Chapter - 2

ALIENATION
In modern art and literature, the theme alienation is often explored to focus on the individual’s feelings of alienness towards the society, the family, and towards himself. Sometimes this alienness becomes worse or pathological through a confrontation with the foreign culture. The dictionary meaning of the word ‘alienation’ is to make hostile where previously friendship had existed. Therefore, in the case of the expatriate this would imply a sort of hostile distancing from the homeland as well as from the adopted country. In the case of the writers, the style and content of their writings have been greatly influenced by the extent to which they have been able to identify and adapt to their surroundings. As Gurbhagat Sigh says, “Expatriate writing in its theory and practice, is the work of the exile who has experienced unsettlement at the existential, political and metaphysical levels. With this experience, he/she has unsettled the philosophical and aesthetic systems.”¹ The feeling of alienation in their adapted country makes them write about people and events typical of their country. So those who have been able to ‘identify’ with their new host country are blessed with bi-cultural perceptions that enable them to write from a wider and more exciting angle.

The word ‘identity’ means ‘to identify, ‘ to become identical’ which means becoming the same as or essentially alike, the word ‘identity’ is further explained as assimilation. It can be on many levels psychological, sociological, linguistic, cultural, and emotional. Though the words ‘immigration’ and ‘expatriation’ seem to be synonyms, there is a thin line of difference between the two words. The term ‘expatriation’ focuses on the native land that has been left behind, while the word ‘immigration’ tells about the country into which one has come to settle down and to make it his home. According to Stainslaw Barnezak, the word “Exil” and “Expatriate” and “emigrant” are sad prefixes that conjure “state of exclusion”.²
The expatriate lives on his ex status while the immigrant celebrates his present in the new country and tries to establish well in the host country.

While commenting on the Diasporic writings and the communities Uma Parameswaran says of the Diasporic Community, “Within the Diaspora community, the concept of “home” continues to exacerbate inter-generational frictions that exist everywhere. Intergenerationality has several groupings other than the usual one depending on age. Thus we have disparate “cultures” within the Diaspora.” The literary texts produced by these writing communities tend to focus more on the underside of extreme experiences of expatriation, alienation and transplantation. Thus alienation and the concomitant identity crisis, a contemporary malaise becomes the predominant theme of many of the stories of diasporic writers, like Raja Rao, Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee and Salman Rushdie. They deal the themes of expatriation, immigration, and the darker dreams and nightmares of protagonists in their stories. Raja Rao and Anita Desai deal with the themes of alienation in Indian context, whereas Bharati Mukherjee and Salman Rushdie deal with the themes of expatriation and immigration in Canadian and London contexts. Most of the stories of these writers are someway or other, connected with one other regarding the theme of alienation. Though most of the stories of Raja Rao throw light on the theme of human relations in India and Indian scene and setting, there are some stories, which deal with the theme of alienation.

The first story in Raja Rao’s first volume of short stories, “Javni”, is about a low caste servant maid of the pre-independence times. Her parents have five daughters and two sons. However, fate has left her with only one brother, Bhima. Though she is happily married, she
loses her husband at an early age. As for her in-laws, her elder brother-in-law is arrested for some unspecified crime and her younger brother-in-law lived with a concubine. At home, their wives harass her and so she is forced to run away to her brother's house. There also she does not fare any better. She is able to get a shelter, but nothing else. She becomes a domestic servant to feed herself. She has to live at the mercy of her Mistress who is very kind towards her, considers her as a human being, and accepts her as a member of her family within the limits of the caste system. When separation from this family becomes inevitable, she breaks down, "Shall I ever see again a family of Gods like yours? Mother was kind to me, kind like a veritable Goddess." (TCB, 6).

However, her brother's wives call her a dirty widow, abuse her, and spit on her. Her brother too calls her a 'prostitute', a 'donkey', a 'bitch'. The whole story is about the sufferings and sorrows of Javni. Another protagonist in the story Akkaya is similar to Javni. She is also a widow, who has lost her husband at an early age. She is a childless child widow. Her father, an ex-minister marries her to another minister when she is only eight or ten years of age. Her husband had by then three grandchildren. It is a marriage of business. Nobody cares for her and nobody loves her even though her services are wanted by every one. She hungers for love. Even her daily prayers and religion do not give solace to her. Her pitiable life dragged on until death came to her rescue, but not before she suffered the disagreeable old age, sickness, stench, and servility unwanted in life. She had none, not even to perform the obsequies after her death. The narrator says,
At last, one of her brothers called a Brahmin, and giving him a few rupees, asked him to perform the 'necessary' ceremonies. I do not know whether the Brahmin did it. Any way, here I have written the story of Akkayya, may be her only funeral ceremony. (TCB, 8)

In her own words,

When I am dead and when you have burnt me, will you ever remember me? ...When I am dead sister, be sure write to Nanjunda, Ramanna and Mari and tell them even once gave me as much as a sari, till then I love them all... (TCB, 94)

After having served different the people, she even loses her childhood name also. When she was a child, she was called “Venkatalakshmi”, or “Nanjamma”, one of those old names, which meant all that a virtuous woman ought to have, that, it virtue.

The life of Akkaya is pathetic for reasons beyond her control. Her father dies, the brothers quarrel, and the family break up. But none of the brothers wants to take in Akkaya. At last, her younger sister rescues her. She passes her life with her younger sister for some fifty years. In the end, she becomes a burden for everyone. As long as she remains useful and docile, everyone wants her. But when she becomes old and sick she is considered as an intolerable burden. Even her sister who has loved and liked her much wishes that she is dead soon. When she dies the reaction of Kittu’s stepmother is the most inhuman of all. All of them want to forget her as early as possible, as she says, “Could they not have the sense to hide it from us for the six months? What a nuisance.” (TCB, 95) After her death, they simply take bath and change their clothes and after dinner, all of them go to a cinema. This shows the inhuman nature of the household whom she has served all her life.
As the two protagonists “Javni” and “Akkaya” are alienated from their families, another protagonist Motilal in “The Little Gram shop” is found to be in a similar plight. Akkaya and Javni at one point or the other have enjoyed the love and affection of the members of their families, but Motilal is completely alienated from his family. His family never likes him. Moreover, his mind is always obsessed with thoughts of money. At least nobody hates Akkaya and Javni but in the case of Motilal, not even his own son and wife have a kind word for Motilal. Motilal and his wife Beti bai have come from a small village in Gujarat with a copper pot in hand and nothing to wear except rags. “They tramped from village to village singing and begging eating the food they had got and knotting in the doles they received.” (TCB, 24) Thus, they save hundred rupees and go to Hyderpor, open a little gram shop and settle down there. Beti Bai belongs to a poor family, but Motilal always remembers that he is ‘the great grandson of Bhata Tata Lal of Khodi’. He always remembers the glory of his great grand father. As he says, “Bhata Tata Lal had a house as big. No about as big as this town (Badepur). He had hundreds and hundreds of servants and a byre that contained at least a hundred cattle.” (TCB, 24) When he was born, he lost his father and mother when he was two months old. The ambition of Motilal is to regain the past glory of his great grandfather.

In Hydepore Motilal opens a grocery shop. He begins to save money by spending too little on their own and lending the money to others on interest, and begins to prosper. He lends twenty thousand at the rate of fifteen percent to Navab Sahib and ten thousand at twenty percent to the District Collector. He also lends fifty thousand at twenty two percent to a man who calls himself a Zamindar but who is really a fraud. The members of his family neglect
poor Motilal who always dreams of bringing back the lost glory of his great grandfather. In the end, he becomes mad and is run over by a car and dies. But the death of poor Motilal brings money to the widow, Beta Bai. She gets ten thousand rupees as damages. Motilal becomes rich after his death, but money does not bring any happiness to him. Money makes him inhuman. He does not know how to live decently. His wife, his sons and even his daughter-in-law hate him. His son Chota runs away with Venku and who in turn runs away with Mr. Sahib. His second son, Sidhu runs away from home. The money earned by Motilal helps neither him nor his family. His family alienates him totally.

The second volume of short stories The Policeman and the Rose contains nine short stories out of which seven have already appeared in the first volume. The protagonist Nimka, 'Nimotchika', is a beautiful Caucasian girl:

With green Mongoloid eyes and a soft calling tongue, that contains rounded princess: Nimotchika was a good, very good, and of a simple true beauty as though you cannot efface it even were you to cut her face with many crosses. Her beauty had certainty; it had a rare equilibrium and a naughtiness that was feminine and very innocent. (TCB,99)

She is a white Russian refugee whom the narrator meets in Paris, a princess by birth she ekes out a living by working as a waitress in a restaurant. The narrator reads Tolstoy, the Ramayana, and the Mahabharata to Nimka. She is very much impressed by the stories and feels drawn towards India and to Nimka; India is 'the land where all that is wrong everywhere goes right' the narrator thinks that she is in love with him but he feels that, 'She could not marry me – I was too distant and different'. Later he introduces her to young
Michel, his friend. He is a student of Sanskrit and a poet. She falls in love with him but she
does not want to marry him. She has decided to marry her co-Russian refugee Count, who
has been running a vegetarian restaurant. She even bore him a son, Morris. However,
unfortunately her husband loses his restaurant and was away to earn money, but never to
return. Her son too flees to Russia promising his mother to come back to take her to Russia,
but does not turned up. Alienated by her husband and son Nimka continues to live in Paris all
alone until the end.

All the protagonists Javni, Akkaya, Motilal, and Nimka are trapped in the sterility of
tradition and coarseness of custom and are victims of alienation. Among the four Javni,
Akkaya and Motilal are Indian Characters, who are enticed by the bond of love and affection.
Nimka is the only alien character. While Javni is apparently a victim of social ostracism,
Akkaya is a victim to the destructive insularity of the puritanical tradition. Javni seeks to
sublimate her tormenting sense of isolation by cultivating a naïve and innocent faith in her
Gods and Goddesses. Akkaya cracks up from within and the rumblings of her inner
disintegration are heard all around in the household. Her love for the family turns into hatred
and in turn; they treat her like a parasite. Her loneliness is the result of convention, which
prompts her to keep aloof from others. The hardening of her human heart within her results
in indifference, hostility, and a neurotic self-hatred. Motilal on the other hand is an exile from
the place of his birth, from home wife, son, and daughter- in-law neighbors. His life is bereft
of all values. The alien character Nimka is abandoned by her husband, her son, and even her
country, Russia.
Desai's stories, which are collected into two volumes Games at Twilight and Diamond Dust, deal with the theme of alienation, loneliness, fear of death and violence. The characters are drawn from educated, urban Indian society. Most of the protagonists in her stories conduct a search for 'selves', within the context of the family. Stories like "Studies in the Park", "Sales", "The Accompanist", "Surface Textures", "The Artists Life" "The Rooftop Dwellers", "Winterscape." "The Man who saw himself drowns" deal with the theme of alienation. In all these stories the protagonists are failures in developing good relations with the members of the families.

In the story "Studies in the Park", the protagonist Suno struggles because of the intense pressure on him to study hard. He selects the Public Park as the best place to study because of so many distractions at home. In his own words:

The bell rings. Voices clash, clatter and break. The tin-and-bottle man? The neighbours? The police? The Help-the-Blind man? Thieves and burglars? All of them, all of them, ten or twenty or a hundred of them, marching up the stairs, hammering at the door, breaking in and climbing over me – ten, twenty or a hundred of them. (GT, 20)

Suno wants to run away from all these keeping his fingers in his ears. But his father expects good results from him. "All of them stared at me, at the exam I was to take. At the degree I was to get."(G.T.p.22) Suno is so tensed and overwhelmed by the pressure of having to study that he gradually loses his ability to function suitably, both physically and psychologically. His condition reaches a state of hopelessness. In his own words:

I lay sluggish on a heap of waste papers under my tree and read without 
seeing slept without sleeping..........I felt we were all dying in the park that
when we entered the examination hall it would be to be declared officially
dead. Slowly we were killing ourselves in order to join them... I did not work
myself and more ...I mean physically, my body no longer functions. I was
constipated I was dying. (GT, 29)

Suno’s extreme reaction to tension is both distressing and horrifying. He could be driven to
the state of death because of his parent’s ambition and competitiveness. His monotonous and
expressive world is broken by a vision. When the boy sees a Muslim couple whose
relationship is never defined, the tension he has been experiencing is transformed into lighter
vein. In his words:

Who was this man, her husband, her father, a lover? I could not make out
although I watched them without moving without breaking. I felt not as if I
were starting rudely at stranger; but as if I were gazing at a painting or a
sculpture, some work of art. Of seeing a vision. They were still, I stood still,
and the children stared. Then she lifted her arms above her head and laughed
very quietly. (GT, 31-32)

The tension that mounts up leads to a search. He feels a sense of liberation in that shared
moment of love. He goes home and sleeps feeling free. The next day when he goes back to
the park he is a changed person. He is not tense. He begins to play jokes with the boys. Life,
to him, is now a search. Now he does not care for his father, members of his family, the
examination, and the competition in the society. A feeling of alienation goes deep into his
heart.

Another story “Sale” is the story of an artist, a nameless character, who has an unusual
vision but is reduced to helplessness. His buyers, though, appreciate his work of art and
encourage him to draw pictures liked by them with a hypocritical show of friendship they are
grave towards his situation. The artist hopes to run his family with the money he earns
through his paintings. His wife is so hostile towards him because he is unable to run the
family with his earnings from art. But he always dreams of becoming a great painter who can
earn a huge amount to maintain the family. The artist is compelled to sell his paintings to
support his wife and child and to prove himself as an artist. The artist is badly in need of
money. Necessity and the frown of his wife force him to convince the visitors who have
come to buy his paintings. The buyers are so inhuman that they humiliate the artist by saying
that he was not acquainted with the things in Nature and made queries whether he had ever
seen landscapes, flowers, birds, and at least the snow. The artist is so eager to attract the
visitors, that he pleads with them that he can see all of them in his imagination. But they say
that as an artist he should know everything. The artist becomes impatient and opens the
window and shows the scene outside to the visitors and says, “There you see my birds and
my flowers’...'I see a tram and that is my mountain. I see a letter-box and that is my tree-
Listen do you hear my birds…” (GT, 44)

The artist explains how he would paint the paintings. The visitors after having a lengthy
discussion with the artist leave his threshold without buying any painting but promising to
buy one in future. The artist then becomes desperate. The necessity lingers in front of his
eyes. He hurries out to plead with them that he would paint the desired landscape within one
day and requests them to pay an advance. The position of the painter is so miserable that he
pleads, “And will you give me an advance? He asks tensely. I need money my friend can you
give me an advance?”(GT, 48) The plight of the artist is so pathetic that the angry face of his
wife keeps appearing in front of his eyes. He feels let down by the visitors, his wife and even by his fate.

"Surface Textures" is another story in which the protagonist, Harish, is intensely preoccupied with the textures of the objects. It is a question of identity. It is ironical that in searching the interesting surfaces he has lost his identity and has been alienated by his family, by his friends, by the society, and at last himself. In the very beginning of the story, this search is referred to.

All through the meal his eyes remained fixed on the plate in the centre of the table with big button of a yellow melon... he reaches out to touch the melon that so captivated him. With one finger, he stroked the coarse grain of its rind. (GT, 35)

Harish is so preoccupied with his interest that he neglects even his wife and children. It is because of the kindness of their neighbours that, they do not starve to death. Even the neighbours alienate him by calling him, a 'hunch backed hyena.' He is humiliated by his neighbours and soon looses his job. He is turned out of his house and his wife leaves for her parents house with her children to plead with her father to feed them. It is ironical that the society, family, neighbours and friends finally alienate Harish, and he transforms himself into Swami. In discovering the surfaces, he loses his own surface. R.S. Sharma rightly comments as, "He achieves a kind of Nirvana in this state of complete oblivion. The women in the village find him holier than any other sanyasi and start worshipping him." 4
The four stories in Diamond Dust, “Winterscape”, “The Man who saw himself drown”, “The Artist’s Life”, “The Rooftop Dwellers deal with the theme of alienation. The “Winterscape” is the story of two sisters, who have struggled with fate and have brought up their only son Rakesh, but only to be alienated from him. Asha and Anu are two sisters with three years of difference in age. Asha gets married with an aged man and she has frequent miscarriages. Soon Anu is also gets married to a young clerk. She becomes pregnant and gives birth to a male child. Soon the child is kept in the hands of Asha, as Anu is not well. Asha on the other hand gladly takes the charge of the child and the mother. The two sisters are so attached that Anu sacrifices her son to her sister with the impression that she will have another child. But unfortunately, Anu does not leave another child as her husband’s health deteriorates day by day and he dies before the first birthday of Rakesh. After his death, Anu packs all her things and goes to live with her sister and the child. From that day, together they bring up the child facing all types of difficulties. Soon the child becomes a young man and goes to Canada for higher studies. He abandons his two mothers, marries a Canadian girl, and never turns back to his mothers. The two mothers feel alienated, whenever they get news about their son. After many years of separation Anu and Asha go to Canada to see their grandchild. They manage to reach Canada. They stay there until the child is born. Nevertheless, what they find in Rakesh is that he is not as affectionate as he was earlier. There is a kind of oddity in the behaviour of Rakesh. He does not want to have them with him any longer. His wife Beth is also vexed with the two women because she thinks that they are always in her way. She felt that they always wanted

To hold him flat on the palm of their hands or sit cross-legged on the sofa and rock him by pumping one knee up and down, could not at all
understand why Beth insisted they place him in his cot in a darkened bedroom instead. (DD, 46)

One fine day they decide to leave the place. Rakesh too feels relieved of all tension and inconvenience of having them in his house. He is so inhuman that when they disappear, he heaves a sigh of relief.

Another story “The Man who saw himself drown.” is about the man or a ghost coming to terms with its own death. The man is nameless who goes on an official tour to a city, where at night, after returning from a hectic meeting to the hotel wants to go on a walk after consuming a little alcohol to relieve him from pain. He thinks that the fresh air will help him in getting good sleep. The hotel is in a residential area. He walks out of the hotel slowly, reaches a great avenue, crosses it, reaches another avenue, and reaches a riverbank. He gets a mad idea to step on to the deck of one of the boats and unties it, up the river. He resists the temptation of jumping into the water and balances himself on the bank of the river. He laughs at himself for getting such a foolish idea. He walks fast along the bank and sees some people bringing a dead body from the water. He is shocked to see his own body there. He begins to identify himself with the dead man. He goes back to the hotel room where he stays for three days and vacates it without paying the room rent. He gradually feels alienated from the society. He has lost his identity because he is no more alive, but his self does not believe this. Maggie Ball comments on his dual identity as a ghost and a real person:

His presence is real enough to be seen by the children who throw rocks at him, or the dogs who chase him down the street. However, as his identity is stripped, we begin to wonder what makes a person. Do we exist outside of the
ties in our lives? Are the ties themselves meaningless? Is there anything left if you take away the trappings of life, or do we simply become like the beggars - identityless, despairing.⁵

He is very much eager to reveal himself to his wife and son. His wife appears in a white sari with her parents on either side. He thinks that his family will come out and invite him but no such thing happens. He has even lost his voice. After sitting for a long time in sorrow and exhaustion, he leaves his house side ways, as he wants to go unnoticed by others. He walks towards the river and drowns himself in it.

The stories of Raja Rao and Anita Desai are set in India. While all the protagonists of Raja Rao and Anita Desai are alienated from their families, the society, and from the self, in the stories of Bharati Mukherjee all the protagonists are the expatriates and immigrants to Canada and U.S.A. In her stories, the theme of alienation and expatriation is predominant and vigorous. In almost all the stories of Middleman and other stories and Darkness Bharati Mukherjee writes mainly about the Asian immigrants in North America and Canada. The two volumes explore in various ways the themes of expatriation, alienation, and immigration. In the introduction to the stories of Darkness she says,

I had thought of myself in spite of a white husband and two assimilated sons, an expatriate. In my fiction and in my Canadian experience, 'immigrants were lost souls, put upon and pathetic. Expatriates, on the other hand, knew all too well who and what they were, and what foul fate had befallen them. ⁶

(D, 4)
In Canada, she has spent hard years between 1966 to 1980. She has found that the country is hostile towards the Asians. She says,

Canada is hostile to its citizens who had been born in hot, most continents like Asia; that the country proudly boasts of its opposition to the whole concept of cultural assimilation. In the immigration community, I saw a family of shared grievances. (D, 2)

She also experienced the racial discrimination, as she narrates her agonizing experiences in Canada because of her being in a paradoxical position of both ‘too visible and too invisible.’ Her colour made her visible and as a writer, she was invisible. She writes in her essay, “Immigrant Writings: Give Us Your Maximalist”.

I was a psychological expatriate, though a naturalized Canadian for fifteen years simply because Canada is a country officially hostile to the concept of assimilation. (It proclaims the virtue of its multicultural policy). Perceiving myself to be in a comfortable but unwelcoming environment, I struggled to maintain various emblems of my difference. 5

Mukherjee always considers expatriation as a self-defeating attitude in a writer and the expatriate writer makes a complaint, tries to express the pain of exile, and always seeks refuge in solitude. The expatriates never feel comfortable both in the native and alien lands. They always experience some change on the other in the process of assimilation and it does not mean that they are denied their past but they let themselves lose their past in the process of assimilation and the rigid hold of the past gradually fade away. In other words, it is
recognition of ‘fluidity’. Mukherjee, in her “Introduction” to Darkness, refers to her identity, “as a fragile identity to be preserved against obliteration” (D, 3)

“The World According to Hsu”, “Isolated Incidents”, and “Hindu.” Depict the theme of expatriation. In the story, “The World According to Hsu” the protagonist Ratna and her husband Graeme Clayton are on a holiday at an island off the coast of Africa. Graeme wants to see the Southern Cross, but his main intention in taking Ratna to the island is to persuade her to move from the French dominant Montreal to the English dominant Toronto. The University of Toronto offers him a job in the Department of Personality Development. Ratna prefers Montreal because there she is merely ‘English’ as she is the offspring of an international marriage, her mother a Czech and her father a Bengali. She marries a liberal white Canadian. In Montreal she is just English speaking Canadian and not even an Indian. Just before going out to see the Southern Cross, Graeme informs Ratna that he has accepted the job in Toronto. Her fear of insecurity is contrasted with his cool indifference, who resolves the problem in the end by assuring her that they would quit Toronto in the event of a racially humiliating situation. While Graeme goes all alone to see the Southern Cross, she reads the label on the wine bottle ‘Cote de Cassandra.’ The name may be symbolic of the Cassandra vision of doom. Though her husband ignores her, she acquires the knowledge of her expatriate existence when she watches “the gathering of Canadian Indians and Europeans babbling in English and remembered dialects. No matter where she lived, she would never feel so at home again.”(D, 56) This symbolizes the sentiments of the Westernized Mukherjee as well. She is most at home in a cosmopolitan, English speaking milieu because assimilation becomes easier for her in American environment than the in hostile Canada.
In the story, "Isolated Incidents" Mukerjee depicts Canadians attitude towards an expatriate. The protagonist Vane's job is to register complaints from immigrants on problems concerning Human Rights. She registers two cases of racial discrimination in Toronto one is, the misbehaviour of students towards Miss Supariwalla and the missing case of John Mohan Persad's sister. Vane knows very well the futility of registering such cases, because,

Torontonians were proud of their subway, their politeness, proud of their moral spotlessness. This after all was not New York. Attack on John Mohan Persad and dozens like him would always be considered isolated incidents and not racial. (D, 82-83)

The third story, "Hindus" though set in America Mukherjee juxtaposes an expatriate with an immigrant and brings out the contrast quite vividly. The protagonist of the story Leela Lahiri represents Mukherjee's concept of an immigrant's identity. She proudly calls her self an American Citizen and at the same time she feels proud of her Bengali Brahmin ancestral identity of the past. Another protagonist H.R.H Maharajah of Gotlah is an expatriate with undue grievance against India, as the Indian Government has ceased his whole property. When both meet after two years of gap, the Maharaja tells Leela that he is leading his life by selling his memoirs, but Leela celebrates her new identity as an immigrant by accepting her dual existence.

"Angela" is another story, which tells us about an immigrant from Bangladesh who can only dream of love, domesticity, babies and all the comforts that a doctor's wife can possibly
enjoy in the new world. Angela is a regular visitor to the hospital to serve Delia who has been recovering from a surgery. On her way to the room, she meets Dr Vinny Menezines, who is a middle aged and prospective, successful and respectable Indian immigrant who wants to marry her. Angela decides to join the personal department to serve the orphans. Unfortunately, she finds the doctor with her friend in her bed. She feels desperate and her hope to marry the doctor is shattered.

Another story “A Father” also deals with the theme of expatriation and immigration. Mr. Bhowmick has come to America from Ranchi. His wife forces him to immigrate to Detroit. Though they immigrated to Detroit, they are not comfortable or assimilated. When Mr. Bhowmick learns that, his daughter is pregnant, he remembers the warning of Kalika matha. He is too much obsessed with Indian tradition, religion, and superstition. Though he is alienated from the country physically, he is not detached from his motherland. Nevertheless, his wife and daughter are totally assimilated in the new land. Especially his daughter is fully assimilated, she always thinks of herself as a native of Detroit. Mrs. Bhowmic is shocked when she hears of the pregnancy of her daughter, though she had given full freedom to her daughter and encouraged her to mix-up with the locals freely to drive away the feeling of expatriation. She too reacts violently and starts beating her daughter with whatever is handy. Mr. Bhowmik stops her because he thinks that his daughter is in love with an American. Probably his longing to identify with and assimilate into that country makes him think like that. However, Babli, an electrical engineer discloses the secret of her pregnancy. She says,

"Who needs a father?" She hissed ‘the father of my baby is a bottle and a syringe. Men louse up your lives. I just want a baby. Oh! Don’t worry he’s a
Expatriation from her native land and freedom at the new place encourages her to have a baby for her own without sex. Her own parents and the circumstances of her native land given her a negative impression about the marriage system. Gradually her hatred towards the marriage system has led her to take this bold step.

In “Nostalgia” the protagonist always yearns for the past of his own land and tries to identify it with the new world. Dr. Manny, Patel goes to “Little India” to enjoy the Indian food and masala tea. Patel bothers too much about old lands and old ways. In “Little India”, he meets an attractive girl, Padma and calls her a little goddess. He thinks that she is a Bengali and proposes a date, anticipating her rejection. But she suggests that they meet outside the sari palace. Her readiness bewilders him. The affair, which starts as a fascinating encounter, ends up as a disaster. The waiter, who happened to be the uncle of Padma, threatens Patel by saying that she is a minor and demands 700 dollars. Manny Patel is forced to pay the amount. The disaster makes him feel nostalgic. His fascination for the old world vanishes creates a feeling of alienation. He finally decides to take his wife on a second honeymoon and wants to get assimilated into the new world.

Another story “Saints” in this volume is a continuation to the story “Nostalgia”. Camellia, the wife of Dr. Manny Patel is estranged from him and settles down with her son in New York. She takes a job in the Administrative Office of a college. Though they are separated from Manny Patel, Dr. Patel is affectionate towards his son, sends cheques and
gifts to his son, and wants to inculcate moral values in him. Shawan, his son becomes a spoilt child because of his hatred towards his mother who has taken a second lover, Wayne deserting his father. Manny Patel wants to make him nostalgic of India. Therefore, he sends him a set of books on art and religion along with a note. “May this book bring you as much happiness as it did to me when I was your age. And a p.s. ‘The said died of throat cancer and was briefly treated by your great uncle, the cancer specialist in Calcutta.” (D, 153) Dr.Patel is very proud of his ancestors and he wants to make his son aware of the greatness of his family. The book attracts Shawan who is already at crossroads. He is so obsessed with the term ‘India’ that to play tricks at night he searches for the Indian names in the phone book and selects ‘The Batliwallas’ In their house, he peeps into the back bedroom in which a ‘dwarf kid’ is learning by heart his ‘alien syllabus’ to get good grades. Unable to hear the hard words he leaves the place, ‘to reach out his fellow saint.’

Another story “Visitors” is about Vinita, an immigrant in Manhattan from Calcutta. Her husband, Kumar and his friends are too much worried about dollars and want to become true Americans. Their nostalgic bond with India gives them security. So men go to work and women stay at home. Like that, Vinita who simply follows her husband to America from Calcutta tries to know of America through ‘soap operas’ and television. Alienation from India develops into a kind of freedom in her heart, which leads to a kind of passion towards the visitor student from India, who is young and attractive. He too is assimilated in America and he begins to call her his goddess misunderstanding her hospitality as lust. She realizes that he is ‘the real looter of American culture’. He is just like her husband. Just like an Indian woman, she cooks food to the guests whom her husband brings home for dinner. She serves
them 'pagodas' and fried cashew. Her husband treats her like the queen of his heart but has control over her. In reality, he never loves her and she is never involved in his life. In his views, as Anthony Boxill rightly says,

She is his goddess, but he controls her completely especially when she exerts erotic power over him. In India Vinita might have had to fulfill, simultaneously, the role of goddess and whore to her husband, she might never have experienced passion in her marriage because such emotions were irrelevant to his status as wife, but she would not have been tantalized as she was in America, by the possibility of passion and self-expression.7

At the end, she is left confused about her status in America.

In 1988, Mukherjee was awarded ‘The National Critics Circle Award' for fiction for her The Middleman and other stories. She is the middleman linking both the worlds. She narrates her stories from many points of view with a shrewd eye for the concept of self within a large society. The characters in this volume are adventurers, explorers rather than refugees and outcasts, and they try hard to become part of a new, changing America. Expatriation, alienation, and assimilation are the predominant themes of her second volume of stories, The Middleman and other stories. In this volume, she says about the universal truth. C.SenGuptha rightly comments,

Foreign culture is not an impediment in a person’s coming to terms with oneself. At best, it works as a catalyst. She also has the courage of conviction to point out that an alienated psyche will find itself estranged any where in the world, America, Uganda, Trinidad or for that matter even in India, because alienation here is a part of the protagonist’s mental makeup.8

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Mukherjee in this volume becomes the explorer of the new world. She believes that the new world forces one to know what one really wants. Uma Parameswari rightly says of Mukherjee’s exploration of America:

> Usually expatriate writers do not write too much about their adopted country, as it is very difficult to get behind the actuality of the mind of a new country. It takes a particular kind of eye for detail to do this and to make it look authentic... Mukherjee has done a believably commendable job in this remarkable collection of short stories.9

In the story “The Middleman” in a straightforward way she spins the tale of a middleman, Alfie Judah, who provides people anything they need, without any fuss and sentimentally. He is the middleman narrator, who having listened to bad advice, ‘with bad associates is under ‘extradition’ but hopes to make a come back’. He makes his living out of the rough-and-tumble world of smuggler. “Me? I make a living from the things that fall. The big fat belly of Clovis I Ransom bobs above me like whale.”(TM, 3)

The story is set in Central America where the middleman, Alfie Judah has been involved in a guerrilla war. Mukherjee is well acquainted with the language of the common people in Central America. Therefore, quite easily she depicts violence, sex, and gangster activities. The middleman, a Jew, also an expatriate, tries to be assimilated in America.

In the story “A Wife’s Story” Mukherjee introduces an Indian protagonist who has left her husband to America to take her Ph.D. Mrs. Panna Bhatt has adapted herself so well to the social and cultural milieu of America that she feels almost free and the thought of alienation from her country never bothers her. Moreover, her expatriation was the outcome of her own
choice. It was not thrust on them, though not always pleasurable, rising to their desired expectations in her host country. She writes,

It is the tyranny of the American dream that scares me. First, you don’t exist. Then you’re invisible. Then you are funny. Then you are disgusting. Insult, my American friends will tell me, is a kind of acceptance. No instant dignity... I long, at times for clear-cut answers. Offer me instant dignity today, and I’ll take it... I long for ugly range. (TM, 26)

Mukherjee like her protagonist Panna is trained to behave well with dignity though she simmers inwardly because she thinks that her situation back at home would have been different from her position in America. It doesn’t mean that she is safe. She has not been under the control of herself and she has faced so many riots, uprootings, and separation.

Panna Patel becomes so free and assimilated that we find a kind of rebellion against the traditional bondage of Hindu wife, who must always dress full to the tastes of her husband. “She has broadened her horizons. She can even think of winking back at the cops when they ‘smile at her with benevolence’ (TM, 28). In contrast she wants to trouble them, wants to break into dance. But her Indian culture asserts it ‘silly’. In her own words, “My parents, with the help of a marriage broker, who was my mother’s cousin, picked out a groom. All I had to do was get to know his taste in food.”(TM, 30-31) She seeks a safety harbour in America and there is no going back to India. She says, “I’ve made it. I’m making something of my life. I have left home, my husband, to get a Ph.D in specialized. I have a multiple entry visa and a small scholarship for two years. After that, we’ll see”(TM, 29)
Alienation from her country has given her an opportunity to find a new self that has been set free from the bondages of Indian traditions and meaningless suppression of the marriage system.

"Fathering", is about an American Vietnamese, who is divided between his present American life and his past life in Vietnam. After the war, Jason wants to lead a peaceful life with his lover, Sharon, in his present profession as a teacher. But, the memories of war come to him through his daughter, Eng, he had with a bargirl. Sharon feels alienated in the presence of Eng because she is crazy and possessive about Jason. Eng on the other hand is distrustful of Sharon. Jason becomes caught between Sharon and Eng. Both demand Jason to choose. Although Jason chooses to be with his daughter, he feels alienated from his daughter by referring to her as his 'Saigon kid'. Sharon rightly assesses the alienated psyche of Jason as she says; "You know what’s wrong with you, Jese? You cannot admit you are being manipulated. You can’t cut through the ‘frightened-foreign-kid’ shit."(TM, 119) Though she provides everything to Eng in her room as a mother, she does not feel free in the presence of Eng. When Jason chooses Eng in preference to her, she leaves the house leaving Jason to Eng. Eng too alienates herself when she refers to the doctor, Sharon, and even Jason as "Yankees". She not only refers to them as another culture, but also prefers to be left alone when she yells at Jason:

Get the hell out, you bastard!" Eng yells "Vamos! Bang bang!. She is pointing her arm like a semiautomatic, taking out Sharon, then the doctor. My Rambo. "Old way is good way. Money cure is good cure. When they shoot my grandma, you think pills do her any good? You Yankees, please go home," She looks straight at me." "Scream Yankee bastard. (TM, 124)
“Fighting for Rebound” is another story in which Mukherjee presents an expatriate protagonist, Blanquita from Manila. She has taken a crash course ‘in making nice to Americans’. She speaks six languages. She is so exciting woman, perfectly sane for her roundish fingernails but Griff, the counterpart American cannot bring himself to fall in love with her. He is so conscious and incapable of such love with her because he feels a kind of discomfort with her foreignness. As Griff says about being exotic, “Exotic means you know how to use your foreignness, or you make yourself a little foreign in order to appear exotic.”(T.M.p.83) Banquetta feels herself comfortable in American ways and does not find Gruff inscrutable or foreign. She is obsessed with American ways that way as she says, “You are all emotional cripples. All you Americans, you just worry about your own mealy little relationships. You don’t care how much you hurt the world.”(TM, 85)

When Griff fails to respond to her passion, she alienates herself from him and turns to her boss. Griff on the other hand being alienated by Blanquita decides to select Maua as his second choice. But unfortunately she returns to Griff again being disappointed by the love of her boss, when Griff and his second choice Maua are in bed. Even though his sense of alienation does not allow him, first to reply to the repeated calls of Blanqueta, he finally runs forward to save her. Like many of the protagonists, Blanquita decides, there is more to be sought elsewhere and that she will leave him again. As Thomas J. Carabas rightly says, “Shame, guilt, tradition are minor obstacles for Blanquita and the other Asian immigrants who have played for high stakes all their lives. They take risks they would not have taken in their old comfortable world.”10
In the story “The Tenant”, Maya Sanyal, a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature, who teaches World Literature at the University of Northern Iowa, is another protagonist who has been alienated from her country. She believes that “A person has to leave home try out his wings”(T.M.p.98). She has traveled from Calcutta to North California, from there to New Jersey. To her ‘every one has something to give’. Though alienated Maya remembers her childhood days, the circuses she had seen with her father, the owner of a big steel company. Maya’s own predicament is to establish herself well in the new land. She has left behind the stability of traditional culture to rehabilitate herself in the new world with a new culture. When Dr. Chatterjee pays a visit to Maya, she experiences a kind of discomfort in his presence, because she does not want to remember India or Indian men. She hates Indian men because, “all Indian men are wife beaters. That is why I married an American.” (TM, 99) However, she is unable to have good relations with her American husband as well. So she divorces him. Later she marries John an American graduate student mistaking a few breathless days of sex for love. They spend two years together in which John inflicts all the pain on her ‘by having her’. Therefore, when Dr. Chatterjee calls her as Mrs. Sanyal she bluntly advises him to call her ‘Maya’.

At Chatterjee’s house, his nephew, Poltoo’s presence creates an unpleasant scene in the party. He falls in love with an African Muslim. Mrs. Chatterjee looks at Maya as though she was responsible for the whole Sunday’s unpleasantness. Mr. Chatterjee, though lives in alien country to work and earn money she does not want to give back any. He wants to maintain his Indianness in the alien country. His expatriate psyche wants to take the advantage of the
freedom of its culture and tries to exploit Maya's loneliness. He says, "Truly speaking, it is my favorite. You are sometimes lovely no. But you are lucky. Divorced women can date; they can go to bars and discos. They can see men, many men. But inside marriage there is so much loneliness." (TM, 108)

Maya hates this part of men and so she has abandoned her first husband and all the men whom she has come across in her way. She tells herself that all men are alike and alienates herself completely from men. But in the University library she finds an advertisement for a bride and she readily responds to it. She meets Mr. Ashok Mehta at the united counter. When she finds him 'handsome, serene, assured, a Hindu God, she feels ugly and unworthy. She is struck in dead space. After she reaches home, she finds a note by her landlord, Ted Suminski asking her to vacate the flat because he is going to be married soon. She takes up some other room. Her new house owner is a freak. She tries to establish a relationship with Fred. But when she gets a call from Ashok she gets out of Fred's heart and runs for Ashok. But soon she abandons him also since alienation is in her psyche, she is incapable of establishing a permanent relationship with any body.

"Jasmine", "Danny's Girls", "Buried Lives" deal with the theme of alienation and expatriation but rather briefly. Jasmine, a young Trinidadian woman has been smuggled illegally into the U.S. Her father provides her with the required money to work in an Indian family in their motel in U.S. Later she works sometimes as a mother's helper in an American family. Being alienated from her homeland, she tries to establish herself well in America with Bill Muffett's family. When Mr. Daboo presents her a brooch and wishes her good luck
for the year, she starts weeping. She misses her daddy, her sisters, and everyone at home, to establish herself in the U.S. with the Muffetts, she decides to settle down with the Muffetts as his second wife. Just like Maya, she too wants to establish good relationships with the family in which she is serving, to get assimilated into the alien nation. But unfortunately, she does not understand that she is being exploited by the alien nation. Alienation from her homeland never gives her an opportunity to her to understand this exploitation, because she has no other choice except to accept whatever comes her way.

"Danny’s Girls" and "Buried Lives" also adumbrate the same theme in a lighter vein. The young boy of seventeen in "Danny Girls" and a University teacher, Mr. Venkatesan in "Buried Lives" are such protagonists who have been alienated from their homeland and are helped by the American culture to assimilate into it. In "Danny Girls", an adolescent boy of Indian origin achieves self acknowledge through a sexual relationship with Rosie, a young beautiful girl from Katmandu. The adolescent boy remembers again and again how he is thrown into this new world. He works as a hizra boy to Danny Sahib. When he sees Rosie, he begins to work for her. He develops a meaningful relationship with her, which in turn brings self-realization in him. This crunch comes to the boy when Danny calls him a hizra. A sense of liberation awakens in him. His dream of liberating himself and his love for Rosie remain unfulfilled because they are linked to his quest for identity, with his struggle to find his true self in a foreign culture, through his admission into Colombia Engineering School.

Thus, the themes of alienation, expatriation, and assimilation run through almost all the stories of Bharati Mukherjee. The stories of Salman Rushdie in, East, West also depict the
same. But his depiction of these themes is somewhat different. As Robert Coover observes, “There are nine stories in this volume, three each in each section, with ‘thesis (East), ‘antithesis’, (West), and final synthesis, (East, West), where in the twin do meet. 11 Just as tolerance, liberty and freedom are associated with the West so too are illiberalism, misunderstanding impute to Islam. Rushdie’s publication of Satanic Verses has led to a great agitation among the Muslim countries. On Feb.14th 1989, Khomeini issued a Fatwa that condemned Rushdie to death and called for his execution. Prior to the issue of Fatwa, he used to make living as a mere writer, as Blythe Will says,

Rushdie wrote bawdy, outsize, polyglot novels, comic, contentious investigations of exile, displacement and home of what happens when a person is translated from one culture to another. Formerly undulated to the fiction of Sterne, Swift, Kafka, Grass, Gar is a Marquez and de Assis, they were brassy bad, raucous books, hymns to mineralization that stated their claim to the world’s attention by literary-anyway shouting.12

Rushdie whether one likes it or not, commands spotlight by having become the living embodiment of his works and themes. He has been cast into exile not just from his first life as a Muslim born in Bombay but also from his adopted life as an Indo- Anglican writer educated at Cambridge, living in London. It is at this juncture, his first collection of short stories, East, West, was published. It was a call as to how to make a home for oneself in a state of exile. Though the theme is familiar, his treatment of it is fresh and appealing. As has been said, “The stories in this volume are warm, quiet, tender and endearing composed by a refugee leafing through ancient photographs of a homeland the through time and distance has
come to seem as impossible as a miracle. But then, that must be how Rushdie feels about the life he enjoyed before Feb 14th 1989." 13

The first part ‘East’ comprises of three stories set in India and Pakistan. The first story “Good Advice is Rarer than Rubies” is about Miss Rehna, a would-be immigrant to Hertford, London, but refuses to go to London in favour of a life in the East. She goes to the Consulate to get a visa to England. Her husband is more than twenty years older than her and he looks like a stranger to her. Therefore she does not want to leave India to Hertford, London. Immigration is a dream to the desirable, but not to people like Rehna who is so independent and self-reliable. According to her the East is the best and more desirable than the West. Her alienation from her husband is contrary to her love for her own country.

In the story,” Free Radio” Rushdie deals with the theme of alienation. The protagonist, Ramani, a rickshaw puller alienates himself from the village he has been living from his childhood for two reasons. One is he has been cheated by the government. The government announces to give a free radio to all the people who undergo the family planning operation. But unfortunately by the time Ramani undergoes the operation the scheme is withdrawn by the government. Therefore, he develops a kind of dislike towards his village because he feels guilty, and thinks that everyone in the village would ask him about the radio. Another thing is that his friends always told him that he looks like Amitabh Buchan and so advised him to go to Bombay to try his luck in cinemas. So he decides to leave the village for Bombay. Unfortunately, he never feels at home in Bombay. He writes a letter to the village
schoolteacher boasting up of his success as a cine actor only to overcome his sense of alienation in the new place. As the village schoolteacher comments,

They were wonderful letters, brimming with confidence, but whenever I read them, and sometimes I read them still, I remember the expression which came over his face in the days just before he learned the truth about his radio, and the huge mad energy which he had poured into the act of conjuring reality, buy an act of magnificent faith, out of the hot thin air between his cupped hand and his ear. (EW, 32)

Thus the village schoolteacher alone could sense the true feelings of Ramani and his longing for the village.

In the second set of stories, “West” Rushdie comes out as one who is discontented with his adopted land. The three stories are satirical in tone, particularly “At the Auction of the Ruby Slippers.” Rushdie spells out his rigorous hatred against Khomeini who declared fatwa in a symbolic way. It reminds us of his great book Satanic Verses which is burnt in many Islamic countries. The story throws light on the multitudes of the world who gathered at the auction of the Ruby Slippers. Rubin Merle rightly says,

The story offers the dispiriting spectacle of a world where the only firmly held values seem to be those of the marketplace on the one hand and religious fundamentalism on the other, as all bidders compete for a piece of Hollywood memorabilia. ‘The fundamentalists openly stated that they are interested in buying the magic footwear only in order to burn it and this is not, in the view of the liberal Auctioneers, a reprehensible programmer. What price tolerance if the intolerant are not tolerated also?’ the story asks.
The narrative of the story is set in the present tense, so that it clearly speaks of the mentalities of the contemporary society, and the writer's own predicament. "Exiles, displaced persons of all sorts, even homeless tramps have turned up for a glimpse of the impossible," (EW, 90) with the hope that they may be transported to their homeland. There is the tone of nostalgia for the lost world of the forties and the reverence on ruby slippers because the alienated, "believe they can make us invulnerable to witches (and there are so many sorcerers pursuing us nowadays); because of their powers of reverse metamorphosis, their affirmation of a lost state of normalcy in which we have almost ceased to believe and to which the slippers promise us we can return." (EW, 92)

Rushdie's longing to be in his homeland with his family is clearly depicted in these words. He is optimistic that someday or the other his condition will be improved. To men like him, "Home' has become such a scattered, damaged, various concept in our present travails. There is so much to yearn for. There are so few rainbows any more. How hard can we expect even a pair of magic shoes to work? They promised to take us home, but are metaphors of homeliness comprehensible to them, are abstractions permissible? Or will they permit us to redefine the blessed world." (EW, 93) All the people who want to buy the ruby slippers aspire to bring back their lost world. They longed that with the help of the slippers they would go back to their homelands. So also, Rushdie who has been exiled from his homeland wants to satisfy his sense of alienation by creating this surrealistic quality about the Ruby slippers.
The final section of the collection titled, 'East, West' deals with the Indian residents neither of England who belong fully neither to India nor of England. They bring together the east, west, and focus on the crossing between them. In “Chekov and Zulu” Rushdie introduces boyhood friends who share the companionship and interests in science and scientific fiction. They are too much interested in Star Trek. They are given the nicknames after the serial as Chekov and Zulu and the names become the central metaphor as to the theme of the story. In this story, Rushdie presents his own interest in scientific fiction. Chekov and Zulu are two brothers though they belong to two different tastes with different mentalities. Chekov is a bookworm and Zulu is interested in athletics. They continue to be friends in England as diplomats exploring new worlds and new civilizations. Both the friends have good jobs, one as acting Deputy High Commissioner and the other as an intelligence officer. The massacre after the death of Smt. Indira Gandhi gets in between them. Zulu, who is very honest and sincere in his profession, is alienated from both his profession and community. As a true officer, he hands over the information about the Sikh terrorists to Chekov.

In India, he sets up a private security service. Chekov too returns to India and joins in Indian Government Service. Unfortunately, he is appointed as special security officer to Rajiv Gandhi and is killed in the bomb explosion. The terrorism in this instance is homemade. It is not of the West or from London. The irony is that Zulu, who is alienated from his community and alienated from his profession, survives and prospers in life, whereas Chekhov, who has joined Indian Security Service, is killed in the bomb explosion. As far as
alienation is concerned Zulu and Chekov both are alienated, one is alienated from the profession and community and the other is alienated from the world itself.

The final story in "East West" is "The Courter", in which Rushdie presents a woman, who is 60 years of age. She is transported to London as ayah to look after the children of an Indian based Muslim family in London. The narrator of the story is one among those children. She is called certainly Mary because she never says simple yes or no, but always uses “certainly” after yea or no. The liberty and freedom of alienation instigates her to make friendship with a widower, who is known to the family as a mix-up, but his real name is Mecir, from Eastern Europe. The chess game becomes their language of love. The narrator says, “. But in the game of chess they had found a form of flirtation, an endless renewal that precluded the –possibility of boredom, a courtly wonderland of the ageing heart.”(EW, 195)

Mary, an Indian is not at home in the West. This sense of alienness is suggested in her use of language. She is unable to pronounce ‘p’ in English, but not in her vernacular. In due course of time, she develops a heart problem. The doctor finds nothing wrong with her general health. One day in summer, Mary announces that she would like to go back to India. The reason for the heart problem, she diagnoses as the homesickness and requests the narrator's father to send her back to India “... God knows for what all we come over to this country.’ But I can no longer stay. No, Certainly not, her determination was absolute.
(EW, 209)

The narrator says
England was breaking her heart, breaking it by not being India. London was killing her, but not being Bombay. And Mixed-up? I wondered. Was the courtier killing her, too, because he was no stronger himself? Or was it that her heart, roped by two different loves, was being pulled east and west, whinnying and rearing...”  

(EW, 209)

Mary does not feel at home in London that she is just like Rehna in “Good Advice is Rarer than Rubies” who feels, happy and content only in her homeland. The narrator after he becomes a Youngman confesses that he refuses to. “... have ropes around my neck, I have them to this day, pulling me this way and that, East and West, the nooses tightening, commanding choose, choose.”(EW, 211) In this sentence Rushdie makes it clear that “ he resides principally in a state of doubt. Rootlessness, it seems, is his--- and every intellectuals---Native country. But that has its compensations. The writer is entitled to the joy of the nomad, migrating from one land to another, blithely crossing artificial borderlines, at home everywhere and nowhere.”

It is similar to the position of Rushdie with the narrator of the story, who is alienated from his homeland and is not satisfied with the host country. In an interview with M.L.Pandit when a question is asked about being away from his homeland, he says,

“My family was here till I was seventeen, and so India represents a very large piece of me. I am not so much nostalgic as I have a feeling of remaining connected and not wanting that connection to be broken. I am not very nostalgic about India, but I keep coming back, and there are things in India which....”
He does not want to stay in the West and is not allowed to enter the East. His longing for the homeland is unfulfilled and everlasting. In his own words, “When I started thinking of calling the stories East, West, the important part of the title was the comma. Because it seems to me that I am that comma, or at least that I live in the comma.”

To conclude, alienation, assimilation, expatriation and immigration are the main themes of the stories of Raja Rao, Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee and Salmon Rushdie. The protagonists in Raja Rao’s stories are alienated from the families and from the society. All the stories are set up in India. The sense of alienation that runs through these stories flows as an undercurrent within India and Indian society. Just as the Raja Rao’s stories, the stories of Anita Desai also present the theme of alienation. The protagonists in her stories are alienated from the family, from the society, and alienated within themselves. There is a similarity in the presentation of the theme between Raja Rao and Anita Desai. The stories of Bharati Mukherjee are set outside India. Her protagonists are expatriates, and immigrants. Mukherjee herself is alienated from her homeland. Salmon Rushdie’s protagonists are also set up at India and London. The protagonists of him are tangled in between the two cultures, the East and the West. Though all the four writers deal with the theme of alienation in their stories they do it in their own way throwing light on several unexplored aspects of alienation.
Reference:


3. Uma Parameswaran “Home is where your feet are, and may your heart be there too”: Writers of Indian Diaspora: Theory and Practice, ed. Jasbir Jain, New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 2003, p.35.


17. Ibid, p.3.