CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A literary creation does not come into existence by itself; its emergence is determined by social conditions. A literary artist draws on contemporary life and social history for his raw material and in doing so he not only reflects social reality but also shapes the complex ways in which men and women organize themselves, their interpersonal relationships and their perception of the socio-cultural reality. Explaining the relationship between literature and society Milton Abrecht observes:

"Literature reflects accepted patterns of thought, feeling, and action, including society's unconscious assumptions."

One of the significant themes of modern literature is the depiction of cross-cultural crisis, a subject which has assumed a great significance in the present world of globalization. This has been a century of enormous movement of people to other countries largely in search of better economic conditions and hope. Immigrant condition is now a part of modern life which changes, damages, destroys, and in a few cases also rebuilds lives as people struggle to maintain their 'identity' and their values while adapting to new cultural environments. The emergence of the 'immigrant psyche' in literature was not sudden like a meteor but has evolved over the years with the changes in the social and political scenario of the world. Henry James's
The Portrait of a Lady, E.M. Forster's A Passage to India, V.S. Naipaul's In a Free State, Raja Rao's The Serpent and the Rope, have added different dimensions to the theme of expatriation. Expatriation is quite a widespread phenomenon in this century and George Steiner describes the expatriate writer as "the contemporary everyman." Today in Commonwealth literature, the phrase "the expatriate sensibility" is considered to be a legitimate literary term, both by Uma Parameswaran and Alistair Niven. Despite different cultural traditions, the writers share the common experience of growing up in an alien, often hostile country.

For a better understanding of the subject under study it is desirable to analyse the two terms 'expatriation' and 'immigration' as they have been used in this work. As the very terms imply, expatriation is the history of alienation and its consequences. It focuses on the native country while immigration emphasizes the country into which one has entered as a migrant. The expatriate dwells on his "ex" status of the past, while the immigrant celebrates his present in the new country.

Several factors contribute to the emergence of an expatriate sensibility. The increased mobility of people in this age has broken the continuity of the cultural and natural environment resulting in superficial relationships. The new cultural patterns unlike the native ones are not conducive to the unfolding of man's powers and happiness. The expatriate finds himself alienated from the host society by every kind of barrier - race,
religion, upbringing, sex or age. Ortega Y. Gasset defines the predicament of the expatriate thus:

... the other man also has his here but this here of the Other is not mine. Our 'heres' are mutually exclusive, they are not interpenetrable, they are different, with the result that the perspective in which the world appears to him is always different from mine. Hence our worlds do not adequately coincide. For the present I am in mine and he is in his. And this is a fresh reason for radical solitude. Not only am I outside of his; we are mutually two outsiders (fuera) and hence radically strangers (forasteros).³

The fundamental situation of an expatriate is a sense of strangeness, of being unreal, and non-acceptance in society. Forced to live as an insular, he becomes conscious of the disorder and chaos in an alien land compared to the patterned life in the native land. This drives him to loneliness and disease augmenting pain and fear.

One of the conditions causing the feeling of 'outsiderness' is 'displacement'. It is a well-established historical fact that empire creation and colonization have forced a dislocation from one world into a new one. Another reason for displacement is man's appetite for 'progress'. Either he wants to secure more knowledge or he wants more money, which in turn
causes displacement. Such geographical dislocation facilitates the break-up of settled ways of life with assured peace and sanity and introduces new conditions of living, new modes of thinking, and an atmosphere of strong denial. Thus, the expatriate stands as an 'outsider' on the edge of a 'pain threshold' and suffers from alienation because his desire for cohesive integration is not fulfilled. The sensitive ones especially, are caught between the pulls of different polarities, being ill at ease both in the native culture and in the alien one, resulting in schizophrenia and other psychological tensions.

The expatriate as an outsider thus faces a multifaceted problem which is sometimes a social problem sometimes an 'existential' one, and very often a socio-psychological one.

Faced with rejection and loneliness, the expatriate clings to his ethnic identity. The importance of nostalgia in expatriation cannot be overemphasized. Irving Howe identifies nostalgia as the real reason for the expatriate's need to evoke ethnic origins. Viney Kirpal observes, "Revival of ethnicity makes bearable to some extent the marginal shadowy existence of these migrants in the new land." Kalpana Wandrekar bases the study of the pathology of the expatriates on Erich Fromm's theory about the "normalcy of human pathology." Fromm believes that as man is bestowed with reason and imagination his needs are not restricted only to the "needs of bread," not "rooted in the body but in the very peculiarity of his
existence." Like a child emerging into a new world after birth, an expatriate emerges from his native land into an altogether new environment. The severance of the natural roots and the dislocation of geography, climate, race, custom, all these frighten him. It is not a surprise then if we find a deep craving in the expatriate to avoid the severance of natural ties, to fight against being torn away from nature, mother, blood and soil.

Expatriation is thus a complex state of mind and emotion which is characterized by failed quests and thwarted dreams, a wistful longing for the past often symbolized by the ancestral home, conditions of dislocation and isolation, the loss of a supportive community and often unsuccessful attempts to forge new support systems, and a crippling loss of relatively coherent earlier identity. The expatriate indulges in foolish or harmful misunderstandings and misreading of the new cultural environment. There is an assumption of moral or cultural superiority over the host country and refusal to accept the identity forced on one by the environment. This often leads to painful searches for an orderly sense of self and for a healing awareness of personal and cultural wholeness. A common theme is marital conflict as spouses differently adapt to the new or imagined standards of the new culture, and as spouses attempt to assert their identity by acts harmful to the relationship. The experience of racism, with its accompanying senses of rejection and humiliation, drives the expatriate to build a cocoon around himself as a refuge from cultural dilemmas.
Unlike the expatriate with his nostalgia for the past, the immigrant plunges into the present and gets enthusiastically involved in the environment around him. While the expatriate parades pain and grievance, the immigrant celebrates the fact of being alive in the world, of being reborn, of acquiring a new identity. Immigrants are energetic, resilient, able to accept changes. Not only do they change in the encounter of cultures, they also bring about a change in their environment. The assimilation or acculturation involved in immigration does not mean a denial of the past, it only means giving up a rigid holding on to the past.

In an age of globalization immigration has become an important stage in human evolution. It breaks the barriers of culture. The strong minds who succeed in absorbing the best of both - the native and the alien - grow into "international citizens" but the weaker ones succumb to a psychic illness. Going abroad should be a sign of growth, independence and adventure in an individual.

A study of the expatriate psyche is ubiquitous in Indian fiction in English as well as in contemporary world literature in English including Commonwealth literature. A few noteworthy works are Reginald and Jamila Massey's *The Immigrants*, Bharati Mukherjee's early novels *The Tiger's Daughter* and *Wife*, Arun Joshi's *The Foreigner*, Anita Desai's *Bye-Bye, Blackbird*, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala's *A Backward Place*, and Kamala
Markandaya’s Possession and The Nowhere Man. From the literatures of other countries one may mention Alex Haley’s Roots, V.S. Naipaul’s A House for Mr. Biswas, and Reshma Desai’s The Indian Immigrants in Britain. A considerable number of Indian writers have preferred the West as their place of settlement not only because of a desire for wider acceptance abroad but also for enjoying the atmosphere of literary affluence and material advancement. This corresponds to Malcolm Bradbury’s observation of expatriation as “a potent symbol of the tensions involved in seeking to create the arts of an historically new nation.” It is natural that Indo-English writers should dwell on the problem of the cultural transplant’s quest for identity. In particular the women writers show remarkable psychological insight and familiarity while dealing with the problems of the expatriates.

Kamala Markandaya’s novel The Nowhere Man explores the evil and ugly nature of racial prejudice in the world of the expatriates. In spite of Srinivas’s best efforts to adopt the country of his choice as his own, he is treated as an alien. The anti-colour agitation that erupts in England threatens his very existence and kills him in the end. Thakur Guruprasad observes that while Srinivas succeeds admirably in taking to cultural transplant at the rational level and in the externals, he remains rooted to the native culture at trans-rational levels. He is always shown in perfect possession of immaculate British manners and ways of thinking. Yet he
remains an uncompromising Indian in certain inner essentials - he cannot eat eggs and meat, has difficulty even with cakes and longs for third-rate Gulabjamuns in London market. The triumphant pull of the country of origin becomes eloquent in his impeccable standards of personal cleanliness that takes him to ridiculous and precarious heights when he throws his shoes smeared with dog's muck into the gutter and walks barefoot on the road one November morning in the London fog. Towards the end, the suppressed Indianness in his subconscious erupts pathetically when in his almost insane reaction to persecution by "Hang the blacks" revolutionaries, he takes to walking about the London streets in muslin dhoti. In the final analysis Srinivas is "a nowhere man looking for a nowhere city."

Markandaya's novel Possession explores yet another dimension - the expatriate's quest for identity. Valmiki becomes the artist Caroline Bell intends in England but at the expense of nearly destroying his soul. He finds only waste and death in personal relationship and to recover his true self has to break with Lady Bell and return to India. Etta in Jhabvala's A Backward Place is a middle-aged Hungarian woman who comes to India as a result of her marriage to an Indian student. She despises the country, describes it as a primitive society with primitive morality. Trapped and imprisoned in a country which she hates, Etta becomes depressed and even hysterical at the thought of isolation and loneliness awaiting her. In Anita
Desai's *Bye Bye, Blackbird*, Sarah, Adit's wife, experiences the identity crisis more than Dev and Adit. Her marriage to Adit makes her an alien in her own homeland. She prepares spicy curries which she never cares to eat and listens to Adit's favourite Indian music. When Adit decides to leave England, she does not regret leaving her country but is torn at the thought of losing her English self.

The novel also deals with the emotional disturbances and cultural disparity that the expatriates undergo. Dev experiences an emotional turbulence when he is torn by mixed feelings of love and hatred for England. It is a "tumult inside him, a growing bewilderment, a kind of schizophrenia that wakes him in the night and shadows him by day."\(^{12}\) His gradual adjustment to and admiration for the alien country coincides with his friend Adit's growing alienation and disillusionment with England.

In this context Bharati Mukherjee as an Indian born American writer provides a rich contrast to these contemporary Indian women writers. Mukherjee's early works no doubt deal with the problems of expatriates but in her later works she breaks free from this traditional stance in her approach to the immigrant psyche. The protagonists of her later works neither wallow in self-pity nor are they enveloped by nostalgic memories of the native land. One finds them firmly thrusting nostalgia into the background and gradually identifying themselves with the tradition and customs of the country of adoption.
New kinds of immigrant literatures are also being simultaneously produced in the United States under new subfields, variously titled such as - "Anglophone literature," "Commonwealth literature," "Asian American literature," "Non-western literature," "multicultural literature," "Third World literature," and "postcolonial literature." This new literary production of immigrant literature is also a cultural production that reminds one of the drastic decrease of a traditional European influx of immigrants to the United States and the simultaneous increase in United States metropolitan centres of such non-European immigrants as Latinos, Filipinos, Indians, Koreans, Japanese, Chinese, and Vietnamese to name a few. Herein lies the importance and relevance of Bharati Mukherjee's works. Until the last two or three decades, post independence emigration from India, especially among 'bourgeois' writers and intellectuals, had been largely channeled towards England. Mukherjee belongs to the first generation of immigrants to align themselves with America. She positions herself emphatically within America and as part of what she asserts is the "ethnic and gender-fractured world of contemporary American fiction."  

It will not be an exaggeration to state that Bharati Mukherjee is chiefly recognized in United States academic circles for her challenge to mainstream American literary-cultural productions. A well-defined instance of this challenge is stated in her 1988 New York Times Book Review essay called "Immigrant Writing: Give Us Your Maximalists!" in which
Mukherjee claims that "both inside and outside America, 'American fiction' has become synonymous with the mainstream, big advance, well-promoted novel or story collection... and ... American fiction - clever mannered, brittle has lost the power to transform the world’s imagination." According to Mukherjee the literary decline of the United States is primarily due to its refusal to see that "an epic was washing up on its shores" in the form of the hundreds of untold stories of "non traditional" (ie. Asian) immigrants. It is their stories that Mukherjee sets out to write in her works:

We immigrants have fascinating tales to relate. Many of us have lived in newly independent or merging countries.... When we uproot ourselves from those countries and come here, either by choice or out of necessity, we suddenly must absorb 200 years of American history and learn to adopt to American Society.... I attempt to illustrate this in my novels and short stories. My aim is to expose Americans to the energetic voices of new settlers in this country.

This observation clearly establishes her aim in writing.

Thus, Bharati Mukherjee is part of a variety of literary traditions. Her works can be read in the national context of Indian writing in English and in the international context of the literature of the Indian diaspora. Her
Major works of migration have also earned her a significant place in contemporary literature of the United States.

Much of Bharati Mukherjee's fiction is informed by her personal experience. A detailed biographical account of Bharati Mukherjee's life is not only essential, it is inevitable to an understanding of her as a writer in the "immigrant tradition." She considers her work a celebration of her emotions, and herself a writer of the Indian diaspora who cherishes the "melting pot" of America. After leading a life of exile as a post-colonial Indian in Canada, the shift to a celebratory mode as an immigrant, then citizen, in the United States, finds her fusing her several lives and backgrounds together with the intention of creating a "new immigrant" literature. It is interesting that as a writer, though she is often racially categorized by her thematic focus and cultural origin, she has often said that she strongly opposes the use of hyphenation when discussing her origin, in order to avoid 'otherization' and the self-imposed marginalization that comes with hyphenation. Rather, she prefers to refer to herself as an American of Bengali-Indian origin.

Bharati Mukherjee was born on July 27, 1940, to an upper-middle class Hindu Brahmin family in Calcutta, India. The second of three daughters of Sudhir Lal, a chemist, and Bina (Banerjee) Mukherjee, she lived with 40 or 50 relatives until the age of eight. In order to make a little
emotional, physical space for herself she became "a very bookish child" and read massive books by Russian authors like Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky. Born into an extraordinarily close-knit and intelligent family, Mukherjee and her sisters were always given ample academic opportunities, and thus have all pursued academic endeavours in their careers and have had the opportunity to receive excellent schooling. In 1947, her father was given a job in England and he brought his family to live there until 1951. The three and a half years she spent in schools in England gave Mukherjee an opportunity to develop and perfect her English language skills.

Back in Calcutta Mukherjee was sent to a very British school run by Irish nuns for upper class Indian children of a certain generation where she was taught "to mimic the British tradition of logic, satire, irony, and realism." She was fascinated by English writers like Jane Austen and E.M. Forster. Mukherjee tried her hand at writing a novel in her school days, when she was about ten years old. It was a short novel about English children and was set in England. Later she wrote short stories for her school magazine, many of these stories set in the West, her imagination being stimulated by reading about European history and European and British literature.

Mukherjee earned a B.A. with honours from the University of Calcutta in 1959. She and her family then moved to Baroda, India, where
she studied for her Master's Degree in English and Ancient Indian Culture, which she acquired in 1961. Having planned to be a writer since childhood, Mukherjee went to the University of Iowa in 1961 to attend the prestigious Writer's Workshop. She planned to study there to earn her Master's of Fine Arts, then return to India to marry a bridegroom of her father's choosing in her class and caste. However, a lunch break on September 19, 1963, changed that plan, transferring Mukherjee into a split world, a transient with loyalties to two cultures. She impulsively married Clark Blaise, a Canadian writer, in a lawyer's office above a coffee shop after only two weeks of courtship. She received her M.F.A. that same year, then went on to earn her Ph.D. in English and Comparative literature from the University of Iowa in 1969.

In 1968 Mukherjee immigrated to Canada with her husband and became a naturalized citizen in 1972. Her fourteen years in Canada were some of the hardest of her life, as she found herself discriminated against and treated, as she says, as a member of the "visible minority." She has spoken in many interviews of her difficult life in Canada, a country that she sees as hostile to its immigrants and one that opposes the concept of cultural assimilation. During these years she viewed herself as an expatriate Bengali permanently stranded in North America because of "destiny or desire." Mukherjee was conscious of being "a brown woman in a white society."* She observes,
I had a very bad time during the 1970's when my husband and I lived and taught in Canada. There was a pattern of discrimination.... I found myself constantly fighting a battle against racial prejudice.  

In Canada Mukherjee claims to have experienced an anti-Indian attitude. Further, while her husband's writing was recognized, her own was mostly ignored. She experienced herself as "a psychological expatriate," a "permanent scold," and clung to her ethnic identity - "I remember how bracing it was to cloak myself in my own Brahminical elegance." She became a Civil Rights activist in Canada and wrote about the crippling effect of racism on individuals. Canada's hostility to Indians, the non-recognition of her writing in Canada, her rootlessness are the recurring themes that appear with an almost obsessive regularity not only in the personal and political writings of Mukherjee, but in her early fiction as well.  

Mukherjee was able to write her first two novels, The Tiger's Daughter (1971), and Wife (1975), while working up to professional status at McGill University in Montreal. The Tiger's Daughter is a fictionalized story drawing from Mukherjee's own first years of marriage and her return home for a visit to a world unlike the one that lives in her memory. The protagonist, Tara Banerjee, returns to India after marrying an American and faces a different India than the one she remembers leaving. The young
expatriate is not yet accustomed to American culture and at the same time finds herself estranged from the morals and values of her native land. This first novel addresses Mukherjee’s personal difficulties of being caught between two worlds, homes and cultures and is an examination of who she is and where she belongs.

Mukherjee’s second novel, Wife, is a psychological study of Dimple, a young woman from Calcutta who settles down in New York with her newly acquired husband. Raised to be passive and dependent according to traditional Indian standards of femininity, Dimple lacks the inner strength and resources it takes to cope with the fear and alienation in New York City as the young wife in an arranged marriage. She tries to reconcile the Bengali ideal of the perfect, passive wife with the demands of her new American life, but fails to make the transition from one world to another. In these early novels Tara and Dimple thus experience the alienation of an expatriate who senses a gulf between herself and her native people and tradition and remains rootless. During these years in Canada Mukherjee also collected many of the sentiments found in her first collection of short stories, Darkness (1985), a collection that in many sections reflects her mood of cultural separation while living in Canada.

Mukherjee lived in Canada from 1966 to 1980. She lived in Toronto and then in Montreal where she held teaching positions at McGill
University and Concordia University. While in Canada, apart from the two novels, she also co-authored a book of memoirs with her husband, entitled *Days and Nights in Calcutta* in 1977 on their year long stay in India in 1973 - 74, after a fire in their Montreal home. Each offers a different India through their separate journals, and ultimately, the two tell the tale of a relationship that faces the daily difficulties of cultural barriers that have been drawn and separate pasts that linger. Other writings in Canada included articles on Civil rights such as *An Invisible Woman*. Another collaborative effort with her husband was published in the United States - *The Sorrow and the Terror: The Haunting Legacy of the Air India Tragedy* (1987), a journalistic account of the crash of an Air-India jet off the coast of Ireland in 1985. A terrorist bomb, planted in an Air-India jet on Canadian soil, blew up after leaving Montreal, killing 329 passengers, most of whom were Canadians of Indian origin. The Prime Minister of Canada at the time, Brian Mulroney, telephoned the Prime Minister of India to offer Canada's condolences for India's loss.

The years in Canada were particularly harsh. Finally fed up with the country, Mukherjee and her family moved to the United States in 1980, where she was sworn in as a permanent U.S. resident. Continuing to write, in 1986 she was awarded a National Endowment for the Arts grant. After holding several posts at various colleges and universities, she ultimately
settled in 1989 at the University of California - Berkeley. In the U.S. after a decade of painful introspection Mukherjee put nostalgia in perspective and made the transition from an expatriate to an immigrant. In the introduction to her collection of short stories Darkness, published in 1985, Mukherjee clearly articulates this,

If you have to wonder, if you keep looking for signs, if you wait - surrendering little bits of self every year, clutching the souvenirs of an ever-retreating past you'll never belong anywhere.  

Mukherjee adds significantly that her decision to leave Canada for good and emigrate to the United States was "a movement away from the aloofness of expatriation to the exuberance of immigration." 

In fact, in Days and Nights in Calcutta Mukherjee had already attempted to define her own multiple (dis)locations, examine her increasing discomfort with a variety of Indian cultural practices and come to terms with her growing realization that the "real" India is vastly different from the imagined "home" of her expatriate nostalgia. Mukherjee says, "The year in India forced me to view myself more as an immigrant than as an exile." The realization of fluid identities and alternate realities too could be traced to this sojourn in India: "In India, different perceptions of reality converge
without embarrassing anyone. My year in India had shown me that I did not need to discard my western education in order to retrieve the dim shape of my Indian one." (Days and Nights 284) She further states, "To be a woman writer in North America, to be a third world woman writer in North America, is to confine oneself to a narrow, airless tightly roofed arena." (Days and Nights 285-6) This realization of the limitations of the stance of a third world expatriate writer probably led to her later opting for the viewpoint of an immigrant. The expatriate writer nurses his grievances and parades his pain of exile, hence Mukherjee began viewing expatriation as "a restrictive and self-defeating attitude" in a writer.

Mukherjee's characters have always reflected her own circumstances and personal concerns, and one is able to trace her growth in self-confidence and her slowly developing identity as an American through her fiction. If Mukherjee's interpretation of and reaction to her experience in Canada led her to see herself as an expatriate, significantly in the United States there is a growing recognition of herself as an immigrant with an increasingly strong attachment to the United States. In her works which were either completed or fully written in the United States - Darkness (1985), The Middleman and Other Stories (1988), and Jasmine (1989) - Mukherjee explores the immigrant sensibility, recognizing its duality and fluid identity and acknowledging alternate realities. As she observes, "The transformation as writer and as resident of the new world, occurred with the act of immigration to the United States." (Darkness 2)
Mukherjee's collection of short stories Darkness marks the nodal point in her personal and artistic development. Darkness focuses on natives of South Asia who crave success and stability, but are burdened by their histories and face the difficulties of prejudice and misunderstanding. The collection is a transitional work for Mukherjee, who was reflecting back on her difficult years in Canada and cherishing the opportunity to establish herself in the United States. Of the twelve stories in Darkness, four stories - "The World According to Hsu," "Isolated Incidents," "Courtly Vision," and "Hindus," - were written in Canada in Montreal and Toronto. Mukherjee comments on these stories in her introduction: "The purely "Canadian" stories in this collection were difficult to write and even more painful to live through. They are uneasy stories about expatriation." (Darkness 2) The remaining eight stories were written at Atlanta, Georgia, "in a three-month burst of energy in the spring of 1984" as a writer-in-residence at Emory University. (Darkness 1) This collection, which contains stories written both in Canada and the United States illustrates the transition from expatriation to immigration.

In "The World According to Hsu," Ratna, of Indian origin, and her husband Graeme Clayton, a Canadian professor of Psychology at McGill University, Montreal, are on a holiday at an island off the coast of Africa. Graeme wants to move to Toronto, where the University had offered him a chair in Personality Development, but Ratna prefers Montreal because she
fears racist violence in Toronto. Three incidents of violence against Indian women and children are reported in the story. The story ends poignantly with Graeme going out to contemplate the stars while Ratna with her vision of impending doom contemplates a wine-bottle labelled "Cote de Cassandra."

In the short story "Isolated Incidents" the expatriate is viewed from the point of view of a native Canadian - Ann Vane, whose job is to file complaints from migrants on problems concerning Human Rights. Two specific cases of racial discrimination in Toronto are brought to her notice - that of Doctor (Miss) Supariwala and John Mohan Persawd. Ann Vane knows the futility of her work in documenting such cases. They would always be considered isolated incidents and not racial in nature.

In "Hindus," Mukherjee juxtaposes an expatriate against an immigrant to draw a contrast. Leela Lahiri, the narrator, proudly declares, "I am an American citizen" but she is also proud of her Bengali Brahmin past. H.R.H. Maharaja Patwant Singh of Gotlah is an obvious expatriate with a grievance against India for not having treated him well. Writing his memoirs with nostalgia, he is an expatriate to the core.

If these are stories of expatriation, in the stories written in the United States the protagonists are mainly immigrants. Where the expatriate sensibility is probed in these stories, it is to its disadvantage. In
"Angela," the protagonist is a well settled immigrant with no nostalgic longing for her native country Bangladesh. In "The Lady from Lucknow," both Nafeesa and her husband Iqbal are successful immigrants and have a contempt for whining expatriates who keep looking back.

In "A Father," the final eruption of violence in Mr. Bhowmick, who attacks his daughter because she is pregnant through artificial insemination is due to his inability to reconcile the wistful expatriate in himself with the immigrant in his feminist daughter. In "Nostalgia," the expatriate element of nostalgia is exposed as a flaw, a chink in the armour of the immigrant protagonist, Dr. Manny Patel.

"Tamurlane," though written by Mukherjee in the United States in 1984, is set in Canada, focusing on the illegal migrants at the 'Mumtaz Bar B-Q'. Here Mukherjee reverts to the violence that Indians are subjected to in Toronto. It is as if the author has been unable to fully exorcise the pain of the Canadian expatriate experience.

Analyzing the characters in these few stories taken from Darkness, we find that the theme of expatriation is linked to fragmented, disintegrating, alienated characters, while the immigrants are fairly well adjusted to the new country and its lifestyle. Christine Gomez observes that the movement from expatriation to immigration, as Bharati Mukherjee sees it, is a movement from alienation to integration.27
Looking back on her writing at this stage Mukherjee observes that she has appropriately moved away from particular autobiographical concerns. She states:

My themes are larger, my strategies more complex. I've put together my aesthetic manifesto, which is not unlike that of Moghul miniature painting with its many foci of interests. Multiculturalism/ diversity are keynotes for being American; they are also what I think are dramatising, injecting, 'quickening' (in the sense of bringing to life) my fiction.28

In 1988, Mukherjee had a major public breakthrough that lifted her into the top ranks of all writers. She was awarded the National Book Critics Circle Award for Fiction for The Middleman and Other Stories. In this collection, Mukherjee becomes a valuable intermediary linking disparate worlds. She tells her tales from many perspectives, with a keen eye for the concept of self within a larger society. She wrote this collection in a lighter, more celebratory tone, with characters who are adventurers and explorers rather than refugees and outcasts, and are a part of a new, changing America.

**Jasmine** (1989), Mukherjee's most popularly read novel stems from an earlier short story from The Middleman and Other Stories and was expanded to a story of a young widow who uproots herself from her life in

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India and re-roots herself in search of a new life and the image of America. It is a story of dislocation and relocation as the title character continually sheds lives to move into other roles, moving further westward while constantly fleeing pieces of her past. In it, Mukherjee rejoices in the idea of assimilation and makes it clear that Jasmine needs to travel to America to make something significant of her life, because in the third world, she faced only despair and loss. It is not only the story of Jasmine's change but also the story of a changing America.

Mukherjee's recent publications include two more novels - The Holder of the World (1993) and Leave It to Me (1997) which along with Jasmine form a trilogy that probe "the politics of identity." In The Holder of the World, Mukherjee tries to forge links between seventeenth century Massachusetts and pre-colonial Mughal India. It is about an asset - hunter Beigh Masters, who is looking for a lost diamond. The treasure - hunt leads him to Hannah Easton, a New England Puritan, who is a lover of the Hindu prince on India's Coromandel Coast. Like Mukherjee's other books Leave It to Me is narrated by a complex, driven character. In it, the woman we initially know as Debby Di Martino is a child of the 1970, born and abandoned on the 'hippie trail' of rural India, adopted and raised by a middle - class family in Schenectedy, N.Y. She is, in other words, a true foundling, a deserted child of uncertain heritage driven to find her biological parents. The quest takes her to the Haight-Ashbury district of San
Francisco, where she assumes the name and temperament of Devi, an avenging goddess in search of bloody justice.

A study of Mukherjee's works from The Tiger's Daughter to Jasmine also reveals that the movement from expatriation to immigration is reflected in the choice of writers whom Mukherjee acknowledges as her models. When she experienced herself as an expatriate, Mukherjee saw V.S. Naipaul as her model. In Days and Nights in Calcutta she writes:

In myself I detect a pale and immature reflection of Naipaul; it is he who has written most movingly about the pain and absurdity of art and exile, of 'third world art' and exile among the former colonizers; the tolerant incomprehension of hosts, the absolute impossibility of ever having a desh. (287)

In thus identifying herself with Naipaul at this stage, it is clear that Mukherjee viewed herself as an expatriate writer in the light of her first two novels. With The Middleman and other stories, Mukherjee outgrew and discarded the posture of an expatriate, rejected Naipaul as a model and chose Bernard Malamud instead who was her husband Blaise's teacher at Harvard and "a second father" to Mukherjee. In the interview with Alison B. Carb, Mukherjee admits:
Like Malamud, I write about a minority community which escapes the ghetto and adapts itself to the patterns of the dominant American culture.29

The shift from Naipaul to Malamud as literary model thus signifies the transition from the exiled expatriate to the vibrant immigrant.

In technique Mukherjee quite frequently expresses expatriation through irony and an omniscient narrative with occasional shifts in perspective and also authorial comments. The immigrants on the other hand more often appear in first person narratives and reveal the author's supple voice which can enter varied immigrant sensibilities. Mukherjee's compact but fluid style is similarly a matter of gradual evolution. In her first novel, The Tiger's Daughter, the language resembles the British English because of the British models she had been taught at the British convent in Calcutta. In contrast, one of the distinctions of Mukherjee's later works is her adroit adaptation of the American vernacular:

Her characters have urgent riveting voices; they speak in the contemporary idiom as immigrants handle it, each richly reflecting the cadences of their original language on which they have grafted a new distinctively regional Americanese.30
Bharati Mukherjee's determined rejection of the emotional paralysis of exile, of nostalgia, and her enthusiastic affirmation of the immigrant condition makes her approach very different from that of other Indian women novelists and immigrant women of colour who share Mukherjee's predicament of multiple displacements. It is this unique quality which makes her works so different and so fascinating. Mukherjee herself holds that there are two kinds of writers - those who confirm what the public wants to know, and the other kind who disturb, interrogate the existing systems and patterns. She identifies herself with the second group. In fact, regarding the question of "identity" she is quite clear and firm in her statement:

Unlike writers such as Anita Desai and R.K.Narayan I do not write in Indian English about Indians living in India. My role models, view of the world, and experience are unlike theirs. These writers live in a world in which there are still certain ties and rules. They are part of their society's mainstream.... On the other hand I don't write from the vantage point of an Indian expatriate like V.S.Naipaul.... Like Naipaul I am a writer from the third world but unlike him I left India by choice to settle in U.S. I have adopted this country as my home.31
Mukherjee’s fiction follows a sense of direction, growth and evolution - from expatriation to immigration. This study seeks to establish just that.

Ruth Prawer Jhabvala in her article "Living in India" observes:

To live in India and be at peace one must, to a very considerable extent, become Indian and adopt Indian attitudes, habits, beliefs, assume if possible an Indian personality. But how is this possible? And even if it were possible - without cheating oneself - would it be desirable? Should one want to try and become something other than what one is?

Mukherjee’s fiction avows that this is not only possible it is also desirable. The expatriate can escape rootlessness and alienation only when he stops focusing on the native country and learns to acquire and celebrate his new identity as an immigrant in the country of adoption. By the time Mukherjee came to write her later novels Jasmine and The Middleman there is neither a sense of nostalgia about the past nor a sense of loss of a glorious heritage. There is no room for sentimentality in the projection of a fragile identity to be preserved against obliteration. On the other hand there is ample evidence of a will to forge new alliances and create new communities in the friendly and fertile soil of the adopted homeland. In the interview with Sybil Steinberg she projects her feelings very clearly:
Mine is a clear-eyed but definite love of America. I'm aware of the brutalities, the violences here, but in the long run my characters are survivors; they've been helped, as I have, by good strong people of conviction. Like Jasmine, I feel there are people born to be Americans. By American I mean an intensity of spirit and a quality of desire. I feel American in a very fundamental way, whether Americans see me that way or not.33

Today Mukherjee demands attention as a powerful member of the American literary scene, one whose most memorable works reflect her pride in her Indian heritage, but also her celebration of embracing America. We have in her a writer, whose voice tells the tales of her own experiences to demonstrate the changing shape of American society.

As a mainstream American writer, Bharati Mukherjee has been the subject of innumerable interviews, lectures, and articles which are mainly reviews of her fictional works or a focus on different aspects of her individual works or very often a probe into her life in India, Canada, and the United States.

This study focuses on Mukherjee's fictional works and personal concerns to suggest that the personal odyssey of the novelist from the position of an expatriate to an immigrant is reflected at the thematic level
in her writings as a movement from expatriation to immigration. The expatriate writer breaks stereotyping and emerges as an exuberant writer in the immigrant tradition. The succeeding chapters attempt to prove that just as expatriation was a metaphor for existential alienation in her early fiction, immigration becomes a metaphor for the reintegration of the alienated sensibility in her later works. Her main theme throughout her writing discusses the condition of Asian immigrants in North America, with particular attention to the changes taking place in South Asian women in a new world. While the characters in all her works are aware of the brutalities and violence that surround them, and are often victimized by various forms of social oppression, she draws them as survivors. The chapters also focus attention on the fact that unlike the other Indian writers who treated the Indian immigrant situation as one of conflict and adjustment with a little understanding and love, Bharati Mukherjee gives it a new, challenging perspective enabling the immigrants to emerge out of their cocoons of defence into the openness of assertion and say that they belong.
WORKS CITED


14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.


18. Ibid., p.2.

