the liquidation of Empire has begun, the modern materialism starts emerging and dethrones the traditional images.

How Bhattacharya has not only used the alien English language, which is no longer "the language of command", but also justifies its continued use, is the main focus of the next chapter.