

REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
YUZUNCU YIL UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE DEPARTMENT

**WOMEN EFFLORESCE IN BHARATI MUKHERJEE’S NOVELS AND
SHORT STORIES**

PhD THESIS

Faruk KALAY

VAN-2011

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CONTENTS

CONTENTS.....	I
INTRODUCTION.....	1
FIRST CHAPTER	15
1. <i>TIGER'S DAUGHTER</i>	17
2. <i>WIFE</i>	31
3. <i>DAYS AND NIGHTS IN CALCUTTA</i>	54
SECOND CHAPTER	66
1. <i>DARKNESS</i>	69
2. <i>THE MIDDLEMAN AND OTHER STORIES</i>	86
3. <i>JASMINE</i>	101
4. <i>THE HOLDER OF THE WORLD</i>	128
5.	
THIRD CHAPTER	142
1. <i>LEAVE IT TO ME</i>	145
2. <i>DESIRABLE DAUGHTERS</i>	157
3. <i>TREE BRIDE</i>	167
4. <i>MISS NEW INDIA</i>	174
CONCLUSION.....	181
WORK CITED.....	187
ABSTRACT.....	203
ÖZET.....	204

INTRODUCTION

Bharati Mukherjee “The best-known and most-anthologized contemporary North American fiction writer of South Asian origin” (Rege 394), is an outstanding Indian born American writer dealing with the disorientation, immigration and their impacts. Patil describes Mukherjee as “one of the most remarkable women writers to have contributed an explicit fiction to the much debated vein of post-modernist literature (116). Mukherjee using “Hindu symbols and themes into her writings” (Tong 357) to her American milieu creates a postcolonial and postmodern motif in her fiction. Tandon best describes Mukherjee “between Indian mythology and attitudes on one side, and Western textures and style on the other” (143). Having much argument in her hand, Mukherjee synthesizes both cultures and traditions. The main reason for this cultural diversity is her homeland(s). Even though Ma centralizes Mukherjee in “position in Asian (North) American literature” (41), Mukherjee does not count herself as an Indian author. “... Bharati Mukherjee, reject the ethnic label “Indian writers” (Rushdie 245). However, this situation renders some writers like Mukherjee impossible for classification in terms of the critics. “It is becoming increasingly difficult to determine who the “Indian” writer is, because some of the best Indian poets and novelists in English live and work abroad” (Dharwadker A, Dharwadker V. 104). In this sense, having two countries supplies Mukherjee “a potentially productive site from which to challenge homogeneous narratives of the nation and its people” (Sharmani 27).

Bharati Mukherjee, the second daughter of three daughters of upper class Brahmin parents, Sudhir Lal Mukherjee, a reputable chemist, and Bina Banerjee Mukherjee, was born on 27 July 1940 in Calcutta, India. Mr. Mukherjee would become the ‘Tiger’ in her first novel *Tiger’s Daughter*. In 1947, her father finds a job in Europe which enables her to see England and Switzerland where she is able to develop her language skills. After returning to India, she attends Loretto School run by Irish nuns who devalue India and traditions, which makes her alien to her own culture. In 1957 Mukherjee attending English Department graduates from the

University of Calcutta with honors. Afterwards she completes her Mastery Degree in Baroda where she moves with her family.

Then, her North America's adventure starts when Mukherjee having a dream to be a writer decides to go Iowa Writer's Workshops in America in 1961. When her parents wish her to get married to an upper class Brahmin man after her returning to India, she gets married to Canadian writer Clarke Blaise who she meets fortnight before in a lunchtime break in 1963. She continues on her education and gets her PhD in English and Comparative Literature in the University of Iowa in 1969. She moves with her husband to Canada where she works as an assistant of professor at McGill University in Montreal. The fourteen years she spends in Canada become her toughest times in her life, which is named by herself as 'resident alien' coined in her novel *Wife*.

It is a definitely fact that Mukherjee is connected with "the American and Canadian canons respectively" (Majumdar 40). However, Canadian immigrant policy is 'mosaic', with each contributing to the fabric of the country. This became one of the reasons for extreme racialism embedded in the society. The Government at times sponsored it" (Tandon 19). Moreover, Podalsky dealing with the same issue agrees with Tandon that the policy turns into racism. The critic states as ; "The new Canadian consciousness of race has brought along with it a growing attention to racism" (129). As Tandon and Podalsky refer, the 'mosaic' policy does not integrate the natives and immigrants. Hence, the society not having a consolidative component sees each individual as an enemy. As the critics mention about the policy;

According to these critiques, the idea of a mosaic, where the individual fragments are arranged into a cohesive and fixed whole, ignores postmodern understandings of fluidity, multiplicity and hybridity in relation to cultural identity. (Johnston and Mangat 200)

Canadian policy toward immigrants turns into abrasiveness and hostility, which irritates Mukherjee very much. In addition to this, as a result of nationalism and hostility, Mukherjee's fiction and non-fiction cannot find the value they deserve. So, "Canada's hostility toward Indians and the non-recognition of her writings in

Canada are the two themes which occur quite frequently in her writings” (Chaturvedi 147). However, as Clarke states in his article, Mukherjee is regarded as ingrate; “The white Canadian reaction? What an ungrateful immigrant!” (102). In this sense, even though Gandhi classifies Mukherjee as ‘apotheosis’ writer in anti-colonial or nationalist writing (153), Canadians and Canadian immigrant policy make her suffer from disorientation, immigration and aloofness.

The Tiger’s Daughter, Mukherjee’s first, concerns with Tara Banerjee’s visit of her homeland and family after she stays in America with her American husband during seven years. Encountering many disappointing experiences in her homeland, Tara realizes that all family, relatives and friends are altered. “Mukherjee’s novel brings the educated, emancipated Indian woman back from the West as the only remaining symbol of cultural progress in a moribund, tradition-bound society and, therefore, as the possible redeemer of East” (Sultana 96). As the critic summarizes the novel, stuck in the middle of two cultures, the characters have the traumatic disorientation, dislocation and alienation. Their “insatiable desire for the fulfillment of the American dream” (Field 169) makes them suffer in both America and India.

Tara’s experiences such as alienation and sexual harassment cause the traumas. Fister juxtaposes the problems as; “the condition of exile, generational differences, and the Diasporic Indian’s relationship to home” (151). Her husband’s absence makes the situation worse. Besides Tara has no feeling of confidence in America, she feels that she is no longer the member of her family and homeland. As Gaijan states that immigration or expatriation is very harsh for individuals. “Transplantation of human beings from one cultural world to another is always painful but it is more painful for the female immigrants” (Gaijan 2005 151). Mukherjee makes the reader feel the traumatic dislocation and disorientation in this novel. Briefly, Mukherjee depicts what she feels in Canada.

The second novel written by Mukherjee is *Wife* dealing with the protagonist Dimple DasGupta whose inclination is to migrate to a better country, that is, America or Canada, to have a prosperous life. However, her husband’s indifference what she

feels and her isolation from the society turns her mad, which results in the murder of her husband. Mukherjee “bitter about her experiences in Canada” (Hedge 134) a bit exaggerates her own experiences in the novel. The results of immigration and expatriation are delicately depicted as the critic implying Mukherjee asserts some Indian woman authors very well emulates Indian woman’s psychology in the country migrated;

These writers being women dive deep into the inner mind of the repressed women by virtue of their feminine sensibility and psychological insight and bring to light their issues, which are the outcome of Indian women’s psychological and emotional imbalances. (Mishra 2)

Furthermore, the theme of disorientation, dislocation and isolation from the society are again argued in Mukherjee’s novel. As the critic says; “Just as expatriation was a metaphor for existential alienation in the first two novels...” (Nalini 194). Immigration or living abroad is an afflictive term for both Mukherjee and her protagonists. “They have to suffer a lot to reach their destination, particularly in America. Among all the immigrants woman immigrants suffer too much. Unimaginably they suffer” (Gaijan 2005 155). Only in her later novels and short stories, North America becomes “the freedom available to the deracinated to become the person one chooses to be rather than to remain the person one is born” (Cronin 218).

Days and Nights in Calcutta co-authored with her husband Clarke Blaise can be regarded as autobiographical and travel book. Consisting of two parts, each of which is written by Blaise and Mukherjee divergently, the book naturally has two points of view. Only one year Mukherjee and Blaise spent in India is depicted in *Days and Nights in Calcutta*. As Alam enunciates; “Not surprisingly, husband and wife have shaped each other’s careers in quite tangible ways” (7). Not involving what the other writes, the couple sees India from both eastern and western point of view. However, like her previous heroines Tara and Dimple, her family and country is not the same as they used to. Feeling like a ‘resident alien’ in Canada, Mukherjee does not have the emotion of belonging to India any more.

Here, in the first chapter, these three fictions will be discussed owing to the resemblances of their protagonists and author herself. Mukherjee and her heroines suffer from the immigration or expatriation and its results. Not only do the protagonists incur the psychological traumas but also the corollary of expatriation becomes worse than expected. While Tara is exposed to sexual harassment, Dimple kills her husband. Mukherjee finds out that her family and friends will not be similar. Myles indicating the postcolonial writers like Mukherjee adjudges that the females in fiction undergoing the traumatic formation maintain stronger personality and healthy psychology.

Their female protagonists display a psychic transformation traversing and evolving gradually but firmly through the respective stages of imitation of tradition, protest and advocacy of rights, and eventually introspection leading to self-discovery which metamorphosizes them into strong, independent, expeditious women willing to encounter the onslaughts of life not merely as a minority group but with the cognizance of being a powerful sustaining force for society as a whole. (Art. 309)

After fourteen years spent in Canada, Mukherjee decides to move again to America. In 1980 she becomes a permanent resident of the United States. Contrary to the immigrant policy of Canada, 'mosaic', American 'melting pot' contains all nationalities for the purpose of consciousness of American citizenship. While her works are not considered as esteemed in Canada on account of her Indian identity, the novels and short stories published in America are appreciated by the critics and readers. The idea of "the notion of America, a land of opportunity and freedom for disparate immigrants" (Amoko 35) is assimilated by Mukherjee. In a conversation, she tells Bill Moyers "I want to conquer, I mean, I want to love and possess this country" (Auster 18).

On the other hand, her point of view towards to her American identity is pure Americanness. Many a critic points out that idea. "Bharati Mukherjee affirms her new American identity, as an American, not an Asian American" (Khatri 246). To make more exemplification, Maini defines the writer as a person "who is willing to 'reclaim only a limited aspect' of her Indian past and insists on her recognition as an

American writer” (197). Being an American, Mukherjee endeavors to remove her Indian identity. In her short story books, Mukherjee implies that she carries the world identity card. She starts advocating feminine, especially those who come from South Asia. “...one could sense the author’s urge for a way of living which would respond to the innermost yearnings of the Indian women for self-emancipation and self-dignity” (Agrawal 239). Agreeing with Agrawal, Bow uses the similar sentences. “...she locates herself not as a participant in a spectacle of femininity with national overtones, but as its witness” (43). In this sense, the United States brings Mukherjee popularity and happiness. In fact, the main reason why she is popular in the United States is due to the fact that, in all her fiction, she avoids meddling in Americanism and its policy. Buell summarizes Mukherjee’s experience in the United States as;

Though the jobs they get in the United States may be at the bottom, they bring global realities and polycultural experience to a U.S. that is still suffering from its old postcolonial cultural inferiority complex and that, having suppressed its own legacy of actual multiculturalism by an oppressive and also parochial official monoculturalism, is in dire need of these things (559)

Unlike her previous novels, Mukherjee authors a short story book *Darkness* written in both America and Canada. Consisting of twelve short stories, *Darkness* can be counted as a transition book due to characterization and plot. The characters vary from poor Indian boys to American females. While the short stories written in Canada have the characteristics of gloom and catastrophe, the others authored in the United States possess the hope and anticipation. The feeling of inequality with indigenous people of immigrants is one of the main themes in *Darkness*. “In fact, Mukherjee’s fiction typically casts immigrant aspirations in terms of class expectations” (Krishnaswamy 98).

As aforementioned, Mukherjee sloughs the feeling of expatriation off in the short stories written in America. In fact, Mukherjee turns into freedom fighter for immigrants, especially for women. For instance, in ‘The Lady from Lucknow’, a short story in *Darkness*, Mukherjee “vividly presents the story of free sex and lust” (Kirubahar 37). Furthermore, her defense of women is easily indicated in her short

stories. "...Bharati Mukherjee argue that labor-saving devices and American individualist traditions have freed women-especially immigrant women-from lives of endless drudgery and subservience" (Wallace 581). Mukherjee functions her authorship with these short stories. Signifying the same short stories, Larriere mentions that that short story is inspired by immigrant writers. "Such clashes become inspiring forces in stories by Americans who live on other continents" (195).

The Middleman and Other Stories, awarded for National Book Critics Circle Award is a short story book consisting of eleven short stories which deal with the relationships between immigrants and residents living in the United States. Unlike *Darkness*, the short stories in *The Middleman* are more pleasant and less disconsolate owing to the fact that the characters do not have the feeling of disorientation, dislocation and alienation. As the critic indicates, Mukherjee's novels and short stories must be discussed in terms of post-colonialism and the class conflict of the Third World. He says;

Brennan argues that writers who can parlay what appears to be an "authentic native attachment to a specific Third World locale" into a career in letters in the First World are the high profile avatars of a massive wave of immigration that has reshaped and destabilized the national identities of Western countries. The production and reception of contemporary "world" or "postcolonial" literature, therefore, must be read through the lens of "economic and cultural inequalities, wholesale labor recruitments and legal arrangements set up on the basis of the former Empires." (Kaplan 123)

No matter what is written on the collection, the reader can easily perceive Mukherjee's fluctuation in the fiction. "...many writers are seen to have arranged them in such a way that the individual stories illuminate each other thereby making up in some sense a whole" (Hedge 2005 76). The correlation between each other is also very distinctive for Mukherjee due to the harmony of multiplicity in one volume unlike her previous novels and short stories concerning about the only theme depending upon identity crises. The reader can effortlessly detect the prelude for Mukherjee's reconciliation with her country and traditions in *The Middleman and Other Stories*. "There can be no question at all that the traditional role models have to be laid aside; it is only reconciliation of the good of tradition and the wonder of the new world that must be worked out" (Rose 296).

The next novel authored by Mukherjee *Jasmine* is her most anthologized and criticized novel. The protagonist Jasmine migrates to America to fulfill her husband's desire after she loses him. It is laudability – some critics think that there is an exaggeration in the novel – that Jasmine survives in many obstacles she encountered. However, as distinct from the theme of immigrant protagonists' disorientation and alienation in her earlier novels and short stories, Jasmine has the struggle for the pursuit of happiness. On the other hand; coming from Asia, Jasmine and her creator Mukherjee endeavor to reconstruct themselves in their new land. As Tapping depicts the writers' conditions coming from the Third World in the article; "...economically and politically displaced immigrants of the twentieth century, transposed into alien contexts from where they redefine and newly construct alternative identities and communities" (36). Hence, the innovation created by the writers coming from South Asia is argued by the critics. The critics interrogate "How is the increasing presence of postcolonial diasporics-such as the South Asians – in the United States changing the definition of Asian America/n, and hence altering ethnic American literature?" (Shankar, Srikanth 370). However, as aforementioned, there are critics thinking that Jasmine has no literary claims like Tushnet. In the article, the critic purports; "It didn't matter to anyone that the presumed experts were in anthropology and psychology, respectively, and showed little comprehension of Jasmine as a work of art" (5). No matter what is imparted for the novel, *Jasmine* can be regarded as a milestone in Mukherjee's fiction.

In this sense, even though *The Middleman and Other Stories* gives new perspective to Mukherjee, the protagonist Jasmine's characteristics such as determination, inclination to realization to her desires, resistance to violence and adaptation make a great contribution to Mukherjee's pen. The theme of "how the centralizing power views "identities" and how it constructs categories of belonging and origins" (Monti, Mittapalli 122). Mukherjee commences to author depicting from the problematical heroines to the protagonist surviving in the country immigrated. Her further fiction's women protagonists will be in better fettle and conditions.

The Holder of the World, a complicated historical novel combines the puritan protagonist Hannah Easton inspired from *The Scarlett Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne with an Indian king and their illegitimate child from the voice of the narrator Beigh Master seeking for Emperor's Tear, a precious diamond. The difficulty in comprehension of the novel comes from the swift passages in time and places. Mukherjee aims the association of both the West and East with this novel. Wavering in both sides, Mukherjee pens the characters "in the past or the present, as in Bharati Mukherjee's novel, many have come from stateless nations, divided lands contested by warring factions or occupied by a foreign power ..." (Tandon 1). As the critic depicts, being the true white puritan protagonist in the novel swaps her characterization with the earlier protagonist because she exposes to the same obstacles in India like those of heroines undergo in America. When summarizing the novel, Ross emphasizes Mukherjee's choice on non-Indian characters. The critics states as;

Mukherjee has declared the Asian immigration story as her preference, urging the Asian-born writer living in North America to turn away from Indian materials and write about the exultation and the turmoil of the immigrants' experience. (240)

This novel can be, I think, regarded as a self-fulfillment for those who come from other countries with the idea that all people have the same feelings, inclinations and attitudes. In this sense, her characters expand not only the Third World people but also North Americans. Nayak implies "Her characters are the victims of double civilizations in their migrated souls and they struggle in distant lands" (269). Furthermore, it can be said that the protagonist has the characteristics of determination and self-confidence more than the earlier fiction. Chosen a puritan protagonist, *The Holder of the World* makes the reader think about the equality and conformability of women wherever they live.

Hence, these two short story collections and two novels will be argued in the second chapter in terms of women protagonists' effloresce. The heroines in the fiction above are more determined and zealous to fulfill their dreams than Tara and

Dimple. Also, the protagonists' psychology in the second chapter is more exhilarating than the previous ones. Especially, the excitement of psychology is higher. As the critic connotes, "It has more bravado than sober tone" (Sahsrabuddhe 74). To put forward, Mukherjee gets over herself in relation to the theme of fiction. Unlike the disorientation and isolation of immigration, the author reflects the protagonists' self-confidence and expectations in her fiction. As the critic states that the fluctuation in her novels can be absolutely observed. "From *The Tiger's Daughter* to *Jasmine* one can observe a steady metamorphosis from acculturation to self actualization in Mukherjee's writing" (Ghanshyam and Iyengar 106). *The Holder of the World* can be added in the category the critic sounds. In her later novels, the protagonists would become independent and free spirited women.

Mukherjee not unexpectedly admits she is an Indian born American author who endeavors to find a compromise between Americans and immigrants disappointed with the country migrated. Mukherjee has an assignment of re-introduction of immigrants to the First World. Shree draws attentions to the Indian women novelists who build a bridge.

The primary task of Indian Women novelists has been to attempt an imaginative mediation between the traditional forces of Indian patriarchal joint family system and the new demands of modernity. They further seek to reconstruct the socio-cultural values from a woman's viewpoint. (147)

On the other hand, admitting this task, Mukherjee is sometimes criticized slightly by the critics. There are substantially number of critics who assume that Mukherjee subverts the idea of culture and traditions. The lack of dominant cultural norms causes the illiberal culture seen in Mukherjee later novels. However no matters what is written for Mukherjee, Dusenbery recognizes the author by stating as; "...there is an element of bad faith in asserting that there is no dominant culture to which one must accommodate, when clearly there are culturally appropriate ways to advance one's cause..." (750). So, when scrutinizing her later novels, the protagonists can be indicated as modern women and reconciled with both themselves and their milieu.

Leave It to Me, the next novel written by Mukherjee, concerns with the protagonist Debby DiMartino risen up in Italian-American family and endeavoring to find her biological family. Debby who does not care what is said or condemned is a modern immigrant. Living alone in a car and using slang language, Debby totally becomes American for Mukherjee. However, Indian traditions and attitudes can be observed on the heroines. Hedge summarizes the incidence from another writer's perspective. The critic states as; "...like Brahati Mukherjee, advocate total assimilation in the host country where the memory of the home they have left behind and the reenvisioning of that home from the memory is predominant" (Hedge 133). Although Debby has many bad experiences such as the attempt of rape by her own father, it is no more surprising for the reader the protagonist blending two cultures together owns a normal life.

The other novel Mukherjee authors is *Desirable Daughters*, the first novel of trilogy, dealing with the protagonist Tara Chatterjee who has to bring her gay son Rabin up by her own in consequence of divorcing from her rich husband Bishwapriya Chatterjee. Myles ironically interprets on Mukherjee's novels written lately. The critic states; "Mukherjee found it difficult to limit herself so she crossed boundaries and saw herself as a pioneer of new territories, experiences and literatures" (B 108). In fact, abandoning her Third World identity, the protagonist Tara has the characterization of both South Asian and American culture. Instead of the feeling of embarrassment, Tara accepts the ambiguity of her situation and feels happily. For example, while Dimple fears of wearing casual clothes in America she wears, Jasmine can walk in jeans and t-shirt in American streets. However, Tara wears both sari and jeans outside. Mukherjee makes the reader feel the self-confidence in Tara.

Tree Bride, the second novel of trilogy, is about the quest of her own ancestor Tara Lata of the protagonist Tara Banerjee. Having the fictional similarity with *The Holder of the World*, *Tree Bride* bears both flashbacks and flashforwards. Being free and rich Tara feels to make something important for herself. As the critic states, "... American individualist traditions have freed women-especially immigrant women-

from lives of endless drudgery and subservience” (Wallace 581). It is also a sign of both the protagonist’s modernity and the writer’s kind of ‘back mutation’.

The characters varying from Americans to Indians in both twentieth and eighteenth centuries make the reader think that the individuals share the same feelings, inclinations and egos whenever they live. However, Tara Lata living in eighteenth century is also a contemporary woman who fights against colonialists for her country.

The task of the writer as stated by Maini is an introduction of other cultures to the First World. Implying Mukherjee, Maini states in one of the article she writes as; “She relates the recent surge of postcolonial and multicultural literature and theory in the academy to the “financialization of the globe” *which has made it “necessary for people in the United States to ‘know other cultures’”* (my italic 196). In this sense, Mukherjee manages to realize her inclination on living together.

The last novel of trilogy authored by Mukherjee *Miss New India* deals with a young townswoman girl Anjali Bose whose desire is a prosperous life in India. Unlike her previous protagonists, Anjali wants to stay in her homeland. This indicates Mukherjee’s effloresce and the improvement of her point of view towards her homeland and people. The critic dealing with the subject of writers’ returning to India asserts that it is a kind of Indian policy whose inclination is the extent and propaganda of the country.

“...the importance accredited to writers of the diaspora in India itself indicates the extent to which their work constitutes what has been described as a ‘return of the repressed for the nation-state’, or ‘a mirror in which modern India seeks to know itself’”. (Morey 19)

However, no matter what the intention is, the protagonist’s desire –giving up from the First World countries and living in her own homeland – is a milestone for Mukherjee. Furthermore; brought up in a small town, Anjali’s modernity is another distinctive feature authored by Mukherjee. The last novel penned by the author can be regarded as a calumet between the countries she lived in and her inwardness.

Even though the novels in this chapter indicate the contemporaneousness and healthy of the protagonists, *Miss New India* is more significant in terms of its theme including presentation of India as modern and livable or the preference of her homeland rather than North America.

For these reasons, her last four novels written so far by Mukherjee have the characteristics of modernity and healthy communication between the immigrants and the residents. The protagonists Debby, Tara and Anjali are leading figures for immigrant women who move to other countries. Also, Mukherjee procures the need of individuals migrating. As Myles expresses in the article; “Even more captivating is the progression of her women from one stage of evolution to the other depicting them as ebullient and courageous characters...” (B 109).

To sum up, this dissertation consists of three chapters. In the first chapter, while Tara visiting her parents in India after seven years has many a problem with her family and friends, which results in sexual harassment, Dimple is a victim who migrates to America, feels lonely and finally kills her husband. In her autobiographical book *Days and Night in Calcutta*, the writer does not encounter the different experience in India. All heroines are exposed to the similar traumatic experiences in their life. In the second chapter, two short story collections and two novels will be argued. *Darkness* concerns about the bad experiences encountered by Mukherjee in Canada. Whereas, the protagonists in *The Middleman and Other Stories* are more determined and they have the inclination of realization of American dream. Hence, the improvement of the characters can be obviously observed in these collections. In her most controversial novel *Jasmine*, Jasmine is an intrepid protagonist who desires to have a prosperous life despite the fact that she is raped on the first day in America. *The Holder of the World* is a complicated historiographical novel connected with Hawthorne’s *Scarlett Letter*. The protagonist Hannah is a puritan American falling in love with rajah. In fact, these protagonists are decisive to live comfortably in the country migrated. In the last chapter, a novel and a trilogy will be discussed. In *Leave It to Me*, Debby DiMartino endeavoring to live her own life moves to California and starts to quest her biological parents. Even though

Debby is tried to be raped by her father, she does not lose her joy of life and she realizes her dream. Tara Chatterjee, the protagonist of *Desirable Daughters*, is a divorced woman who brings her gay child Rabin up. The heroine of *Tree Bride*, Tara Lata living in the eighteenth century is a contemporary woman in her era. Also, Tara Chatterjee's son Rabin has a friend named Anjali Bose living in India. Anjali is the protagonist of *Miss New India*. These heroines have the self-confidence in their self. For these reasons, the woman effloresce in Mukherjee's fiction will be argued in this dissertation.

FIRST CHAPTER

Bharati Mukherjee's initial novels *The Tiger's Daughter* and *Darkness* and autobiographical book *Days and Nights in Calcutta* briefly deal with young women moving to another country, which results isolation, alienation and mental ailment. While the protagonist of *The Tiger's Daughter* coming from America visits her parents in India, Dimple, the heroine of *Darkness*, who kills her husband because of her mental illness, migrates from India to America in order to have prosperous life. *Days and Nights in Calcutta* co-written with her husband Clarke Blaise can be regarded as both autobiographical and travels book which Mukherjee's family authors their own experience in India in their sabbatical year. However, the main theme in these books is that all protagonists suffer from aloofness and isolation from the society resulting from migration.

The Tiger's Daughter concerns Tara Banerjee who visits her family after seven years without her western husband David. When she steps in India, she understands that her hometown is not the same as she used to live. Also, despite being the only child in the family, her parents do not forgive her for marriage with a European. In addition, her friends abandon her for accusation about her deviation. Finally, recurrence of David's advice to live like a western makes her a mistake resulted in sexual abuse. Nayak indicating Mukherjee emphasizes the main theme of post-colonial authors like in this novel;

“Like many post-colonial authors she craves for the identity of many Asian-American women who suffer owing to the complex issues of racism, sexism, violence, high social expectations and pressures, poverty, cultural adjustment, lack of family support, and post-traumatic stress disorders related to refugee experiences.” (268)

Furthermore, the second novel Mukherjee authors is *Wife* whose protagonist is more controversial and insane than all Mukherjee's characters. Dimple Dasgupta the vision of whom is merely marriage and life as a westerner. However, her marriage is totally fiasco. After migration to America, Dimple cannot know to be either Sita, the ideal wife in Indian mythology or a modern woman. The media and people around her make Dimple more introvert. Finally, not able to stand all the

things, Dimple kills her husband. Dimple is a victim in terms of both Indian customs and her psychological problems.

The last book co-written by her husband Clarke Blaise can be counted as both autobiography and traveller book. Mukherjee endeavours to reflect India from western point of view. By doing so, Mukherjee and Blaise indicate their different perspective for the same experience.

There are many resemblances between these three books in respects of migration, isolation and expatriation. All protagonists make a choice to live the country they do not get used to. They have a traumatic transformation to improve their characters. While Tara has a sexual abuse by an Indian man Mr. Tuntunvala, Dimple murders her husband. Rao and Kasyap, two critics studying on Mukherjee, indicate her first novels as; “In the modern world of flux, uncertainty and confusion, and constant erosion of identities, they explored major issues like cultural conflicts, immigrants’ alienation, psyche and changing social values” (i).

1. *TIGER'S DAUGHTER*

Bharati Mukherjee's first novel *Tiger's Daughter* deals with "the return of the immigrant from the New World to the geographic space of the Old" (Singh 241). After educated and marrying with an American, the protagonist Tara Banerjee returns her family for a couple of months with the absence of her husband. Thinking that the people in America do not recognize her, Tara finds out that India is not as the same as she used to live. Furthermore, although she has the crème de la crème friends, one of whom abuses her at the end of the novel. In fact Mukherjee reflects that Tara is not tranquil in both the USA with her husband and India with her family. Grewal summarizes the novel as;

...a novel about a young woman's unsettling return home to Calcutta after years abroad; alienated from both her elite circle of family and friends and the revolutionary cause of the underclass, she is left with a lonely awareness of the hypocrisies of a patriarchal, class-conscious post-colonial society. (99)

Tara hopefully comes to America to start a new prosperous life. She is educated by a western college. However, starting to live there, she sees some of the falsity, especially in police departments, in such a democratic country, which totally shocks her. "Tara did not seem to hear his compliment. She was too full of questions about the conduct of the police, the tactics of the rioters, editorials he had written" (*Tiger's Daughter* 85). New York exaggerated by the protagonist becomes tribulations for her. "How much simpler to trust the city's police inspector and play tennis with him on Saturdays. How humane to accompany a friendly editor to watch the riots in town. *New York, she confided, was a gruesome nightmare*" (my italic *Tiger's Daughter* 86).

Tara Banerjee's America experiences are definitely adaptation process. Coming from South Asian, Tara cannot be attuned to her American friends. She is too fragile to live abroad. The beginning of accommodation and living in America starts very severely for her. "She prayed Kali for strength so she would not break down before these polite Americans. And Kali....smiled out at her *mischievously*" (my italic, *Tiger's Daughter* 14). Moreover, the first years in America are very

painful for her. For example, in the dormitory, the friend she shares her room with seems unfriendly. “Tara, who remembered all insults, who allowed grudges to ferment till they were unbearable, had never forgiven the girl from Hokkaido. She had continued to room with her, tolerating her only for her efficiency in killing mice” (*Tiger’s Daughter* 65). The people around her are very bully.

However, Tara misunderstands almost everything due to the feelings of immigration. To illustrate; “Little things pained her. If her roommate did not share her bottle of mango chutney she sensed discrimination” (*Tiger’s Daughter* 14). Being an immigrant in the USA, she feels bigotry even if her friends ordinarily behave. Additionally, the protagonist cannot find common ground in conversations with her friends. “‘My great-grandfather’s name was Hari Lal Banerjee. He was a very plucky man.’ But such remarks she found made a bad impression and soon she gave up” (*Tiger’s Daughter* 14). The orientation stage is very painful for Tara who wishes to be one in the community. Also she is usually misconstrued by American friends.

“It’s hard to explain,” she had said to the foreign student adviser at Vassar.
“I just can’t pray here. It doesn’t come. Do you know what I mean?”

And the foreign adviser, who had not known what she meant, had invited her to worship with her at the nearest Episcopalian church every Sunday. (*Tiger’s Daughter* 61-2)

Tara gets married to an American against her parents’ and society will. “Don’t do anything foolish or rash. It is your happiness that I demand. Caste, class and province are more valuable in marriage than giddiness. We do not disapprove of this young man, but...” (*Tiger’s Daughter* 16). However her father does not find a suitable match for her. He would say; “Finding suitable match is a man’s job. Leave me alone or else” (*Tiger’s Daughter* 149). Being the highest caste in India, Brahmin parents disapprove her marriage despite full love for her daughter Tara. Furthermore, her society expostulates the matrimony with foreign husband. “You are so beautiful and you are married to a European, Madam?” (*Tiger’s Daughter* 29). However, Tara ventures everything including her mother’s love. “Perhaps her mother, sitting serenely before God on a tiny rug, no longer loved her either. After all

Tara had wilfully abandoned her caste by marrying a foreigner” (*Tiger Daughters* 63). Alam referring to Mukherjee’s biography mentions as;

Like Mukherjee, Tara has married a North American novelist who prefers to stay back during his summer breaks so that he can write; like her creator, Tara was overcome by bouts of homesickness when in North America and returns to Calcutta to gauge the extent of her commitment to what was once home. (Alam 21)

Moreover, Tara’s marriage is another obstacle she would encounter. “For Tara, like Dimple, marriage has not provided effective solutions to her psychic problems” (Rao and Kasyap 29). Because Tara is under pressure to express her feeling about Calcutta to David, her husband, who cannot comprehend the issues because of his western point of view. “Tara often wonders about the difficulties of communicating her feeling about her city and its people to David” (Alam 23). Alam also asseverates that the cultural differences between Tara and David are indispensable.

Misunderstanding, confusion, and incomprehension, then, are inevitable in any cross-cultural encounter. Passages to and out of India, Mukherjee appears to be saying, will cause pain and bewilderment. There are limits not only to David’s understanding of and tolerance for Indians, but also to India’s ability to accept or comprehend someone like Tara’s husband. (23)

On the one hand, on observed the marriage and life in Tara’s inner side, it can be easily indicated that Tara fulfilling her American dream, which means the chase the dreams has misery and hardship. Owing to her husband dissatisfaction and indifference, she can’t find the love and respect she expects. In fact it is the most catastrophic thing is that she stands against her family and society for the foreign husband.

She finds that she is admired neither by her family nor by her friends. While the Indians condemn her marriage to a ‘mleccha’ as having stooped too low, being a Brahmin in an upper caste, David, her husband, does not give her much credit for clearing bathrooms which she considers a wifely duty. (Tandon 29)

On the other hand, not able to move between America and India, Mukherjee indicates a person whose marriage reduces her worries. “She realizes that while an American husband and a passport can create a new distance between herself and her old home, the distance had its seeds in her anglicized education in Calcutta” (Sultana 102). The marriage with a North American man, I think, symbolizes the freedom and devotion to be Western, and the abdication from the responsibility of being Indian. However, she cannot feel as though she is at home in India.

Mukherjee's explorations of the personal dimensions of female identity and belonging within marriage, an integral part of traditional Indian socialization for females, now resonates in a new key as Tara's husband belongs "elsewhere," and so her home "should" be with him, even though that space is not yet “home.” (Katrak 674-5)

Also in America the protagonist tries to create a small India. Her background is naturally Indian so that all meals she made or the songs she listens are Indian. Sometimes she becomes such traditional a woman that she loses the thread. To illustrate; “Her mother-in-law had accused her of trying to kill her son. Widowed in-laws had humiliated her by giving the boniest piece of curried fish at public feasts” (*Tiger's Daughter* 60). Besides, even though living in the centre of America, Tara redecorates her house in order not to feel homesick. “On days she had thought she could not possibly survive, she had shaken out all her silk scarves, ironed them and hung them to make the apartment more “Indian” (*Tiger's Daughter* 41). These examples reveal she cannot give up the tradition of her homeland even if she can't endure living in there.

Then, when she is abroad, her friends do not leave her alone in America. However, talking about the city of Calcutta, they think that Tara lives in a better place. She, in fact, feels very lonely in America. The fear Tara feels is what she will experience in the future. In America she cannot adapt herself as a real American as she does in India. It means not the adjustment to the USA's world;

Tara's Camac Street friends did not forget her. They wrote her long and beautiful letters, meticulously addressed with periods and commas. In their letters they complained wittily of boredom in Calcutta, the movies at the metro, the foul temper of the whiskered nun from Mauritius, the weather's

beastliness, but not once did they detect *Tara's fears*. (my italic *Tiger's Daughter* 13)

However, there is an eccentric opinion collision between Tara and her husband. Being too democratic for India to be, David wants her wife to be more independent than Indian society bears. For example; "He had almost said that he thought her lazy, not doing enough, that inertia was the Indian curse" (*Tiger's Daughter* 100). This incidence reflects Tara's dilemma whether she should behave such an Indian or not. What is more, ignoring the India traditions from occidental point of view, David complains about his wife's stagnation. Tara is hurt by his attitudes. "David was *painfully* western; he still complained of her placidity" (my italic *Tiger's Daughter* 135). Also, her husband is very realistic about what India is. Tara's letter telling that everything is nice and same is unconvincing for her husband;

He did not believe her, though she struggled to convince him that all her childhood friends were the same as before, that the old movie houses were still there, the old night clubs, even the nuns who had taught her. He responded with the hostility, and she liked him because he did not believe her. (TD 93)

In fact, although she has some problems in America while living there, she is enlightened by occidental reality, that is American dream. Because she impulsively starts to interrogate the life between her homeland and her new settlement, she also suffers from Indian reality. Additionally, the inconvenience in America increases by thinking Indian life and adversity. Tandon deals with this problem, which makes Tara more fragile when she visits her homeland;

She becomes painfully aware that while she has not yet eased herself into American culture, she no longer derives sustenance from values and mores of her native land. Memories of genteel Brahmin life-style are usurped by the new impressions of poverty, hungry children and political unrest. (Tandon 27)

As aforementioned, David's point of view leads her to behave like an American. His motivation to attitude like a western in India sometimes distresses her because it may as well seem irrational and excessive such as going to one city to another without escorting of a man. Also David's not accompaniment with Tara while she is in India makes poses some problems in terms of Indian customs. "Where

is your husband? How dare he not come!” (*Tiger’s Daughter* 22). The society can make this a big problem.

In the novel there are a great number of comparisons between Calcutta and America. What is more important is that Calcutta is worse than she is accustomed to while America still gives pain in orientation term. To illustrate, after she arrives to Bombay, she reconsiders her preferences. “Seven years earlier on her way to Vassar, she had admired the houses on Marine Drive, had thought them fashionable, but now their shabbiness appalled her. The relatives have sensed her disappointments” (*Tiger’s Daughter* 22). What is more, should the exemplars be made more, she gets irritated when she takes on the train she did several times before. “Her mother’s brother worked with diesel locomotives and so she had been trained since childhood to think well of the Indian railways. But this time the train ride depressed her” (*Tiger’s Daughter* 26). Additionally, the Indian, especially upper class, believe that the country possesses terrible parts. When Tara’s relatives take her to their house, they have a conversation between uncle and aunt; “You must promise not to look at the bad parts of India.” “Promise to keep your eyes shut! Some parts are horrible.” “What about the smell? She ought to cover her nose.” (*Tiger’s Daughter* 22)

Likewise, Mukherjee tells about Calcutta customs which frequently puts the protagonist to thump. Although David grumbles about Tara’s placidity in India, she sometimes takes ‘radical’ decisions in her homeland. “Tara was surprised at the quickness of her own decision to accompany a stranger. In Calcutta proprieties were paralyzing” (*Tiger’s Daughter* 100). It is one of the most embarrassing behaviours a married woman goes with someone who isn’t her relatives. “Pronob might have been right as far as it went – one shouldn’t speak to strangers; saying yes to anyone in Calcutta was madness” (*Tiger’s Daughter* 101). Despite Tara’s awareness of traditions, she is both affected by Occidentalism and David’s instructions.

To understand what Tara feels in India, the people in town must be indicated briefly. The upper class society blindly imitates what the eastern do. As the protagonist lives there, she feels flabbergasted. To make an exemplification, old

Tuntunwala boasts for eating pork like a western. “I am a very modern man,” said P. K. Tuntunwala. “I have learned to eat pork” (*Tiger’s Daughter* 93). Also, it is not surprising that the people she met in the train do not like the Indian food. Mukherjee indicates this incidence;

“The Indian menu is hopeless,” he commented, sucking in a spoonful of rice floating in yellow liquid. “Madam, are you new here?”

“Yes and no,” said Tara, preparing to hide behind a *Time* magazine. (author’s italic *Tiger’s Daughter* 27)

Living seven years in America and getting married to American boy, David, Tara cannot comfortably communicate with her mother who has colonial thoughts that Eastern and Western should be separated from each other. “On her return from America, Tara finds it not only difficult but impossible to communicate with her family” (Tandon 32-3). According to her mother, all whites are European and should return to their homeland. Her mother does not forgive her daughter leaving the caste and marrying a western. There becomes an enormous gap between her and her mother. It offends the protagonist Tara very much. “Tara cannot wait to go back to the United States and to her white American husband, David” (Singh 242). Calcutta does not give the tranquillity she need.

To Tara’s mother all white men were Europeans and she trusted them only when they were in their proper place. Now Tara saw herself as that unwelcome Australian. Still pained by the odd scraps from David’s letter, disturbed by the authentic religious emotions of her mother, she thought it best to go away (*Tiger’s Daughter* 63)

Not only her mother but also her close relatives have the prejudice against her after she decides to settle in America. On saying anything or giving advice, her close relatives misunderstand her. These experiences push Tara solitude and loneliness. Like her family, the relatives cannot accept the family member’s going abroad by separation from caste and recruitment a European. To illustrate; when Tara gives advice to her aunt, the aunt gets angry and humiliates her by using *mleccha* to her husband meaning “non-Vedic or barbarian” (Wikipedia);

“Have you tried plaster casts and special shoes, Aunt Jharna?” asked Tara, wanting to spare herself the humiliation of the scene.

“You think you are too educated for this, don’t you?” Aunt Jharna laughed with a quiet violence. “You have come back to make fun of us, haven’t you? What gives you the right? Your American money? Your *mleccha* husband?” (author’s italic *Tiger’s Daughter* 45)

Additionally, a great number of critics suggest very antithetic ideas about Aunt Jharna’s attitudes towards Tara and Tara’s not responding to her. Alam symbolizes the aunt as a whole Indians’ critics. “Aunt Jharna’s quietly violent response to Tara’s innocuous suggestion can be seen as a paradigm of the response many Indian critics have had to this and other Mukherjee books on India and Indians”(25). Sushma Tandon writes that she cannot express Indian reality to anyone even her husband. “...considers is the reason for Tara’s incommunicability. ... She is unable to write a letter to her husband about her experience in India because of ‘the inauthenticity’ of the expressed ‘voice’: (34) The loneliness accelerates her psychological problems.

Moreover, Tara’s friends are the same as the society. Not only do they not see the futility and abyss in Tara’s eyes but also they do not believe there are ghettos or demonstrations in such a beautiful country like America. Tara is, in fact, affected badly by her people’s blindness. Considered as rich and prosperous, Brahmin friends Tara hangs out have snobbish characteristics, sitting on the roof of luxurious hotel and talking about America dreamed.

Pronob’s group irritated Tara with its lack of seriousness. The group often sat on the roof of the Catelli-Continental, imagining itself successful and splendid, smoking and swearing in public to flout conventions, imploring Tara not to smile at strange old men in blazers and sun hats. They longed to listen to stories about America, about television and automobiles and frozen foods and record players. But she mentioned ghettos or student demonstrations her friend protested. What nonsense! They knew America was lovely, they knew New York was not like Calcutta.(*Tiger’s Daughter* 70)

When Tara sits with them, she knows she cannot be the same any more. “Everything was perfect, except for Tara, still in her mood, who sat beside them” (*Tiger’s Daughter* 114).

The next stage is, of course, isolation from the family, relatives, and society. Her family cannot welcome to get married to a Northern American even if they are very modern parents with plenteous affection in highest caste. Not seeing Tara for seven years, her friends alienates her in order not to present the America they imagine. However, Tara not listening to the same music or going to the same cinema becomes very different from the others. Mukherjee indicates as;

At first they tried to distract her with movies and concerts and *pakor*s at Kapoor’s. but when that proved useless they called her “a silly billy” and “a bloody bore” and scolded her. They diagnosed her melancholy as “love sickness,” and offered to cable David to join her in Calcutta. For nice Bengalis, thought Tara, to be depressed was to be stupid. (author’s italic *Tiger’s Daughter* 105)

Nevertheless, Tara’s attitudes are a little bit the reason why they behave like that. The reaction Tara indicates is not nice response to her friends. Rectifying all errors they make or mocking with them is not a good solution to re-conciliate with others. “Their snubs brought out minor viciousness in Tara. She insisted on correcting the grammatical errors of her friends, made jokes about their mannerism, then waited to be shunned” (*Tiger’s Daughter* 106). It indicates Tara’s isolation from her own society, which results with the incompatibility with the others.

To take forward, Tara has a best friend, Reena, having the same dreams like Tara but not still unfulfilling them yet. However, after Tara returns to India and sees her, she cannot find her congenial and happy. Reena is no friendlier than she used to be according to Tara. “That’s dead right. Relax. Walk toward me. No, no. Relax. How is it they didn’t teach you to relax in America?” (*Tiger’s Daughter* 115) Reena’s sentence reflects the connection between them gets deteriorated. To make exemplification more; “How is it you’ve changed too much, Tara?” Reena asked. “I mean this is no moral judgment or anything, but you’ve become too self-centered and European” (*Tiger’s Daughter* 128). Or “Such rudeness! It is not like you at all.

Gosh! That's what happens when Bengali girls go to America" (*Tiger's Daughter* 127). When Alam scrutinize the novel' he excoriates Rena as;

What Tara had not known before coming to Calcutta but must discover is what is obvious to her friend Reena. ..Again and again, she finds herself reacting to an event very differently from them. What surprises or shocks her in Calcutta appears to be quite routine to someone like Reena. (Alam 22)

However, all friends Tara has are crazy about western except for Pronob. He thinks that living as an immigrant is very hard condition for a woman. "There they were again, even Pronob, wanting to know what it was like being a Bengali girl in America, not how she had got there, nor why. She described to them in detail..." (*Tiger's Daughter* 73). To put aside, the statement he made rouses Tara's consternation in her new homeland. For example when Pronob asks Tara' he absolutely shocks her; "I would hate to be an immigrant," said Pronob suddenly. "I wouldn't mind giving up the factory, but I'd hate to be a nobody in America. How do they treat Indians, Tara?" (*Tiger's Daughter* 73) In fact, Mukherjee does not give Pronob's background, it is cleared that he is well aware of the policy of his country and western immigration. "It's all political stunt," said Pronob. "Farms are being looted, landlords are being clubbed to death. This is reform?" (*Tiger's Daughter* 72) His awareness fears Tara because of making her remind her psychology in America.

Undoubtedly, Tara longs for visiting her homeland India for years. She lives in America for years and visualizes the reality of unseen America by Indians including how they behave the immigrants etc. Tandon depicts it in her book as; "She has dreamt for years of this return, but now finds herself imbued with the 'foreignness of spirit' attributable not only to her American domicile but also to her early education in Calcutta at a private school run by Belgian nuns" (28). For Tandon, Tara's education absolutely pushes her isolation as well. Indeed, Mukherjee and her protagonist Tara have the education from nuns so that they are unaware of their country's reality. The Indians, especially the upper class Mukherjee are thought by "...the European missionary nuns who have taught Bengali protagonist Tara are 'ruddy' with 'fat foreheads'"(Maxey 2006 532). Mukherjee's desire to return to home becomes an inspiration for succeeding novels. "Yet, this longing for the

return, the longing for a lost home and culture, provides a stark contrast to Mukherjee's later works, notably darker in tone, which refuse to romanticize the experience of the expatriate or exile". (Oh 202)

Likewise, Tara's psychology is getting worse day by day. In the novel, a great number of illustrations are made to give. In fact Tara cannot think properly as she herself knows well. Sometimes, she feels blameworthy about what she did. "Tara started guiltily as if something she had hoped to hide had suddenly been forced out into the open. She envied the self-confidence of these people, their passionate conviction that they were always right" (*Tiger's Daughter* 73-4). However, not deciding balanced judgement, Tara is sometimes glad to see other's getting into trouble, which makes her a little depressive. To illustrate, a tragic accident is not good news for a normal person. "This crisis gave Tara ghoulish pleasure. Was she about to experience a tragic accident? Would Sanjay suddenly drown just to please her?" (*Tiger's Daughter* 116)

Subsequently, after all the disagreement, isolation and homelessness, it should be asked how Tara's psychology is among the critics. Mukherjee's first novel is "conceived in a very difficult phase of life when she was struggling to determine her own identity in the Indian heritage" (Myles Art. 309). Tara is brought up by a thought that Western is a cradle of modernism and prosperity by Bengali nuns. However, after studying and marrying there, she tries to accommodate there. Afterwards, when she visits India, she understands that she cannot live there anymore. "Tara leads a life of duality and conflict seeking stability through a marriage which lacked confidence and mutual understanding and put her in an acute traumatic dilemma" (Myles 110).

On the other hand, some critics take the chain of events further by indicating that Tara "experiences the contrast of the old and new world during a return visit to India after seven years of Westernized life" (Huang 145). The dilemmas, incapability and not be able to express feeling to anyone like an aphasic induce her personality disorder. Furthermore, not exactly finding what she is looking for in

America, Tara experiences the same feelings in India, not to mention the change of milieu and society which tells her that nothing will be the same as anticipated. Rao and Kasyap comparison between Tara and Dimple, the second protagonist of *Wife* and indicate as;

Tara visualizes a glorious stay amidst her near and dear in India. But her dreams are shattered, as she witnesses nothing but violence and unrest in Calcutta. The violence in America motivates Dimple in *Wife* whereas the violence in Calcutta disturbs Tara. In addition, her difficulty to adjust with her friends and relatives aggravates her mental anxiety. Tara feels the clash in her psyche when she fails to adapt herself to the traditional norms of her own family. Tara's psyche, at a point, prompts her to stay away from people who disturb her mental peace. (29)

Of course, in addition to her psychological condition, Tara is abused by Mr. P. K. Tuntunvala who is over sixty. This incidence is not elaborately given in the novel; however, it is clear that Tara is profoundly affected by it. "The second is the traumatic incident of sexual violence by Tuntunvala. Tara is desperate need to communicate but to whom? She finds all avenues closed" (Tandon 34). On the one hand, the critic emphasizes Tara's isolation from the society. She cannot communicate with anybody, even her best friend Reena. On the other hand, Moore resembles the sexual harassment as metamorphosis of a living. "The physical violence of the novel symbolizes the psychic violence that is necessary for the transformation of the soul" (945). As she states that, the violence apprises her. "Tara realizes she has become rootless and out of place both in India and America" (Tandon 29).

After the sexual abuse, Tara feels contrition about visiting her homeland and coming without her husband. She feels his lack every time. "Tara put away her pen and aerogrammes. She wished she had not come to India without her husband" (*Tiger's Daughter* 80). In fact, she cannot declare that she has sexual abuse from someone for the sake of her husband because she knows that her family and society will blame David for all. "If she died in the bustee she knew her parents would blame David. They would say that he was not like "us people," that he let his wife wander into danger" (*Tiger's Daughter* 141).

Although Tara lost in dualism and dilemma cannot properly decide and have psychological problems, she sometimes stands behind her country. There is a woman named Antonia Whitehead. Mukherjee especially uses this specific name meaning 'priceless or beautiful whitehead' (Wikipedia). When this American woman does anything against Indian traditions, Tara and others start complaining about it. "Antonia Whitehead, a big redheaded American out on a "mission" to save the Third World, bumbles her way through India and occasions this impassioned editorial from Tara's Journalist friend Sanjay" (Alam 24). In fact there is jealousy in Tara against Whitehead. Because she cannot approve of Whitehead's being privileged in her homeland while she herself is seen as a second-class citizen in Whitehead's country. As the critic depicts as;

Tara's re-discovery of her ethnic selfhood is sharply offset against the response of Antonia Whitehead to the religious ceremonies at the shrine. A proverbial American tourist, Antonia is busily clicking her camera while the worshippers are praying, and she denounces the ceremony as "a depressing performance," saying that "what India needed ... was less religious excitement and more birth-control devices" (208-09). By this time it has become apparent that Tara has re-adopted India as her true ethnic homeland, and that she does not seem too much bothered about whether or not she will get back to her husband in the United States. (Verhoeven 97)

To sum up, "Bharati Mukherjee's first novel *The Tiger's Daughter* presents another facet of the psyche problem. *The Tiger's Daughter* presents cross-cultural conflicts, alienation and isolation that influence one's psyche" (Rao and Kasyap 28). The protagonist goes to America to get education. She marries a western boy David, which her family and society do not improve. Also David's family insults her as America does that. Tara longs for visiting her family and country. Tara "privileged with a Western education, class standing, and wealth" (Sultana 99) visits her India which she hasn't seen for seven years. On the first day she steps in, she understands that her beautiful country is not the same as she used to imagine. "Mukherjee manages to present the decay of Calcutta and the decadent life of its upper class with considerable skill" (Alam 17). Furthermore, Tandon reflects the same idea as; "*Tiger's Daughter* presents a segment of society that Bharati Mukherjee herself grew up in and is familiar with: the upper middle class convent educated Westernized boxwallah society, a hangover from the British Raj" (38). Tara is now stuck between

West and East or old and new. She has some psychological problems. “Tara soon comprehends the threats of the collision of cultures” (Myles, B; 310). She cannot communicate with anybody even if she is abused because she knows that everybody will blame her husband. Verhoeven summarizes the novel as;

The Tiger's Daughter is meant to illustrate the feelings of alienation, confusion and disorientation that are part of the immigrant experience. Concentrating on the culture lost, rather than the culture gained, the novel is in fact a study of nostalgia -- a longing for "old country" values and customs, which is a characteristic of all immigrant societies. (97)

Mukherjee's *Tiger's Daughter* is autobiographic first autobiographic novel. It is the first time she makes a name with this novel. Also, she helps some Indian writers understand better. “...Bharati Mukherjee's *The Tiger's Daughter*, there is an emphasis on the achievement of unity through acceptance in Rushdie's novel” (Harris 35).

2. *WIFE*

Wife is one of the most criticised and expostulated Mukherjee's novels whose protagonist Dimple Dasgupta has a bad mentality, which results in murder of her husband. Of all protagonists Mukherjee writes, Dimple is the most maddened one. Critics accused Mukherjee for choice of protagonist Dimple "distorting her immigrant narrative by choosing in Dimple a protagonist who is not settled in any identity or culture" (Dlaska 46). Even one of the critics claims "You could raise Dimple's consciousness by ninety degrees and still have a zombie" (Levin 16). Tandon states that "it received a harsh response from the political feminists. It was rejected outright" (43) when the novel starts to be sold. In fact, as a great number of critics indicate, Dimple is a woman who does not know her identity, roots and orientation. Briefly, Dimple is both a victim of Indian society Mukherjee indicates and an insane person who is not able to distinguish between reality and imaginary. Tandon summarizes the novel as;

The story is an upsetting account of the conflict between the Western and Indian cultures and the modern and conventional traditions as embodied in the life of Dimple Das Gupta, and these conflicts are related with some sort of comic ferocity. Dimple appears a very brutally drawn character who ends in depression, madness and murder. (Tandon 44)

The novel begins with the explanation of protagonist's name 'Dimple' symbolizing Indian woman who suffers from men's hegemony. Mukherjee draws a strong illustration to emphasize the conditions of women in India. "In this sense, *Wife* stands as a critique of the Indian society, home and expatriate, rather than as a critique of Dimple as an immigrant" (Dlaska 63). Even though Mukherjee gets severe criticism from feminists and critics, it is apparent that she manages to expostulate the Indian society.

From the beginning of the novel, Dimple like other upper class girls wants to have luxurious life including "an apartment in Chowringhee, her hair done by Chinese girls, trips to New Market for nylon saris" (*Wife* 3). However, Dimple is restricted by her family and the society even if her wishes are very dissimilar from others' expectation. For example, while she gets married to a neuro surgeon or an

architect in her dreams, her father himself “looking for engineers in the matrimonial ads” (*Wife 3*) thinks that Amit Dasgupta “an electrical engineer (he called himself a “high-tension” man)” (*Wife 3*) is best option she chooses. Her marriage and decision of groom makes her insaner.

On the other hand, her imaginary physical deformity gets everything worse. In fact she only fears of impossibility of finding a suitable match for herself. Others’ mollification to her is so inefficacious that she cannot banish in her head. To make illustration; “Dimple protested that she looked dreadful in photographs, morose and heavy-lidded” (*Wife 12*). Her marriage, the only salvation from the society’s press is imperilled by her defect. The counsel given by friends such as “You must be satisfied with what God has given you. But use it to your best advantage” (*Wife 5*) or “Don’t be so blue, Vimla! Anyone can turn a molehill into a mountain!” (*Wife 4*) cannot help Dimple believe she is beautiful enough to get married. Also, there are other reasons to get impossible to find the prince charm including “Without a B.A. she’d never get a decent husband” (*Wife 9*).

What’s more, when Mr. Dasgupta, the electrical engineer, is presented as a suitable match by her family, Dimple cannot find the characteristics she seeks. In fact, her husband is very handsome and has some better characteristics than her expectancy. However, as Sarada states, Dimple lives in a dream world. “Dimple is not fully satisfied with Amit’s looks. Though handsome, she laments over the fact that he was not handsome the way ‘the movie-stars were’” (59). Tandon also points out that incidence. “Her husband though quite handsome, does not quite measure up to the standard of movie stars” (46). Not only does she think that her husband is handsome and perfect but also she imagines him as a statue of precision and exactness. The critics advance one step by saying ‘God-like’. This incidence means her ill mentality because it is indisputable that Mukherjee endeavours to depict upper class Indian woman who symbolizes the marriage independence.

She wants a husband who is ‘infallible’, ‘intractable’ and ‘God like’. Since the gap between expectation and reality becomes very wide, she fails to psychologically accept an ordinary human being vulnerable to the ‘ping-pong volleys’ of life. (Sarada 60)

However, Dimple cannot find exactly what she needs from marriage. Tandon states as; “She is puzzled that marriage does not bring glamorous freedom and searches for answers in letters to the editor” (45). As well as she is not able to marry a doctor or an architect, her husband and his family restriction makes her life more limited and miserable than her parents’. In fact, Dimple supposes “Marriage, she was sure, would free her, fill her with passion. Discreet and virgin, she waited for real life to begin” (*Wife* 13). Anyhow, one of the reasons why he becomes insane is her marriage “a further edge to these as yet muted disturbances” (Tandon 46). In actuality, her understanding the life and marriage is too shallow to differentiate between the reality and imagination, which makes difficult everything to her. “Her pseudo-intellectual approach to life, her immature views on marriage coupled with a psychic fragility play havoc on her performance as a wife” (Sarada 63).

When it is examined Dimple’s marriage life, Amit and his family increase the tension of Dimple’s psychology. First of all, Amit cannot share his life with Dimple. For example, the conversation between Amit and Dimple is an evident evidence to clarify it. “Of course, this is only a temporary arrangement. My immigration should come through any day” “You mean *our* immigration” (author’s italic *Wife* 17). He still sees himself as an individual who does not have the responsibility of husbandry.

Furthermore, the attitudes of his family, especially her mother, irritate her very much. Amit cannot indicate the feelings towards his wife. His stagnation and ill-treatment in front of his sisters makes Dimple angry. To make an exemplification, “On the way back, Dimple and her fiancé sat by themselves in the back seat of Mr. Ghose’s Fiat, with his sister watching them through the rearview mirror. He talked of his hobby: cricket” (*Wife* 15). Dimple thinks that his sisters have an antipathy to her, which annoys her a lot. Although Amit does not express as it is, Dimple knows that. “Why doesn’t your sister like me?” “Who said she doesn’t? She likes you.” She heard Amit talking in a strange, furry whisper” (*Wife* 21). To listen to a nice compliment from her husband she has to wait till late night. “You look very nice,” Amit said...He said such things very late at night” (*Wife* 22).

Worse than all these things is his mother's behaviours including changing her name as Nandini or eavesdropping her telephone calls aggravate her temper. Dimple cannot treat as she is. The limitation in her husband's house isolates her in the real world. Also she is compelled to be alone, which deteriorates her psychology. However, her mother-in-law's desire to change her name as Nandini disappoints her idea about "the best part of getting married: being free and expressing yourself" (*Wife* 20). The conversation between Dimple and her husband indicates this incidence;

"There's one small thing," he said. "My mother wants to call you Nandini.
 "She doesn't like Dimple as a name."
 "What will you call me?"
 "Nandini, Dimple ... what's in a name, for goodness sake?"
 "Everything," Dimple said. (*Wife* 17-8)

Even though "marriage, instead of liberating her, imprisons and stifles her" (Sahsrabuddhe 75), the tales and myths told from her childhood shapes her philosophy of life. Sita is the only one who walks on the fire at her husband's request. Mukherjee endeavours to pay attention this idea implying it is men's deceptive play to control women. Mukherjee indicates as; "Such pain such loyalty, seemed reserved for married women. How much easier to suffer from burns, stones growths; from diseases with precise, even dignified, names" (*Wife* 6). Mukherjee teasing with the issue by asking "Did Sita humiliate him by refusing to stroll through fire in front of his subjects and friends? Let us carry the torch (excusable pun!) of Sita's docility!" (*Wife* 27) emphasizes the wrong belief that the more a woman suffers, the more dignified she will be. As the critic states; "So, Indian fiction in English has long been suffering from Sita-Savitri syndrome" (Jha 95). Spyra studying both Rushdie and Mukherjee deals with the same issue of Sita. She accentuates the problem in terms of feministic point of view;

The invented nature of Ila's and Sita's bodies brings with it the fluidity that haunts their lives and recurs metaphorically throughout both texts. They both point, in a somewhat Freudian gesture, to the lack of grounding of the female characters' childhoods as the reason for the later instability of their lives. Involuntary migration early in life, unlike the migration celebrated in novels of Rushdie or Bharati Mukherjee, seems to create an irreparable rift

in their identities, weakening their ability to self-translate, to evoke Bhabha's term once more, and thus to be actively attached to their own bodies. As a result, these women remain caught within the narratives of the men around them, who stay rooted--if only emotionally--in a single home, which also provides them with a safe grounding within the scale of the community and the nation. (Spyra 1)

On the other hand, Dimple playing a game of happiness has a self-deception. She repeatedly utters herself that she is a happy woman. As Mukherjee indicates in her novel, "Happy people did not talk to themselves and happy people did not pretend that they had not been talking to themselves. "Dimple Basu," she repeated. "Dimple Basu is a happy woman" (*Wife* 21). It is clear that her mentality is getting worse day by day despite the pretence of Pollyannaism. To make clearer, she receives a letter telling about a woman who disappears. However, she concocts another story for herself. "Or had she been kidnapped by bad men and forced to engage in unspeakable activities? Dimple invented a happy ending" (*Wife* 28).

Nonetheless, her pregnancy makes her more irritated and indefensible in inner side even though an ordinary woman believing the reinforcement of marriage would like to have a baby. However, Mukherjee tragically reflects her husband idea. "It'll be a boy." Amit said. "He'll be a doctor and *mint money*" (my italic *Wife* 33). It is merely financial idea in terms of men in India. Furthermore, she is not in good health with her inside. "Sleeping was worse than staying awake, for then she was sucked into the center of cone-shaped emotions that made her sweat, cry loudly, sit up in bed" (*Wife* 34). Not only does she relapse into physical problems but also she suffers from physiological problems. She is so miserable that "her helplessness enraged her" (*Wife* 32). Also, she begins to behave outrageously. "The vomit fascinated her. It was hers; she was locked in the bathroom expelling brownish liquid from her body. She took pride in the brownish blossoms..." (*Wife* 30). The reason why she likes her vomit is due to the fact that it belongs to her. Her husband's attitudes implying he does not care for her and the loneliness in the house expand her mental problems like that.

Nonetheless, the main reason why she does not want the baby is, in my opinion, the compulsion which she needs to start a new life after migration her husband applies. So, “the sick psyche of Dimple intends to terminate her pregnancy” (Rao and Kasyap 30). The baby would be burden, an obstruction to fulfil her dreams if she gave a birth. The critic indicates as: “It makes her going abroad difficult and she does not want to carry any relics from her old life She began to think of the baby as unfinished business” (Babu 164).

However, she sometimes hallucinates; “To Dimple the dead mouse looked pregnant” (*Wife* 35). Viciousness will be transformation for her like all Mukherjee’s novels. “Violence is the key word, a ‘leitmotiff’ in Mukherjee’s fiction, and the psychic violence that she thinks is necessary for the transformation of character is often emphasized by an accompanying physical conflict of some sort” (Tandon 56). In the novel Dimple is ready to change. In fact her ill-mentality forces her to make abortion. “She seemed confident now, a woman transformed. And in an outburst of hatred, her body shuddering, her wrist taut with fury, she smashed the top of a small gray head” (*Wife* 35).

Some critics disparately explain the incidence. Of all critics, Myles is the most sanguine one declaring that it is a freedom for women to revolt against traditions and man. “The self abortion is a liberation from the traditional role of motherhood” (A 111). Tandon also thinks that Dimple does not consent anything in her life without her permission. “She thinks of ways of getting rid of the foetus which she describes as ‘vile’ and ‘tyrannical,’ something deposited in her body without anybody ‘consulting her’” (47). While most of the women critics think the abortion from the feministic point of view, some of them believe that it is just because of her mental instability. “Dimple’s weird thoughts are unending. She becomes pregnant and like any ordinary woman she never visualizes the bliss of motherhood. The wish to destroy her pregnancy reflects the dislocation of sensibility” (Rao and Kasyap 27).

In addition, the new life Dimple demolishes everything, even her unborn baby, will begin with the visa to America Amit applies. Dimple believes that the sheer luxury, bonhomie and prosperity come from the West. “Older people had always been like her parents; sipping tea and calling each other “Mr.” and “Mrs.”; real happiness was just in the movies or in the West” (*Wife* 47). However, the people around her warn about the immigration, which is Mukherjee’s personal thoughts on. In the middle of a party given in honour of Dimple, she finds out that the real happiness is not only in the West. “The subdued laughter of wealthy women frightened her. She didn’t belong in the Skyroom” (*Wife* 38). Pixie, her best friend implies that she will have a mental problem if she lives as a foreigner. “Me too,” Pixie said. “I wouldn’t want to feel a foreigner all my life. I’m sure it would ruin my *system*” (author’s italic *Wife* 46). The conversation between Dimple and one of the guests is very prominent to indicate Mukherjee’s thoughts for living in North America. When Dimple proudly announces the acceptance of her husband’s visa to her;

“But why would you feel like a foreigner if you went as an immigrant?”
 “*You* may think of it as immigration, my dear,” said Ratna Das in her deepest voice, “but what you are is a *resident alien*.” She smiled, but the words sounded venomous.” (author’s italic *Wife* 46)

With all the things including self-abortion, imaginary physical deformity, Dasguptas migrate to America they dream. Naturally, Dimple is shocked when they see the excellence of modern world. “Dimple had never seen television; she prayed that someone would turn it on” (*Wife* 54). Furthermore, she is too diffident to ask what it is. To make illustration, on dinner table “Dimple cursed herself for asking, even for noticing. He explained, though she no longer cared, that chicken parts came in clean little plastic packages...” (*Wife* 65). On the other hand, the family they will stay together does not keep up with American society. The father speaks “in a fast and funny mixture of English and Bengali” (*Wife* 51). Furthermore, Dasguptas trying to be perfect cannot assent the deficiency. For example, when the man criticizes Americans, he says; “And when they talked to you, you never know when they’re serious – baapré, I get a headache trying to understand them half the time.” *The admission of inadequacy chilled the air*” (my italic *Wife* 54). In fact, the

rejection of inadequacy is another problem Dimple has. The feeling of embarrassment hardens to externalize the emotions Dimple feels. No matter what she does, she endeavours not to make a mistake.

Whilst Dimple tries to “learn to please him in new ways” (*Wife* 44) in new their homeland till he finds a job, her husband has an effort to understand the American’s working styles. In fact Mukherjee indicates that the people coming from poorer countries cannot give up living in richer countries even if it is said to be a temporarily settlement. To make an example, Meena disagrees with her husband by saying that “It used to be thirty-five before,” laughed his wife. “Now he’s pushed it up to forty” (*Wife* 55).

In fact, one of the reasons why she has mental problems in America is her prototypes she takes as example. While Meena, the lady of house she lives, is so introvert and fearful that she thinks she will be murdered or raped outside the door, Ina Mullick, a friend of Meena is “more American than Americans” (*Wife* 68). Dimple cannot decide to stand behind these two figures who own abnormal lifestyle. Yet, Dimple, as Tandon indicates, is not seen as a social being by her husband and her society. “Dimple comes to the US as the dependent wife of an engineer, and is not expected to have any interaction with the new culture by her husband or her community” (*Wife* 48). And, the figure she chooses between Meena and Ina becomes blurry for her. Not talented to ascertain her identity, Dimple is forced to penetrate imaginary world.

The problems of adjustment that Dimple faces in the New World cultural location seems to stem from her inability to realize that the cultural identity, which she has inherited, is not, in any sense, an authentically Indian, indisputably non-western cultural identity but one that is irretrievably “impure,” culturally mix having been influenced by the many changes that the British colonial presence wrought upon the Indian socio-political landscape. (Tandon 49)

As aforementioned, not only does Dimple stick in the middle of two cultures but also there is another issue whose examples she should take while she lives in America. Meena’s whimsical anxieties make her behave more cowardly and isolate

her from the society she should get used to. Her advice to Dimple is appalling. “When you start shopping, Dimple, you’ll have to be very careful” (*Wife* 58). Moreover, she tells about the possibility of being murdered or raped even in the apartment they live. It is one of the reasons for non-socialization of Dimple.

“You want to get mugged? Women in this building – not me, touch wood – have been mugged in the basement. If you want to get killed and worse things, then go do the laundry yourself. Don’t listen to me. I tell you these people are *goondas*.”

“But why would anyone want to mug *me*?”

“It’s all the rare beef they eat. It makes them crazy.” (author’s italic *Wife* 70)

Additionally, Indian born friends she meets think the same as Meena. In their opinion, walking on the street, attending a college or the usage of transportation possess the possibility of mugging or murder. For example, the conversation between Dimple and Jyoti in a party is a good illustration. “‘You mean you can go to college at nights?’ asked Dimple. ‘If you want to get mugged on the subway,’ said Jyoti” (*Wife* 68). In this respect, Amit also supports the idea in order that he keeps her wife isolated and alienated. “Jyoti’s right,” said Amit. “With so many Indians around and a television and a child, a woman shouldn’t have any time to get crazy ideas.” He looked to Dimple for confirmation” (*Wife* 69). Amit’s desire of authentication by Dimple is a sign that he has a power on her, which will be discussed later.

Furthermore, with all warnings she is given, Dimple is scared to walk outside or do her daily work. For instance a few days later, she goes shopping for buying something. “No – I didn’t know the law,” she said. He was reaching under the counter, for a gun, Dimple thought. I’ve insulted him; I will stand here numbly and be shot. She couldn’t even scream” (*Wife* 59). Although the shopkeeper kindly tells there isn’t anything she wants, she misunderstands and swiftly leaves there. “She felt she’d come very close to getting killed on her third morning in America” (*Wife* 60). Among the friends, talking about murder or suicide is day-to-day conversation. “Talking about murders in America was like talking about the weather, and she was glad that an elderly couple had been fatally shot on a fishing trip so that *she did not have to feel guilty about Amit*” (my italic *Wife* 99). Dimple’s psychology gets worse

day by day. The critics imply that her mentality is so depraved that it can be counted as sadism. “The queer acts of Dimple give an impression that it is sheer sadistic pleasure that she derives. Dimple had the passion to accomplish selfhood” (Rao and Kasyap 27)

On the other hand, such is Dimple an obsessive woman that she does not feel secure in her own house on the fourteenth floor. When she hears anything from outside, she thinks that s/he may be burglar or thief. Even if her husband is home, she feels anxious. For instance; “At 4:38 by the travel clock in the bedroom she admitted to herself that she was scared. Everything scared her; the sputtering of the radiators,...” (*Wife* 155). To make more exemplification; “Between two and four in the morning she thought she heard men putting keys in the front door and roaches scuttling in the closet” (*Wife* 97). Furthermore, the fear extremely advances to stab accidentally her husband.

“I didn’t realize it was you sneaking up from behind like that,” she said. “I thought it was someone evil; you know what I mean? Some burglar who had broken in through the living-room windows.” She tried not to look at the starlike drop of blood on his shirtfront.

“How could anyone come in through the window?” Amit laughed. “We’re on the fourteenth floor, for God’s sake!”

In America, anything is possible,” she retorted. “You can be raped and killed on any floor.” (*Wife* 129)

Put up in a detailed way, Meena Sen and Ina Mullick represents Sita, the traditional Indian woman and self-centred modern woman respectively. While Meena Sen “wife revel in America’s consumer culture but have no desire to become part of the melting pot” (Alam 42) symbolizes superego, Dimple’s Indian part, Ina Mullick is her ego, the modern part. Unfortunately, these parts are not in a harmony like an ordinary individual for Dimple. As the critic indicates there constitute unreal ailments. “Dimple begins to experience a split personality, sees her body and soul apart, manifests extreme self-consciousness and acutely suffers from imaginary illness” (Babu 172).

As stated before, Dimple is influenced by Meena Sen because she unnecessarily warns about the possibilities of danger. At the same time, Ina makes the same impact on her as Meena. “But Ina Mullick might give Dimple some bad ideas” (*Wife* 68). These bad ideas Mukherjee implies are demands of American ‘modern’ women which Indian society does not assent as right. Interrogating and humiliating Dimple, Ina Mullick instils her ideas to her. “Ina sighed. “Why is food our national obsession? Why don’t we make more time for happiness? For love?” (*Wife* 95). To make more examples ““Okay, okay,” Ina said. “Let’s forget it. I was just trying to make you look normal and anonymous on Bleecker Street, that’s all” (*Wife* 155).

Nonetheless, Dimple starts to change and becomes the product of ‘melting pot’ as Ina Mullick envisages. It is clearly apparent that Dimple, scared of going outside thanks to Meena’s cautions cannot balance herself with Ina’s recommendations. The theory Ina produces is the general fact of immigrant psychology. Mukherjee signifies her considerations via her character Ina.

Bijoy turned and said, “Ina has this theory about Indian immigrants. It takes them a year to get India out of their system. In the second year they’ve bought all the things they’ve hungered for. So then they go back, or they stay here and vegetate or else they’ve got to live here like anyone else.” (*Wife* 76)

Additionally, Dimple’s changing can be observed by others. The more she interacts with Ina, the more extravert she becomes. She feels better since she moved to the USA. She “discussed important things like love and death. That’s what America meant to her” (*Wife* 85). Ironically, when she talks about love and death, she feels living in America just as she watches on television. However, she does not want to lose Ina, the only person who understands her. “...but she feared Ina’s laughter, or anger, more than anything in the world” (*Wife* 78). America, I think, consists of ads and dramas for her. However the improvement makes her more selective. “In the next few days, she could tell from the other’s reactions that she had become hard to please” (*Wife* 104). Lastly, she becomes so independent that she revolts against her husband expectancy as Amit warns about “You’re becoming American, but not too American, I hope. I don’t want you to be like Mrs. Mullick

and wear pants in the house!” (*Wife* 112). She asks Ina whether she borrows her American clothes or not. “Were you really serious about lending me your clothes? Or was it some kind of joke?” (*Wife* 159)

The conversations or discussions between Ina and Meena are clashes between modernism and traditionalism. Dimple hesitating for whom she choose is indecisive to justify. Even though her id vests for Ina, her superego is silent. Dimple wishing to get married to only a neuro-surgeon or an architect accepts a male dancer to marry. Also she is not satisfied to marry.

“But what’s wrong with marrying a male dancer?” asked Dimple.

Meena declared the marriage disgusting. “The only male dancer I would marry,” she said, “would be Uday Shankar. This Miss Singh is marrying just so she can stay in the country.” ...Dimple started to deny it all; she *felt crushed* between Ina’s approval and Meena’s quizzical silence. (my italic *Wife* 93-4)

On the other hand when looked to her marriage life, she does not have marital gratification by Amit. Their life is monotonous, which depressed her very much. The apron she wears in kitchen is very sarcastic symbol Mukherjee uses. “The apron said LOVE ME LOVE MY COOKING” (author’s capital *Wife* 82) because, when Amit tells her that he loves her, he says “I love you because you are a great cook. Here, let me lift that out of there (*Wife* 110-1). Furthermore, Dimple makes some accusations about not loving her any more. For instance, she understands Amit’s lovelessness from the way he scratches her back. “I can tell you hate me from the way you’re scratching my back. You always hated me! I know you wanted to marry someone fat and fair like Meena Sen!” (*Wife* 86) She also thinks that he wants her to die by not purchasing of lined gloves. “If I had had lined gloves, it wouldn’t have been so bad. Why didn’t you buy me lined gloves? You want me die. I know; you’re just waiting for me to die” (*Wife* 177).

Furthermore, she is no longer satisfied with her husband. “Amit did not feed her fantasy life; he was merely the provider of small material comforts” (*Wife* 113). She endeavours to see her husband attractive; yet, she feels shame but not

concupiscent; “It was the first time she had stood naked in the tub in front of her husband. Shame, she discovered, was a sobering emotion” (*Wife* 179).

While Amit becomes ordinary, the other men acquainted with are more attractive and passionate than usual. “Her husband appears to her dwindle in importance in New York while she feels a stirring of sexual desire for Jyonti and for Marsha Mookerji’s brother, Milt Glasser” (Alam 43). It is clear that she tends to be an American woman who fulfils her simplest desire. So, her ill-subconscious is revealed in her fantasies. “Her neurotic need to find a heaven is imagination shown in her sexual fantasies” (Babu 166).

Patil states it is a general problem of Indian woman Mukherjee projects. “This is now, the Indian women, in the flux of race and sexuality turn victims of their own crisis. Evidently, Dimple is caught in a tradition of passivity, female treachery and covert violence” (121). Comparing her husband with other man, Dimple does not understand that nobody is perfect, which irritates her and make sick. The critic associates dissatisfaction with her mental illnesses.

Thus, dissatisfaction leads to comparison, and undue comparison in turn leads to depression on account of which Dimple falls into frequent bouts of insomnia. During such moments, she suffers from paranoia...both from the Eros and the Thanatos complex. (Sarada 60)

Amit is, in fact, not capable of what is going on his around and Dimple. He has no sensitivity “to understand the complicated changes going on inside Dimple. Although quite tolerant and considerate in some ways, he is too self-absorbed and traditional to help his wife achieve selfhood” (Alam 41). His constrictions such Dimple’s not going to college or the condition that “He cannot think of letting her work” (Alam 41) limit her area. Tandon expresses that her mental problems are not only immigration and isolation but also “more deeply embedded than the temporary cultural shock diagnosed by her husband” (45).

Amit is, in this sense, inadequate to understand her feelings. However, he wants her to spend more time for herself provided that she does not become 'more American' (*Wife* 68). Amit offers "Why don't you try a sauna? American women are supposed to love saunas. Why don't you be outgoing like them?" (*Wife* 113). More examples can be given. For instance, after he rents a flat in Manhattan, he tells her wife "she ought to go out more often, make friends with the other women in the building - they had noticed four Indian names on the lobby register – invite them for coffee or go shopping" (*Wife* 111). The main problem is that Amit's control over her wife and limitation by saying not to be 'more American' (*Wife* 68). It is unknown what the limit is. As long as Dimple is in his sovereignty to satisfy him, which indicates that Amit still desires Indian traditions at home in America, she can do whatever she wants. Dimple is well-aware of the conditions.

She felt that Amit was waiting for just the right answer, that it was up to her to uphold Bengali womanhood, marriage and male pride. The right answer, *I do not need stimulants to feel happy in my husband's presence...* (author's italic *Wife* 78)

Moreover, as stated above, her marriage is totally shocked for her. Her expectations are too high for Amit to reach. "She was bitter that marriage had not betrayed her, had not provided all the glittery things she had imagined, had not brought her cocktails under canopied skies..." (*Wife* 101-2). America where she stays with Amit does not make her dreams true. Encouraged by being in the west, she tells her husband "Do you know I read in the papers that a woman divorced her husband because he snored?" (*Wife* 86) It is a kind of rebellion against her husband. The critic states that Dimple like Indian traditional woman will have the same destiny in both India and other countries.

Dimple, the wife, is torn between the old heritage and the new environment; she painfully attempts to adjust to American life and in the third part asserts herself over her "cold" husband in an act of violence in the violent, urban setting of Manhattan. It is too bad that the Americanization of the wife is painful and violent. Clearly, the novel raises an important question: was the Indian wife happier in India with her limited freedom and greater docility, or does she achieve happiness in her painful search for more individual freedom and in the process of maturing? (Rao 475)

Not allowed to go to college or start working by her husband, Dimple does housework. “Dimple liked having the living room to herself. She kept the TV on all day and did odd jobs like cleaning windows and vacuuming” (*Wife* 72). The possession of a house is her cupidity to feel confident, which Dimple rarely experiences. Watching television becomes her only habit killing her time. “She thought of the television set as her only friend; it was so undemanding, it gave and gave and asked nothing of her in return” (*Wife* 157). She watches television so much that she begins not noticing the differences between reality and imagination. The people around her are just like the characters in dramas or films. “Dimple feels confused as the T.V. insidiously erodes and already warped sense of reality, and she finds much difficulty in distinguishing her husband from the men on TV” (Tandon 48)

Watching television finally has bad impact on her including hallucination, madness and violence. “But her imagination, inflamed by too many hours in front of TV, pictures what might have been. And alone in the dark apartment, Dimple collapsed in terror” (*Wife* 162). After realization of effects, she is bored with television “the voice of madness” (Babu 170). The friendship between the protagonist and TV no longer goes on. She doesn’t want to watch television because “it was becoming the voice of madness” (*Wife* 176). Sarcastically, Mukherjee writes that media teaches Dimple life lessons. However, her mental progress is getting worse and worse day by day. “Television had taught her how to cope with life’s *real* problems. But it was the imaginary ills that were impossible to treat. She felt moody and lightheaded” (author’s italic *Wife* 205). Fakrul Alam claims that her sadism and aggression are increased by media. “Inevitably, she gets addicted to television, not realizing that the violence in her is further stimulated by it” (Alam 45).

On the other hand, when she migrates to America, she does not know anything about the life. She is too timid to behave in front of others. The husband and wife are mostly frightened of being embarrassed in front of people. However, she has struggles to learn new things. “She could not learn from them how to make friends with Archana though she learned the details of American home life” (*Wife*

73). Also when a new condition occurs, Dimple cannot decide what it must be done. Mukherjee ironically deals with in the novel; “-no one had told her how to behave with a husband’s friend in pajamas on the middle of the night - ” (*Wife* 99).

Dimple “...whose migration to America after matrimony results in suffering cultural shock, alienation and isolation” (Myles 2006B. 310) deteriorates day by day. Isolated from society, bad marriage, hallucination and violence via television addiction make her mentality worse. Her friend Ina’s enterprise of suicide deeply affects her. Ina’s words clarify Dimple’s psychology. “No one – no Bengali, not my husband, not you, absolutely no one understands me. Do you know that last night I thought seriously of suicide?” (*Wife* 136) After this experience, she significantly considers about the suicide “in the bathroom and try cutting up her jugular with a razor blade under the warm shower” (*Wife* 162). A great number of critics see Dimple as a victim of both Indian and American society.

it becomes clear that Dimple is the victim of a double marginalization: as a recent immigrant to the United States she finds it hard to adjust to American culture; and as the wife of a man who expects her to adhere to conventional Indian marital mores, she is condemned to a life within the four walls of a cramped apartment. (Verhoeven 97)

The attempt of suicide, the last solution for her mentality, can be referred to depression. She relapses into “a psychic disorder” (Tandon 45), which the critics have different explanations about her suicide. Some of whom claims that she tends to commit suicide no matter what she experiences. “The aspect of immigration shrinks in size, as far as the reasons for her mental decline are concerned. It is the basic temperament of Dimple that causes her mental depression” (Rao and Kasyap 28). Also Patil indifferently repeats the same idea. “Often she is struck by mental disorders and indubitably she attempts for a suicide” (Patil 120). On the other hand, some critics believe that Dimple Mukherjee characterizes is a victim of society she lives in. “Dimple also experiences an intense loneliness which is different, qualitatively, from the loneliness of the expatriate” (Nalini 190).

Even though Dimple cannot properly live in America, her dream land as she wishes, she quietly knows that she will not be as the same as she used to be. She is fully conscious that India will be bad memoirs for her. “Dimple was not sure where she wanted to die, but she was sure that dying would be just as senseless and unfair in Calcutta” (*Wife* 184). Calcutta is her past and a woman who self-aborts for a new beginning sees her past unbearable.

Furthermore, as Alam indicates that she comes to “America ready to be transformed and willing to seek out an identity” (41). She endeavours to change her life. “She wished she could begin again, forget the six hours she had spent on the park bench in the middle of the winter, wanted to look sexy like Ina Mullick” (*Wife* 182). Instead of wearing sari, she prefers jeans and shirts like Ina representing modernism for her. Amit and her limited society string “Dimple at home and in her Sari and thus refuses to allow her the anonymity of wearing pants or any contact outside the circle of expatriate wives” (Dlaska 57). In fact the jeans symbolize her attempt to be a western woman, which is suppressed by her husband. Also, she wants to indicate how American she becomes. Writing a letter to Pixie her best friend is a good example; “Every day she thought she should write a letter, something funny and witty with little hints of how American she had become but not so American that she was ridiculous,” (*Wife* 114).

Jocosely, Dimple cannot stand American women, though she would rather become an American woman. For example, she gives a party for neighbourhood. When the women offer her help, “she, convinced they were predators, kept them out of her kitchen” (*Wife* 151). She possesses a dilemma, either becoming Sita or westernized. Although Whitson claims that “Her confusion is understandable, given her Indian culture, which on one hand... on the other hand is informed by an encroaching Westernization” (Whitson 172), It seems Dimple is certain which way she goes. The choice of western and wish to overcome the obstacles are resulted in murder of her husband.

As well as she sees Americans as predators, she also feels alienated and isolated from other women. “How could she live in a country where she could not predict these basic patterns, where every other woman was a stranger, where she felt different, ignorant, exposed to ridicule in the elevator?” (*Wife* 112). It is a hard question for readers how Americanization can be expected from someone who thinks that they are predators. Mixed in two cultures, Dimple has psychological problems. She has a dilemma, India or America, old or new, Ina or Meena. The strict by her circle makes the phase of orientation impossible for her. “It gives an upsetting account of the conflict in two cultures, the Western and the Indian” (Tandon 54).

On the other hand, she herself knows that it will be tough period for orientation. “She had expected pain when she had come to America, had told herself that pain was part of any new beginning,” (*Wife* 115). Like in all Mukherjee’s novels and short stories, no transformation can be happened without tribulation. However, the problem of identity and nothing to do at home but watching television get her temper in severe pain. “This emptiness or nullity in her mind influenced by a barbaric culture leads her to bad dreams and nightmares” (Patil 122). Identity crisis Dimple experience is more painful term than other woman immigrants. Yet, it is very prominent for immigrants to be their voice. “This situation of cultural shock is perhaps a little too trite, for it could also be explained as the agony of a voice, struggling for identity, and getting stifled repeatedly” (Tandon 44).

Dimple, in contrast to her Indian traditions, falls in love with a man named Milt Glasser, one of the friends of Ina. Dimple pursues someone who talks and listens to her. Her husband does not understand her needs like communication with someone. “...she liked Milt Glasser. He was the only one she could talk to” (*Wife* 191). The communication conveys confidence to her. She relies on him more than all people in the world. “Wiping helped the plants breathe, Milt had said, and she trusted Milt, trusted him so implicitly that she could imagine the leaves sighing their gratitude” (*Wife* 186). Also his trustfulness strengthens their love. She likes him more than her husband. “...she remembered that she had once felt he was the only

person she could talk to. Now she was not listening to his words so much as memorizing his gestures and mannerisms” (*Wife* 203)

Furthermore, Dimple who cannot feel the excitement for her husband seeks in Milt. The expectancy of reader should not be high for Dimple supposing that America means love and death. “It is obvious that he excites her and represents for her nothing less than the seductiveness of the New World:” (Alam 46-7). These excites turns into subterfuges she cannot explain to herself. The traditions force her to feel guilty about her love. “Eating a pizza, was, after all, a very small crime and should not require too great an explanation. The main thing was to convince herself that Milt had forced her into the pizzeria” (*Wife* 194-5). Also Amit always limiting her does not provide her convenience, happiness and reliance. When Milt performs as her lover telling that “Dimple I’d like to look after you. You need some looking after” (*Wife* 199)’ she hesitates what she should do. Her mental conditions are getting worse and the association with Milt takes her from reality to imagination. “She was so much worse off than ever, more lonely, more cut off from Amit, from the Indians, left only with borrowed disguises. She felt like a shadow without feelings” (*Wife* 200). The dilemma between Ina and Meena is repeated as Amit and Milt. The quatrain she writes represents her feelings;

The road has not come to an end.
In the dark of the evening
I cannot see who is walking
Beside me...(*Wife* 190)

After all experiences, she becomes depressed and obsessive. She sometimes hallucinates and even when there is nothing to trouble, she starts panicking. “When she could detect no thumps and knocks on the door, no dangerous shuffling of drunkards, no keys being slid into locks, only a vast, unnerving silence, she began to panic” (*Wife* 58). There are many examples in the novels. For example; “Dimple was momentarily frozen, wanting to scream, when she heard the scratching at the door and then saw it move” (*Wife* 121). These traumatic attitudes indicate that her mentality becomes worse than depression. Her madness and hopelessness are correlated by Alam. “But Dimple’s outbursts mark her as a manic-depressive for

such spirited gestures or thoughts of rebellion from her are almost always followed by bouts of hopelessness” (46).

Apart from her dilemma, America and India, there is also a third world in her mind. “Linda Sandler considers the novel as the story of a woman is trapped between two cultures, and who aspires to a third, imagined world” (Tandon 54). Her apocryphal world makes everything more catastrophic and alienated for her. There are a great number of reasons separating her from reality such as “limited intelligence, confined to the Indian immigrant community and the television set” (Alam 40). Dimple symbolizing an ordinary immigrant woman in America has a traumatic transformation which costs her mentality and husband. Katrak juxtaposes her contradictions as;

Her multiple identities embody the physical and mental spaces that she traverses between the village of Hasnapur in India and the United States, fleeing immigration authorities and murderous ghosts from her past, seeking a belonging amidst the anguished thorns of various identities that struggle for integration. (Katrak 674)

There are also other reasons why she becomes a mad immigrant. When she thinks her past, she well knows that she dedicates her life to others, especially her husband. She doesn’t do anything for herself. “She feels that her life so far has been devoted to pleasing others, not herself” (Tandon 54-5). In addition, as an Indian, she feels humiliated in front of Americans. Scared of embarrassing herself, Dimple sorrows over her culture abashed by Americans. “Dimple is also suffering from the shock of seeing her culture of origin through new eyes” (Whitson 173). After a short period of time, she imitates what she sees in her new country in order not to embarrass herself.

With all bad experiences and traumas, Dimple starts to feel violence better way to get rid of her all tribulations. “She began to feel that violence was right even decent” (*Wife* 117). Her chronic depression gets worse and she endeavours to find a way to suppress her suffers. “Violence has become endemic with Dimple” (Tandon 52). Isolated from outside, Dimple is addicted to watch television at home. Dimple finds a solution via television. “Women on television got away with murder” (*Wife*

213). Her husband at first “as a dashing hero of a newspaper advertisement or a television commercial” (Alam 42) becomes an apology for her miserable life. Murder of husband is the only solution for her independence in her new country. “The tension generates in the novel by Dimple’s Jekyll and Hyde existence makes the atmosphere so charged with suspense that she contemplates murder or suicide as the solution for her unbearable dilemma” (Tandon 50).

The moment she kills her husband is literally depicted by Mukherjee. “...it stayed upright on the counter top, still with its eyes averted from her face, and she said very loudly to the knife that was redder now than it had ever been” (*Wife* 208). Mukherjee revolts against Indian traditions. The fact that she stabs the knife seven times is a symbol representing the tradition of marriage ceremony in India. The critic deals with the way of killing; “...whom she stabs seven times, symbolically, in apparent repudiation of the Hindu marriage bond signified by the seven ritual steps taken by the couple at the time of marriage” (Leong).

As aforementioned, as well as it is a reaction against Indian traditions, it can also be regarded as the way of deliverance from man or husband hegemony. Unexpectedly, Dimple clearly indicates her anger to him. To make clarify, the conversation between her and her husband reveals as; ““Is it all stuffed up? Take two aspirins and go to bed.”... “It’s not that ... it’s just that you...”” (*Wife* 208). However, Mukherjee implies that as the wife is a part of her husband in Indian customs, the wife must kill herself or her husband to save her life. Daska points out the situation Dimple is in;

Dimple saves her own life by taking Amit’s instead, not in a deliberate act of murder but in a suicide by proxy, well aware that she is eclipsing her own life together Amit’s, since in the Hindu traditions the wife is but part of her husband and cannot claim an existence independent of her husband’s. (Daska 67)

When the novel is studied in terms of feministic point of view, the date the novel was published is very prominent for feminist critics. Women’s liberation movement is very popular at that time. Even though the eastern readers do not

approve of killing her husband for freedom, the western readers think that it is essential to get rid of a husband like Amit Dasgupta.

The novel's brutal ending shocked and repelled many Indian readers, although it evoked a strong positive response in a U.S. audience influenced by the burgeoning women's liberation movement of the 1970s as yet another depiction of the ways in which women are channeled into restrictive roles. (Brians 113)

Mukherjee writes the novel in Canada at very hard times. Thinking about how hard times an Indian woman has, Mukherjee depicts them to indicate to the world. Dimple is not only the victim of her own tradition but is feeble-minded to understand what goes around. Her main theme in her novels and short stories is an immigrant woman suffering from isolation and alienation or striving to be a member of the society. "The immigrant situation of displacement is of prime interest to the writers" (Tandon 55). In her autobiographical book *Days and Nights in Calcutta*, she describes her book and explains why she authors a novel like that;

I cried when I got back to mission. I was writing a second novel, *Wife*, at the time, about a young Bengali wife who was sensitive enough to feel pain, but not intelligent enough to make sense out of her situation and break out. The anger that young wives around me trying so hard to hide had become my anger. And that anger washed over the manuscript. I wrote what I hoped would be a wounding novel. (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 268)

Nonetheless, Dimple will be her last protagonist who cannot adapt herself to the milieu she lives. Later protagonists are eager to acquaint the dominant culture they share. *Jasmine* first novel after *Wife* is about a woman who chases from American dream in order to fulfil her husband's will. "Unlike the protagonist in *Jasmine*, who falls in love with the American dream and the new life it promises, Dimple cannot generate enough energy to transform herself" (Dlaska 61).

Finally it can be expressed that Mukherjee manages to spotlight on Indian woman and traditions. The novel is severely criticized by feminist critics "who condemned the novel as propagating female passivity and categorized it as a book that has "to be killed" (Dlaska 45). Dimple venturing everything to live freely in the place she migrates even ends her pregnancy by her own. Coming to America,

Dimple is stuck home and limited to Indians and television, which resulted in her traumas. Also one of the critics concludes the novel as a disagreement between her expression and social expectancy. “Bharati Mukherjee’s second novel has as its major theme the plight of an Indian wife torn between the need to play society expects of her and her need for self-expression” (Alam 37). For all these reasons, it can be concluded that Mukherjee cannot well indicate the immigrant woman’s psychology and conditions by choosing the protagonist Dimple whose mentality is low.

3. *DAYS AND NIGHTS IN CALCUTTA*

Bharati Mukherjee's third work co-written with her husband Clarke Blaise, *Days and Nights in Calcutta* can be counted as both an autobiographic and travel book like the former novel *The Tiger's Daughter* whose protagonists visits her homeland Calcutta, India. The book is consisted of two parts written at the same time by Blaise and Mukherjee in order that the reader perceives their experiences from two different – Blaise's western and Mukherjee's eastern – points of view. After their house is burnt by mistake, which results in their house totally destruction, they decide to visit Mukherjee's family in India for their sabbatical year. With this book, Mukherjee tries to reflect India from both western and eastern points of view. However, Mukherjee faces her roots with her husband as Fruchter indicates;

In *Days and Nights in Calcutta*, Mukherjee and her husband, Clarke Blaise, have constructed a portmanteau autobiographical memoir or, perhaps, a palimpsest whose peeled-back layers incrementally reveal the pain of a diasporic intellectual confronting her attraction/repulsion to her "roots." (258)

As aforementioned, the book is comprised by two parts, former of which is written by Clarke Blaise and the latter of which is written by Bharati Mukherjee. Blaise is prone to use the techniques of oral storytelling pertaining to Orient. "Blaise straightforwardly sets out to write a travel memoir and, in so doing, at least semiconsciously recuperates the traditional narrative of the Orientalist traveller" (Fruchter 258). He writes a modern 'picaresque' novel. Also he mustn't be accused for the characteristics perceiving him as a colonial in a postcolonial India. Indians demarcates a line that he cannot be an Indian even if he tries to be. The incidence of homesickness he feels is a must-think example for readers. The fact that Blaise has blue eyes symbolizes his Occidentalism.

I remarked on the blueness of the sky (now visible from the open hallway), like a summertime Canadian sky, something to feel homesick for, and Anju answered before quickly entering another room, "You need not feel homesick. You have only to look in the mirror to see such blue." "What?" I asked. "Your eyes," she giggled, and disappeared for the rest of the morning. (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 78)

Nevertheless, when compared with Tara, the protagonist of *The Tiger's Daughter*, Mukherjee now has a power to meet her 'mleccha' husband to her family and her society. While Tara is scared of her husband's seeing Indian reality because of his socialist thoughts which means that he can object to peculiarities of traditions, her creator Mukherjee confronts with this experience. Doing so, Mukherjee tells her husband the roots and tradition she brought up. The critic believes that Mukherjee would like to improve her perspective.

But while Blaise does manage to record something of the real "India" Tara knew her husband would capture, the collaborative work assumes special significance when considered as an indispensable part of Mukherjee's oeuvre and integral to her developing vision of her status as an expatriate writer. (Alam 26)

Blaise begins his story about his trip saying that it was one of his wrong experiences he made. "Taking a hotel for a night in Hamburg would prove to be my first Calcutta mistake" (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 9). Blaise, in fact, wants to settle in India in the beginning but later he gives up his decision after he has many a bad experience he encounters. He learns Bengali and imitates some of the Bengali traditions in North America. "No one had expected the pronam from me (no one knew what to expect from me), and I'd not yet been called on to perform" (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 70). It is undoubted that he is open to the novelty. As he writes in the book that he learns many things to get used to India;

I yearned to get settled in India, and resented every traveler's check converted to francs or lire. A vision of India – or rather, of me in India – was ripening. I seemed to see myself learning Bengali stupendously fast and speaking it with friends; I saw myself at Satyajit Ray movies, at concerts and plays in a crisp white dhoti. I saw myself eating curry with my fingers. I was looking forward to heat (especially in frigid Paris wearing my MiracleMart Korean cottons), and for the first time the art of Europe, even of Amsterdam had been a bore (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 9)

Nevertheless, this journey is not for the first time Blaise has visited India. He really knows about the caste or lower and upper classes and these upper classes' desire to have a new life in the New World. In the city there are some physical innovations like skyscrapers and big buildings. "...in the newer office buildings

where Air-India, Bank of America, and a number of other giant corporations are putting up creamy skyscrapers, and not have to contend with the ‘other’ India” (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 15). According to Blaise, the American dream and the wish for living there is getting bigger day by day. “I have read that morning’s copy of Times of India (its page duller than on my first visit three years ago, almost preyellowed) and I think I have noticed creeping Americanisms from the last visit” (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 13). As Blaise indicates that, Indians, especially upper class, have a life as a western life.

Besides, as soon as he steps in India, the obscurity starts. For Blaise, one who visits India should neither try to change India and the society nor let himself flow in India. He indicates the collapse of system in India as a foreigner.

“For a Westerner, there is enough unknown even on the steps of the Air-India Building, or with friends and family, and especially on the streets of any Indian city, to satisfy all his tastes for texture and design. To seek more is greed. *Bom baim, Mum bai*. Trust only texture” (*Days and Nights in Calcutta*).

Blaise is also aware the distinction between caste and their position in the society. This makes him more conscious than other western authors. To make an exemplification, “Indian Christians, another form of the Western life; we closed the windows on them” (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 46). As well as this phrase is seen as confession, it is clear that he is certain about the policy and perspective of India. To make more examples; “He knew only that he was a Muslim, which explained why he was a good driver” (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 31). It means that the professions are shared between the castes. Unfortunately, the most catastrophic thing is that they believe it is God’s choice for it no matter how a person has talented or creative personality, which makes him upset about it. “His character, beliefs, and ambitions are reflected in the quality of his work, his loyalty and efficiency. Baas. The relationship between master and *chokra* is a cast relation. Men are *not* born equal in the eye of God” (author’s italic, *Days and Nights in Calcutta* 36). Blaise owns some hesitations about the conditions and clearly states as;

Don't make the mistake of writing that I don't recognize injustice and that I don't feel just as strongly as any high-minded Westerner on a two-week visit. But I thank God those people on the street and in the villages are abysmally ignorant of their rights and of my privileges as they were at the dawn of history. The alternative is too horrible to contemplate." (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 105)

As a sensible author, Blaise criticizes those who do not understand the art except humiliate the people who perform fine art. It really indicates that India does not gain the level of scrutinizing fine art. For instance; "He only writes of prostitutes and young people trying drug and sex. All bedroom scenes, right-wing filth. You must let me introduce you to *real* writers" (author's italic, *Days and Nights in Calcutta* 116). The man criticized is one of the most successful directors in India. Blaise disapproves of not understanding the real art.

I wanted to cry out weakly, No, no, I'm the Westerner here and I've seen *Last Tango in Paris* and *Deep Throat* and I know what sex in movies is like, and I know how chaste and obscure an item Ray is in the West! How can you say these things about the greatest artist in your culture? Mad Ireland, and now mad Calcutta, why must you grind your artists into exile (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 117)

Nevertheless, the other custom in upper class he indicates is nominal behaviours among each others. To make an exemplification, there is a neighbour who comes to Mukherjee's house every day but they do not know her first name. "Mrs. Chatterjee, fellow Bengali, lives across the road and stops in for tea two or three times a week and has done for six years, but she remains "Mrs. Chatterjee" (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 39).

Even though male characters have a minor role in Mukherjee's novels and short stories, her father "Bengali, of a good family but not exceptionally well educated. The family has been "Westernized" (which can mean many things) for a couple of generations" (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 139) becomes a prominent figure to shape herself. Before World War II, nationalism rises at the maximum level in Germany where he stays at that time. This induces his own Indian nationalism like Indians who gain their Independence in 1948. "The rise of Nazi Germany fired his own nationalism, as it did for millions of other Indians who had

never left” (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 26). However, also this makes him feel foreign in India like her daughter Bharati and her protagonists in novels and short stories. “Perhaps he finally tired of feeling foreign. Perhaps he felt he had delayed his rewards too long; it was time to go home and start collecting. The partner wanted him in Calcutta” (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 28). Mukherjee inherits the characteristics including foreignness, expatriation and aloofness from her father.

On the one hand, like Mukherjee, her sisters have the same destiny. Blaise depicts her sisters-in-law very well. “She is a brilliant woman, though very different in manner and appearance from Bharati. She is very much her father’s daughter, and I suspect that her life, too, will follow some larger national destiny, just as his has” (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 53). Furthermore, a sister called Ranu possesses strong characteristics more than Bharati. “Ranu was headstrong and married “beneath” her. Bharati was romantic and docile and married a *mleccha*, and now she wears miniskirts” (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 54). It reflects that getting married to someone out of caste make them ‘beneath’ from others’ perspectives even though it is an advantage for them to both improve themselves and make a connection between the old and the new.

On the other hand, depicting modern India before, Blaise emphasizes sisters’ psychological problems. Upper class’ desire to live in North America or Europe and vaccination to every teenage as a dream make youth miserable and desperate. For this reason, Blaise stresses as; “The daughters will suffer agonies their father never knew – modern India is in for agonies the world has never known – and it seems almost impossible to avoid or interfere” (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 57).

Finally, it can be deduced that Blaise in vicious circle, as expected, writes only what he sees in India. Deployed as a mirror, Blaise indicates India as it is due to being a western, which means what exactly they want to do. However, everything can be changed as he tells. “Life is flow in India, everything moves, though it moves at its own place” (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 17). He does not indicate that these variations make India better than before.

The second part written by Bharati Mukherjee has a great number of confessions about her thoughts and life in North America and India. Authoring an autobiographical book, Mukherjee reflects her inner side to the readers. One of the critics summarizes this book as; “her own struggles as he grapples with the complexities of returning home with a Canadian husband” (Moore 950). However Alam specifies by saying that there is cultural clashes between her and upper class woman with feministic point of view. Alam depicts as;

Mukherjee’s chapters of *Days and Nights in Calcutta* concentrate mostly on the lives of the upper-middle-class women of the city with whom she had gone to school and on her discovery that there was a gulf that separated her now from them. (Alam 27)

When referred to Mukherjee’s life, she lives in Canada for many years. She has many a bad experience in Canada such as sniped or behaved as a prostitute in the streets. Being a Canadian citizen is worse than being Indian citizen according to her. Feeling loneliness or isolation is very hard thing she encounters. To illustrate; “...became Canadian citizen. But in Canada I feel isolated, separate in the vastness of this underpopulated country” (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 169). However, Mukherjee “lost myself in the swamps of being a “Third World Woman Writer” in North America” (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 253) well knows that Canadian society even Canadian Writers’ Association do not accept her as a member of society. To make more illustration; “Prior to this year-long stay in India, I had seen myself as others saw me in Montreal, a brown woman in a white society, different perhaps even special, but definitely not a part of the majority” (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 179). She absolutely deals with this issue, which indicates that she is deeply affected by. Despite living for many years and being a professor in university, she cannot sanctify herself as a totally western to her colleagues and people around her. It indicates that Mukherjee cannot complete her assimilation process owing to not approving of being one of whom they behave her as an ordinary individual.

I am not charmed when colleagues compliment me for not having a “singsong” accent. I am tired of being exotic, being complimented for qualities of voice, education, bearing, appearance, that are not extraordinary.

But if as a citizen I am painfully visible, I cannot make myself visible at all as a Canadian writer. (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 169)

On the other hand, while Canada gives the author great contrition and depression, America becomes adorable and lively country she would like to live. In many speeches and works, she clearly addresses her feelings about the country. “It is, of course, America that I love. Where history occurs with the dramatic swiftness and interest of half –hour television shows. America is sheer luxury, being touched more by the presentation of tragedy itself” (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 168). One of the most prominent things is that America will be better than portentous Canada when later two short story books *Darkness* and *Middleman and Other Stories* are scrutinized.

Whatever she does for making herself accepted by her friends, she cannot avoid being criticised by her society. To make an exemplification, when she talks with her friends, any small things she misunderstands make her the black sheep of the group. “Don’t be boring, Bharati,” she said good-naturedly. “Really, America’s made you as bad a fuss-pot as all the Englishmen we keep entertaining” (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 250). It is clear that Mukherjee living in North America will be dissected by her society no matter what she does.

Before stating her trip to homeland Calcutta, it is very crucial to be scrutinized her background and education. Mukherjee attends to missionary school given European lessons by Belgian nuns without recognition of her culture after returning from England. For example, Mukherjee not knowing Indian writers deals with English authors in school years. “...by Heinrich Zimmer, whose work had not been brought to my attention as a schoolgirl in Calcutta because the missionary school I attend taught no Indian history, culture, art, or religion” (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 171). Fruchter proudly claims that Mukherjee is aware of her conditions. “One price of this type of privacy and individuation was her first consciousness of her own Otherness, an awkward brown unassimilable child among a white, English-speaking group of students” (260).

Mukherjee is also conscious about the importance of the language. Not knowing her culture and traditions is not because she uses English in her daily life or her works but because she is far away from her mother tongue. To make an illustration, as she says; “For me, it was a reminder that I had almost lost the Hindu instinct for miraculous transformation of the literal” (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 171). Mukherjee is also knowledgeable about the usage of English suspends her culture and traditions from her.

My Indianness is fragile; it has to be professed and fought for, even though I look so unmistakably Indian. Language transforms our ways of apprehending the world; I fear that my decades-long use of English as a first language has cut me off from my *desh* (=country, nation) (author’s italic *Days and Nights in Calcutta* 170)

Furthermore, in her sabbatical year, a visit to her family is essential for her to re-discover herself and understand the whereabouts in her society. Even though she takes the risks on whether she will be sincerely welcomed by her society or not, the cultural clashes are far harder than the risks. “Of course I had other reasons for going to India. I was going because I had discovered that while changing citizenships is easy, swapping cultures is not” (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 169). However, it is not surprising that Blaise’s escorting to her wife in India provides less attention to Mukherjee, who does not wish all spotlights on. Also, as the critic indicates, Mukherjee is as oblivious as her western husband.

While Clarke Blaise was truly an outsider in India, Mukherjee, too, was a stranger in her homeland after years spent abroad. The stay provided a wealth of material for the novelist in Mukherjee as she observed the lives of women with whom she had grown up and who were now busy socialites living in the shadow of their husbands. (Kapai 204)

Like her previous novels, Mukherjee rooting “herself in Calcutta by immersing herself in the social life of the city, everywhere she goes and everything that she observes reminds her of her alienation from Calcuttans” (Alam 31) describes her town Calcutta. The town becomes blind and deaf for her because it isn’t as she used to. The cultural abyss including cultural clashes, or lack of communication is higher than she expects. As she says, “Calcutta seemed to me to be made up of separate walled villages between which there was only defective communication”

(*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 219). Alam dealing with this incidence elucidates that it would be ridiculous of Mukherjee if the society welcomed her with open arms. “But if Mukherjee believed that she would be accepted easily by Calcutta or that reentry into the world she had left behind would pose no problem, she was soon disabused of such notions” (30).

On the other hand, unlike her husband, Mukherjee gets upset as well as criticism, when she sees the degeneration in the society. People’s ignorance to rights and identity makes Mukherjee miserable and even conscious which indicates her prone to Occidentalism.

Bengalis, especially those from Calcutta, are arrogant about their subnational identity. They do not seek connection with a larger world, except on equal terms. It pained me, therefore, to discover even before I had landed in the city that my connections with North America were so obvious. (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 199)

What’s more, Mukherjee is additionally concerned with woman conditions in India. Not only is their occupation “as housewives (chattelaines is almost appropriate) demanded certain skills: managerial shrewdness, physical stamina, diplomacy” (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 204) very hard to be handled by women, but also other professions are not ‘preferred alternative’. However, worse than this incidence is that women resent the owners of career. For instance after she tells they envy her, she complains about the woman situation; “I was a career person, which meant that I had the right to independent thought without incurring censure, while the middle-class Bengali woman was locked into a woman’s world of gossip and speculation” (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 225).

In fact, woman must not be merely blamed for the lack of education and occupation. There are many examples in her book due to the fact that Mukherjee tries to reflect the problem. For instance; “Even though her husband had studied in the United States, Meena has to struggle with their community’s code that dictates that a woman should not study” (Alam 29). Alam, with some justification, connects the code with the duty of woman towards man, which irritates the feminist critics. Additionally, Mukherjee criticizes Indian traditions and myths like in her former

novel *Darkness*. “She told me that her anger against Manu (ca. 500 B.C.) bore resemblance to the intensity of the anger of some American feminist against Freud” (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 236). She clearly reflects her arrogance towards the myth in her traditions. The women listening to Sita the goddess who walks on the fire just because of her husband wish, of course, cannot think properly what to do for shaping her own life. Alam, again, gives an example of woman who sacrifices herself for her man.

On the surface, a woman like Anjali was content and played perfectly the roles required of her by her society; she was the ideal wife, mother, mistress of her household servants, and patron of the city’s poor. But like the Sita of Hindu myths, Anjali and other women like her had sacrificed themselves for their husbands;” (29)

In fact when examined the upper class behaviours, the dream they have must be taken consideration. Like others, Mukherjee and her sisters not estimating the results have the same ambition to fulfil. On Mukherjee mentions about her sister’s dream, she says; “She wanted a “Westernized” groom who had studied abroad, and who could command for her a “Westernized” life style in a pretty flat on Park Street or Chowringhee” (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 184). This immaculate desire may sometimes be resulted as bad situations. For example, when the husband having stayed in England for many years wants her English food, the wife cannot do anything in penurious Calcutta even if they live in a sheer luxury.

“It’s been a perfectly horrid morning,” she said apologetically as I climbed in. “I have been interviewing English-style cooks and they all want to make me something called baked carp á la anchovy sauce! I don’t know that I can even find canned anchovy in Calcutta, let alone afford it.” (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 240)

Additionally, Blaise, Mukherjee’s western point of view, is totally surprised for all the experiences he encounters. The mis-criticism of real artists or the society perspective to his family makes him shocked in India. When compared between Montreal and Calcutta, there is not a vast chasm between these cities such as the feeling of isolation and alienation. “Clarke was astonished by the elasticity of this society, compared to the narrowness of ours in Montreal. As for me, I felt sheepish

that I was now so eager to explore the social life I had once regarded with irony” (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 199).

The most crucial sense Mukherjee feels in Calcutta is that nothing will be the same as she is accustomed to. She starts to blame herself for all the things. “It was I who was at fault for having set myself up as a professional interpreter of the slightest signs” (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 200). In fact, the psychological problems start in this phase. Mukherjee “not wise enough to discriminate intelligently between malice and play” (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 251) becomes more sensible and uncomfortable around her. “And that was the first time I had felt that someone was about to remove a part of my brain in order to make me a different creature than I was, and I had collapsed in tears” (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 228). This makes her miserable and desperate towards other people.

Finally, Mukherjee’s book *Days and Nights in Calcutta* deals with trip to her homeland. The reason of abandonment is, Mukherjee states as, “I went because I had to escape crushing parental love” (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 283). However, her return to homeland is much more painful than leaving. Coming with her husband Clarke Blaise, Mukherjee coherently implies her family and society that she is a North America citizen and she cannot be Indian as they expect her. She does not assent herself as a real Indian. “We were born both too late and not late enough to be real Indians” (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 223). As aforementioned, she chooses her homeland America. Canada and India give nothing but trouble to Mukherjee. At the end she confesses as; “...but I had to admit that by the end of the year in India I no longer liked India in the unreal and exaggerated ways I had in Montreal” (*Days and Nights in Calcutta* 284). She clearly discloses that she is happy to leave India. She knows “they will no longer accept her within their midst without reservation” (Alam 31). In fact, with this book, the reader can apprehend that Mukherjee undergoes a metamorphosis which means that her perspective is no longer to her homeland India but North America.

Thus, at the end of the year spent in the city of her birth, Mukherjee declares she was glad to leave India and ready to view herself henceforth as an immigrant and not an exile. She had made friends in Calcutta in the months she had been there and had enjoyed being “racially invisible,” but India would no longer be for her “a talisman” that would enable her to survive as an exile in Canada (Alam 32)

SECOND CHAPTER

Darkness written in both America and Canada by Mukherjee consists of twelve short stories concerning with migration, isolation and disorientation as expected from Mukherjee. Different from her previous novels, Mukherjee introduces the readers all caste of Indians from the lowest to the top. While the short stories written in Canada are more gloomy and desperate, the ones authored in America are hopeful and life-affirming for both protagonists and readers. *Darkness* can be counted as her 'second birth' by Mukherjee. With this book, it is evident that she writes the matters and psychology of immigrants in North America instead of concern for her homeland India. As the critic states "*Darkness* was a breakthrough book in the sense that Bharati Mukherjee was writing about the changes among the immigrants" (Tandon 63)

On the other hand, *The Middleman and Other Stories*, as understood from the title, is a transition book from exile to immigration. Consisting of eleven short stories, the book has great number of people coming from all around the world varying from American to Korean. Nominating all immigrants' advocacy, Mukherjee deals with not only immigrants' problems in new country they live but also the resident white Anglo-Saxon Americans having the obligatory to live with immigrants together. Mukherjee believes in togetherness in the community and no difference between newcomers and natives in the same country. Comparing these two short story books, Lesser pays attention the resemblances between them by claiming as;

In the collections *Darkness* (1985) and *The Middleman and Other Stories* (1988) we are allowed to inhabit, sequentially, a range of American types, from the status-conscious, recently arrived Indian housewife, through the thuggish Italian-American city boy, to the Midwestern suburbanite; and are permitted to discover the ways in which each person's world-view is both limited and fortified by a specific cultural inheritance (419)

Jasmine which can be counted as a bildungsroman deals with Jyoti who lives in a remote village in India. The inclination to attend the university and become distinctive from the others causes some difficulties in her life. "She will never be a

doctor, but she has developed a sense of possibility that will drive her for the rest of her life” (Brians 120). She marries Prakash who falls in love at first sight. Prakash who wants to study engineering in America renames Jyoti as Jasmine. Unfortunately, she loses her husband in attack by radicals. To realize his desire, she illegally migrates to America. The captain taking her to the US rapes her; yet, Jasmine succeeds in murdering her. After staying with Professorji’s family, she gets her green card and starts as caregiver in an American family. When she sees one of the terrorists who kills her husband she is scared and moves to Iowa. However, the pregnant Jasmine decides to go to California with Taylor, the ex-lover in New York.

Mukherjee represents the Indian woman who survives in America. Her struggle to live more comfortably causes her transformation. Even though the transformation happens in terms of the men she shares her life, self-learning occurs in these stages. Ray briefly summarizes the novel as;

An enthusiastic valorization of the migrant as an agent of disruption can be said to characterize Jasmine, the eponymous heroine of Bharati Mukherjee’s novel. But the dissident presence of an East Indian woman in America who retreads the footsteps of the early immigrants moving west in search of a new home and land is reterritorialized in Mukherjee’s valorization of her heroine as adopting and reflecting the adventurous spirit characteristic of the American. (190)

The last novel in this part *The Holder of the World* is Mukherjee’s first historifiction novel. Having disorientation and dislocation make the novel complicated for readers. Beigh Master, the narrator of the novel is a Phd student in Yale University in the twentieth century. She seeks the Emperor Tears, one of the most distinctive diamonds in the world with Venn, her boyfriend who manages to make a machine making possible to travel in time. Beigh seeks her ancestor Hannah Easton Fitch Legge, who goes to India in the seventeenth century. Hannah gets married to Gabriel Legge, who has bibi, an Indian woman. After her husband’s death, she embarks on some adventures with her maid Bhagmati. Then she falls in love with an Indian rajah. She battles against her lover’s enemies, yet she is captured. She succeeds in escaping from there. When she returns her home, she is

pregnant. She has to live in the Puritan society. At the end of the novel Beigh encounters with her ancestor Hannah.

Like her previous novel *Jasmine*, this novel has the characteristic of transformation and orientation. While Jasmine goes to America to get better life, Hannah notices herself and her sexuality in India. Also Hester Prynne, one of the names given to the protagonist is distinctive name whose protagonist has the same name of *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne. In fact Mukherjee has the idea of reflecting the ideal citizen of West who is tolerant of differences. The critic also summarizes as;

...*The Holder of the World* sets out to rewrite America in its imaginative and artificially imposed roots, suggesting it was hybrid and heterogeneous in the very beginning of its Euro-centric tradition. Mukherjee takes the reverse route on her journey of discovery, insisting that all parties involved, immigrants and settled Americans alike, make the epistemological efforts Puritanism failed to make. (Dlaska 170)

1. *DARKNESS*

Mukherjee's first short story collection *Darkness* consists of twelve stories, six of which were published in different magazines and newspapers before. It deals with immigrant psychology and problems, the feeling of belonging and the disorientation, which Mukherjee reflects all her novels and short stories. There are a great number of interpretations on the theme of *Darkness*. Grewal defines as "a collection of short stories that register the despair produced by the encounter with Canadian racism" (98). On the other hand, Tandon deliberately emphasizes more general theme than Grewal by saying that *Darkness* "raises questions about human dignity, about the true value of diversity, about the tension between assimilation and preservation of cultures..." (72). While her previous novels, the protagonists of which are exposed to traumatic transformation, have the characteristics of depression, isolation and disorientation, *Darkness* gives "the will to bond oneself to a new community, against the ever-present fear of failure and betrayal" (*Darkness* xv). Inasmuch as woman's maturation is studied in this thesis, all short stories will not be analyzed due to the deficiency of female characters in some short stories.

Mukherjee severely criticizes Canadian policy to immigrants. The 'mosaic' philosophy, Mukherjee rejects, is multiculturalism a combination of all nations living together. Despite the fact that the idea seems reasonable and positive, the practice process does not penetrate as well as expected. Racism reappears in the country and South Asian born Mukherjee sustains some unappealing experiences. The critic makes clear about Canadian reality as;

The reappearance of racism in a country that prides itself in being "a nation of immigrants" and whose government officially proclaims multiculturalism partly reflects current economic instability. Regrettably, it also mirrors a long-term problem, the lack of a secure sense of self-identity among English Canadians... (Roy 206)

In this sense, considering that some characters of short stories are created in Canada, it is natural the characters are "lost souls, put upon and pathetic" (*Darkness* xiii). Mukherjee perceives the contradictions or differences between expression and attitude. Although Canada "proudly boasts of its opposition to the whole concept of

cultural assimilation” (*Darkness* xiv), it becomes a hostile to her citizens whose ethnicity are not from Canada. However, Mukherjee endeavours to become the voice of immigrants who live in both America and Canada. Her upper-class characters transform the individuals in all parts of South Asia. “Having overcome her anger at Canada’s treatment of herself as part of an uneducated underclass, she can now see herself as an outcast like them and is determined to overcome that aloofness in her fiction” (Dlaska 74).

However, no matter what the characters are exposed to alienation or physical torture, they can easily adapt themselves the place they live. The life conditions in the migrated country are hard but they face the obstacles unlike previous novels. “...the theme of expatriation is linked to fragmented, disintegrating, alienated characters, while the immigrants are fairly well adjusted to the new country and its life style” (Nalini 193). They endeavour re-gaining their statuses they lose in North America. “*Darkness*, documents the struggles of newly arrived South Asians, their experiences of alienation and racism as they try to find their "place" in American society” (Katrak 676). The struggle and performance to authenticate themselves they carry out should be more than natives. Transition to gain upper status always becomes disconsolate. Tandon generalizes theme as;

The stories of *Darkness* migrants, estranges from their new environment or characters from Bangladesh, Punjab, Muslim princely state Lebanon, etc. the stories deal with the classical theme of diaspora of exile and emigration, of *all acts of courage and will* required by the experience, all the traumas, ironies and failures of it. (my italic 63)

It can be, I think, regarded as an elaboration process for Mukherjee even if her protagonists suffer from disorientation and isolation. Because she is absolutely aware that she cannot be a part of India any more, she diverges from her homeland. The obligation living in North America drives her new scopes indicating the invention of new solutions to immigration issues instead of running away from it. Andrews points out the same issue as; “For both these constituencies within an immigrant group, one thing is certain: *no return to the past is possible*” (my italic 56). Mirroring the prospects of immigrants may be the beginning of solution in her opinion.

Nonetheless, Mukherjee at first deprecates American policy 'melting pot'. "Mukherjee views official American theories of multiculturalism with similar distrust as the Canadian 'mosaic' philosophy" (Dlaska 73). Yet, she decides that it will be better solution on immigration in spite of its lacks. Advocating the Indian, Mukherjee criticizes Canada "many times more hostile than the US to immigrants" (Tandon 62). And the same critic goes on her interpretation declaring "racism in its more virulent forms is present mostly in stories that have a Canadian setting" (Tandon 62). Short stories written in Canada are more caliginous than written in America. In doing so, she takes America as a model;

With some important late twentieth century differences, Mukherjee advocates the melting-pot model of assimilation that accompanied earlier waves of European immigration. Critical of the Canadian policy of "multiculturalism," which she sees as reinforcing ethnic differences, she subscribes instead to the U.S. model. (Rege 395)

On the other hand the language Mukherjee uses is English, the product of dominant culture. Her English is much better than many of English writers. Anita Desai, one of the prominent Indian writers using English, glorifies her usage of the language. She apprehends "Mukherjee's ability to catch with "near-perfection the American tone, the American hysteria, the American *angst*" in some stories..." (author's italic Alam 71). As aforementioned, her characters are from all parts of Asia and North America. The language they use is a mixture of English and their native language. The critic suggests that their language indicates their background consisting of both their homeland culture and the culture of country they emigrate. "Their use of language is but one manifestation of their split dual personalities" (Tandon 67).

Mukherjee goes a step ahead. As Rege indicates, her language style represents her choice which country she would like to live as well as she re-adjusts her for the conditions of North America due to the statement to western readers. "Reshaping of self involves reshaping of language as well. Mukherjee uses neither contemporary Indian English nor colonial British English in her stories, but instead

employs a hard-nosed, “tough-cookie” American English...” (396). Furthermore, in one of the conversations she makes she clearly opens her feelings, the desire and love of the usage of English;

Perhaps we who appropriate English are more aware of the language’s powers than are native speakers. Language gives me my identity. I am the writer I am because I write in North American English about immigrants in the New World. (Hancock Interview 38: 35)

Mukherjee herself accepts her effloresce on both her mind and writings. Instead of only depressive protagonists, she authors the women knowing what they want and trying to find their places in the society. “She sees *Darkness* as her ‘second birth’ as a writer” (Tandon 61). She also writes in the introduction of *Darkness* as; “For me, it is a movement away from the aloofness of expatriation, to the exuberance of immigration” (xv). *Darkness* is a term of transition from expatriation to immigration.

In her short stories, the women are more social and adapted to the society they live in their new country than men. “Mukherjee clearly distinguishes between her female protagonists’ need to achieve independence and their subsequent desire to find a place where they can live independently” (Dlaska 85). As Dlaska indicates, Mukherjee thinks women need more freedom and the capacity to achieve standing without any help. “They are more enterprising and willing to take risks to discover themselves and to break out of the prisons of sexual discrimination they find themselves in as women” (Tandon 73). They are more open to the new experiences and cultures. Unlike previous protagonists Tara and Dimple, stuck between two cultures, the heroines in *Darkness* have the ability to overcome the obstacles in their front. Dlaska concerning with the issue indicates as;

Especially, the women are successful in finding a place for themselves in the new country, no matter whether they are wealthy wives or political refugees. The fact that they feel marginalized in their own community usually heightens their determination to overcome being an outsider in America. (77)

The explanation why men are closer to adapt to the new culture is the threat of reduction of their hegemony on women. While they are dominant on women in their homeland, they cannot give up losing their authority in the new country. Because the acceptance of the new culture means the acknowledgement of the equality of women. The critic indicates the men who lose their predominance may tend to violence;

Their inability to choose between worlds renders them unable to lead satisfying lives outside their professions. As they lose authority and patriarchal power, they try to reassert it in its purest form, and thus often turn to violence. (Dlaska 77)

The first short story “Angela” is about a girl named, as it can easily be guessed, Angela adopted by a liberal American family. Before adoption, living with her family happily, six-year-old Angela has a great deal of agony including “soldiers with bayonets cut off my nipples” (*Darkness* 4). The physical deformity makes her grotesque protagonist, which makes her the mistake of marriage choosing ‘distasteful’ doctor Mr. Menezies. She experiences many bad memoirs she cannot remember such as “The rapes, the dogs chewing on dead bodies, the soldiers” (*Darkness* 8). Moreover, she is abandoned for death by soldiers. Her independence is perceived as a miraculous experience by her religious family. “They left you for dead, but the Lord saved you. Now it’s your turn to do Him credit” (*Darkness* 4).

Angela is very distinctive from Mukherjee’s previous heroines, especially Dimple. As aforementioned, Dimple fearing of embarrassment is not mature enough to accept her deficiency; however, Angela accepts with a confession “It is a family joke that I hate to read – my English isn’t good enough yet” (*Darkness* 2). Nobody must be perfect in a world of darkness.

Dr. Menezies, the desperate lover of protagonist, symbolizes her past and India. Angela compares her and her step brother Kim, adopted a Korean child with the doctor. Thinking about doctor, Angela realizes the doctor lives his own life while Kim and she are made to assimilate. They have the obligation to live both their traditions and family’s customs. “He approaches the New World with his

stethoscope drawn; he listens to its scary gurgles. He leaves the frolicking to natives. Kim and I are forced to assimilate” (*Darkness* 12).

Contrary to Angela’s thoughts, she does not have any contradictions or obligations to choose one culture. Her family gives her the chance to chase which way she would like to go. “You will have to fly, Angie. Make your own life. No shilly-shally, no depending on other people here” (*Darkness* 13). She has the opportunity to sustain her own life. “However, she is not torn between choosing one culture over the other, as she can read both cultural codes and seems comfortable accommodating Dr. Menezies’ and her family’s desires and concerns” (Dlaska 84). As clearly understood, Angela does not have a dilemma between her own culture or her family culture. Dlaska comparing to other heroines in *Darkness* sees her situation more comfortable and harmoniously;

...in Mukherjee’s term this usually makes the process of Americanization easier, because no contradictory choices or self doubts hamper integration into the new culture. More than Vinita, Hafeesa or Leela, Angela seems thus free to explore her place in America. (Dlaska 83-4)

The second short story, written by Mukherjee, “The Lady from Lucknow” concerns with a woman called Nafeesa Hafeez espied by his wife when she commits adultery with a married man. Nafeesa and her husband Iqbal have an ordinary and ‘decent’ life to their children. However, Nafeesa does not see the adultery as guilty or contrition for her husband. It is also an ordinary activity like shopping or barbecue in garden. “Adultery in my house is probably no different, no quieter, than in other houses in this neighbourhood” (*Darkness* 23). She seeks excitement and sexual satisfaction while her husband is aboard. “It wasn’t guilt I felt (guilt comes with desire not acted), but wonder that while I’d dash out Tuesday night...” (*Darkness* 23).

Nafeesa’s desire to have sexual pleasure without love affairs is a radical change in Mukherjee’s style and technique. America gives her exemption to behave freely:- “...America itself has a positive charge for Mukherjee in that the country offers sexual freedom and, by implication, freedom from all stifling conventions”

(Alam 66). On the other hand, telling how she is brought up in a Muslim society, Mukherjee alludes to the traditions of India. It is very crucial to represent a woman who is able to achieve her expectations. As Alam states, the country she migrates gives the chance;

...Nafessa has had enough of being treated as an object that can be pushed around or as a person who can be taken for granted all the time, and is eager for the sexual freedom that America seems to offer, especially for someone like her who has been brought up in an extremely puritanical environment. (Alam 65)

The episode she experienced is the reason for her transformation. The conversation between her and James committing adultery arises her self-belief and self-confidence. It can be regarded as a revolt against men or symbolically colonizing if Nafeesa is considered as colonized. Nafeesa like all women having self-respect protests as though she were new cleaning woman.

James didn't go to pieces. I had to admire that. He said, "Get in the bathroom. Get dressed. I'll take care of this."

I am submissive by training. To survive, the Asian wife will usually do as she is told. But this time I stayed in bed.

"How are you going to explain me away, James? Tell her I'm the new cleaning woman? I laughed, and my laugh tinkled flirtatiously, at least to me.

"Get in the bathroom." This was the fiercest I'd ever heard him. (*Darkness* 25-6)

Afterwards, his wife arrives home and sees them on the bed. The wife does not care about the woman with her husband on the same bed simply owing to her being of Indian ethnicity. "I'm definitely the jealous kind," Kate Beamish said. "I might have stabbed you if I could take you seriously. But you are quite ludicrous lounging like Goya nude on my bed" (*Darkness* 26). The wife seriously disregards Nafeesa even if she has sexual intercourse. The emotion she feels is nothing but apoplexy and displeasure. "My arms are numb, my breathing loud and ugly from pressing hard against the cedar railing. The pain in my chest will not go away. I should be tasting blood in my throat by now" (*Darkness* 27-8)

A great number of critics interpret the incidence Nafeesa has. As well as some of the critics like Tandon imply that Kate Beamish humiliates her by disregarding her female honour, some of them mentions about colonialist idea in post-colonial world. Daska emphasizing Nafeesa's Americanism claims that she rediscovers family love and patriotism. "She is deeply hurt as the American woman re-turns the image in its colonial version; she dismisses Nafeesa's passion for her husband and her country as the sordid affair of a white man" (81). Furthermore, Alam regards Kate Beamish as a *memsahib* the then landlady in India in colonial time;

What rankles Nafessa is the way Kate Beamish decides to ignore her as someone beneath contempt, ... It was as if Kate was a *memsahib* in some colonial outpost, indulging her husband's tastes for a colored mistress whom he would abandon sooner or later. (65)

On the other hand; Nafeesa compared to the previous protagonists is more eager to be an American and she would like to discover her needs and desires. Even though Tara and Dimple are not able to move between social pressure and her desires, Nafeesa can fulfil her desire even if it means adultery.

She is one step ahead of Vinita and Dimple in that she is ready to explore that desire. In this sense, Brinda Bose argues, she is typical of many of measure of their increasing detachment from traditional sexual mores and correspondingly, of their assimilation in the New World. (Daska 80)

The third short story written in Canada by Mukherjee "The World According to Hsü" is concerned with a couple, an Indian and Canadian, who have a holiday in Africa. However, when they arrive the country, there is a revolution, which makes her vocation as a disaster. Ratna, the protagonist of the story, has a dream living in Canada as a western despite her Indian ethnicity. "She imagined herself in her daring new bikini on a shoreline tangled with branches and cattle skulls. The landscape was always narcotically beautiful" (*Darkness* 30). Whatever she has bad experiences, it is important for readers to indicate her excitement of live.

The trouble they have in Africa is a sign for her self-conscious. She also has many problems in Toronto; “I don’t know why you two went to Africa. If you wanted trouble you could’ve found it right here in Canada” (*Darkness* 31). However, the racism and discrimination are more distinctive than a revolution because Toronto is a permanent place they live. When her husband asks her why she is dejected, she talks about the racism in Canada;

“I’m worrying about Toronto.” A week before their flight, a Bengali woman was beaten and nearly blinded on the street. And the week before that an eight-year-old Punjabi boy was stuck by a car announcing on its bumper: KEEP CANADA GREEN PAINT A PAKI. (author’s capital *Darkness* 39)

On the other hand, when there are clashes on the streets, the driver insists on going Hilton. “...all the Indians, they stay at the Hilton. In times like these, it’s the safest place” (*Darkness* 35). Being the safest place in the country, Hilton is a symbol indicating the obligation of dependence to western. Also Ratna herself alleges “I am a Canadian,” Ratna said arrogantly. “I’m a Canadian tourist and I want to stay at Papillon in the marketplace, okay?” (*Darkness* 40). The contradiction where she belongs to is very prominent for Ratna feeling as Canadian whose ethnicity is India. “...no matter where she lived, she would never feel so at home again” (*Darkness* 56). As Tandon states that she becomes nobody both India and Canada. “Ratna is shunned as a “white rat” (the off spring of a Czech mother and an Indian father) in India and scorned as a Paki in Canada” (Tandon 74).

Nonetheless, although Ratna experiences bad incidents in her new country, she desires to accomplish to live like a North American. Her husband, a professor at university though, does not understand what she needs. However, Ratna has the capacity to fulfil her desire, which Mukherjee indicates the courage and self reliance in her short stories

The other short story in *Darkness* is “A Father” whose protagonist is Mr. Bhowmick migrating to America compelled by his wife. Mr. Bhowmick cannot adapt to new country as much as her wife and daughter Babli. “The women in his family were smarter than him. They were cheerful, outgoing, more American

somehow” (*Darkness* 51). It will be focused on her wife and her daughter in terms of the theme of dissertation.

Her wife forces him to go to America. According to Mr. Bhowmick she has changed a lot in two years. “Those two years had changed his wife from pliant girl to ambitious woman. She wanted America, nothing less” (*Darkness* 59). She becomes an ‘ambitious woman’ who realizes her desire and has courage to chase for it. Different from other Indian woman in the same neighbourhood, she also organizes charity work:- “His wife had thrown herself into charity work with the same energy that had offended the Ranchi women” (*Darkness* 60).

Furthermore, Babli is also just her mother, an independent woman knowing what she wants and following for them. A step ahead from her mother, Babli gets pregnant as a means of in vitro fertilization. This incidence is an embarrassment to her family who are brought up in terms of eastern traditions. It is a normal thing for both westerners and the second generation grown up in the country migrated. However, even her mother objects as;

“Stop it!” His own boldness overwhelmed him. “Shut up! Babli’s pregnant, so what? It’s your fault, you made us come to the States.”
 “My fault?” His wife cried. I told her to do hanky-panky with boys? I told her to shame us like this?” (*Darkness* 62)

It is a determination that she brings up a baby and struggles for the subsistence without a husband or men. Mukherjee advocates women’s equality and the lack of patriarchy. The eastern men “as they encounter the sexual liberation of the new country leads to acts of shame, madness, even violence” (Tandon 76) cannot stand a behaviour like this. Feminist critics fortify her thoughts in spite of the catastrophic ending of short stories. Her conversation between her and the father is a revolt against the patriarchy. “Who needs a man?” 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 certified fit donor” (*Darkness* 63). Her anger and hysteric attitudes indicate how she desires to live like an independent woman.

She boycotts not only the patriarchy in family but also Indian marriage traditions. She opposes to the man who is found by father. She regards the marriage as animal like. As well as she is a shy woman to interact with a man like coetaneous American girls, she does not accept the traditions her father finds her a match like Indians. “Yes, yes, yes,” she screamed, “like livestock. Just like animals. You should be happy – that’s what marriage is all about, isn’t it? Matching bloodlines, matching horoscopes, matching castes, matching, matching...”(*Darkness* 63). However, Daska emphasizes her attitudes are too extreme for even American culture to accept its normality;

Being denied the doubtful privilege of an arranged marriage, she cannot find a man to match the successful immigrant, either in the American society. In this sense, Babli is not caught between rules and roles, but within the prejudices of both immigrant and American communities. Her response is a defiant independence that violates the moral codes of both societies. (Daska 87)

The short story ends with Mr. Bhowmick’s hit her daughter for termination of her pregnancy. –The father has no capacity to comprehend “the depth of her dilemma” (Tandon 75). Thinking that the daughter embarrasses the family dignity, Mr. Bhowmick injures her. “Mr. Bhowmick lifted the rolling pin high above his head and brought it down hard on the dome of Babli’s stomach. In the end, it was his wife who called the police” (*Darkness* 63-4). It is important for wife to call the police. Again Mukherjee reflects the woman’s consciousness. Her mother denounces her husband, which also demonstrates her sanity.

Finally even though Mr. Bhowmick is the protagonist of the short story, her wife and her daughter Babli are mentioned here. It can be deduced that the woman characters are more adapted to the new culture than the men. “They are smarter than he, he admits, more open and American in their ways” (Daska 86). Also the ending of the story resembles Dimple’s murder of her husband. Alam comparisons Mr. Bhowmick with Dimple by saying; Mukherjee treats the father of the story with considerable cynicism while the heroine of the novel draws mostly her sympathy” (Alam 60). Even Dimple becomes more positive than Mr. Bhowmick. Woman characters in *Darkness* are ready to enter the New World.

“Isolated Incidents” and “Tamurlane” are short stories, the criticism of Canadian policy against immigrants, especially South Asians. These two stories are depicted by new immigrants having just come to Canada. They indicate “how - through its newspapers, legal system, and historical records-society clings to an outdated, static version of itself” (Andrews 57). In this sense, it reinforces immigrants’ consciousness and awareness with the experiences told by Mukherjee. Also these short stories “reflect Mukherjee’s feelings of alienation after her long sojourn in Canada” (Rege 396).

“Nostalgia” deals with Dr. Patel, the protagonist of the short story, filled with nostalgia and regrets why he doesn’t marry an Indian girl. Afterwards, “he finds there a well-experienced teams of hustlers who sexually entice him, and then blackmail him” (Tandon 84). Dr. Patel’s thoughts on Indian woman is distinctive to illuminate how women are eager to change fast. Mukherjee using his voice declares as; “An immigrant girl from a descent Hindu family – it didn’t matter how long she had lived in America and what rock groups she was crazy about – would not have said yes to dinner with a man she didn’t know” (*Darkness* 91). Although he emphasizes Indo-Americans’ deception, it is clear that they are open to new culture.

“Hindus”, another short story written by Mukherjee concerns with Leela, the protagonist of story, getting married to an American and then divorcing him, which results in the realization of her roots. In the first place, like almost all novels, Leelah abbreviates her name as Leela “reminding us of the transformations and the shedding of old selves that go on in the New World” (Alam 68). However, she is totally American with her husband. “...she has lost her Indian accent and in her Western clothes looks indistinguishable from any other American woman” (Alam 69). She confesses to the friends and later herself. “I disclaimed any recent connection with India. “I haven’t been home in ages,” I told the Lebanese. “I am an American citizen” (*Darkness* 113). She considers herself absolutely American. As the critic indicates as “...she disclaims “any recent connection with India” –and like Mukherjee

has left behind a country that has become alien to her and could no longer accommodate her” (Dlaska 82).

The society and even her husband are shocked to see Leela abstaining from her culture, language and society. “It bothered Derek that I knew so little about my heritage. Islam is nothing more than a marauder’s faith to me” (*Darkness* 109). She avoids being looked like an Indian, which will be an obstacle to assimilate and different from ‘others’; however, she realizes she cannot be the same as a native American. The awareness of herself makes her different from both New and Old World.

No matter what language I speak it will come out slightly foreign, no matter how perfectly I mouth it. There’s a whole world of us now, speaking Hindu. The manuscript of *Memoirs* was not dynamite, but I stayed up all night to finish it. In spite of the arch locutions and the aggrieved posture that Pat had stubbornly clung to, I knew I was reading about myself, blind and groping conquistador who had come to the New World too late. (*Darkness* 121)

In this sense, Mukherjee has a life like Leela. Marrying a North American, no expectation from the homeland are some resemblances in the short story. Mukherjee aims to prove that all cultures can live together without any conflictions. Dlaska implies that Leela gives a message on the transportation of her own culture. Reconciliation with the past and future gives person peace wherever s/he is;

Even if Leela does not succeed in forging a satisfying sense of belonging based on this realization, Mukherjee’s own life between continents and countries bears out the message that we carry with us the essential luggage of self and cultural skills wherever we go. (82)

Finally it can be concluded as a hybrid culture may give her happiness and prosperity if she struggles for it. “Leela uses her training in courage, charm and adaptability to assimilate and belong. New York allows her the anonymity of a “new American” (Dlaska 82). The critic emphasizes her courage and struggles for the acquisition of New World. On the other hand, Alam sees the ending of the story in terms of a nationalistic perspective. He pointing out the increase of Indian population in North America is optimistic about Leela’s changing;

This revelation highlights Leela's ambivalence about her status in America: on the other hand, it expresses a sense of defiance ("There's a whole world of us now, speaking Hindu") and registers a consciousness of the demographic changes taking place in the United States because of a rush immigrants from Asia; (69)

"Saints" a short story in *Darkness*, is about a man named Shawn Patel. Mukherjee reflects some mistakes of assimilation if it is done by the wrong people. The short story "suggests clearly that failure to assimilate in one generation of immigrants can be a canker for another" (Alam 63). In this sense it is an important short story in *Darkness*.

Vinita, the protagonist of "Visitors" is a beautiful Indian woman who waits for a suitable match her father chooses. Her father prefers an engineer, the candidate of millionaire who lives in Manhattan, America. Like Dimple, her parents would rather "a doctor or engineer of the right caste and class but resident abroad, preferably in America" (*Darkness* 138). However, she is completely different from Dimple because she has no problem with her destiny and her expectancies. "Unlike Dimple, however, Vinita leads a life of "grace and ease", as she comes from an upper-class background, is beautiful and charming and does not quarrel with her fate" (Dlaska 78). She is an ordinary girl who expects a perfect match by her parents. She herself does know she is not exceptional girl but her beauty and expect anything exclusive.

This life of grace and ease has less to do with modern conveniences such as the microwave oven built into a narrow wall which is covered with designer wallpaper, and more to do with moods and traits she recognizes as new in herself. Happiness, expressiveness, bad temper: all these states seem valuable and exciting to her. But she is not sure she deserves this life. She has done nothing exceptional. She has made no brave choices. The decision to start over on a new continent where hard work is more often than not rewarded with comfort has been her parents', not hers. (*Darkness* 139)

After migration to America, unlike other feminine protagonists, she has no expectancy from the New World. Because she has no rights to think in India, she is surprised to feel new emotions. However, despite her awkwardness, she can manage

to handle all the things. “Vinita had no expectations of America offering liberation and transformation; ... So it surprises and excites her when she discovers new traits in herself, like happiness, expressiveness and bad temper” (Dlaska 78-9).

The incidence giving its name as “Visitors” happens when a man who is scarcely acquainted by Vinita visits her. “If she found herself in an apartment alone with a man not related to her, but the rules are different in Gutenberg” (Darkness 143). Her background forces her not to decide accurately what she should do. What a woman whose husband isn’t at home supposed to do in America? Cultural hybrid Vinita takes in home and offers tea with great hospitality; yet she is exposed to harassment. The experiment emphasizes the dilemma of those who migrates from eastern countries;

Vinita does not know how to react to this unexpected visitor; she is flattered by his attention and does not want him to leave; on the other hand, she is only too aware of the impropriety of receiving a man she hardly knows when her husband is away. (Alam 66)

For many critics, the ending of the short story resembles *Wife*. However, Vinita is luckier and stronger than Dimple. She is courageous enough to face the new culture she encounters. “...Vinita prepares to face America even if, in terms of her own culture, she will expose herself to “shame and disaster” (Dlaska 80). As Dlaska states, despite her Indian background, she is eager to find out America. The abuse done by visitor is not an obstacle to explore the new world. Alam declare as; “Significantly, “Visitors” end with a question mark; Vinita’s fate is thus left uncertain, but at least Mukherjee has moved her heroine beyond madness to at least the possibility of a ‘liberation of sensibility’” (67).

The last two short stories in *Darkness* are “The Imaginary Assassin” and “Courtly Vision”. The first short story deals with a clever boy whose grandfather tells that Gandhi is killed by himself, which is absolutely lie. The little boy understands that his grandpa isn’t telling the truth about the history “in order to re-interpret his repeated failure to become an American” (Dlaska 89). “Courtly Vision”

deals again with Canadian policy to South Asian immigrants, which Mukherjee is object to.

Mukherjee has always been criticised for writing only immigrants and upper class. For example, the writers like Desai questions “Mukherjee’s claim to have always written herself into her immigrant lives” (Alam 72). Even some critics claim that Mukherjee coming from upper class misrepresents the people coming from South Asia. “Representation is doubly inscribed here— Mukherjee's writing represents Indo-American writing, and it represents a heretofore "misrepresented other" (Palumbo-Liu 165). In this sense, Mukherjee is disapproved by both critics and readers.

However, Mukherjee becomes the representative of immigrants who live in North America. Mukherjee scrutinizes the psychology and status of immigrants in the society. “...*Darkness* raise questions about human dignity, about the true value of diversity, about the tension between assimilation and preservation of cultures...” (Andrews 58). Additionally Mukherjee is appreciated for being voice of the minorities in America. P. Singh emphasizes the lack of writers dealing with the conditions. “There is a great dearth of candid writing about our expatriate community here and its experiences with the mainstream American community. So far only Bharati Mukherjee has attempted to write on this theme” (291). The critic advances a step ahead by claiming to place her in one of the distinguished nineteenth century authors who concern with the complications in the society:-

In the 19th century, some of the pathbreaking novelists brought their readers an awareness of how wealth and poverty coexisted in London or Paris or Saint Petersburg. In our time, isn't the basic confrontation the one between the Third World and the First? But rare is the author who can fluently and emphatically imagine herself onto the skins of those on both sides. (Hochschild 49)

Finally, it can be said that despite some abominable criticism, Mukherjee becomes successful to represent the immigrants. Although Mukherjee is not accepted to Canadian Writer’s Association, which upsets her very much, *Darkness* is received well there. Also, “George Woodcock, one of the elder statesmen of Canadian letters,

welcomed the volume despite its bitterness against Canada and regrets her move to the United States as a loss for his country's literature" (Alam 71). Additionally, *Darkness* is very distinctive for understanding and differentiating between Canadian and American policy

Although the book is the least talked about of her works, it should be read if only because it helps us to fully understand her indignant rejection of Canadian immigration policy and her enthusiastic embrace of America's melting-pot approach to its new immigrants. (Alam 76)

2. *THE MIDDLEMAN AND OTHER STORIES*

The Middleman and Other Stories winning National Book Critics Circle Award and selected as a New York Times Book Review notable book of the year consists of eleven short stories which Mukherjee again reflects her thoughts on migration and its results including isolation, expatriation and disorientation. Unlike her earlier novels and short stories, there are a great number of characters all around the world. Her characters having “the presence of many diasporic subjects from various countries” (Singh 244) come to the New World to effectuate their dreams. Mukherjee constitutes a new world “by new faces from all over the world, from ‘nothing places’ as Bharati Mukherjee calls them, and the transformation of these people by America in turn” (Tandon 127). Like previous short stories book *Darkness*, only female characters are concerned in this part owing to the theme of dissertation dealing with woman effloresce.

After gaining the citizenship of America in 1988, Mukherjee publishes *The Middleman*. With this book, Mukherjee forgetting Canada’s bad memoirs gains a new point of view. The expatriation totally turns into migration. “By the time she wrote *The Middleman*, Mukherjee felt that her own process of acculturation had reached a stage of comfortable integration” (Dlaska 95). Her protagonists become more optimistic for future and their mentality is healthier and livelier than her earlier novels and short stories. “Anger makes one less pretty and more complicated a writer, but she is glad it is over” (Tandon 101). However, no matter how enthusiastic they are, the perspective of white American society to immigrants will be prejudiced. Dlaska consolidates the anger or unhappiness with this;

If there is still a ring of sadness and exclusion to the stories of *The Middleman*, this may be due to the indisputable fact that the cross-cultural encounters they describe are as yet largely determined by the white American majority, who as a rule do not welcome immigrants from Third World countries. (Dlaska 96)

The changes of style and techniques are accepted by Mukherjee. Instead of traumatic characters or dual identity, Mukherjee concerns with the individuals eager to assimilate. As understood from the title, Mukherjee authors those who dominate

on both cultures. “Bharati Mukherjee is herself a middleman, an interpreter of two cultures” (Tandon 102). In addition, her being middleman spreads her all characters in the book. The characters stuck in the middle of cultures have the personality of contradictions. “The title of the volume goes beyond the title story to imply that many of Mukherjee's personae are middlemen, moving between cultures or events that pull others or themselves in opposite directions” (Parameswaran 1990 363). In this sense, characters do not have psychological problems like in earlier novels. In one of the conversations, she makes she addresses the more Americanized she becomes, the better her style advances;

My style has changed because I am becoming more Americanized with each passing year. American fiction has a kind of energy that fiction from other cultures seems to lack right now. The stories in *The Middleman*, *I like to think, have this energy and passion as well.* (author's italic Bloom 73)

Her choice of characterization is getting better year by year. As aforementioned, the characters whose ethnicities diversified from East to West are found in the short stories. Doing so, Mukherjee enriches her accumulation in order to indicate her self. “Bharati Mukherjee has bounced around a lot finding subjects to write about the alternate selves” (Tandon 100). Furthermore, she achieves mirroring immigrant's conditions and psychology. The same critic continues as; “But rare is the author who can fluently and emphatically imagine herself into the skin of those on both sides” (103).

On the other hand, the personal dilemma is not because they are rejected from either the new or their own society like earlier novels but because their moral values and ethic rules force them to have the contradictions. “In several stories in *Middleman*, Mukherjee's characters become “alienating” in the midst of their own alienation” (Mollo 284). This time Mukherjee draws all male protagonists as white Americans under a lot of stress to re-evaluate their position which side they will be. Like in *Darkness*, woman characters are more open to new cultures and transformation than male characters:-

The male narrators of these stories are all white Americans forced to re-examine their subject position in light of an American society reshaped and, arguably, driven by the expansion and vivacity of immigrant cultures and the repercussions of neo-imperialist U.S. foreign and economic policy. (Oh 191)

“The Middleman” appeared in *The Best American Short Stories 1987* is the first and titular short story appeared in the book. The protagonist Alfie Judah an Iraqi Jew living in America is a middleman who works for both sides. The short story is very prominent for “determination to venture as far away as possible from her milieu to write about all sorts of people caught up in a global diaspora” (Alam 87). Furthermore, it is the first step for Mukherjee to prove the ascent from her shell. Mukherjee advocates the immigrants “traditionally perceived as aliens and who must now be acknowledged and accepted by older Americans” (Alam 95).

“A Wife’s Story” is one of the must-studied short stories written by Mukherjee. Panna Bhatt, the protagonist of “A Wife’s Story” abandons her husband and her roots in India in order to get her PhD in America. She has an intimate friendship with “Goran from Yugoslavia” (*The Middleman* 38) symbolizing her multiculturalism. Her husband visits her and tells her to come to India together. Whether she turns with her husband or not is an obscurity for the readers.

Even though some critics claim that the short story “reminds us of Mukherjee’s second novel” (Alam 83), Panna is much more different from Dimple. While Dimple suffers from some psychological troubles and traumas, Panna is well conscious of conditions of both sides for Americans and immigrants, which makes her hate. “I know how both sides feel, that’s the trouble. The Patel sniffing out scams, the sad salesmen on the stage; postcolonialism has made me their referee. It’s hate I long for; simple, brutish, partisan hate” (*The Middleman* 27). However, Smith’s interpretation on contradiction is vehement. “Panna’s experience is one that places the protagonist squarely in the middle of two cultures that, If not mutually exclusive, do not complement each other well” (194). It is given as an equilibrium which Mukherjee’s characters do not have.

Most interestingly, Panna giving up everything in India cannot adapt herself to the conditions of dominant culture. She really comprehends that there is no way to return homeland like her author. However, merely America where Panna lives independently without traditions and men's hegemony does not become a reason for her to become happy. "It's the tyranny of the American dream that scares me. First, you don't exist. Then you are invisible. Then you're funny. Then you're disgusting. Insult, my American friends will tell me, is a kind of acceptance" (*The Middleman* 26).

Panna having two cultural characteristics, furthermore, is respectful to other cultures in the country. For example, when Yugoslavia of Goran the intimate friend mentions about Mostar, Panna wants to see it; "In Mostar white Muslims sing the call to prayer. I would like to see that before I die: white Muslims" (*The Middleman* 39). Like Panna, his friend thinks the same as her. "He assumed Patel was a Jewish name or maybe Hispanic; everything makes equal sense to him" (*The Middleman* 27). Oftentimes, Panna hating her homeland India raises her feeling of patriotism. She feels "too conscious of the way the jokes stereotype Indians" (Alam 83) because of the film of Indiana Jones implying "that Indians don't eat monkey brains" (*The Middleman* 29).

Panna's husband coming from India to take her wife back is very prominent figure to shape her identity. He is at first stuffy and under Indian traditions. "He stroke my fingers one by one. "How come you aren't wearing my mother's ring?" (*The Middleman* 33). The ring symbolizes the India. However, Panna achieves to metamorphose her identity. "Panna has walked out of the traditional Hindu marriage and experiences freedom and individuality in Manhattan" (Tandon 112). Does an individual who experiences American traditions and lifestyle prefer India where everybody is limited with their desires? Noticing these differences, her husband tends to head the New World. "...the man who has never entered the kitchen of our Ahmadabad house now comes toward me with a dish tub of steamy water to massage away the pavement heat" (*The Middleman* 35). No demand to lose his wife, the husband the owner of factory in India helps her in the kitchen. Panna is surprised with the incidence; yet "Panna knows she has drifted away considerably from her

considerate but tradition-conscious husband” (Alam 83). Again the short story is distinctive from *Wife* whose husband limits not to ‘be too American’ as well as he desires her to be a traditional wife.

Despite all dilemmas and ambivalence of culture, Panna decides how and where she lives. The experience of voyeurism herself without shameless is a transformation of Americanization. Panna is the first character who enjoys the nakedness in Mukherjee’s novels and short stories. When she looks on the mirror, she feels like an independent woman like other white women in the country:-

In the mirror that hangs on the bathroom door, I watch my naked body turn, the breasts, the thighs glow. The body’s beauty amazes. I stand here shameless, in ways he has never seen me. I am free, afloat, watching somebody else. (*The Middleman* 40)

Panna’s reaction can be considered as self confidence and rebellion against Indian perspective. “The fact that she no longer hides her new self” (Dlaska 100) indicates the choice for her future. Kumar regards as a hard step to advance but the only solution to get rid of contradictions. “The end of story encapsulates both the strength of her spirited struggle to refashion herself and the difficulty of achieving wholeness when one is stretched between two cultures” (Kumar 187). Dlaska also encapsulates the experiences as a small trip from Indian wife to independent womanhood:-

The last lines of the story suggest that Panna’s transformation from Indian wife to a more fluid and flexible American identity is about to be completed: waiting to make love to her husband, she contemplates her naked body in the mirror, surprised at seeing a new person, whose beauty she admires with detachment (Dlaska 99-100)

The third short story “Loose Ends” again deals with the Americans’ point of view to immigrants. Instead of immigrant perspective, Mukherjee authors a white Vietnam vet “who will refuse to accept the changes wrought in their country by Asians (and Latinos)” (Alam 92). Americans do not welcome to the immigrants who comes from the third world countries. Briefly, the short story “tests the responses of white Americans to immigrants” (Tandon 113).

Another story written by Mukherjee is “Orbiting” whose protagonist is an asylum seeker Roshan abbreviated as Ro in America. Alam claims “Orbiting” is without a doubt the most optimistic of the stories of *The Middleman*” (97). The story deals with the day when Ro is introduced to her girlfriend’s family on Thanksgiving Day. The story is narrated by an Italian origin woman using first person of narration. Even though the male character Ro is the protagonist of short story, her girl friend Renata will be studied in this part.

Her girlfriend Renata is a hybrid whose father is an Italian American man and her mother roots go beyond Korea. Ironically, her father is more American than Americans. His being ‘very American’ (*The Middleman* 58) makes trouble for the acceptance Ro as a bride groom. Mukherjee claims that Americans settling by immigrants coming from all over the world cannot accept the new comers. Renata’s father marrying a Calabrian peasant is an irony to represent the American reality;

Dad, a proud son of North Italy had one big adventure in his life, besides fighting in the Pacific, and that was marrying a Calabrian peasant. He made it sound as though Mom was a Korean or something, and their marriage was a kind of taming of the West, and that everything about her could be explained as a cultural deficiency. (*The Middleman* 59)

The question “Will they approve of someone as unassimilated as Roshan is?” (Alam 96) is a prominent question for immigrants whether they will be accepted or not. Mollo states the multiculturalism of America by metaphorically saying as; “Not only is the character Ro “foreign” to the narrator’s parents, his entire lifestyle—based on attempting to obtain what they already have and take for granted—is alien” (284). Although the parents coming from different countries, the policy of ‘melting pot’ makes them a real American by relinquishing their own culture. Mukherjee signifies “the way in which the American melting pot makes in no time a Ro or Roy out of a Roshan” (Alam 98).

Mukherjee also presents the Americans' perspective on migration and immigrants. The prejudiced point of view is indicated in the story. Equating all immigrants as the same is a wrong attitude for the dominant culture. To make an exemplification, Renata's father tells; "We saw your famine camps on TV. Well, you won't starve this afternoon" (*The Middleman* 68). Her father's simile Ro like an African is a sign of ignorance and unawareness of him. The immigrants react the attitudes of the natives like Ro. "No, no, madam. What you smell good is my cologne. Flowers in New York have no fragrance" (*The Middleman* 68). The reaction against her family of Ro is an acceptable behaviour owing to the humiliation.

Renata becomes a bridge to the colonialist family and postcolonialist Ro. Renata's point of view is completely different from her family. In spite of the contradictions she realizes after her parents' visit such as, "He shows too much white collar and cuff" (*The Middleman* 70-1), her feeling gets stronger and stronger on Thanksgiving Day. Ro also changes her feelings to migration and the third world countries. "When I'm with Ro I feel I am looking at America through the wrong end of a telescope" (*The Middleman* 66). Thus, Renata endeavours to conciliate her family with her fiancée. "Don't be so formal, Dad" (*The Middleman* 66).

Finally it can be deduced that Mukherjee authors a short story narrated by a white American thinking that there is no difference between natives and immigrants. Metaphorically, Renata's roots go beyond Italia and Korea like all Americans. Some critics indicate the deficiency in interactions between societies. "Mukherjee seems to conclude that superficial comprehension and the projection of personal expectations are not sufficient tools in genuine cross-cultural interactions" (Dlaska 117). Alam concludes as a success of Roshan. "At the end, though, the Thanksgiving Day dinner turns out to be a success, and Roshan proves to be quite a hit with Renata's family" (97). As understood, "Orbiting" is a sign as a beginning for the possibility to live together for Mukherjee.

“Fighting for Rebound” authored by Mukherjee is a short story dealing with the (im) balance between the New World and the Third World. Narrated by a male protagonist Griff, the story mirrors America and Americans from the immigrant’s point of view. However, Blanquita, Griff’s girlfriend will be briefly studied in this part.

Blanquita is one of the most educated and self confident woman characters among Mukherjee’s novels and short stories. Speaking six different languages, Blanquita is called as Blanquita the Beautiful or Blanquita the Brave by the protagonist and her friends. Her beauty and attitudes attract all kinds of people living in America. However, her so much confidence fears Griff. The conversation between her and Griff indicates her inner strength;

She relaxes, and Marcos leaps off the sexy, shallow shelf of her left hip. “You’re a racist, patronizing jerk if you think I’m beautiful. I’m just different, that’s all.”

“Different from whom?”

“All your others.” (*The Middleman* 81)

Additionally, her ideas on America and Americans suggest immigrants’ point of view. America is shown as senseless human by Blanquita. “You’re all emotional cripples. All you Americans. You just worry about your own measly little relationships. You don’t care how much you hurt the world” (*The Middleman* 85). On the other hand, Blanquita is a symbol the voice of immigrants as aforementioned. Blanquita does not accept the impotence or inequality with the Americans. “You think I can’t handle the situation, right? You think I’m just a dump, naïve foreigner you have to protect, right?” (*The Middleman* 90) The psychology of immigrants is too sensitive to think reasonably.

Finally, the tragic incidence of short story is Blanquita’s rape and murder by Griff. The fact that she is killed by an immigrant person is a prominent to indicate the ill-psychology of migrants. While Blanquita is decisive and self-confident to fulfil her dreams in America, Griff is dumb and undecided what way he should go. Alam thinks that Griff re-takes his past by killing Blanquita;

All the frustration, rage, and resentment building up within him make him go berserk, and he rapes and then kills her, thinking with his twisted logic that in doing violence to her he was getting back everything that was “taking” America away from people like him. (93)

Maya the protagonist of “The Tenant” is a divorced woman who lives in America and has a cultural dilemma. Although she is in the middle class in America, she succeeds nothing but her American citizenship. “...she hasn’t broken through into the light, the vigor, the *hustle* of the New World. She is stuck in dead space” (author’s italic *The Middleman* 110). Even though “The Tenant” is reasonably used as a title by Mukherjee, Maya is a resident tenant of America. However, Maya is a kind of woman who cannot decide where and how to live. Daska asserts that Maya’s field is a sign of her cultural hybridity. “...Maya’s own subject, Comparative Literature, reflects her inability to choose between the comparative merits of culture” (101). Also the critic summarizes her psychology as;

Divided between two cultures, Maya, the eternal enchantress, corrupts the ethos of both the East and the West. She remains neither an American nor an Indian. She keeps hanging in the air like the mythical ‘Trishanku’, and typifies the real condition of a person who is caught in the net of two cultures. (Kumar 188)

It can be concluded that Maya represents immigrant woman personality. Shattered with pieces of personality, Maya disguises behind her past. “To hide her failure to become an American she hides behind a false Indian identity” (Daska 103). Alam culminates Maya as; “Rootless, lonely – destined always to be a tenant – and driven by her sexuality. Maya is made by Mukherjee to be the type of the new Indian immigrant woman in North America...” (Alam 85-6)

Another story in *The Middleman* “Fathering” studied by a great number of critics is pertained to the protagonist Jason adopted a Vietnamese little girl Eng who possesses the traumatic personality. Jason is, like Dimple in *Wife*, stuck between Eng and her girlfriend Sharon owing to their hate to each other. Eng utterances like “She’s bad, Dad. Send *her* back” (author’s italic *The Middleman* 123) indicates her anger to Sharon while Jason feels Sharon’s feelings. Jason complains about the treatment like ‘a deaf-mute’ by Sharon.

Eng, meticulously chosen character by Mukherjee is the product of America-Vietnam War. Her destiny adopted by an American is both an irony for the readers and the reality of necessity that America must face her future. As the critic states the irony of the generation “geographically closer to their biological fathers” (Zheng 103) like Eng. American soldiers’ atrocity to Vietnamese women becomes a social problem for American population. The trauma and psychological illnesses Eng has are consequences of her ambiguity. “Mukherjee’s use of ambiguity in “Fathering” clearly shows its ideological undertone in its reference to—or rather avoidance of—social engagements” (Zheng 108).

On the other hand, Jason, a symbol of American citizen, suffers from the ambiguity and psychological problems. While Eng has traumas and anger for Sharon, his girlfriend feels alone and desperate. Zheng briefly summarizes his agony as;

But based on his empathetic reactions to Eng, Jason apparently suffers from the psychological wound like Eng, even if he does not have any physical scars. The psychological wound is invisible, but it is extremely malignant and difficult to heal. The wound is not just limited to individual characters; it rips apart families like Jason’s. Finally, the nation itself endures the pain from the wound, for which Sharon bemoans, “What’s happening in this country?” (Zheng 108)

For these reasons, it can be concluded that Mukherjee sees the immigration problems as a whole. While Eng suffers from Vietnam War effects and cultural pressures, Jason possesses the psychological traumas like his country. Adding the Americans into the immigration problems, Mukherjee reflects her effloresce in her writings. The individuals mustn’t be categorized for their ethnicity, skin colour or language they use for Mukherjee. Daska pays attention to the assimilation policy of America by saying that it must positive for both assimilating and assimilated. If not done so, there will be naturally contradictions in the society;

Mukherjee often refuses to tone down the foreign appearance of her characters, who wear their Saris and – by American standards – bright or old-fashioned clothes proudly. It seems that while she advocates

constructive assimilation, she nevertheless revels in the contrasts and contradictions the new America must now absorb. (Dlaska 116)

Jasmine authored in *The Middleman* by Mukherjee deals with a young girl to come America for her desire to have prosperous and luxurious life. This short story will also be inspiration for Mukherjee to write *Jasmine* whose protagonist's name is the same. Jasmine coming from Trinidad is an illegal immigrant who is ready to pay every kind of price to live there. "She shed her Port-of-Spain identity with alacrity and determination, eager to adopt American manners and interpretations" (Dlaska 110). The new identity for Jasmine means the erasure or reinvention of her past "Just as readily as she accepts the casual American euphemism for her new position" (Dlaska 109).

Jasmine has ill-psychology who accepts all the things coming from Americanism. For instance; "Back home at work, she used to count out thousands of Trinidad dollars every day and not even think of them as real. Real money was worn and green. American dollars" (*The Middleman* 128). The most important experience she has is lovemaking with Bill. From that moment she feels "she will be able to control her destiny decisively" (Alam 89). Controlling a man whose ethnicity is American, Jasmine possesses the feeling of superiority. Yet, Dlaska interprets the incidence from different point of view;

She sleeps with him because she enjoys the physical sensation, and because she has nothing to gain from offering her body to a man, which in Trinidad often meant paying for favors. When she rejects Bill's exotic label 'flower of Trinidad', it is not because she objects to his exotic image of her, but *because she wants to be considered American*, (my italic 111)

In conclusion, Jasmine seems like the other characters who sacrifice her culture and past to be a member of the new society. "Jasmine like her counterparts Panna Bhatt and Maya Sanyal, is also an adventurer, ready to pay the price for realising her American dream" (Kumar 189). The women who immigrate to a new country generally have the same phrases in Mukherjee's novels and short stories. Mollo, implying her next novel *Jasmine*, find the affinities between these two ones by indicating as;

The issues explored in *The Middleman* are unified and transmogrified in her subsequent novel *Jasmine* (1989), perhaps her quintessential statement on the alienation and emotional displacement of the immigrant and the need for new definitions of selfhood that accommodate the individual immigrant's experience as a "stranger in a strange land." (Mollo 280)

"Danny's Girl" is about the life of immigrants living in North America. Mukherjee again repeats the difficulties in the country migrated. Taken its title from Matthew Arnold poem, "Buried Lives" concerns about N. K. S. Venkatesan who finds a suitable match in Hamburg and deals with the trip. "The events that have propelled him to Hamburg begin with his sister's defiant act, joining her rebel-boyfriend in a demonstration" (Strehle 233). In this short story, Mukherjee briefly depicts the problems and psychology of immigrants and "misguided dreams of painless re-housement" (Dlaska 119).

"The Management of Grief" the last short story in *The Middleman* is, in fact, a political short story written in Canada. "Mukherjee moves fictional characters through real events: the aftermath of a midair explosion aboard Air India Flight 182 in 1985 that killed 329 people" (Orlofsky 47). The title is outstanding for choice because "grief is managed, it is rarely erased" (Orlofsky 58). The short story deals with Shaila, the protagonist, who loses her husband and two sons in the plane crash. She begins working as an interpreter to supply connection between those who lost her relatives in the same plane and Canadian government. She acquires a mission for immigrants in Canada at the end of the novel.

Shaila is depicted as a strong immigrant woman in the story. After found out her lost, she does not cry or tell any negative things to her milieu. "I was always controlled; but never repressed" (*The Middleman* 180). In this sense she is chosen by government as a translator. "Someone mentioned that Mrs. Bhavé is a pillar – because you've taken it more calmly" (*The Middleman* 183). No matter how she is desperate and lonely because of the lost of her family, she cannot express her feelings. "I want to say to her, *I wish I could scream, starve, walk into Lake Ontario, jump from a bridge*. "They would not see me as a model. I do not see myself as a

model” (author’s italic *The Middleman* 183). Mukherjee portrays one of her most powerful and strongest characters in *The Middleman*.

The representative of all immigrants, Shaila implies all her thoughts in the short story. Like her creator Mukherjee, she advocates all immigrants have the same destiny in the new country. “She says that all those people – our husbands, my boys, her girl with the nightingale voice, all those Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, Muslims, Parsis, and atheists on that plane – were fated to die together off this beautiful day” (*The Middleman* 184). Even though she sustains an exile life in Canada in her opinion, she manages to defend the rights of immigrants.

Furthermore, not only does she accept the immigrants’ life in hatred country Canada but also she has the courage to maintain her life. “Acceptance means you speak of your family in the past tense and you make active plans for moving ahead with your life” (*The Middleman* 192). Mukherjee gives the names of stage “to pass through: rejection, depression, acceptance, reconstruction” (*The Middleman* 192). Shaila is, of course, the most stalwart character in *The Middleman*. The last sentences she says indicate the power inside. “I do not know where this voyage I have begun will end. I do not know which direction I will take. I dropped the package on a park bench and started walking” (*The Middleman* 197). Daska assesses as; “...she leaves behind on a park bench and begins walking into an unknown future” (Daska 108). She moves towards a new beginning.

To sum up, Mukherjee inspired a real experience when she lives in Canada, authors a short story whose protagonist is more influenced than other protagonists in *The Middleman*. Losing her husband and two children, Shaila does not mislay her hope or courage to sustain her life. Unlike the other short stories written in Canada, Mukherjee seems to give up her exile life. The protagonist’s demand to survive in Canada means that Mukherjee casts her previous thoughts on Canada and decides to have smooth life in the country migrated Smith summarizes “The Management of Grief” as;

Mukherjee's story, which based on her own experience of a terrorist bombing in 1986, explores the depths of suffering and posits two entirely different reactions; the wholly "rational" response of the counselor, who sees the grieving process as nothing more than a series of steps to be taken on the road to recovery; and the much more personal response that takes into account deeply held cultural beliefs. (Smith 194)

Finally, this collection mirrors the immigrants' life. While some of them acquire the dignity by North Americans, some can be lost in dominant culture. Endeavouring to be realistic, Mukherjee becomes one of the most distinctive authors who are interested in immigration and its results on immigrants and the society. Tandon summarizes the collection as;

The Middleman is about the experience of eleven people who have deliberately chosen to make America their new home not because of some political turmoil upsetting their lives in their native lands, but because of the lure of a better life has made them drift into their situation. Thus, the book does not focus exclusively on the Indian experience, but the details the lives of other immigrant – Hispanics, Italians and Sri Lankans as well. (106)

Additionally, it can be said that Mukherjee matures with the collection of *The Middleman and Other Stories*. *Darkness*, as deduced from its title, concerns about the people who are disoriented in their homeland or North America. Even though the characters "explore the harsh, violent, tragic, and oftentimes redemptive aspects of the immigrant experience in the later decades of the 20th century" (Oh 190), the ending of the short stories are generally positive for both immigrants and natives. When Pipino lecturing postcolonialism in a university gives the examples of Mukherjee and her short stories, she says; "Thus, generally I saw students reacting more positively to stories and characters whose values and feelings were most like their own, that were familiar and comfortable" (175). Additionally another critic mentions the same things for the end of the short stories. "Its stories are really fables fairy tales of the cruel city and the stone-washed heartland, with surprisingly happy endings" (McGee 22). It symbolizes that Mukherjee eliminates the responsibility of exile, which results the idea of immigration.

Furthermore, Mukherjee proving with this collection starts to look positively for immigration. She moves away “from racial, ethnic, or narrowly South Asian constructions of identity, which she looks upon as forms of self-imposed ghettoization” (Rege 399). In fact she has to find a new way to advocate the immigrants. “Despite her affection for the West, Mukherjee clearly felt the need to claim her identity as different in a powerful way as a means of warding off the racial slurs to which she was subjected” (Carchidi 91). In this sense, Mukherjee gets rid of her exile feeling in Canada and gains her self-confidence in America. Alam claims that Mukherjee reflects her utopian individuals and multicultural society in this collection. “On the whole, though, *The Middleman and Other Stories* shows a confident Mukherjee working dexterously on her theme of the making of new Americans and ringing all kinds of fascinating variations on that theme” (99).

3. *JASMINE*

Jasmine selected as a New York Times Book Review notable book of the year is the most accomplished and controversial novel of Mukherjee for almost every critic. The novel deals with “a woman from Punjab who takes her life into her own hands and makes herself an American” (Tandon 134). In this sense, she resembles her author. If decided to criticize the novel, the critics have both affirmative and dissenting thoughts for it. Moore claims Mukherjee indicates “the immigrant’s ability to change and adapt allows her to survive” (948). Additionally, as well as Huang says the novel “deals with transformation of identities” (145), other critic interprets as “the fluid identities of the protagonist” (Sarangi 285). However, while *Jasmine* is approved by a great number of critics and feminists, “it has at the same time revived and focused mainly Indian criticism of the author’s representation of immigration” (Dlaska 123). The protagonist of *Jasmine*, Jyoti’s too accelerated transformation is seen improper by some of the critics. It is allegory that Jasmine absolutely transforms from a peasant girl to a modern American woman in a short time. “Conversely, Bharati Mukherjee’s novel *Jasmine* satirizes immigrant assimilationist zeal in which rootlessness and ruthlessness coexist side by side” (Konzett 406). Furthermore, Indian critics like Banerjee believe that Mukherjee deceives her homeland and Indian society. “Mukherjee betrays the postcolonial writer’s responsibility to resist reductive western interpretations” (Dlaska 124).

There are many resemblances between Jasmine and previous novels’ protagonists Tara and Dimple such as migration, disorientation and ill-psychology. Bose renames as “a series of reincarnations, deaths of earlier existences followed by rebirths full of promise” (51). Also the resemblance between Dimple and Jasmine such as migration to a new country and killing experiences makes them closer each other. Power sees this familiarization as “sociopolitical observations at a higher level to create a new sort of postcolonial logic” (Powers 90). However, this transformation will be more moderate in terms of Tara and Dimple. Tara’s exposure to sexual harassment and Dimple’s murder of her own husband are incidences of violence Mukherjee believes in real transformation comes true with violence. Even

though Jasmine is exposed to both these two experiences rape and murder, she has courage to fulfil her desires and requirements. The critic points out that Jasmine is a stronger character than Tara and Dimple;

The concept of transformation itself changes to reincarnation as one moves from Tara to Dimple and Jasmine: it seems as if Mukherjee concludes that a gradual and gentle transformation is not spirited enough for the sweeping adaptations that are required of the immigrant who wishes to belong to the world she has chosen to be in. (Bose 53)

Nevertheless, in Mukherjee's previous book *The Middleman and Other Stories*, there are some protagonists resembling Jasmine in some ways. For example, Maya, the protagonist of "The Tenant" is a woman who becomes rootless in America. Turning back to her past, Maya sleeping with Americans and humiliating her own people declares a war against her traditions. "While Maya breaks the rules to break away from the past, Jasmine revels in making the rules and in choosing a moral code suited to her circumstances" (Dlaska 152). In this sense, Jasmine has better personality and her attitudes are more normal than Maya. On the other hand, Jasmine, the protagonist of short story, has not the capacity of improvement inside her but merely sexually. While Jasmine in *The Middleman* aims to live a better country, our Jasmine has bigger objectives when thought in terms of both post-colonialism and feminism. "...unlike the Jasmine of the short story, who easily escapes the fluid society of the Caribbean, the Jasmine in the novel has to transcend the restrictions of gender, poverty and caste in rural India" (Dlaska 125). To sum up, Mukherjee manages to reach immigrant psychology in *Jasmine*. As Alam indicates as Mukherjee takes her immigrants one step ahead by not only reconciled to herself but also desired by natives living in the New World;

Jasmine differs from *The Middleman* in the way it manages to go beyond the immigration theme in its portrait of white Americans. We get fairly full portraits of people such as the Hayeses and Bud Ripplemeyer; Mukherjee also peoples her novel with a number of minor characters who represent older Americans and who are interested in themselves as well as in their relationships with Jasmine. (113)

On the other hand some critics resemble *Jasmine* with some of the distinguished novels in American literature. The postcolonial author Wendy Law-Yone's novel seems like *Jasmine* in many respects. "Along with (de)colonization, immigration contributes further to the splitting of the narrators' and other characters' identities in both *Jasmine* and *The Coffin Tree*" (Adams 131). However, the conclusion of Twain's famous novel gives the same theme to the readers. Brians states as; "It is often pointed out that the final flight toward California echoes the cliché of American fiction dating back to *Huckleberry Finn* in which freedom lies to the west" (125). In this respect it can be claimed that Mukherjee endeavours to prove her Americanness with the distinguished American author's fantastic novels.

Mukherjee authors the novel *Jasmine* after her acceptance of American citizenship. The sign of how she becomes American is her protagonist Jyoti, "upon birth, but then is also called Jasmine, Jase, and Jane during various periods of her life that correspond to different men in it, as well as to different stages of it" (Pultar 45). The reason why she transforms is her upgrading her Americanness. "By the time Mukherjee writes *Jasmine*, she is ready to celebrate: "I am one of you now" (Tandon 144). Also, she realizes the maturity in her American identity. When she is interviewed, she adumbrates "...her style has changed because she is becoming more Americanized with each passing year ..." (Tandon 135).

When examined in a detailed way, it is clear that Mukherjee totally feels herself as an American who forgets her life in both Canada and India. Her only object is, I think, to attest how much she becomes American. Li's interpretation on "Bharati Mukherjee's own disguised *patriotic passions*" (my italic 97) is, of course, due to her desire to be accepted as American. Li notices the parallelism between Mukherjee and her protagonist *Jasmine*;

The ritualistic Americanization of *Jasmine* from Hasnapur to California cannot be set apart from Mukherjee's own artistic migration from Calcutta to Canada to America. To be oblivious of this parallel journey is to miss not only the mutual constitution of the character's exuberant idealism and its author's own romanticism but also the integral link between *Jasmine*'s assimilation of American culture and Mukherjee's conscious appropriation of American literary traditions. (92)

On the other hand, no matter how she feels herself as an American, she cannot be labelled as a totally American by some of the critics. Instead of seen as an exotic or postcolonial writer, she would like to be one of the contemporary American writers. “Evident in Mukherjee’s self-definition is a refusal to be marginalized as a writer of alien material, an insistence that her themes are central and not marginal to the contemporary American society” (Tandon 144). She, furthermore, seems like “a pale and immature reflection of the writer” (Tandon 152-3). To hurdle these obstacles, she puts down the novel *Jasmine* on paper.

For these reasons, Mukherjee authors *Jasmine* to “search for and creation of identity” (Wang 88). *Jasmine* resembles her creator *Jasmine* in many aspects. *Jasmine* gradually matures by identities and gains her Americanization. *Jasmine* is really “a bildungsroman which traces the protagonist's growth into womanhood through various stages, each progressively more liberating” (Kanhai 120) Mukherjee ameliorates herself step by step with the publications of novels and short stories. “We could appreciate better the entirety of Mukherjee’s writing if we could view it as chronicling the transitions from an expatriate sensibility to an immigrant one” (Tandon 144).

Mukherjee, as expected, deals with a young Indian woman falling in love and marrying a Marxist man who is killed by radicals. Her husband inclination to migrate to America is fulfilled by her. As Parekh indicates, “Among traditional oral stories, myths, and folktales in India, the theme of marriage and gender roles are central” (Parekh 109). However, the novel has the characteristics of the usage of circular narration for the first time for Mukherjee. This type of narration starts from the end to beginning. Bose believes that the author’s usage is not because of the characteristics of either postmodernism or postcolonialism but because she wants her protagonist to transform herself as she wishes. “Memory evolves into a political and ideological signifier in the fiction of Bharati Mukherjee, as her protagonists alternate between the desire for remembering and the need for forgetting” (51). Additionally this technique brings *Jasmine* multiple characters. “...the narrative sequence of the

novel allows Jasmine's multiple beliefs and actions..." (Dlaska 127) Oh also concerning about the same idea states as; "Structurally the novel shifts between past and present almost seamlessly, as the narrative voice remains constant while at the same time navigating between identities and multiple selves" (134).

Other technique used when *Jasmine* is written is the first-person narration which means that Mukherjee features the subjectivity in the novel. Jasmine rejects her triviality in both Indian and American culture. "...the heroine of this third novel has gradually refused to accept "invisibility" and ultimately rejects "imperial shackles" (Alam 102). In this sense, Jasmine differs from previous protagonists due to the fact that she is not only strong character and does not have the psychological trauma and ailment but also she has the ability to lead an American dream even if she has very bad experiences such as rape and murder. Alam emphasizes her transformations;

...the limited third-person-perspective used in the story gives way to first-person narration, and Jasmine becomes more of a sensitive survivor undergoing complex internal transformations than the shallow teenager who lives purely for the moment. (101)

The story begins the incidence of fortune teller, which makes a scar on forehead for a lifetime. Telling about her widowhood and migration, the fortune teller is opposed by the protagonist and Jyoti "punched a star-shaped wound into my forehead" (*Jasmine* 3). While her sisters complain that she cannot find a suitable match, she revolts against the idea. "I broke away from their solicitous grip. "It's not a scar," I shouted, "it's my third eye." In the stories that our mother recited..." (*Jasmine* 5). The third eye symbolizes many things including the ability to see from other perspectives or from the perspective of a woman with an all-seeing "third eye" (Sanborn 442). Looking from feminist point of view, Sanborn goes on the interpretations about the wound which is surprising that it is on forehead meaning the destiny;

Helping us (that is, mainstream U.S. readers) to see "ourselves as others see us," the "uncanny third eye of the artist [that] forces us to see our country anew" reveals itself to be the uncanny eye of the third *world* artist for these reviewers. But at the same time it embodies the mystical insight

of the Other, Jasmine's "third eye" represents a way of seeing that is ultimately transformed, in the mini-narrative of the book blurb, from the myopia of a backward (Sanborn 435)

Her mother gives birth to "the fifth daughter, the seventh of nine children" (*Jasmine* 39) Jyoti in Punjab. Jyoti given by her grandmother is a distinctive name meaning the light (*Jasmine* 40). Like her wound on her forehead, it is also a symbol for discrepancy from woman in the village. She has self-awareness of the feeling of difference. "In a world where pulling a piece of cord can illuminate a room, surely, Jyoti, the Light, can defeat the spirit of oppression just as electricity can conquer the darkness" (Dlaska 131). When examined her milieu she lives, the reason why Mukherjee chooses the name Jyoti can be understood better.

Jyoti lives in a society the men have hegemony. The women are considered nothing but a slave. For example, her cousin states in one of the conversation that "...big city men prefer us village girls because we are brought up to be caring and have no minds of our own. Village girls are like cattle; whichever way you lead them, that is the way they will go" (*Jasmine* 46). The self-criticism is, in fact, a step for awareness. Also Jyoti complains about the men who do not support women for anything. "We have no husbands, no wives, no fathers, no sons. Family life and family emotions are all illusions" (*Jasmine* 59). However, the men hinder the improvement of woman in the society instead of assistance to them. "Surely you know, sir, that in our modern society many bright ladies are finding positions?" (*Jasmine* 50). So, Jyoti revolts against the hegemony of masculinity in her society. "Mukherjee does not present Jyoti's rejection of Indian womanhood as a pat dismissal of the values and assets of Indian culture but as a rejection of the restrictive fate her male-regulated society offers her" (Dlaska 129).

As aforementioned Jyoti is not a kind of protagonist accepting all the obstacles she encounters. She asks by herself "Why shouldn't our mission be infinitesimal? Aren't all lives, viewed that way, equally small?" (*Jasmine* 60). To make illustration; one day when she goes home, she runs into a savage dog which frightens her very much. "The dog stopped twenty feet from me. It looked straight at

me out of those red eyes” (*Jasmine* 56). Instead of running, she stands and fights. Mukherjee prepares her to stand for worse experiences ahead;

The imposed lack of a future heightens Jyoti’s determination to shape her destiny. Her emerging self develops along those lines of resistance and hope. While her ambitions for happiness and self-realization initially lie within the framework of traditional wifehood, Jyoti soon perceives herself as an exceptional child of courage and willpower. (Dlaska 130)

Also her improvement on English is a symbol of how much she desires to be in the modern world. For Jyoti English unlocks the door of America which she fulfil her inclinations and desires. “To want to English was to want more than you had been given at birth, it was to want the world” (*Jasmine* 68). Brian comments as; “English is her vehicle for leaving India” (121).

Also, the novels she reads have some impacts on her. Jyoti coming “to reject most western female roles” (Dlaska 130) has some experiences of the novels *Shane*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Great Expectations*, and *Jane Eyre*. On the other hand, she has the courage of participation and doing something in the society. She has no fear of losing anything even her soul. “When I go to work in another country, it’ll be because I want to be a part of it...” (*Jasmine* 67). Jyoti transforms “...from a feudal village to the global metropolis. (Tandon 161). However, Hoppe thinks that Jasmine cannot erase her past. “Jasmine murders herself in order to recreate different selves, but she can never wholly deny, forget, or escape the previous ones” (137)

On the other hand Mukherjee is generally criticized by a great number of critics who believe in the impossibility of an ignorant peasant woman could manage so many things. In this sense, it is not realistic condition for Jyoti, having only her familiarity of English. Chu, one of the critics studying on Mukherjee queries the conditions Jyoti is in and her society. The possibility for Jyoti to manage to overcome all obstacles is almost unimaginable for Chu;

To imagine how an uneducated, unskilled Asian woman can replicate this myth, Mukherjee falls back on the romance plots of English novels of education, perhaps because they form a well-known, compelling tradition

that assumes that women with no economic or political power can still attain social status, security, dignity, and freedom. These plots work hard, with very persuasive results, to depict their heroines as earning and deserving privileged social status through their private personal characters rather than their contributions in the public work force. (129)

When Jyoti is sixteen years old, she is introduced to Prakash, a good student on engineering and having desire to migrate to America. The protagonist falls in love with Prakash even though she does not see him for the first time. “Love before first sight: that’s our Hasnapuri way” (*Jasmine* 67). The main and only reason why she accepts Prakash, I think, is that he is transition to a better society, America. The critic argues about her opportunism. “Living as she does in a society that circumscribed women through all sorts of rules, she learns early to make use of every opportunity that came her way” (Alam 103). Also her brothers mentions about his intention. “Prakash isn’t a dunderhead like us. He’ll move to America in a year or two. He already has friends in New York. He knows ways” (*Jasmine* 68). Prakash is a step to enter the new world and vaccinates Jyoti hope and serendipity even if she does not directly think about the migration. “However, Jyoti builds her hopes not on feminist anger and a network of largely powerless women, but on the promise of a changing society which will have to give up its feudal traditions sooner or later” (Dlaska 131)

Prakash, contrary to other men living in Hasnapur, is a modern “best engineering student” (*Jasmine* 148) man, who makes his wife more modern and better to prepare for America. For example Jyoti succumbing from the pressure of both family and society wants to have a baby at the age of sixteen. However she is rejected by her husband due to the fact that her age is not old enough to look after a baby. It is seen as disconsolate transition “from her traditional cultural desire to have children early to Prakash's contempt for those desires” (Hoppe 137) for some critics. Ruppel briefly abstracts the incidence of marriage and the characteristics of Prakash as;

When Jyoti does marry, it is to Prakash Vijn, a city man whose values are those of Gandhi and Nehru. In contrast to the other men of the traditional culture, Prakash does not see marriage as the cultural sanctioning of patriarchal control and enforced obedience. He renames Jyoti as Jasmine, a

symbolic break with her feudal past. Yet this break causes Jyoti/Jasmine deep conflict. As a traditional woman she wants to get pregnant immediately to prove her worth and to validate her identity. (Ruppel 184)

Contemporary and successful student, Prakash manages to change Jyoti thoroughly. Not only does he transpose her name Jasmine but also he influences on her ideas about lifestyle, marriage and transformation. “We *had* created life. Prakash had taken Jyoti and created Jasmine, and Jasmine would complete the mission of Prakash. Vijn & Wife. A vision had formed” (author’s italic *Jasmine* 97). This is first phase for Jyoti to change. It is not surprising that Jyoti/Jasmine brought up in Indian culture imposing Sita who walks on fire just for her husband command transmutes for her husband Prakash. “Woman has to migrate and transplant herself from one place to another place in her life, in the childhood at her parents’ place then in her husband’s place” (Gaijan 2004 170). Tandon juxtaposes the births and deaths for the transmuting in the novel. The critic goes on writing “It is a motif, a symbolism of cyclical patterns of birth, death and rebirth in this context of the post-colonial immigrant woman’s life (162).

The incidence to cause Prakash’s death is correlated with woman factor by Mukherjee. The radical groups want to prohibit woman to walk on the streets independently. “Is there anything else you want us to do, Sukkhi?” “Yes. Keep your whorish women off the streets” (*Jasmine* 65). The attack on Jasmine is terminated with self-sacrifice of her husband. However, the critic very exactly pays attention to this incidence. “...Prakash/ India is metaphorically murdered, according to the author's aesthetic of "unhousement" to "rehousement," can *Jasmine become an eligible American bride*” (my italic, Li 101). Also the other critic, Dayal owns another distinctive interpretation. “The transformation of the ‘feudal’ wife Jyoti into the modern, English-speaking Jasmine, inevitably, involves a violent baptism in Prakash’s blood” (70).

Violence is a keyword for Mukherjee thinking that it cannot be transformation without pain. Jasmine has an obligatory to change. “She does not remain same at the very stage of her life. As the change permits her she has to adjust

according to that” (Gaijan 2004 171). The bloody transformation teaches Jasmine the significance of her possession and the life she would be. Bose mentions about the violence on women characters of Mukherjee’s novels and short story collections. “Violence is a key word, a leitmotif in Mukherjee’s fiction, and the ‘psychic violence’ that she thinks is necessary for the transformation of character is often emphasized by an accompanying physical conflict of some sort” (53)

After her husband’s death, Jasmine decides to go to America to fulfil his will. In eastern countries an intention of a peasant woman who wants to go abroad without money, passport or visa is insaneness. “I must be mad! Certainly, I was. I told them. I had sworn it before God. A matter of duty and honor” (*Jasmine* 97). Fleeing from her homeland Jasmine seeks a new country to live on. Although she would like to migrate to America for her husband, she desires independence and a new home in a new milieu. “Jasmine, on the other hand, seeks empowerment in disconnectedness, in a life where the idea of “homeland” is irrevocably challenged by variations of exile” (Roberts 87).

Mukherjee again mirrors the problems of immigrants in the novel *Jasmine*. Reflecting the impact of immigration on both immigrants and residents in the same society, Mukherjee makes Jasmine speak on the process of migration. “We ask only one thing: to be allowed to land; to pass through; to continue” (*Jasmine* 101). Additionally, the subject of ‘we’ proves the vision that all communities are one for Mukherjee. Despite the impossibility of statement of Jasmine who has never been abroad, the reader can animate the conditions and adversity of immigrants by Jasmine’s sentences

But we are refugees and mercenaries and guest workers; you see us sleeping in airport lounges; you watch us unwrapping the last of our native foods, unrolling our prayer rugs, reading our holy books, taking out the hundredth time an aerogram promising a job or space to sleep, a newspaper in our language, a photo of happier times, a passport, a visa, a laissez-passer. (*Jasmine* 100-1)

However, contrary to her previous novels and short stories, Mukherjee proposes some solutions for immigrant problems. Instead of analyzing the conditions, she comes up with the explication. “She has repeatedly argued that immigrants should avoid living in isolated communities dedicated to preserving their old ways of life and instead seek to enter the mainstream of their new homeland” (Brians 113).

Jasmine having a long trip with refugees arrives in her dreamland America. The first impression for America is not as nice as she expects to be. This, in fact, is an introduction to traumatic experiences for Jasmine. “The first thing I saw were the two cones of a nuclear plant, and smoke spreading from them in complicated but seemingly purposeful patterns...” (*Jasmine* 107). Jasmine also keeps on depicting the environment she sees. The darker side of the country is observed by her. “My first night in America was spent in a motel plywood over its windows, its pool bottomed with garbage sacks, and grass growing in its parking lot” (*Jasmine* 109). Gaijan states “Ultimately she has to accept the truth and that is the adjustment with the changing environment” (2004 175). The transition has to be adapted by Jasmine for her survival. Going to the motel with the captain, veteran of Vietnam who is pervert she does not know, Jasmine will have her worst night in the motel. Chiu perceives as the success of novel. “Such books satisfy advocates of the "American Dream" but naively dismiss trauma's complications upon an immigrant's psyche:” (19).

Jasmine, in fact, surprises the readers with her astonishment of utensils in the motel room. The captain’s humiliation is also another factor to understand the feeling of protagonist. Although her deceased husband works as repairman in India, the captain says “Don’t tell me you ever seen a television set. Don’t lie to me about no husbands and no television and we’ll get along real good” (*Jasmine* 112). The silence to him is quite normal for a woman who is under the fear of rape or death. After she is raped, she has a shower. However, she is fascinated from the system of shower and hot water coming from the tap. It is ridiculous for readers that a woman raped by “a half-faced monster” a few minutes ago relishes having bath;

I had never used a Western shower, standing instead of squatting, with automatic hot water coming hard from a nozzle instead of cool water from a hand-dipped pitcher. It seemed like a miracle, that even here in a place that looked deserted (*Jasmine* 117)

The rape arouses her Jekyll side. She transforms from Sita, the ideal wife to Kali, the death of goddess. Our strong character Jasmine transmutes Kali when she needs killing the captain. She is “both destroyer and preserver, powerful with want and wanting, facing and making violent change, moving through lives with tornado force” (Drake 63). However, according to Faymonville, the freedom in the West enables her to do everything. “the West liberates her inner self so that a chaotic unconscious can be calmed. Consequently, she is able to find a new morality that enables her to leave behind those things that limit her personal freedom” (53-4). When Jasmine whose background goes to a society applying too much pressure on its individuals, especially women, comes to America, she finds an independent solution. Also, killing with pin in her tongue is a symbol emphasizing the power of language and the superiority of colonized on colonizing via their pens. Additionally, Roberts sees Jyoti/Jasmine/Kali as “constructed identity conforming to its adoptive context” (89).

The bad experience she encounters is also discussed by the critics. The critic suggests “unimaginable and unpardonable crime for the Indian widow in India but in the only option for her survival” (Gaijan 2004 176). Indeed, seeing that Jasmine did not kill the captain, she could not have the chance to survive a country like America. Also Bose says the same thing. “..and finally to Jasmine’s reincarnation as an avenging Kali in her desperate bid to find a foothold in the American way of life” (Bose 53). The critic going on the interpretation insinuates that the incidence is just beginning but not ending (Bose 54). However, some of the critics regard the murder as a notorious thing for representing America. “...one notes that Mukherjee’s novel perpetuates the stereotype that Americans are violent, self-centered, materialistic, and lacking in the poetry of life” (Parameswaran 1990 699).

The murder of the 'half face' captain again makes her independent and free from the masculine pressure. Mukherjee absurdly depicts the heroine happy and unworried at the time she kills him. "A sanctuary transformed into a hotel; hell turned into paradise – to me this seems very American" (*Jasmine* 138). However, unlike all previous woman thinking a long time whether she wears western clothes or not, Jasmine/Kali wears blue jean on her first day in America. "I took out a blue-jean jacket bought for me in Delhi by my brothers" (*Jasmine* 119-20). Wearing the western clothes after rape and murdering the captain means that it happens in Indian identity. In this respect America conserves its innocent in terms of Jasmine. The clothes symbolize rebirth and new identity. Alam defines it is a kind of revenge; "Because she has been defiled by being raped, she realizes that sati is no longer a way out for her, and she decides to opt for rebirth, to avenge herself on the monster" (105). Moreover, there are a lot of critics thinking about the signification of clothes as American identity;

When Jasmine burns her clothes in the trash bin, she symbolically trashes the old traditions and, hence, her traditional identity, as the act of rape frees her from the old notions of purity and impurity, she becomes liberated and therefore can construct a new American identity for herself. (Singh 242)

Then Jasmine realizes her husband will, she has to give a vital decision, either she will survive in her new country or she lets herself die. "Instead of burning herself as a suttee goddess, she throws her suitcase into a trash can and sets it on fire" (Tandon 146). She chooses to adapt herself in America as she dreams with her husband in India. "She realised Prakash had taken Jyoti and created Jasmine and Jasmine could complete his mission" (Babu B. 63). Jasmine going on her transformation is born twice in America. Parekh sees the transmuting as the destiny of postcolonial woman;

This process of transformation, figuratively centred in the death of one's old self and the birth of a new self, is a motif that vitalizes the narrative language and structure. Sensory images reiterate at various levels the symbolism of cyclical patterns of birth, death, and new birth, in the context of the postcolonial immigrant woman's life and experiences. (Parekh 118)

The first day Jasmine has in America is a bit shock for her. The imagination she owns in her mind swiftly demolishes. “It was as though I’d never left India” (*Jasmine* 128). She starts to fed up with the milieu. “I had been in America nearly a day and had yet to see an “American” face” (*Jasmine* 129). However, Jasmine well knows that there is a circular she must join. If she does not change herself, she can make a vital failure which may as well cost her life. “For me, experience must be forgotten, or else it will kill” (*Jasmine* 33). The Jamaican woman she introduces at the first days in America becomes a role model for her. She is exposed to the self-realization. It is, of course, a part of transformation. “Not only Jasmine has to change according to the environmental change and the change of society, there is also another woman, the Jamaican, has also accepted the change. (Gaijan 2004 177).

Lillian Gordon, who helps Jasmine make healthy and accommodate her for a while symbolizes the ideal western – that is universal – citizenship. Not questioning and accepting the person as s/he is, Lillian is like a Pollyanna who is always optimistic even in the worst incidences. “I was lucky, she said, that India had once been a British colony. Can you imagine being stuck with a language like Dutch or Portuguese?” (*Jasmine* 132). The must-be characterization drawn by Mukherjee indicates her model persona for Americans. Dlaska points out the condition as;

It is thus the experienced and unprejudiced Lillian who formulates and reinforces Jasmine’s immigrant view of the past as a dangerous luxury for someone whose future has to be fashioned from the elements of a new culture and society. Far from offering a prescription for new-world citizenship, however, Lillian Gordon understands and supports the immigrants utmost desire: (Dlaska 141)

After Lillian’s assistance to get better both physically and psychologically, Jasmine gets contact the Professorji who teaches her English at the secondary school in India but now he lives in America. He also metamorphoses from Devinder to Dave, from the professorship to the dealership of hair in his new country. “Here he was “Dave,” not Devinder, and not even Professor, though I never called him anything but Professorji” (*Jasmine* 143).

Devinder can be regarded as an ordinary immigrant composing an Indian house in America. He makes Jasmine do housework. "They had a grateful servant who took her pay in food and saris" (*Jasmine* 146). It causes to live under the conditions of her hometown again. "Jasmine has become an invisible, nameless woman in the Flushing ghetto" (Alam 106). Thinking to dwell the American dream, Jasmine is disappointed with the condition there. She unfortunately possesses the dichotomy between two cultures. "Since coming to America, Jasmine herself has felt caught between two different worlds, divided between near-feudalism and modernity" (Dayal 76).

Working all day and not doing anything for herself, Jasmine really gets bored and she has the inclination to lead her dreams. The life waiting outside will be far away from her if she goes on living like that. "But it is in the two years that Jasmine spends with the Hayeses that she emerges as completely her own woman and begins living the American dream" (Alam 106). So, she tries to find solution to save her from this kind of life consisting of housework. And the only way to get rid of them is the green card letting her work like an American citizen. "Disappointments tumbled out of me. I told him. I wanted a green card more than anything else in the world, that a green card was freedom" (*Jasmine* 149). In doing so, she will be able to begin a work by green card "a job, a goal, *happiness*" (author's italic *Jasmine* 151). Chiu states that Jasmine manages to survive as an illegal in America;

In Bharati Mukherjee's novel *Jasmine*, the eponymous South Asian protagonist successfully survives her illegal existence in America. She accomplishes this not only through constant motion (thereby evading immigration authorities) but also by inheriting multiple identities, obscuring and complicating any acceptable notion of a fixed "American" identity. (Chiu 19)

Jasmine experiences the condition of contradictions between her old and new homeland. However, contrary to Mukherjee's previous protagonists, Jasmine is absolutely conscious about what she chases on. She is not ashamed of any behaviour she has done in order to adapt herself. "I could not admit that I had accustomed myself to American clothes disguised my widowhood. In a T-shirt and cords" (*Jasmine* 145). Likewise, Jasmine going on her experiences deals with her marital

status. “I wanted to distance myself from everything Indian, everything Jyoti-like. To them, I was a widow who should show a proper modesty of appearance and attitude. If not, it appeared I was competing with Nirmala” (*Jasmine* 145). She totally forgets her past and endeavours to fix her future. “An imaginary brick wall topped with barbed wire cut me off from the past and kept me from breaking into the future” (*Jasmine* 148)

The adaptability and transformation attract a great number of critics. No matter how hard obstacles she encounters, nothing can stand in front of her through her life. Jasmine being raped murdering someone has no impediments to accustom her America. Coming to America for some purposes, Jasmine forgets her targets and realizes her dreams. “The US is Jasmine’s dream world and her strange mission is soon forgotten. She sheds her Indian name and dress and adopts herself easily to every circumstance of life” (Babu B 69). In fact, Mukherjee represents Jasmine as a role model for immigrants who have just arrived in their new countries. Jasmine “a composite model for other minorities to emulate” (Song 345) becomes prototype for some other postcolonial authors. However, acclimatisation of Jasmine so fast is not a usual thing for Mukherjee. While some critics perceive as “the shattering of fleshly vessels” (Sanborn 438), others regard as “invested in discovering a resistant self” (Ramanathan, Schlau 6). As stated before, Mukherjee’s model woman Jasmine has the ability of changing priority according to her needs, which results in too fast Americanization;

Bharati Mukherjee *Jasmine* is not about authorship per se, but it is about the revision of the bildungsroman as a narrative form for legitimating a privilege ethnic women's narratives cannot take for granted, the privilege to become American by giving up or challenging traditional obligations (Chu 96)

As aforementioned, Jasmine is exposed to many obstacles and traumatic experiences; however, “she possesses strength of character...” (Sahsrabuddhe 74). Furthermore, she succeeds in transforming the bad situation to better one. “...she takes advantage of all the opportunities offered by her new country” (Wong 183). On the other hand, the critic sometimes complain about Jasmine’s too swift assimilation and too volunteer to Americanization which will be dealt later.

Jasmine finds a work as a servant and caregiver for Katy adopted child of Taylor and Wylie who are the first American couple or family accepting her without considering her ethnicity. The climax of the novel is Jasmine taking Katy's pet iguana on her lap. This incidence indicates how much enthusiasm she has inside to get westernization. Also it can be considered as tolerance to even most repugnant things which symbolizes American freedom. Power, like many a critic, thinks it is a part of her transformation by saying that "Jase holds the reptile on her lap, something she would never have done in India, and responds by noting her own transformation with astonishment" (104). It is granted as a vital test for Jasmine how much she desires America by Alaska. "She feels elated and a little sad at the thought that there is no going back and the hard and painful task before her" (143). In fact, it is really a hard task to carry out for Jasmine. After all, she considers herself reborn;

I picked him up and held him. Truly, I had been reborn. Indian village girls do not hold large reptiles on their laps. They would scream at the swipe of a dry tongue, the basilisk stare of a beady eye. The relationship of an Indian, any Indian, to reptile, any reptile, is that of a fisherman to a fish. (163)

The relationship between the family and her starts very well. As well as Katy sees her elder sister, Wylie, the wife of Taylor, considers her caretaker and one of the members in the family. Although Jasmine cannot understand everything in the American family such as adoption "as foreign to me as the idea of widow remarriage" (*Jasmine* 170), she is very happy in the family. Wylie makes many compliments in front of people. "When Wylie talked of me on the phone, she called me her "caregiver." "I don't know what I'd do without her, Jasmine's a real find" (*Jasmine* 175). She behaves so intimately that Jasmine feels she is adopted by American family. "it offers the symbolic possibility of the emergence of a reinvented, paralogical, heterogeneous "family," based on affinity and multiplicity rather than fixed identity" (Ruppel 182).

From the beginning of the chapter, Taylor becomes an ideal man and husband for Jasmine. Compared to man characters in the novel, Taylor is more humorous and a kind of person who does not care his appearance and being seen as a stupid person.

“He was the only man I knew who didn’t mind getting caught laughing silly. Prakash’d wanted to be infallible, and Professorji’d acted pompous. Taylor was fun” (*Jasmine* 176). Also, to give more illustration, “Taylor had teeth as crooked as mine – the first crooked teeth I’d seen in America” (*Jasmine* 166).

Then the second phase, falling in love with Taylor, begins. In fact, with the love she feels for Taylor, she starts to maintain American dream. “I liked everything he said or did. I liked the name he gave me: Jase. Jase was a woman who bought herself spangled heels and silk chartreuse pants” (*Jasmine* 176). The most important attitude seen in Taylor is his acceptance of Jasmine as she is. He does not want or try to change her. “Taylor didn’t want to change me. He didn’t want to scour and sanitize the foreignness. My being different from Wylie or Kate didn’t scare him” (*Jasmine* 185). This enables him to have Jasmine again. Furthermore, when Jasmine juxtaposes the characterization, she regards Taylor as an exact American. Now she is able to see the brighter side of America;

He smiled his crooked-toothed smile, and I began to fall in love. I mean, I fell in love with he represented to me, a professor who served biscuits to a servant, smiled at her, and admitted her to the broad democracy of his joking, even when she didn’t understand it. It seemed entirely American. I was curious about his life, not repulsed. I wanted to watch, be a part of it. He seemed wondrously extravagant, that Sunday morning. (*Jasmine* 167)

The moment waited for both Jasmine and Taylor comes when Wylie leaves him for another man. In fact, it impacts on Jasmine very deeply. It re-shapes her thoughts about her western life in America. “It was the hardest lesson for her to learn: monuments, agreements, even families, must constantly undergo transformation” (Powers 104). She starts to interrogate herself and her milieu. She asks herself what the happiness is or what qualifications she needs for happiness. “There was no word I could learn, no one I can consult, to understand what Wylie was saying or why she had done it. She wasn’t happy?” (*Jasmine* 181-2) Having eastern culture, Jasmine is inexperienced about what she should do. Although she is not disappointed with the disunion, she is twice exposed to bad experience by Mukherjee. Tandon, implying her ignorance states that Mukherjee reflects the characters who are not prepared for the conditions of real life;

In America she knows nothing that lasts forever, and so she needs not condemn herself to a life of mere duty and decides to move out to seek a life of happiness. Mukherjee's ethnic women are between roles. There is no role model for Jasmies or the Dimples. They have to invent their roles, survive and revise as best as they can. (Tandon 143)

The presentation of Taylor by her wife to Jasmine is another factor to be shocked for the protagonist. "It won't be okay by itself. But you'll make it okay, Jase" (*Jasmine* 183). Also Wylie's insistence for her staying with Taylor indicates her choice for her husband. Jasmine is the best candidate to look after both Kate and Taylor. To be a 'real' family is a signal for both writer and Jasmine to remove all the obstacles between old and new world. The critic associates with the affinity. "And belonging is all important, even if it means the discarding of nostalgia in order to wholly embrace the New World" (Bose 52).

On the other hand, Jasmine is attracted by the man around her. From the beginning of the novel, all the male characters desire Jasmine. Her transformation such as "Prakash for Jasmine, Taylor for Jase, Bud for Jane. Half-Face for Kali" (*Jasmine* 197) is due to her man's desire. Furthermore, Mukherjee depicts Jasmine as Aphrodite who is goddess of love and beauty. Also, "One executive bought me flowers and wine, another took me out to dinner and asked me if I was...otherwise engaged. I paid back professorji in a single check" (*Jasmine* 180). The requisition by man is a part of transformation in Mukherjee's opinion. The more she drifts away from her own culture, the more American she becomes. "Nevertheless, Jasmine's intransigence towards her native culture and upbringing acts as a powerful magnet for all men who appreciate and admire her Indianness and its adaptability" (Myles 113). Escaping from her own culture, Jasmine is hungry for all the things labelled as American. To complete her transmitting in her new land she tries not to be exotic. "As she shuttles between cultural interpretations her journey through America is aimed at escaping all cultural, social and genderist inscriptions and prescriptions which may stand in the way of her desire for self-fulfilment" (Dlaska 144)

Chu criticizes Jasmine becomes unreal and turns into nineteenth century heroines. It is unreasonable how an illiterate and inexperienced woman like Jasmine becomes so lucky and successful in a short time. It can be regarded as “aesthetic indulgence of excess” (Ray 191). For the critic, Mukherjee exaggerates to transform Jasmine. Resembling her a Victorian heroine, Chu thinks that nobody has so much opportunities and advantages as Jasmine has in the novel;

Most importantly, the book's heroine, Jasmine, is a grammar school dropout from a Punjabi village who enters the United States illegally with no job experience or skills. Privileges and opportunities are repeatedly granted to her because, like a Victorian heroine, she's perceived as innately special. (134)

When living together with Taylor, she sees one of the terrorists who cause her husband Prakash's death. Scared of him a lot, Jasmine decides to move Iowa, more west than New York, which means the more one goes the west, the more independence one is according to Mukherjee. The fear of death results in abandonment of her lover and his daughter. “‘How can anyone leave New York, he said, how can *you* leave New York, you belong here. Iowa's dull and it's flat, he said' ‘So is Punjab’, I said. ‘You deserve better’” (author's italic *Jasmine* 6). So, she meets Bud Ripplemeyer, an old small banker, who will be crippled after a bank robbery. She introduces to the readers “We're the kind who marry” (*Jasmine* 7).

Bud Ripplemeyer is very dissimilar from Taylor in terms of many respects such as attitudes and psychology. While Taylor is commonplace and normal and accepts Jasmine as she is, Bud regards her as an exotic foreign woman to be loved, which irritates her very much. “Bud is not the perfect lover, however. He always sees Jasmine as the lovely, exotic foreigner whose real name he cannot pronounce. He can never know her as well as she knows him” (Brians 118). Also his ignorance is noticed by Jasmine.

The vicious circle goes on. Jase is renamed as Jane by Bud because Bud not pronouncing her name properly. He sometimes jokes about her new name. However, the relationship between her and Bud is not the same as the one with

Taylor. Bud is discontented with her foreignness. Although she is liked by everybody around her, she feels foreign in Iowa. “But Plain Jane is all I want to be. Plane Jane is a role, like any other. My genuine foreignness frightens him. I don’t hold that against him. It frightens me, too” (*Jasmine* 26).

Furthermore the people from Iowa endeavour to change Jasmine. Different from others, Jasmine is sometimes isolated from the society. “They assume that I’m different from them but exempted from being one of “them,” the knife-wielding undocumented hiding in basements webbing furniture” (*Jasmine* 33). Afterwards sometimes they try to change her. It is irony that a person who wants to be totally American like Jasmine is undertaken to be assimilated by them. “They want to make me familiar” (*Jasmine* 33). Friedman declares this temptation as a racist reaction. “Mukherjee’s Indian immigrant Jasmine triggers racist reactions based on ideologies of inferiority, alienness, bestiality, and/or exoticism” (Friedman 110). However, contrary to the protagonists in earlier novels and short stories, Mukherjee depicts Jasmine who has “the spirit to survive and prosper in America” (Alam 110)

Changing her name as Jyoti, Jasmine, Kali, Jase and Jane is another factor to complete her transformation. With each names, Jasmine is getting closer to her ideal American woman. “The name changes also symbolize this defiance, because each new name represents a new fate and a new identity. She repeatedly gives birth to herself and in doing so becomes the ideal American immigrant” (Moore 949). Besides, the variation of names can be considered as a kind of surviving according to Ruppel. He alleges “... these name changes can be seen as a response to the still ongoing effects of colonialism. She must change to survive and to continue her journey” (183)

The sex is very important for Jane. Her superiority humiliates Bud. “It shames Bud that now, for sex, I must do all the work, all the moving, that I will always be top. I will do this” (*Jasmine* 35). Jasmine’s choice for Bud can be derived from his representing the West. “...*blond-haired arms* enfold me” (my italic *Jasmine* 37). The sexual relationship between her and Bud is very distinctive symbol

representing a post colonial woman predominates a colonial man. Jasmine's transformation goes so well that she outclasses an American man.

This condition is argued by a great number of critics. There are very distinctive interpretations about the sexual affair. "...it enables her to escape the psychological, physical and cultural limbo experienced by her immigrant peers" (Adams 134). In doing so, Jasmine forgets her being foreignness and feels superior on him. On the other hand some thinks as a measure of "her increasing detachment from traditional sexual mores and, correspondingly, of her assimilation in the New World through her rapid Westernization/Americanization" (Bose 60). The westernization is evaluated by aloofness from her traditions, which may as well be considered as assimilation. However, there are naturally other critics who suppose the affair as a humiliation of her own society and displeasure of readers. For instance, Chu regards it a kind of opportunism by stating as;. "... such as surviving rape and prospering, ..., and accepting white men's eroticized patronage, Mukherjee offends by appearing to celebrate a disturbing form of opportunism" (97). Also, keeping on criticism, the critic addresses Mukherjee makes a failure by the opportunist usage of her sexuality;

Thus, *Jasmine* invokes -- and harshly rewrites -- a tradition that codes courtship and marriage as legitimate "work" for a fictional heroine, potentially offending readers who consider marriage plots obsolete and readers who are offended by Jasmine's pragmatic use of her sexuality, her calculated rewriting of romantic plots. (Chu 132)

Also in this stage Mukherjee cannot get rid of asperity some critics make. There are some contradictions like the previous chapters of the novel. In Iowa, like in New York, all the male characters are captivated by Jasmine attraction. Chu finds the plot in which *four* men fall in love with the heroine on first sight. (author's italic 135) absurd and abnormal. Furthermore, the absorbing all the cultures emerged from America is out of logic for Parameswaran. The critic points out her desire to have American system by avoiding her culture; "... Jasmine simply buys into the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant value system and ends up binding herself to a bourgeois white-collar professional" (1995 649). On the other hand, Wong uses harsher style

for Jasmine. Wong brands Jasmine as ‘food prostitute’ because she moves to Iowa and lives with Bud. She gives her reason as;

The narrator's common-law marriage to Iowa banker Bud Ripplemeyer is depicted with an almost calculating ambiguity: to the reader “Jane” never reveals her true feelings toward his disabled mate, but hints at the nature of the transaction by recalling that the romance begins when she first arrives in Baden looking visibly famished....For all we know (at times food appears more metaphorical than real, and the protagonist's definition. Necessity is so slippery that one suspects her of creating an elaborate self-justifying alibi), Jasmine might be a “food prostitute” like her less articulate sisters.(Wong 1993 53)

Despite being a male character, Du, Jane and Bud’s adopted son is one of the most distinctive characters for analysing the transformation of immigrants in Mukherjee novels and short stories. Du learns to speak English in a very short time with ‘a permanent accent’ (*Jasmine* 13). It is not surprising Du likes her late husband Prakash is interested in electronics. “He’s working in a hardware store, learning electrical repair at night” (*Jasmine* 236). The critic expresses that it is a kind of immigrants’ acceptance to the new world. “Du’s practice of recombinant electronics, symbolic of the general gene pool alteration effected by immigrants, points to the ultimate transformation of American society” (Powers 105).

In this sense, Jasmine compares herself with Du for their assimilation process. “My transformation has been genetic; Du’s was hyphenated. We were so full of wonder at how fast he became American, but he’s a hybrid” (*Jasmine* 222). His hybridity emerges from Vietnamese-American. Mukherjee is again inclined to female characters that are more enthusiastic and determined to transform than men. “The transformation of Jasmine is genetic, unlike the transformation of Du, who remains a hybrid. Jasmine’s efforts to encounter the gruesome realities in an alien land reveal the strength of her psyche” (Rao and Kasyap 30). However, Hoppe supposes there is another perspective, which Jane and Du rewrite both their destiny and America;

Jasmine and Du re-combine, reappropriate, and re-invent cultural traditions and subjectivities in new combinations, imagining the land as wilderness/frontier/open possibility imaginatively and thus claiming it for

their use, in a mutated and shifting echo of the process the European settlers used as they imaginatively emptied and re-wrote the New World to serve as their destiny. (Hoppe 137)

Even though America seems “murderers, rape victims” (*Jasmine* 224) for him, he is courageous to start a new life in America which kills his family and make him leave from his homeland. “Despite all this, Du appears to have become the all-American teenager, refusing to talk Vietnamese, watching science fiction movies on television, hoarding gadgets, making friends, getting good grades in school” (Pultar 54). He well knows that the whole transformation and the possession of prosperous life happen with English and America. Even Jasmine is surprised for his decision to leave Iowa and start a new life with his sister. “I am amazed, and a little proud that Du had made a life for himself among the Vietnamese in Baden and I hadn’t had a clue” (*Jasmine* 222). Dayal regards it as “an expression of his survival instinct” (74) His bravery stimulates Jasmine to take notable decisions.

After a period of time, she begins questing herself. Her multi-identity speaks at the same time, which finds her in a bad condition. “In the white lamplight, ghost float toward me. Jane, Jasmine Jyoti” (*Jasmine* 21). The relationship between her and Bud is getting worse day by day. His perspective of exoticism and ignorance to her irritates her very much. “Jane, his mind is closed against me” (*Jasmine* 23). His mind closeness raises the distance between them. She starts to feel more terrible for herself than her crippled dear Bud. “I felt awful for him, and worse for myself” (*Jasmine* 23). She similes the life and people between India and America. At one point, the life in America becomes miserable and desperate for her. For example, Vimla setting herself on fire is better than Mrs. Ripplemeyer’s life for Jasmine’s opinion;

Vimla set herself on fire because she had broken her pitcher; she saw there were no insides and outsides. We are just shells of the same Absolute. In Hasnapur, Vimla isn’t a sad story. The sad story would be a woman Mother Ripplemeyer’s age still working on her shell, bothering to get her hair and nails done at Madame Cleo’s. (*Jasmine* 15)

At the end of the novel Taylor finds her and asks her whether she will come with him or not. Despite her pregnancy, Jasmine accepts her proposal in order to realize American dream. As expected from Mukherjee, they move to more western part of America, California. Du takes an important role to take this decision. Narrowly she thinks “The world is divided between those who stay and those who leave” (*Jasmine* 228). Chua believes in the stimulation of pregnancy on Jasmine who follows her dream in the west of America. “...it is an event over which she has more control than most women, and it is an indicator of how much Jasmine is now in charge of her self and her life, of how much empowerment she has gained” (59).

She makes a preference to go to California with Taylor. Brian simply states as “life with Taylor seem all the more attractive” (Brians 125). With this incidence, she gains her self-confidence. As aforementioned, Jasmine is uneducated she does not have a model to follow; however, she is able to lead her life on her own. “...she is reentering the circle of self-directedness and self-emancipation, which, however, never produces a fixed self” (Dayal 76). Furthermore, Chua exaggerates that Jasmine makes self-sacrifice to save her unborn child; “a wife's virtue entails self-immolation to believing that a pregnant woman's happiness justifies her deserting the crippled father of her unborn child for the arms of a lover” (Chua 59). Also, instead of self-humiliation and delinquency, she feels ameliorated and relax by going with Taylor. “In contrast, Jasmine does not experience *shame or guilt, only relief*, as she gives up her respectable life as caretaker to her disabled partner, Bud” (my italic, Adams 136). Also, similar to Adams, one of the critics believes that Jasmine loses her traditions, cultures and values by the end of the novel;

In this sense, Mukherjee challenges the reader to make any final pronouncement on the morality of Jyoti/Jasmine/Jase/Jane's decision at the end of the book to leave the paralyzed Bud while carrying his child, as no cultural values/ standards appear to be absolute and unchanging; rather, they must be mitigated and deliberated within the context of a constantly shifting self and that self's relationship to increasingly destabilized notions of culture and society. (Oh 135)

However, some of the critics blame Jasmine for her pragmatism. I think, it is unknown for the reader how she behaves if she encounters a better option than Taylor. “The protagonist moves from India to Florida, to New York, then to the Midwest, and finally to California. Metaphorically she moves from East to West and becomes an American ‘gold digger’” (Faymonville 53). Mukherjee drags her protagonist Jasmine “darker side, where failure seems more likely than success” (Brians 124). The more American she becomes, the more she separates from her values and standards. Finally, Chiu harshly criticizes *Jasmine* for its characterization, plot and idea. In spite of a long paragraph, it is very good quotation to explain Mukherjee’s failure clearly;

I return briefly to Mukherjee's *Jasmine*. While the novel enjoys frequent classroom use, it often has been criticized by postcolonial and feminist scholars for its facile representation of immigrant assimilation and for its use of Western feminism to propel Jasmine to America and its "freedoms." How can Jasmine, for example, so easily overcome her emotionally and psychologically fraught past: first the murder of her husband Prakash in India by terrorists; second, her immigration, as a woman alone, to America with no refuge, no contacts, and no job upon landing; and finally a rape on United States soil? The novel problematically negotiates the past and present by creating institutionally and politically "acceptable" dichotomies of, for example, the "uncivilized" India versus the progressive United States despite underlying commonalities evident in the uncivilized behaviour of her stateside, white rapist. The latter, however, is treated as an individual's heinous actions, whereas glimpses of Sikh terrorism and of the control of Indian women by men are unfortunately read as prevailing primitivisms that reflect the entirety of a nation. Such controversial representations spill from the literary and into the marketing realm. (19)

Finally, Jasmine can be regarded as an ideal self for Mukherjee. She believes in “a backward, squalid, crime-ridden, sexist India in desperate need of Westernization” (Brians 112). The westernization means the immigrant transformation which Jasmine undergoes. It is interrogated how the immigrants need to become American. For Li, *Jasmine* “raise doubts about whether the new immigrant could indeed become the architect of her own wants” (100). Not only does Mukherjee stimulate the immigrants to fulfil American dream but also she attempts to educate them by the all stages Jasmine is exposed. Jasmine is both criticized and appreciated by a great number of critics. No matter how criticized by

the critics, this means that it has a deep impact on American postmodern and postcolonial literature. It also mirrors the condition and problems of immigrants. Jasmine is the most inclined protagonist who wishes to transform and be western in Mukherjee's novels and short stories published by then. Alam summarizes that it is one of the distinctive novels in American fiction;

Even though three of those four essays were unsympathetic and even hostile to the novel, the attention given to it was a measure of the attention it and its author had received ever its publication...from now on be considered a "major" American writer writing about a distinct and important theme in American fiction: (Alam 118)

4. *THE HOLDER OF THE WORLD*

The Holder of the World is her most complicated novel existing dislocation, and disorientation. It is a historifiction novel of Mukherjee dealing with a woman who goes to India and falls in love with an Indian rajah in India in the seventeenth century in the ancient times of America where the Puritan dominate. Hannah Easton Fitch Legge, the protagonist of the novel, starts her journey to India in order to find the Emperor's Tear, one of the most precious diamonds on earth. Yet, she falls in love with an Indian rajah and possesses some bad experiences. Brian summarizes the novel as; "A rebellious Puritan woman in colonial America abandons her home for an Indian (Native American) lover, and her daughter goes even further—to India, where she becomes the devoted lover of an East Indian rajah" (115). In doing so' Mukherjee gets different point of view with respect to immigration and immigrant problems. Simon perceives the novel distinctively by stating as; "Mukherjee rewrites both American literary history and the origins of national independence to emphasize Indian influences" (420). To him, Mukherjee indicates Indian influence on American history. Alam supporting the thesis makes a similar explanation; "Evidently, Mukherjee had found in the process enough evidence to produce a book that suggests that there could have been connections made between America and India in earlier centuries – connections that can inspire connections in our time. (130).

The Holder of the World looks like Mukherjee's previous novels in terms of its theme and the arguments she concerns. Hannah having the problems of disorientation and acceptance her can be categorized as the same protagonists Jasmine, Tara and Dimple. However, contrary to them, Hanna is a white puritan oriental woman who has a relationship with an Indian. While other heroines yearn for living in America to fulfil their dream, Hannah explores India other protagonists come from and gives up everything in America. N. Iyer regards as a revolution in Mukherjee style. For the critic, Mukherjee expanding her perspective not only writes about the immigrants' psychology in terms of the women in Third World but also endeavours to represents from the women having the same problems.

Mukherjee's novel, like her previous works, focuses on such familiar topics as the displaced immigrant woman, trouble marriages, the search for identity in an alien culture, and the clash between Indian and American values. However, this novel shows an evolution in Mukherjee's aesthetics of the immigrant novel in that the form of the narrative questions the mode of inscribing cultural difference rather than simply acknowledging the existence of difference. (34)

The protagonist of the novel Hannah seems Jasmine in many respects; yet she also precedes Jasmine in terms of some characterization dealt below. As aforementioned, she resembles other heroines, especially Jasmine. Daska emphasizes the fact that Hannah “has the imagination and determination to carry her to new frontiers of the mind and through the transformations such journeys entail” (165). It is crucial that she has no psychological problems and traumas unlike Tara and Dimple. On the other hand, she is one step ahead of Jasmine. While Jasmine attempts to orient herself in her new homeland and indicates her American society how western she will be, Hannah has nothing to prove but enjoy her life in both America and India. “She may not herself prove to be a survivor like just as Jasmine adapts herself to the Western lifestyle similarly Hannah finds great contentment and joy in her adapted land, India” (Myles 116). Furthermore, the other critic agrees with Myles on the same idea. Jasmine symbolizes Mukherjee’s ideal self whereas Hannah stands for “ideal of independence and uncompromising new beginnings” (Daska 185). Going on her interpretation, Daska sees Hannah more superior than Jasmine in terms of mentality.

She is the first American to incorporate cultural difference into the fabric of her experience, the first American woman to be invented in the ‘particular crucible’ of American multiculturalism. In this sense, more than Jasmine’s trials, Hannah’s fabulous adventures are the stuff of fables. (191)

The complexity of the novel is emphasized by a great number of critics. The tides in the novel forces the reader comprehend the theme and characters. It points out the multiculturalism of the author. “The writer creates a vivid complex, takes about the dislocation and transformation that arise in the face of a meeting of cultures” (Tandon 163). Myles, furthermore, complains about the complication of

the novel. “The novel has an unusually wide canvas that sweeps across continents and centuries, also various cultures and religions” (114).

The novel shuttles between seventeenth and twentieth centuries, which combine at the end of the novel. The novel starts with an American narrator Beigh Master who seeks her own ancestors and the Emperor’s Tears. Writing on her dissertation, Beigh collaborates with an Indian boy Venn for a machine used for visualisation any places in history. At the end, Venn succeeds to make a program for her. The togetherness of two different ethnical people indicates Mukherjee’s multiculturalism in the novel who symbolizes her ideal American.

Also, two characters are depicted to the reader as postmodern. Having ‘cultures’, Venn and Beigh are not stuck in the middle of one culture. For example Venn says “The gaudiness of Allah, the porridge of Jehovah” (*The Holder of the World* 9). To make more exemplification, Beigh states as “I should have let the keyboard do the tracking, but, I like shamans and physics” (*The Holder of the World* 19). To like both the new and old is a sign of multiculturalism despite her Puritanism. The machine Venn’s team is working on is also a sign of ideal western sheltering tolerantly in all cultures. “...the team is working on the thousand most relevant facts, the thousand things that make me me, you you – to construct a kind of personality genome” (*The Holder of the World* 6). Beigh sees no differences between her and India or ‘others’ and has courage to explore by “slaloming between *us* and *them*, imagining *our* wonder and *their* dread” (author’s italic *The Holder of the World* 13).

While Beigh confidently uses the sources and extensive knowledge of the researcher, she also constantly draws attention to the bias, instability and arbitrariness of competing interpretations, juxtaposing eastern and western viewpoints, historical and contemporary readings, and even biblical exegesis, ... (Dlaska 176)

Beigh’s exploration to find her roots comes from Mukherjee’s need of connectedness. Contrary to her previous novels and short stories, the protagonist faces her culture and society she emerges from. It constitutes the basement of the novel. Even though some think that Mukherjee endeavours to reconcile with her

eastern readers after Jasmine's desire for absolute Americanization, she authors characters who seek her connectedness and roots. Also, this novel is reform for Mukherjee because the other novels written later *Leave It to Me* and *Tree Bride*.

Man's search of his identity, in a world of rootlessness and uncertainty, takes him back to history or past, which gives him a base to hold on to. This is exactly what Bharati Mukherjee seems to bring out in this novel (Ghanshyam and Iyengar 107)

Mukherjee realizes the prosperity of her own culture and Beigh does not perceive American culture as the highest level in the world contrary to Jasmine. Mukherjee, I think, masquerades American as an oriental. "Because of information overload, a five-minute American reality will be denser, more "lifelike," than five minutes in Africa. But the African reality may be more elemental, dreamlike, mythic" (*The Holder of the World* 7). Seeing the east as mystical and exotic, Beigh

"...discovers her ancestor Hannah Easton, who was Hester Prynne. Born in Salem, and later marrying an Englishman, Hannah moves to India, where she becomes the mistress of a Raja. Then, pregnant by him, she returns to Salem" (Barlowe 17)

The reality between Beigh and Venn is completely love. They love each other. Like her ancestors, Beigh loves an Indian boy, which seems to fit the tradition that an ideal Indian man should be an engineer in Mukherjee's point of view. Beigh possesses the same experiences as Rebecca who is isolated from her society, which cannot prevent her happiness. She confesses the reader she has a lover who is not accepted by family and she states "A lover scornful of our habits of self-effacement and reasonableness, of our naïve or desperate clinging to an imagined continuity Venn was born in India and came over as a baby" (*The Holder of the World* 31).

Depicted as an oriental in the novel, Beigh in fact finds eastern men more attractive and better characters than her own American men. "Past success became my credentials, and I picked up other men – Other men – meaning the natives of other countries whose immediate attractiveness" (*The Holder of the World* 33). There are a lot of examples given in the novel; "Even small but well-formed men,

like Indians” (104) or “I thought that I had found the world’s most modest man” (35). It indicates the continuity in the family falling love with an Indian.

First of all, Beigh depicts Rebecca and her life in early America. Rebecca has a totally puritan life such as singing the psalms, knitting for poor children and waiting for her ideal husband. “Rebecca Easton loved to sing. She sang psalms by the light of a fish-oil lamp, always to the same five or sings tunes” (*The Holder of the World* 26). To make it authentic, Mukherjee uses the passages of old psalms. “*Aske thou of me, and I will give the Heathen for thy lot; And of the earth thou shalt possess the utmost coasts abroad.* (author’s italic *The Holder of the World* 43). Later, Rebecca’s chase for her lover is appreciated by Beigh. Her careless stimulates her love to Venn. “And I envy Rebecca as she, impulsively, carelessly, leaps behind her lover, who is already on his horse, and vanishes into the wilderness” (*The Holder of the World* 31)

Rebecca marries off an American guy Gabriel Legge and migrates to exotic India. Nevertheless, when Rebecca arrives in India, her character totally changes somehow. Even at first she pretends to live like in America, she realizes that the life would not be the same as she used to. Like the earlier protagonist Jasmine who survives in America, Rebecca gets accustomed to live in seventeenth-century-India where colonialists dominate. Dealing with the same idea, Simon states on the conditions turning adverse direction;

Holder reverses the pattern set in Mukherjee’s earlier works, where a wide range of immigrants come to America and survive violent and rapid changes on their way to becoming ethnics. This time, it’s white women experiencing diversity and self-transformation – Beigh Masters reconstructs the life story of a Puritan woman who goes from being called Hannah Easton to Hannah Fitch to Hannah Legge to Salem Bibi to Mukta to Precious-as-Pearl to White Pearl. (Simon 427)

On the other hand not only do the wives fight for the hard conditions of India without supporting of their husbands but also they have to struggles for bibis who are the servants or slaves of their husband having adultery with. Even though “all the women, all the luxury and adventure, all the hunting, killing, debauchery a man

could dream about” (*The Holder of the World* 102), it becomes an ordinary tradition for men to cheat his wife, which irritates their wives very much. So, Gabriel would naturally have the bibi. Besides, “To Hannah’s friends a bibi was an annoyance, but not a threat” (*The Holder of the World* 131). They begin giving advices what she should or should not do. For example, confrontation with husband’s bibi reduces the dignity of wife. “Whatever you do, you will of course never confront your husband’s bibi. You will never acknowledge her” (*The Holder of the World* 131). Furthermore, the choice of bibi must be done by wife in order to elect an ugly woman. ““Your maids should be ugly as jackdaws,’ advised Martha” (*The Holder of the World* 132).

After a while, she is fed up with the uniformity and monotony of her life. “Martha Ruxton’s instructions and Sarah Higginbotham’s confessions stunned Hannah. These women, the only women she could call friends here, accepted cups of tea and biscuits...” (*The Holder of the World* 133). It is absolute shocking that a woman who has a dialogue with her husband below will be a white bibi fighting for her Indian lover and carrying his baby;

“Wife!” She knew not to answer.

“I say, my good Christian Massachusetts Bay Puritan wife. Have you missed me?”

“Of course, my husband.”

“Have you entertained yourself in my absence?”

“Only with my sewing.” (*The Holder of the World* 153)

Gabriel and his bibi die by “a rabid flying fox” (*The Holder of the World* 194) when they are together. After the death of her husband and embarkation of adventures, Rebecca’s first transformation is completed by renaming her Hannah Easton in India. This transformation makes her liberate and free from her puritan thoughts. Being one of the colonialists, Hannah does not regard the relationship or collaboration with natives as a humiliation. “There was no dishonor in being a mercenary or of working for the natives” (*The Holder of the World* 161). The curiosity for exploration of natives has stronger influences than her puritan side.

The liberation also means sexuality for Hannah Easton. “Being rid of a sexual tormentor was the least cause for her new sense of liberty” (*The Holder of the World* 163). Her mother’s adultery and husband’s relationship with a bibi stimulate the feeling for exploration the sexuality. Alam expresses that Hannah grows up by this imagination; “Hannah finally enters of the world of the natives, fulfilling thereby a dream she had been dreaming since her childhood. And it is a world every bit as fascinating as she had imagined it to be” (128).

As aforementioned, she is a widow at the age of twenty three. “...we know she was a damned handsome woman” (*The Holder of the World* 60). She has a love affair with a Nipmuc raja. The love she cannot find in her husband appears in the eyes of her Indian lover. “Hannah Easton has, in effect, entered the world of romance, and true to the logic of romance, she now is going to have the grand affair of her life with the raja ... it is love at first sight for her and sex in the first close encounter” (Alam 128). In this sense, India becomes her new home, which is realization of re-housement. “The truth was Hannah felt herself no more at home in England than she did in the Coromandel” (*The Holder of the World* 164).

The experience with an Indian lover reminds the reader her mother whose “abduction by her Indian lover and disappearance into wilderness, physically breaking the barriers of her Puritan society, remains in her mind forever (Ghanshyam and Iyengar 108). Indian traditions and Sita help better comprehension of her mother. For Daska it is a kind of transformation from her puritan identity to comprehend her mother’s choice. “It is in fact through her encounter with India’s rich imagination and Sita’s captivity myth that Hannah succeeds in freeing her Puritan senses to finally understand her mother’s decision” (184). Alam states by stating that Hannah will not stop the place her mother stands and also advance more than her. “Instead of turning her against her mother, though, the episode keeps stimulating Hannah to go beyond the strict parameters imposed by Puritan society” (120-1)

Hannah newly feels her femininity. The closer Indian traditions she is, the more passionate and determined she becomes. The characteristics of Puritanism gradually perish in her mind. “India offers a life of limitless possibilities and sensuous pleasures which Hannah could not even dream of in the seventeenth century European world” (Myles 116). When it is thought in terms of feminism, she gains the ability of taking decisions, self-confidence and self-sufficiency even though she is depicted under the hegemony of rajah. In this sense, *Dlaska* resembles Hannah with her author Mukherjee;

The most exciting protagonist, like Hannah, seemed an unlikely candidate for repositioning the stars. The many links Mukherjee establishes between herself, her complexity of the novel, but create a continuity and tradition of female risk-takers...as well as creators and authors who are determined to shape their own and others' lives. (*Dlaska* 179)

In this regard, Alam redefines the theme of the novel as “sexual awakening through an “other” lover” (124). When returned to her earlier life, it will be clearly seen that there are no opportunities to indicate her sexuality. “Growing up among the ascetic Fitches in the strict Puritan community of Brookfield, Hannah has no occasion for expressing her sexuality” (Alam 125). Keeping on his interpretation Alam finds similarities between the narrator Beigh and the protagonist Hannah. “Although Beigh has experienced the ash of sterile relationships and is relishing happiness with Venn, the theme of sexual awaking through an “other” is conveyed chiefly through Hannah Easton’s life...” (125). In this sense, also Hannah seeking the adventure and self-development looks like her author Mukherjee.

The changing happens radically when compared to the previous protagonists in the novels and short stories. Hanna manages to transform herself as an Indian ideal woman like Sita. The condition is appreciated by even Indians colonized by the white. Also her Indian lover sees no obstacles to get married to her. “Masters celebrates Hannah’s talent for-precisely-hybridity: the appropriation of a form meant to be prayed to and to prove one’s marriageability...” (Simon 424). Also some critics claim that the women in the novel are so changeable that one cannot identify characters properly. “Plot twists so intensely fuse the identities of these figures—

switching their names, clothes, roles, fates, and even bodies—that “horizontal” female identification becomes the great secret” (Rody 207).

The transformation symbolizes many things according to critics. However, the most suitable one is Moore’s idea by stating that Mukherjee constitutes of her ideal American identity (950). Also the adaptation to a city and its traditions is very distinctive for survive in old colonized India. So “In Hannah’s character, we find adaptability” (Ghanshyam and Iyengar 109). While Jasmine fulfils her dreams in America, Hannah feels great pleasure to be in India. The condition of love to rajah is indicated by Daska. “Rebecca’s flight with her Nipmuc lover, who very likely came to either kill or claim her, is the first instance of many rebirths and transformations in the novel” (182-3). Transmitting from a devoted puritan to white bibi is that not only does she endeavour to survive in east part of the world but also she achieves her self confidence.

In presenting Hannah's identity as transcending geographic space, Mukherjee examines location as ideological space and interrogates how race and gender constitute a fluid rather than a fixed identity. Hannah's fluid sense of race and ethnicity, signified by her constant renaming—Hannah Easton to Hannah Fitch to Hannah Legge to Salem Bibi to Mukta—and Bhagmati's similar renaming—from Bindu Bhashini to Bhagmati to Hester suggest that one's identity is constituted by the narrative that one constructs and the actual experiences one undergoes. (Iyer, N 37)

Her maid, translator and friend Bhagmati helps her learn India better. But for Bhagmati, it would be too hard to survive in India for Hannah. Bhagmati teaches her both the language and cultural figures including Sita to be better wife. The relationship between them turns into fellowship, which symbolizes Mukherjee’s ideal connection in multicultural America. The critic believes Bhagmati stimulates Hannah’s wishes to explore the old world and her sexual exploitation profoundly; “... she begins to talk more freely to Bhagmati and learn from her maid about Indians and their beliefs. And what she learns in the process further increases her desire to immerse herself in the life of the subcontinent” (Alam 127).

On the other hand, similar to Hannah and the previous protagonist Jasmine, Bhagmati transforms from Bindu, Bhashini to Bhagmati. This passage to metamorphose is a kind of surviving according to critics. Mukherjee reflects the necessity of adaptation for the changing even if the individual is native Indian/American. “So also Bhagmati's transformation from Bindu Bhashini to Bhagmati is a consequence of rape: it is not an identity she chooses but one she accepts and then reshapes in order to survive” (Iyer, N 37). Also, Dlasaka thinks that they steps ahead for more liberation when they are called any other name. “As they reincarnate and rename each other, they appear as stages in a non-linear development towards an ideal of independence” (Dlasaka 196).

After some adventures she encounters, she enters her maid and friend Bhagnati's world, which means her second transformation. She battles against her lover's enemies and rescues her lover by making him healthy. “Hannah's entry into Bhagmati's India is accompanied by Hannah's second rebirth, which bears all the hallmarks of Mukherjee's immigrant transformations” (Dlasaka 176). Going her interpretation, she states that she becomes the centre of the novel in this stage. Hester manages to realize her potential. “Hannah embarks on the first leg of her journey to vicariously participate in somebody else's stories until she becomes the center of her own” (185). In this part of the novel Hester has the central role who takes some significant steps as a woman in colonial India. The women play more important role than men. For example, Hester, who carries his baby, goes on helping her crippled rajah despite her mother's rejection. “These women possess inner strength of character. These women do not impress the readers with beauty but with this strength of character” (Sahsrabuddhe 71).

Her love to Rajah is far more than the love for her husband Gabriel. Being her pregnancy by a rajah makes the conditions more complicated. She offers the rajah going to America together at the moment she has to return to her homeland. ““What change do you propose for a one-armed king?’ ‘He is going to become a one-armed father’” (*The Holder of the World* 256). Her positive point of view does not change her lover's mind. The rajah who finds ‘an obscene idea’ (*The Holder of the*

World 255) does not go to America with Hester who will have many obstacles there because of her illegitimate child. “She prayed for the first time in years, for the strength of survival” (*The Holder of the World* 273). Although she is taken captured and exposed to some physical and psychological tortures, she feels more miserable and desperate in America.

In fact, the tribulation for Hannah Legge begins in America. Again she takes her former name and surname, which causes some identity problems. Mukherjee indicates both the peculiarities of Puritan life which considers it is unacceptable that a woman will have an illegitimate child from an Indian rajah and the hardness for a woman who experiences all these. Abair and Cross think that Mukherjee tries to assimilate her protagonist with Hawthorne’s character who suffers from the same problem. “The oppressive narrowness of Puritan life in which “suffering is good” and the quiet rebelliousness of Hester Prynne are reflected upon more openly in Mukherjee’s rendering of a similar story and her creation of a similar protagonist” (83).

In fact it is a kind of transformation of development for Mukherjee. As aforementioned, Mukherjee thinks that the transmitting cannot actualize without pain. Like Jasmine, Hannah/Hester transforms to survive in the society she lives. “The women in the novel, author, narrator, protagonists and the many women of all nationalities, social positions and convictions, are reincarnations of a spirit of independence and connectedness” (Dlaska 196). Dlaska also supposes that the narrator/protagonist’s quest is the reincarnation of woman;

In a highly symbolic moment of merging identities and experiences, Beigh thus finds inside herself/Bnagmati/Hester the object of her quest and reveals the secret of her narration: Hannah *the Holder of the World*, is one in and endless line of female reincarnations who carry with them the desire for and knowledge of connection across time and cultures. (Dlaska 196)

On the other hand, when she has an illegitimate child, she is condemned by the society. Simon defines Hannah as “the Hindu woman with the Puritan name” (Simon 423). She is penalized by carrying ‘I’ on her chest meaning ‘Indian lover’.

As a result of the realization of herself, Hannah does not consider as a charge. For her, 'I' means independence instead of Indian lover. The critic summarizes as;

The Hester Prynne – like ambiguity that Hannah's life is becoming is also shown when she blurts out her sacred letter in a delirium. "I is for Independence" she cries out, even though her best friend, Hester Manning thinks that her sick friend has in mind her mother's Indian lover. (Alam 125)

Mukherjee refers to Hawthorne's novel *The Scarlet Letter*. Not only is the protagonist name as the same as Hawthorne's Hester Prynne but also the context has some similarities between them. "In this sense, Hawthorne's novel represents not only material to be written, but also a subtextual reference point in Mukherjee's intricate play of intertextuality" (Dlaska 172). Having an illegitimate child and display a disgrace letter worn on chest are some of the similarities between them. However, it is seen as "a kind of immigrant literature of its own" (Simon 420). Because *The Scarlet Letter* a product of the then novel in nineteenth century is re-authored by Mukherjee, the postcolonial writer of twentieth century. Alam believes that Mukherjee questions the history and romance again. "...she is asking her readers to place *The Holder of the World* in the tradition of American romance inaugurated by Hawthorne and is emphasizing the historical dimension of her novel" (Alam 129)

Furthermore like Mukherjee, Maryse Condé having the protagonist called Hester Prynne in her novel deals with the same issue including feminism, colonialism and gender. Simon undeservedly criticizes Hawthorne regarding not considering with these issues. "Hawthorne either was unwilling or unable to address, or addressed obliquely or directly, but in limited ways" (Simon 420). Thinking the society he lives in the nineteenth century, it will be injustice for him. In fact these two authors endeavour to reflect the problems of society mentioned above by using worldly-known protagonist Hester Prynne who are exposed to the same obstacles. Instead of using the third world women, white western women are always more influential to impress the readers. "No, Hester Prynne is simply the first protesting woman in the comparatively infant literature of the United States, but this apparently

makes her central to the newly globalized literary universe” (Rody 205). At the same time, Rody

That Condé and Mukherjee rewrite Hester Prynne “horizontally, ” as an ally of their own peoples' antiracist and anticolonial struggles, despite the privileged white American status that might have made her an unwelcome presence in their “histories, ” suggests the distinctive willingness to see the self in the other that has driven the “horizontal plot” throughout this study. But more particularly, Condé and Mukherjee seem to find in Hester a special potential that mediates their cross-ethnic identification (208)

Lastly, Beigh and Hannah’s encountering is distinctive symbol representing the universalism of human characters. As well as they are relatives, their destiny combines with the same location, India. “Both of them, she realizes, are impelled by curiosity and romance, a thirst for the unknown and for a passion that could transform their lives” (Alam 122). Also the parallelism in their destinies is another factor for Mukherjee who makes them meet in the same time and place. Mukherjee authors “...two parallel stories about cross cultural connections skillfully put together...” (Alam 137). Also, not only the narrator/protagonists but also other minor characters are in the transformation phase to survive in two controversial worlds. “The four women appear as stages and versions of the same spirit of departure and renewal, sharing a belief in the concept of rebirth” (Dlaska 179).

Furthermore, Dlaska has different point of view for two recent novels written by Mukherjee. The critic emphasizes that Mukherjee successfully draws the prototypes of modern Indian and American people. However, she advocates Mukherjee presents it metaphorically;

In her two recent novels, *Jasmine* and *The Holder of the World*, Mukherjee examines how experiences constitute one's self and one's frame of reference. Both "Indianness" and "Americanness" are presented as metaphors for comprehending the world. (Iyer, N 32)

Briefly, it can be said that Mukherjee manages to write a distinguish novel in terms of both postcolonial and feminist point of view. Constituting of a universal individual, she metaphorically mixes all cultures, religion and ethnicity together. “In response to the recent move in American feminism to consider consciously race

and class when discussing gender issues, Mukherjee's attempted blurring of racial identities is entering a new phase" (Iyer, N 40). On the other hand, she uses multicultural components in order to take the control the white American literature. "*The Holder of the World* criticizes canonical American literature's white centredness, by forcing the recognition of the immigrant experience and the multicultural aspects to American history" (Iyer, N 42). Many critics find *The Holder of the World* as a successful novel authored by Mukherjee. Alam concludes his chapter about the novel as;

Despite such occasional lapses, *The Holder of the World* is an impressive work. It shows Mukherjee reaffirming her Indianness while asserting her Americanization. She appears to have found through this novel a way to reconcile the Indian part of her heritage with the part that wants to celebrate immigration to America. (Alam 137)

THIRD CHAPTER

The first novel mentioned here is *Leave It to Me* dealing with Devi Dee an adopted young girl, who moves to California in order to fulfil her two desires, the realization of her American dreams and the determination of her bio-parents who leave her death. Coming to San Francisco, Devi “enjoys being part of community of outsiders” (Dlaska 223). Contrary to the previous protagonists, Devi is a social individual having the ability to accompany with both natives and immigrants. Through the end of the novel she introduces her parents whose father endeavours to rape her. However, she is not affected by these experiences.

This novel is a turning point for Mukherjee leaving the immigrant crisis and identity. Regarding herself as a western – that is American – citizen, Mukherjee does not categorize the people and nations as old and new, or western and eastern. “Mukherjee insists in *Leave it to Me*, need to include the ‘whole story’ of a nation of old and new immigrants and cultural migrants” (Dlaska 238). The feeling of oppression gradually disappears in Mukherjee’s mind.

The other novel authored by Mukherjee is the first novel of trilogy *Desirable Daughters* dealing with Tara Banerjee, the youngest of three sisters who lives in California, divorces from her rich husband Bish and has the necessity to raise up her gay son attending a high school. Although Tara is the protagonist in the novel, sisters have important major characters, the proof of Mukherjee’s development. The middle sister, Parvati whose husband is waiting her green card is an upper-class wife living in Bombay. The eldest Padma or Didi having the tendency for Indian life and traditions lives in New York. Even though the context is centralized in Padma’s illegitimate child, Mukherjee details three sisters’ psychology and points of view to life. At the end of the novel it will be clear that the issue of child is not connected with Padma but Tara owing to her husband who possesses the computer engineering company. With an explosion Bish is badly wounded, which causes the family reunion.

From now on Mukherjee writes the extreme issues in the society. Having a gay son is not a problem for Tara. Her sisters are also agreed with it. “Being fed up with overflowing superfluity in her life of opulence, Tara breaks all taboos and walks out of the wedlock with her son Rabi... all for her self fulfilment” (Nayak 273). With this novel, Mukherjee gives the signal that there is no return to the people who have the psychological ailments and traumas. Her woman characters are self confident modern that they have the possibility to compete against man hegemony.

Her next novel *Tree Bride* deals with again the protagonist Tara who decides to author her own roots and ancestors, one of whom is her namesake Tara who fights against the imperial British. The reason why she writes a book is her tiredness to look after her husband. In fact Mukherjee narrates four different characters who live in other places and time. Despite its complication to understand, it is prominent that Mukherjee becomes well-aware for her own country and history. Instead of only fulfilling her desire in America, she possesses also historical awareness and the responsibility to notice her people living in India.

The last novel of trilogy authored by Mukherjee is *Miss New India* dealing with a young passionate protagonist Angali Bose who flees from her family and homeland to lead her own destiny. Angali is connected with Tara’s son Rabi. The plot of the novel is thoroughly realized in India. Mukherjee implies that India will be no longer conservative, sectarian and underdeveloped. With this novel Mukherjee accesses the latest point for her heroines owing to the protagonists’ determination, peace of mind and extrovert personality even if they are in their homeland. The characters are also reconciled with their past.

In this part of the dissertation, Mukherjee’s protagonists have no cultural and psychological traumas and man’s hegemony. However, the quickest development of Mukherjee’s protagonists is seen in this phase. While Devi Dee is her transitional heroine to her extreme experiences she deals with, Tara becomes the transformational protagonist who has historical and cultural awareness. Furthermore, Angali Bose chases her dreams in India and leaves her family. The name of the

novel, *Miss New India*, symbolizes the contemporary new ideal Indian woman living in her homeland. With this respect, Mukherjee manages to surmount herself in her last novels.

1. *LEAVE IT TO ME*

The other novel *Leave It to Me* is one of her successful and controversial novels authored by Mukherjee. Grown up by middle-class Italian family, Debby DiMartino, protagonist of the novel, is an Indian born adopted girl in her twenties who moves to San Francisco alone and search for her biological parents who “abandoned and left to die... ironically named ‘Baby Clear Water Iris-Daughter’” (Dlaska 206). However some critics distinctively explicate the novel as “Mukherjee took aim at the 1960s and 1970s American counterculture” (Oh 203). Oh implies the Vietnam War, some natural disasters in America. After writing a seventeenth-century-heroine Hannah Easton, Mukherjee again turns to twentieth century. In the novel she deals with the same issues, the immigrants’ psychology and the components of Americanism. Dlaska claims that the novel is another step for her assertion what makes the country real America as the suggestion will be discussed in this part of dissertation. “In this sense *Leave It to Me* will be discussed as a stage in Mukherjee’s development as a new American writer as well as an impetus in continuing American tradition of reconsidering and reconstituting what makes an American” (206).

Debby comes into Mukherjee’s mind earlier than Jasmine. However, the improvement of her character in her mind will happen much later. However, the similarities between Jasmine and Debby are so much that they can be considered as twin sisters. Their desire to fulfil American dream is an obsession for both heroines. On the other hand Devi gets closer to her creator than Jasmine. In one of the interview, she clearly states as;

Devi came to me as the opposite of a character I’d written earlier, Jasmine from the novel *Jasmine*. Draft by draft, I came to understand Devi better, and the most important idea that wrote itself in the second or third draft was that she prizes clarity over everything else. (Hogan)

On the comparison of her previous novel *The Holder of the World*, *Leave It to Me* is more harshly criticized by the critics. The critics “agree in all-round condemnation of *Leave It to Me* as a failed project” (Dlaska 205). The

connectedness is obsession in Mukherjee's novels and short stories. Even though both protagonists have a great number of similarities such as changing name for adaptation, migration and sexuality, Debby differentiates from Hannah on the basis of identity quest. Daska implying Debby indicates; "Her search for identity is guided not by a desire for growth and understanding, as Beigh Masters' is, but is conducted on a purely emotive level and thus driven by rage and the need for revenge" (215). However, the critic claims that the novel is more appealing than her previous novel in terms of many aspects;

If Mukherjee's vision in *Leave It to Me* is darker than in *The Holder of the World*, the novel's formal experimentation and representational revisionism are also more demanding. Its irreverent genre-crossing as well as its intertextual tension go beyond the attempt at recovery and re-vision in *The Holder of the World*, since Mukherjee latest novel is even more interested in complicating accepted American meanings and metaphors. (Daska 238)

Mukherjee's first sentence is about depicting the protagonist's characteristics. "I am, or was, Debby DiMartino, a fun-loving twenty-three-year-old American girl. I was adopted into a decent Italian-American family in Hudson Valley" (*Leave It to Me* 10). Her identity crisis begins with her physical appearance. Debby "a beautiful girl in a plain family, an exotic girl in a very American town" (*Leave It to Me* 16) possesses the feeling of discrepancy from others. Unlike the earlier heroines, Debby accepts her distinctiveness. "I began to understand about mugged identities" (*Leave It to Me* 16).

The relationship between her and the family members is not the same as an ordinary family. She always feels she is different from the others. The gap between them isn't very well. "Angie, my sister, is still stuck on a one-bedroom four-share in the West Village, and Angie's twenty seven" (*Leave It to Me* 29). Moreover, her mother thinks very whimsically. For example when Debby moves to another city and calls, "Why waste your money?" Mama sighed" (*Leave it to Me* 49). Additionally, she sometimes behaves feeble-mindedly as though she does not know anything about the facts. "Mama chose innocence. "Didn't it work out with that nice Oriental man?" (*Leave It to Me* 49)

Lastly, the other family member, the father is worse one for Debby thinks that he alienates her from the family. Her father is the reason why she categorizes her family as aliens:. “Pappy became my dad a million times removed. Thanks to those stories, for the first time I felt connected *the DiMartinis were the aliens*” (my italic, *Leave It to Me* 27). It is the first time the protagonist has accused her family of her disorientation instead of herself. It indicates the improvement of Mukherjee and Mukherjee’s characters.

In fact her family having adoration to their daughter is not as bad as she thinks. The idea of adoption makes her think improperly. “That evening I counted seven dogs, though one of them had a NOT ADOPTION sign above its cage” (author’s capital *Leave It to Me* 47). Thinking even the dogs are not adopted, Debby would take a decision for quest her bio-parents. Also the unknown spreading ahead her is a scary condition for Debby. Instead of hearing the facts, she avoids them. “Ignorance isn’t bliss, but it keeps risky knowledge at bay” (*Leave It to Me* 41). Adoption means the limitation for Debby. “Not I was adopted, but I am adopted, meaning I want you to know that we’ve both invented ourselves, you couldn’t have found another woman as much like you as I am if you’d taken out personals (*Leave It to Me* 33-4). She hates the idea of intervention of her private life. She flees from her ‘very American town’ in order to be independent. On the other hand the critic states that the repeated theme on immigrants’ contradiction Mukherjee deals with is re-written by a distinctive Indian-origin-protagonist who are grown up in terms of American culture;

Leave It To Me remains in part a reworked story and in part an experimental novel in the sense that the novelist repeats a theme she has used before-the individual's dilemma in the American multiethnic potpourri-in a new context, against a fresh backdrop. (Jaidka 204)

Although Debby has a happy middle-class family who loves her very much, “Debby grows up with the awareness of being different, the feeling that she is an unwanted obstacle in a world that hurtles on towards its mysterious destinations” (Jaidka 202). Having different ethnicity in American town makes her have the

emotion of nonentity. “It’s just that Debby DiMartino has no weight, no substance” (*Leave It to Me* 10). While the Indian ethnicity makes trouble for almost all previous protagonists created by Mukherjee, Debby has an ambition to find her Indian connectedness. “The celebration of rootlessness is thus contrasted in Mukherjee’s work with a disturbing exoticization and essentialization of cultural belonging” (Banerjee 76). The critic claims that her energy and ambition to make a connection between her and East

Furthermore, the quest for identity becomes very tough condition for Debby. Her ethnicity of Indianness means only the exoticism for both the protagonist and her society. “When Debby DiMartino first starts asking questions about her identity and place in a seemingly familiar America, she finds that there are no precepts or codes for being an Asian American” (Dlaska 215). On the other hand, Myles sees the condition as a development of Mukherjee’s characters. For her opinion, Debby knowing her parents’ undesirability is the best characters drawn by Mukherjee so far. “The evolution of Debby from a helpless infant rejected by her biological parents to a young woman in search of reality divulges a step further in the mental progression of Bharati Mukherjee’s women characters” (Myles 117).

Like Jasmine and Hannah who every man falls in love with on the first sight, Debby is attractive and has “the voice of a sexy nun” (*Leave It to Me* 19), which Mukherjee fails to depict her characters. Also Debby has the ability to use her advantage of exoticism. It gives hint reader guess what will be Debby’s next step. The necessity of transformation as well as the desire to get know better grows in her side. The real life expanding on front is waiting for her;

I knew by then that there was a life beyond the state lines waiting for me to slip into. Star Quality just plays taller and thinner and younger than it really is; second bananas just look older and fatter than they really are. All I’d have to do was be beautiful, be available, and my other life, my *real* life, would find me. (author’s italic *Leave It to Me* 18)

The first transformation, similar to Jasmine and Hannah, forms according to her first lover. Her Chinese lover wants her to look like a Chinese, which does not irritate the heroine. “I’d be more Chinese than the Great Wall” (*Leave It to Me* 38).

On the other hand, renaming her name as Tiger is her first transformation, which means the inclination of her changing. “He called me Tiger from that night on” (*Leave It to Me* 35). On the other hand, contrary to Jasmine and Hannah, she has more self-confidence. “I didn’t need the world to fall in love with me” (*Leave It to Me* 34).

California always becomes the symbol of independence and American dream for Mukherjee. That’s why Jasmine leaves Bud and goes with Taylor there. The west always becomes more American even in America. However, twenty three-year old Debby’s maturity welcomes the obstacles and discrimination in a new city which represents the improvement of the characters in her novels and short stories. “Of course I knew I’d been discriminated against, but nicely, so why not treat it as a learning experience? Hello California” (*Leave It to Me* 63). It is a new era for Mukherjee to meet the impediments so nicely.

On the other hand, Mukherjee completely gives up renaming her protagonists when they are introduced to a new society. “The Golden State offered freaky-costumed freedom, and more: it offered immunity from past and future sins. Goodbye, Debby DiMartino. Long live Devi Dee” (*Leave It to Me* 65). Debby DiMartino turns into Devi Dee, which is very ironic name for both easterners and westerners. Devi is a mythical character in Indian mythology while Devi evokes the reader Devil. Singh interprets as “the text to a Hollywood thriller fantasy, a masala (meaning a mixture of spices) of East and West” (245). Furthermore, the same critic going on her interpretation states the moment Debby’s transforms into Devi is truly American scene chosen by Mukherjee;

As the protagonist drives out of New York toward San Francisco, "Debby DiMartino [dies] and Devi Dee [births] herself on the Donner Pass at the precise moment a topdown Spider Veloce with DEVI vanities" cuts her off in front of the Welcome to California Fruit Inspector Barrier (Singh 245)

As mentioned above, Devi is the character of Indian mythology. “She is the female counterpart without whom the male aspect, *which represents consciousness or discrimination*, remains impotent and void” (my italic, Wikipedia). Representing

the discrimination, Devi is unaware of her name. She does not attitude according the meaning of the name. Dlaska suggests that she is “best understood if she is viewed as a heroine of Greek tragedy...” (Dlaska 219). Indeed, a great number of critics go along with the misrepresentation of Devi as an Indian goddess. Banerjee asseverates the same issue as;

Yet Debbie’s remaking of herself out of a ‘tool kit of identities’ is constantly at odds with her ‘mystery genes’ (*Leave*). Ironically enough, the Indian-American Debby DiMartino renames herself as an Indian goddess, Devi, while at the same time being ignorant of the name’s origin or meaning. (Banerjee 75)

On the revision of Devi’s characteristics, Mukherjee again fails to represent Debby because of her extravagant attractiveness and exoticism. Coming to California with nothing but a car, Devi has the first-class life from the day she arrives there. “My first time in California, would you believe?” (*Leave It to Me* 61). On the other hand, when Devi is depicted in the novel, she is introduced the reader as a perfect woman. In the novel Devi Dee;

You are twenty-three-year-old SWF, I tested myself. You are attractive, and you are street-smart in a Schenectady/Albany sort of way. You have a sense of humor, which gets you dates and jobs. You also have your pride, which, when it gets out of hand, burns down an ex-boyfriend’s house. Given such assets of your looks and character and the liability of your situation, (author’s italic *Leave It to Me* 58)

Paramesvaran complains about the situation everything is presented to Devi in the golden bowl. For example, like Jasmine and Hannah, the men around her fall in love in first sight. Or her old car never needs repairing. The critic blames Mukherjee for writing a desultory novel. Additionally, many critics such as Banerjee and Jaidka agree with Parameswaran. To make an exemplification, Jaidka implies the aim of moving to California for nothing but sexual freedom. “But is it really self-knowledge or self-discovery that the newly-christened Devi seeks?” (*Leave It to Me* 203) The critic believes in Mukherjee’s deficiency to represent Indian woman living in America. She states in her article as;

Everything comes on a red carpet for Devi; she wins over the richest men on sight, unearths her personal history (needless to say, she has one Indian parent and one white parent) in a handy series of faxes, and never runs into any problem, not even with her battered Toyota, which never needs repair. Everything is described so superficially that one does not get the feeling the author has ever been in those spaces or done the homework needed for verisimilitude. (Parameswaran, 1998; 630)

The feeling of connectedness gets bigger and bigger in her. To illustrate, when she enters a cafe, she sees two people who have different ethnicity, which makes her jealous of their consciousness of roots. “The guys were geeks, but they knew who they were. They knew what they’d inherited. They couldn’t pass themselves off as anything else. No evasion, no speculations, no let’s-pretends” (*Leave It to Me* 66). Additionally, in the other part of the novel, she is introduced to a man who has four wives. Ironically, he says “My grandfather could afford three, my father only two. I work harder, I earn dollars, I am a family man. (*Leave It to Me* 191). Despite his polygamy she cannot conceive, she admires his pure anger for the police who search her wife. “...I envy the clarity of your hate. That, too, would have been true” (*Leave It to Me* 190). Banerjee sees the experience Devi encounters as an over-national. The Somali husband’s determination indicates her cultural retrogression, which irritates her very much;

At the same time, the indictment of cultural difference (no longer a *misrepresentation* of cultural difference), is immediately undermined by the narrator’s ambivalent identification with the Somali family; their politics may be freakish, but at least they have a sense of cultural belonging that Devi craves. (Banerjee 79)

On the other hand, Devi has much confidence than earlier protagonists. “The whole world was mine to claim” (*Leave It to Me* 129). For many aspects, she is superior on the characters of man. “My fist clenched up on their own. “Well, I do! I make the rules! So beat it, Ms. Loc!” (*Leave It to Me* 75) Devi is well aware what she possesses and how to use it. Her beauty attracts the men around her. Fred said, “You’re pretty special, Devi.” “I knew that,” I snapped (*Leave It to Me* 105). Additionally, her self-confidence is so much that she leads the men by her nose. They are not able to desist from her attraction, which Devi uses magnificently in any situation. “I should be heading back,” Fred said. “I do have other clients. I have a

life, you know” “Who’s stopping you?” I stalked off ahead of Fred. He didn’t follow.
(*Leave It to Me* 125)

As aforementioned, Devi is metaphorical name chosen by Mukherjee. Devi evokes the western reader the Devil. Her sexual freedom, the language she uses and lifestyle remind the Devil. It is evident that Mukherjee is getting free from the thoughts of migration psychology, self-devotion to a husband. However, the conversation between the protagonist and a woman indicates her self-reliance and self-confidence. It is stated as;

“You know what your name means? Do you have the right to such a name?”

“As much as you have to yours.”

.....

“This is a free country.” I kept my defensiveness flippant. “You can give yourself any name you want. There’s a kid on my block who had his name changed officially last week. From Ralph Rinzoni to Anytime Anyhoo.”
(*Leave it to Me* 203)

Furthermore, she uses her sexuality and attraction for her expedencies. The pragmatism is Devi’s ordinary behaviours. “I went along with his attitudes, because I liked Ham. And because I might need more favors” (*Leave It to Me* 96). The sexual freedom enables her do what she likes. The fact that the men fall in love in first sight simplifies her missions. Simultaneously, she is conscious about the interest of men. “While, smelling smoke, seeing flames, when I thought of sex. I was attracted to Ham. I don’t deny it” (*Leave It to Me* 82). Devi, furthermore, exactly knows what she should do in order to fulfil her inclinations. She “needed the nets he cast, the people he knew, the visions and delusions he’d survived” (*Leave It to Me* 89).

Contrary to the previous protagonists, Devi’s language becomes more American. Using the slang language, Devi becomes totally American even though she looks for her roots. There are many examples in the novel to glorify the incidences such as; “Life’s a bitch,”...Life is a bastard, too” (130), “Just too fuck up!” (72) and “And fuck you, too,” I muttered to the dead line” (73). Mukherjee , depicting Devi swearing all the time uses minor woman characters speaking like the

protagonist. The dialogue between public prosecutor and a woman is good illustration;

PUBLIC PROSECUTOR: You admit that you are an unmarried woman?

APPROVER: fuck your institutions, man! I pick who and when I want to ball

PUBLIC PROSECUTOR: In addition, you admit, do you not, that you are an unmarried woman who is, however, not a virgin?

APPROVER: I'm a free spirit. I don't have your bourgeois hang-ups.
(*Leave It to Me* 179)

When her friends are inspected, it can be easily said that they are all activists who advocates human rights. In this respect there are role models for Devi. America gives the chance of justification of people who are right or alienated from the society. "He, Jess and Fred had marched for peace, for civil rights, for women, *gays*, migrants, had gone to jail, signed petitions, run for city councils, run radical campaigns" (my italic *Leave it to Me* 166). The word of 'gay' is found for the first time in Mukherjee's novels and short stories. Thus, it can be regarded as a step to absolute Americanization for Mukherjee moving away from her Indian identity.

Apparently, Mukherjee endeavours to depict her heroine as a universal character. Devi has cultural characteristics consisting of a great number of nations stretching from India to France. -"So you're a Fong fan. This has to be karma!" (*Leave It to Me* 79) Devi becomes as an exactly postmodern heroine. Devi who is not contented with India deals with Confucius; "I read my fortune *Confucius* says..." (author's italic *LeaveIt to Me* 89). Not only eastern but also western characteristics are used in the novel. "It said, "C'est la vie. Thanks for the superb times" (*Leave It to Me* 48).

There is a woman character named Jess DuPree, Ham's ex-girlfriend Devi replaces her mother. Also she resembles Jess in order that both come from India. Her extreme attitudes such as "I was the first one to try a nose ring in Berkeley" (*Leave It to Me* 148) are instances Devi models. Jess's determination and possession to somewhere affects her very much. "'I wasn't that dumb. I may have been naive, but I wasn't dumb, never" (*Leave It to Me* 224). Jess's influence makes her

approach. When Dlasca gives the reason why she chooses Jess as a mother, she states as;

Devi locates her mother in Ham's old lover and friend Jess DuPree the reason why she decides on Jess as the most likely candidate for her originator is not only the evidence Fred uncovers in India but above all the fact that Jess never married Ham and went in search of her own dream in Asia. (Dlasca 226)

In the novel there is a mystification of quest her biological parents. Devi using all her femininity finds her parents at last. However, it will be totally disappointment for a girl whose mother is a poor and desperate addicted. Getting married to a serial killer, the bio-mother will be glad for adoption. "*The damned construe the Good Lord's interventions as curses. The woman thanked us for the cigarettes*" (author's italic *Leave It to Me* 125). However, instead of anger, disappointment, Devi desires the times of her mother. "I'd missed, I mean my bio-mom's times and wants and needs and not the place, was still true" (*Leave It to Me* 68). However, Devi wants her to be independent from her serial killer husband. It indicates that she is too mature for twenty three-year-old woman to accept the incidence of adoption. Besides, Dlasca thinks that her mother's inclination to live in America passes her daughter. However, Devi who is satisfied with the belongings re-shapes her mentality for America. It is a kind of Devi's improvement, which Dlasca states as;

The task of re-imagining and revitalizing narratives of identity falls to Devi, who has been unhoused from the certainties of culture and belonging. Although she continues to share her mother's American dreams and hopes, she has also come to realize that her experience of being American exceeds the limits of a narrow norm. Forced to re-evaluate the center from the margins, Devi thus re-assembles a larger American concept of self. (232)

As for her father, he is "one of the most notorious serial murderers in modern history" (*Leave It to Me* 121). He is not only serial killer but a psycho who abuses even her own daughter. "You're not my type," I snapped. I hoped I meant it. "I don't have to be." He grinned. "I am your father. I didn't come empty-handed daughter." (*Leave It to Me* 213). No matter who he is, Devi protects her father. "He

was *my* father, Fred. I'm not mourning him" (author's italic *Leave It to Me* 145). The emphasis is done by means of the italic of possessive adjective 'my' by Mukherjee. Even if he does not deserve being loved by his daughter and wife, the feeling of connectedness predominates.

However at the end of the novel the question asked to Devi can be considered the theme of the novel. "If you're part ethnic Chinese, part French Vietnamese, definitely part Pakistani and part you-never-figured-out-what, what does that make you?" (*Leave It to Me* 229). Although Devi seems the earlier heroines who have the traumatic psychology like Tara and Dimple, she possesses far better mentality accepting her both positive and negative conditions. In this sense, the earlier heroines cannot be compared with Devi.

To sum up, Mukherjee gets rid of her immigrant psychology and the hegemony of the man. In the novel Debby is adopted girl adopted from an Indian couple. Grown up in an Italian-American family, Debby chooses to write her own destiny by going to California. Debby transforms Devi having the characteristics of both eastern and western cultures. Unlike the earlier protagonists, Devi attitudes more dignified than expected by twenty three-year-old woman due to the fact that she forgives her parents even if he endeavours to rape her. Although some of the critics find Devi the constraint heroine, she is a good illustration to represent Mukherjee's development in style and technique.

However, the novel deals with the women "“who are prepared to explode the limits of cultural self-definition and to embrace rebirth and regeneration” (Dlaska 226). Even though she resembles Jasmine and Hannah, she differs from the feature of Devi's self-confidence and maturity. However, Dlaska interprets differently as; “Adrift in a houseboat, the unsettled and unsettling Devi defers the question of belonging; in *Leave It to Me* the impulse is towards the unhousement of the nation and a revision of the myths upon which it is built” (237). She sees Devi's conditions as a national problem.

Briefly, Mukherjee again authors a multicultural heroine Debby/Devi. She represents a multicultural citizen of western. The writer succeeds in the description of modern eastern woman in western world. Mixing the old and new immigrants together Mukherjee indicates a new way for the young who will follow.

2. *DESIRABLE DAUGHTERS*

The first novel of trilogy, *Desirable Daughters* is one of the most distinctive novels written by Mukherjee. The novel deals with the youngest of three sisters, the protagonist Tara Lata living in America, divorcing billionaire Bishwapriya Chatterjee, the owner of computer engineering company and raising her son who is gay in high school. Tara is depicted as Americanized Indian princess. Having both eastern and western cultural characteristics, Tara “belongs to both tradition and modernity” (Swain 263). Reconciled with her past and future, the heroine is a role model for her both Indian and Indian born American readers. “Through Tara, Bharati Mukherjee voices her belief in the individual’s liberty and freedom to mould himself, to reconstruct and reshape her identity” (Swain 261). In this sense, the absolute ideal self and immigrant are successfully constituted by the description of the protagonist. Furthermore, her Americanization is completed so successfully that she humiliates her own tradition in many incidences.

The novel begins with the incidence of her ancestor’s wedding Tara, the namesake of protagonist, who is forced to marry a tree when the groom dies by snakebite. The incidence will be an inspiration for her next novel *Tree Bride*. Similar to the protagonist, the youngest of three sisters, Tara would marry a suitable match. After the death of groom’ her father says; “*I will see my daughter married to a crocodile, to a tree, before you get a single pice!*”(author’s italic *Desirable Daughters* 14). The nine-year-old girl faces the harshness of tradition, the impossibility of her re-marriage. “*In a community intolerant of unmarried women, his Tara Lata had become an unmarriageable woman*” (author’s italic *Desirable Daughters* 12).

Mukherjee aims the readers’ awareness in the light of the experience which indicates the absurdity of Indian customs. Additionally, Tara’s presence becomes the reaction to the traditions for the society. “*She lived there seventy years and gradually changed the world*” (author’s italic *Desirable Daughters* 17). It becomes the symbol of the revolt against the traditions. However, Mukherjee believes that

there are some must-taken-lessons from the incidence. The repetition of story by Tara means there is no change in Indian history even if one lives in a modern world. When they ask the reason why she repeats the memory so much, she states as; “*I am exploring the making of consciousness. Your consciousness? They tease, and I tell them, No. Yours*” (author’s italic *Desirable Daughters* 5)

Furthermore, there is a mixture of old and modern characters that have the same fate including marriage, loneliness. Tara’s thought is that rich or poor, old or modern woman lives in the same conditions. “There are more of me than there are of you, although I am both” (*Desirable Daughters* 6). To make an exemplification; Tara’s marriage has resulted in failure. When she is considered as a young to be married off, her father agrees the most suitable match, which means calamity for her. “It lured my father into marriage negotiations, and it earned my not enthusiastic acceptance of him as husband. A very predictable, very successful marriage negotiation” (*Desirable Daughters* 7). In this sense, similar to her ancestor, Tara is a product of Indian traditions because she has only three-week-marriage.

The protagonist depicts herself as; “*I have become, as befits an educated, thirty-six-year-old Californian, free and well traveled*” (*Desirable Daughters* 18). Also in another part of the novel she says; “I am one with the neighborhood, a young woman like so many others on the street: ethnically ambiguous, hanging out in the coffee shop, walking dogs, strolling with boyfriends ...” (*Desirable Daughters* 25). As paid attention to the description, she is captured as a white middle-class American woman who has a set routine at work and home. Additionally, her home is described the same as herself. She possesses a house “which led to modernization and more preservation” (*Desirable Daughters* 25).

Tara, contrary to the previous protagonists, shares something with her neighbours and society. However, she never sees the reaction as humiliation or abasement; on the contrary, “Americans seem to find them endlessly amusing and appalling” (*Desirable Daughters* 25-6). Also it must be considered that Tara has the omnipotent point of view. She can objectively judge herself and her American

friends from both western and eastern point of view. Despite seeing her impotence, Tara is the first protagonist not catching any trauma or psychological defeats in the new home. She is, in a sneaking way, envious about her American friends as;

When I speak of this to my American friends – the iron-clad identifiers of region, language, caste, and subcaste – they call me “overdetermined” and of course they are right. When I tell them they should be thankful for their identity crises and feelings of alienation, I of course am right. When everyone knows your business and every name declares your identity, where no landscape fails to contain a plethora of human figures, even a damaged consciousness, even loneliness, become privileged commodities. (*Desirable Daughters* 33-4)

However, Tara does not classify the people according to their ethnicity. She does not choose her friends in terms of their ethnicity. She hates the people who make her feel isolated or exotic. “Nafisa’s mother and I don’t speak the same dialect. We don’t even speak the same language. I am tired of explaining India to Americans. I am sick of feeling an alien” (*Desirable Daughters* 87). She endeavours to be made stand for herself by the society. When reviewed from the feminist point of view, it can be regarded as a very natural wish.

Moreover, she starts a job like a voluntary schoolteacher. “I handle the “multi-cultural” acquisitions as a school volunteer – were being held for me at the bookstore down on the Haight” (*Desirable Daughters* 78). The school consists of multicultural students extending from Latinos to Afro-Americans. The protagonist thinks that this variation adds America the cultural richness and independence. Also “The rhetoric of modern San Francisco makes me invisible. I am not “Asian,” which is reserved for what in outdated textbooks used to be called “Oriental.” I am all things” (*Desirable Daughters* 78). She rejects to be an oriental woman. Still going on the statement, Tara “feel not just invisible but heroically invisible, a border-crashing claimant of all people’s legacies” (*Desirable Daughters* 78-9). For this subject, Swain asserts that Tara is an American imitation whose roots go beyond the old world. Tara is described as “a hybrid subject, a *mimicry* of the American socio-cultural ethos” (my italic 258). She criticizes Tara for her imitation. However, there are critics who vindicate Mukherjee. Nayak claims that “Tara constructs Indianness as a form purity rather than as hybridity” (278)

The traditional woman figure is no longer alive for the protagonist. She has a feminist point of view. For example when an Indian woman who has a degree of university works as nurse or maid, she asks herself “How many modern girls are prepared to do that?” (*Desirable Daughters* 83). So, Mukherjee raises an awareness of feminism for her woman readers. Myles advocates Tara and the other feminine characters that resist the burdens they encounter. The protagonist and other women characters not only endure life’s hardships stoically but in the process also emerges stronger providing sustenance and equilibrium to the entire community. (118). Swain who criticizes Mukherjee harshly accepts their determination. “They rebel against this hackneyed and constraining socio-cultural set up and chart out their own course of action” (Swain 256).

On the other hand, Dimple objects to wear western clothes until she decides to be an absolute American. Jasmine getting rid of her Indian clothes on her first day in America wears blue jean and T-shirt. However, Tara is the first protagonist mixing both American and Indian clothes. “Bharati Mukherjee has struck a balance between the past and the present through a deft blending of tradition and modernity” (Swain 264). The critic believes in harmony between the clothes. She is, furthermore, self-confident who knows there is no difference between her and the others unlike the previous protagonists. She states as;

Nobody pays attention to me other than to ask for spare change or press a handbill into my closed fist. I am not the only blue-jeaned woman with a Pashmina shawl around my shoulders and broken-down running shoes on my feet. I am not the only Indian on the block. All the same, I stand out, I’m convinced. (*Desirable Daughters* 79)

However, the sexuality is a distinctive symbol to represent modern Indian feminine for Mukherjee. In the conversations made in the novel, two Indians are able to talk about sex obviously. Also they make a discourse in tea-time. Tara says; “Meena read the American magazines, and she would quiz us as we are: *Does your husband know how to satisfy you? ... Are you his breakfast, his snack, the main course – or the dessert?*” (author’s italic *Desirable Daughters* 83) It indicates how

much she improves herself. Nayak signifies the same development in Mukherjee's writing. The critic indicates her improvement as;

...Mukherjee exposes many facets of feminism encompassing agitation for equal opportunity, sexual autonomy and right to self-determination. Her earlier works had the complex weaving of colonialism, history and culture shocks but in her recent writings she has become more adventurous, more innovative and non-conformist like her literary counterparts. (Nayak 267)

Her boyfriend Andy a Zen master is a prominent character who is a sign of her advance because widowed Tara having a teenager son shares her house with a man. His helpfulness provides her better adaptation to her new homeland. "Andy was trying to help, and I was grateful that he was trying" (*Desirable Daughters* 91). Also, I think, it is a kind of satisfaction and exclamation to the American 'I am one of you'. She does not mind anything no matter what it is mentioned. "The brave smells of my "American adventure"; that was Parvati's wry term for whatever Andy and I had going" (*Desirable Daughters* 91). However, her 'American adventure' leaves her on the first day she finds out her own son's homosexuality because of her communication with the police, which results with the reconciliation with her ex-husband.

Her teenage son is also another distinctive character in the novel. When the protagonist introduces him, she reminds the reader *Great Expectations* by Dickens. "We had (and have) one son, Rabin, short (of course) for Rabindranath, as in Tagore. His school friends call him Rob. We call him Rabi" (*Desirable Daughters* 23). Additionally, Rabi is not considered as Indian by Tara. In fact, Rabi is not interested in India and Indian traditions. "He's never taken a deep interest in my Indian life, even though he's seen far more of India than I have" (*Desirable Daughters* 46). "Indo-American" (*Desirable Daughters* 34) Rabi becomes a homosexual, which is shocked for her family. Despite an eastern mother, she confronts with this incidence much broadmindedly.

Expectedly, there will be a dialogue between mother and son dealing with the situation. The objection made by the mother is a sign of her tolerance to her son. “*When have I ever interfered with your life? When have I ever behaved like a Bengali mother, sucking the life out of you?* I’ve always been open about Andy” (author’s italic *Desirable Daughters* 162). Despite her anger, she has the capacity to think dispassionately. However, when she utter the sentences, there is self-pride in the sentences. “The last five years haven’t been easy for him. I said. *For me. For me.* “His father and I divorced, which is rare enough among Indians.” *I was brave. I stood up for myself and my son.* (author’s italic *Desirable Daughters* 162).

The solution is more radical than the discussion. Andy’s resolution is “very New World, very democratic: It’s none of my business” (*Desirable Daughters* 137). Also her instinct of motherhood has more priority than the social norms. A woman not caring the social pressure, of course, will stand behind her son who chooses the homosexuality. “How can a mother deny her son? It’s unnatural, especially a Bengali mother...” (*Desirable Daughters* 39). Or in another part of the novel she states as; “Indian mothers don’t; we don’t have violent feelings except against ourselves, and never against our children, at least not against our sons” (*Desirable Daughters* 40). Also Tara regards the incidence a life lesson which must be taken. According to Tara, it is a passage of transformation for her own assimilation. “There’s so much in this life for a little Calcutta girl to assimilate” (*Desirable Daughters* 160). What the most striking incidence is that she mentions herself as a little girl.

On the other hand, Rabi is calmer and more obedient than expected from his age. His choice does not convert any psychological or physiological behaviour on him. For example instead of concealment, he declares he is gay in both school and home. “Mike’s a cool guy, ...he volunteers as the Gay Students’ adviser. He’s helped me a lot” (*Desirable Daughters* 165). The explanation made to his mother is very crucial to display the modernity of Tara’s family. Rabi’s consolation looks like the counsellor;

Now; here's the one thing I knew back then that might come as a big surprise to you now. I knew that I had a different "sexual orientation" long before there was an ugly name like that for it (just bring your compass, and everything straightens out). Ma, I am gay (that's the name of my play, incidentally). It's another first for the family, another distinction we're going to have to work on. I've always known it, and I've tested it. Don't worry, I'm too Bengali to be reckless. (*Desirable Daughters* 164)

However, some critics find the incidence peculiar and unnecessary. The incidence is regarded like 'hush money' for feminist critics. The critics are amazed to accept his choice quite effortlessly, which her attitudes are inconsistent. Also, his clarification is too exaggerated for a teenager to be expected. In this respect, Mukherjee cannot make a determination for her character's balance. As the critic utters;

However, the author has ended up with writing a book with typically American feminist ideas about housewives, sexuality, and worth... So many passages seem like polemical arguments that are simply added to make a feminist American point. For instance, there is the introduction of homosexuality. The main character accepts the sexual orientation of a homosexual character fairly readily. But the sexual orientation of the "fag hag" is explored and questioned. Very American, but imbalanced. What are we to make of the list of the author's list of atrocities done on Indian women when the most wounded and damaged characters in the book are a cast-off husband and a cast-off male child? As a reader, I suspected many of these atrocities were probably against lower caste women and were simply being used by the author as a sexual issue when they were more likely caste issues. (McDonnell)

Besides, there are other prominent woman characters showing Mukherjee's improvement. The sisters are the same as Tara who is modern and have no psychological traumas and negative feeling for immigration. "*Sisters three are we ... as like as blossoms on a tree. But we are not*" (author's italic *Desirable Daughters* 21). The middle sister is Parvati living in Bombay and whose husband is waiting for green card. She is the only sister marrying the man she loves. "Parvati was in her second year at Mount Holyoke when her letter came: *Daddy I have found a boy and we have fallen in love*" (author's italic *Desirable Daughters* 50). Having an avant-garde life, Parvati has childish behaviours. For example, when Tara notifies Padma's illegitimate child, they agree "it was the first serious talk we'd had as adults"

(*Desirable Daughters* 62). In this sense, she is childlike woman who succeeds to make Tara laugh.

Parvati, furthermore, lives in apartment whose housekeeper is “a thief, a murderer’s accomplice” (*Desirable Daughters* 70). Sharing the city with the criminals is not necessary to make her upset. Additionally their conversations resemble the ones with neighbours in tea-time. Instead of watching Bollywood films or dramas, they prefer talk about their sexual life. “We read film magazines about the Bombay stars’ outrageous sex lives and criminal activities. Their biographies were far more interesting than their performances” (*Desirable Daughters* 114). Again their perspective is a sign of the writer’s development.

Additionally, what Parvati does not understand is Tara’s determination to go on living in America. Although they claim that Tara and her son will be no American or Indian there, Tara is resolute to fulfil American dream. “They thought my “American adventure” was over. I wondered if it was just beginning” (*Desirable Daughters* 66). In this respect, America becomes more attractive and liveable than India.

Padma or Didi, Tara’s eldest sister, who has an illegitimate child that is the mystery of the novel whether he is really her own son or not lives in New York. She creates a little village in New York metropolitan. She has very different characteristics from her sisters. She is totally opposed to Tara’s inquiry about the son. There are many discussions made for it. “...you might surprise yourself learning what you’ll do to survive. Just stop criticizing me for everything I’ve had to do. You really should examine your selfishness, Tara” (*Desirable Daughters* 233). In fact the experience becomes the stimulation for sisters’ awareness and love. Even though Padma is six years elder than the protagonist, the unconnectedness between them is much more than normality. At the end of their discussion their affection rises. “By the time she finished, she was breathing hard. I hadn’t heard that much sincerity from her in twenty years, and I wished I could let it go at that” (*Desirable*

Daughters 125). There are gradual growing up in their communication in three sisters through the novel.

On the other hand, no matter how Indian she endeavours to remain, which Swain states “The alien culture thus fails to subvert her traditional identity” (258), Padma seizes the American styles and traditions. Contrary to Swain, Newman thinks that she is absolutely American product, which is indicated in the article by saying as; “Didi was not at all traditional; in some ways she is the real American, defiant and path breaking (p. 134), a saleswoman exploiting the past to survive, unconcerned by issues of descent” (Newman 165). There are many exemplifications in the novel indicating the statement. For example when Tara declares Rabi is gay, she just says; “Good for him. You think it, or he told you?” (*Desirable Daughters* 237). Additionally, the later utterance is her encouragement about his homosexuality. She states as;

“I didn’t even know the Bengali word for ...it. Doing in the same-sex way.”

“All in all, I envy them. Does that sound strange? Everywhere I’ve gone, it’s been gay men who’ve protected me and yes, loved me. Like Sohrab and Darshan, like, oh, God, Tara, like just about every man I’ve ever met and taken a liking to. (author’s italic *Desirable Daughters* 238)

Lastly her ex husband Bish is one of supportive characters who helps Tara shape and improve herself. After three-week-marriage, they are separated. However Tara starts captivating to Bish. However “his Americanization and acquisition of cast wealth” (D’Souza 199) play an important role for it. “He was so broad-minded, I couldn’t believe he was Indian” (*Desirable Daughters* 236). She begins to think about reunion. “I might very well have been the only appropriate woman in the world for him” (*Desirable Daughters* 268). Their togetherness will cause a calamity for Bish.

Through the end of the novel the quest of her own mother is, in fact, an assault to Tara whose husband is billionaire engineer. When Tara and Bish reunite, there will be an explosion which results in Bish’s seriously wound in order to rescue her. It reminds Mukherjee’s earlier novel *Jasmine* whose husband dies by throwing

herself in front of bomb to protect Jasmine. This incidence makes them a family again. After reunion, Tara decides to author a book named *Tree Bride* which will be the name of Mukherjee's novel.

Finally it can be said that Mukherjee authors three sisters who have different functions in order to complete the novel. While Parvati fulfils the American dream in Bombay, her eldest sister Didi lives in New York in terms of Indian traditions. However, Tara contains these two figures inside. Not only does she effect her dreams in America but also she becomes her husband's assistant in India after his injury. Dealing with the same issue Newman states as;

In *Desirable Daughters* Mukherjee uses the dynamics of a group of sisters to explore the way in which a story is claimed, transmitted or denied, how even in the apparent homogeneity of three almost identical sisters divergent roles are created, and what the political consequences are of a place in a sibship – envisaged as a literary and social model largely replacing 'vertical' lines of descent. (153)

To sum up, Mukherjee no longer authors the characters who have immigration problems such as disorientation, dislocation or psychological traumas. The author gets rid of immigrant psychology and becomes totally American in her writings. Even though *Desirable Daughters* gets some unwanted criticism by the critics, it is clear that her characters will surely be self-confident and determined to realize their dreams.

3. *TREE BRIDE*

Tree Bride is the second distinctive and prominent historifiction novel of the trilogy written by Mukherjee. As aforementioned in the previous part, Tara whose husband is badly injured by bomb looks after him. After a while, she is bored and decides to write the life of her ancestor Tara who makes gotten married to a bride because of her bridegroom dies by a snake. Her silent widow ancestor turns into heroine who fights against British colonialism. In the novel four different people varying from Indian to British are narrated, which complicate to understand. Changing the places widening from east to California and England the time from nineteenth century to now makes more awkward for readers. The critic stating that issue deals with the characters as;

There is the stuff here of several novels. Miss Mukherjee drops each of her sub-plots at a certain point, leaving the reader to fill in too many gaps such as the life of John Mist after he fled into the jungle; the family relationships of Vertie Treadwell and what happened to the wife and daughter in New Zealand; the life of Olivia Todd whom John Mist supported until he died; what brought about hatred so intense as to warrant the bombings in California. (Lothar)

Furthermore, the characters including the protagonist have very fast life. For example when Tara is narrated in California in one chapter, in the other chapter she appears in India in order to chase the knowledge about her ancestor Tara. The characters are “tireless commuters, moving back and forth between two poles: between their families' homes abroad and their new homes in America, between the East and the West, the old and the new, the past and the future” (Kakutani). However, owing to the subject of the dissertation, only women characters will be argued.

During Bish's treatment, Tara fails to interest doing the routine jobs every day. “I prepared Bish's bowl of cornflakes, heating the milk in the microwave, just the way we'd been raised. I still have to feed him” (*Tree Bride* 34). Seeking for excitement, Tara starts to finds out her ancestors and family tree. She oftentimes trips to the Eastern countries including Bangladesh, Bengal and India with her son

Rabi. “In order to complete herself” to fulfill the desire to belong here, she must go on a journey of self-discovery that requires deconstructing her background of privilege in order to reconstruct her new identity” (Burton 95). She is criticized about the expeditions by her family and friends. “My friends and even my sisters thought I’d gone crazy, or very American” (*Tree Bride* 20). In fact she is fed up with being called billionaire Bish’s wife instead of being herself. “Wife of-Bish-Chatterjee was my full identity. If I had plans for the future, they would be to follow my husband wherever he went, probably back to India” (*Tree Bride* 19). Her desire for self-expression comprehends the identity of Indian wife who imitates the ideal wife Sita. “I wondered if “wife” was the only role permitted to me, if there was a way of being in this country with my own identity” (*Tree Bride* 19). In this sense, the critic states that the protagonist carries out a search, which makes her occupied. The critic says as;

The protagonist, Tara Chatterjee, is a savvy, cosmopolitan world-traveler very taken with her privileged life as a Silicon Valley magnate. But when her home is firebombed just as she may be reconciling with her ex, she begins to yearn for home and tradition. A trip back to India rekindles a desire to find her family’s ancestral roots and their place in the history of pre-independent India. (Chopra)

On the analyses of the protagonist Tara, her provisions are modern and independent. If the traditions are reasons to make her limited and be an obstacle to realize her dreams, Tara does not accept it. In doing so, she plays the western role in Indian identity. To make an exemplification, when the idea of marriage is told she says; “Marriage was something done once and for all time to satisfy everyone’s expectations, then put aside. Marriage was self-sustaining, the way our grandparents’ had been. But those are Indian assumptions, not American” (*Tree Bride* 17-8). In this respect her cultural connectedness is not a factor affecting her determinations.

Soon her interest to her own roots and Indian history rises. The deeper knowledge makes her more aware about the facts of India. For example, “Other girls facing similar fates were married to rocks or crocodiles” (*Tree Bride* 33). On the other hand she is conscious that the old traditions go on in modern India. When seen from the feminist point of view, it is very clear that Mukherjee makes the notification

for her woman readers. Instead of being traditional wife, Mukherjee imposes to be a modern woman who can judge and know her own history. She also thinks that the past lives on. “the past isn’t past. The past isn’t even dead” (*Tree Bride* 29). Also she gives the example in the other part of the novel as; “I let it pass. Who doesn’t in my family? Some cultural habits never die” (*Tree Bride* 11). Additionally, she has the responsibility to inform about the history to her people. “It’s almost funny, thinking of little Bengali girls crying about Marie Antoinette, Napoléon, or Ceasar, yet I always thought of them as Bengalis like us. Their defeat, often as a result of intimate betrayal, was our history” (*Tree Bride* 38). I think it is an upper level for Mukherjee who owns the dream living in America as a real American.

In this novel unlike the previous the protagonists Devi and Tara in *Desirable Daughters*, she is more aware of the connection between India and imperial America and Britain. Not only does she want to have the self-confidence and live what she wants in West, but also she knows the reality of her own homeland. It is evident the reason why she writes about one of her ancestors Tara symbolizing both the implacability of Indian traditions and the struggle of woman when imperialists colonize the country in nineteenth century.

However, Tara becomes such a conscious woman that she can reason her judgements. “*In my mind*, the history of the British in India is a story of adventure gone bad, where the thrill of new encounters, the lure of transformation, and the frontier of second chances slowly inevitably, started drying up” (my italic *Tree Bride* 47). The thing Mukherjee does not want to see is the transformation of herself and her people. According to Tara, their destiny is the same as Indian fate. “Their good old days become our good old days. Their nostalgia became ours, their irony and cynicism a mark of our own wordliness” (*Tree Bride* 24). The togetherness of two countries’ destiny is exactly what Mukherjee imposes on her readers. Additionally,

On the one hand, Calcutta is the only place to welcome them. It is irony of India to embrace the colonizing countries. “He is the freest man alive, freer than even we can possibly imagine, free to invent past and future, free to discard every scrap of inheritance. He seeks, or surrenders to, alien codes” (*Tree Bride* 54). Tara

utters that the imperialist comes freely because Indians do not regard them as their hostiles. It can be easily understood in Mukherjee's novel that there is an attempt for reconciliation between the East and the West. In this respect, as well as the people colonizing the country is met very friendly by Indians, they become one of the natives there. "Many Britishers came to India and become more Indian than the natives, learning the languages, practicing the religions, eating the food, and fathering half-Indian children from a virtual harem of bibis" (*Tree Bride* 119). It is narrated in many parts of the novel.

The natives aren't hostile. They find work in the indigo plantations and stay, or they reach the forest and blend in, like tigers. They work harder than native labor, they ingratiate themselves to the Muslim nawabs or Hindu zamindars. There is no lack of resources in that warm and fertile Eden. No one starves in that original paradise. (*Tree Bride* 54)

On the other hand, natives have prejudice for Westerns after they are colonized by them many years. "It is easy for an English-educated, middle class Indian (or Pakistani or Bangladeshi) to fall in line with colonial prejudice" (*Tree Bride* 44). In addition, the prejudice turns into acrimony to the western. "'America' is a bad word" (*Tree Bride* 60). She feels so scared that she concedes her 'Americanness in spite of her ethnicity is Indian when she has a trip to Bangladesh and Pakistan. "I'd been trying to hide my Americanness and ward off the fear, or resentment, that it might engender" (*Tree Bride* 58). It is typical Mukherjee's idea that she feels exile outside America.

I think Mukherjee writing a novel advocating the West endeavours to pay her gratitude for America embracing her after exile in Canada. The anger for western is considered as ghettoizing attempt by Mukherjee. Mukherjee tries to build a peace bridge between the Indians and the western world. According to the theme of the novel, the people both in America and other countries – especially India – the immigrants come from have historical and cultural connectedness, which is American injustice to the immigrants. Stating the equality between human being, Mukherjee utters as;

I tell her we share a history. Under different circumstances – we might even have been of the same family. The Brits chose India; we didn't choose them, but the consequences are just the same. Information feels like the glue of the universe, one of those unimaginable calculations of time and distance, but one that restores a bit of human scale to the ungraspable proportions of space. (*Tree Bride* 234-5)

Mukherjee narrates the story of Tara Lata from western men's point of view. "Mukherjee reconstructs the story of Tara Lata and her times from snippets of family lore and the journals of three very different Englishmen" (S. Roy). I think, in doing so she tries to capture the objectivity of her story. Writing a true story is Tara's only determination to fulfil despite hard conditions such as her pregnancy. "So far as I know, all the things I am about to reveal are true" (*Tree Bride* 69). In this sense, the novel has the historical characteristics which can be categorized as historifiction novel.

On other hand the other and last woman character in the novel is the ancestor five-year-old Tara Lata who has the obligatory to get married a tree by her father because she loses her bridegroom at the day of wedding. This incidence is re-narrated by Tara Lata with optimistic point of view. "Yes, it was to a tree, for which I am grateful. My father was a visionary and marriage saved me from a life of widowhood" (*Tree Bride* 213). Her positivism will be very expedient guide for her. Additionally she is very foresighted woman who exceeds the then traditional limits among the women. For instance; "She had taught herself to read and write very forceful English, which was most uncommon for women in that time and place" (*Tree Bride* 208). Also writing her autobiography is intended to bequeath her own experiences to others. "Tara Lata had written of her childhood, but infuriatingly, not from a modern autobiographical perspective. I wanted facts, word-pictures; she gave parables, more lessons" (*Tree Bride* 68). When contemplated the term Tara lives in, it can be conveniently understood that she is one of the modern woman in the nineteenth century in India.

As aforementioned, Tara Lata becomes a warrior to defend her country. The old Tara Lata regards the colonizing countries as the enemy who exploit the country's natural sources while the protagonist Tara possesses the struggle to make a

connection by writing a parallel destiny. When Tara Lata speaks to Vertie, one of the British coming to India, she clearly states her ambitions and what she will do against the westerns. She says as;

Not in court. To me. Your so-called undisputed facts murdered me, Vertie. You have me conspiring in the overthrow of the British Empire in India. Had I been permitted a day in court, I could have disproved all of your allegations. You bring up the name of Subhas Bose to defend your every action, but you do not mention the famine, caused by your shortsighted practices. (*Tree Bride* 217)

Besides, Tara Lata has some adventurous experiences including war and piracy. She becomes a respected captain who is feared of her brutality in her time. “After the privateers disappeared with their loot and the woman captaincy of the crippled ship had devolved upon Tom Crabbe. It was as he’d said: in the company of common sailors, his face compelled respect” (*Tree Bride* 108). In fact Tara’s quest for adventure and the fight for monotony create a character coined as Tara Lata who has a transformation from obedient little girl to a warrior. D’Souza looks from feminist perspective. Living in male dominated world in the nineteenth century, Tara Lata manages to educate herself and fight against the western colonizing countries.

The retrieval of the little known “history” of the freedom fighting activities if the narrator’s great grand-aunt’ the Tree Bride or child widow, Tara Lata Gangooly (1874-1944), instates her as an emblematic female figure of the novel, especially since the first and last chapters are about her. They can be read as homage to the resilience of Indian women despite or perhaps because of constant oppression and marginalization by the male-dominated, patriarchal system of all of Indian society, since time immemorial. (203)

Finally, it can be said that Mukherjee writes a historical transitions, which is a history of a nation. Tara thinks that all people and nations have the same destiny if it is seen objectively. Thus, to be American or western is not necessary to be WASP according to her. Even though some of her thoughts in the novel can be regarded as compliments to the America which embraces her after the failure of Canada, some critics believe that there is a criticism of America and Americans humiliating the immigrants and the third world people. In this sense, Iyer believes in India’s

liquidity for transformation. Despite Indian fluidity, it is wrong that America becomes solid. The critic states as;

Tara Lata Banerjee, undertakes a search for her roots and learns that the quest for one's origins is the pursuit of an ever-receding horizon. What one confronts is neither stability nor authenticity but fluidity. If one's Indianness is fluid, then so is one's Americanness in the twentieth-first century. Whereas Mukherjee stridently claims her Americanness, she does not uncritically accept whiteness as the norm but desires to compel Americans of all kinds to recognize the fluidity of American identities (Iyer 2009 13)^f

To sum up, Mukherjee authors a novel dealing with history and cultural differences again. Her some ideas make the reader shocked owing to the thoughts on colonizing countries such as “. *To trade with civilised men is infinitely our more profitable than to govern savages*” (author's italic *Tree Bride* 46). However, she believes in the equality of people. Many critics agrees with the idea that Mukherjee succeeds in writing an outstanding novel as *Tree Bride*.

Despite the complex, often open-ended plot twists and some under-developed characters, there can be no doubt that Miss Mukherjee is a fine writer. Her prose is elegant, sardonic and often brilliant. She has a gift for vividly creating time and place shown in this description (Lothar)

4. MISS NEW INDIA

Mukherjee's last novel of her trilogy *Miss New India* deals with a nineteen-year-old Anjali Bose, the protagonist who is enthusiastic about the leading her own life. The connection between the other novels is Bish Chattarjee, Tara Chattarjee's son, visiting his homeland India where he meets the protagonist Anjali Bose. Her parents' desire of marrying her off becomes a flame for the decision to leave her house and move to another city. Memmoth states that "Like young women in every age and culture, she hopes to find happiness, romance and a career". After writing a novel *Tree Bride*, the protagonist of whom is an Indian born modern immigrant Tara living in America, Mukherjee does not surprise the readers for creation of a contemporary protagonist like Anjali "who longs to control her destiny" (Memmoth). In this chapter, the author's last novel's protagonist will be argued in respect of her characterization and attitudes.

The title of novel, *Miss New India* chosen by Mukherjee, is a symbol of the girls who live in India. Anjali represents all women living in the eastern countries. The woman endeavours to keep pace with the western woman in all areas. The protagonist's ambition and desires are the wishes everywoman wants. Furthermore, the word 'new' means that Indian will not remain the same as it used to be.

The novel begins with a prologue concerning with the Americans living in India and accustomed to Indian traditions. Even though, in Mukherjee's previous novels, the characters wish to move to America to get better life, the white Americans are fascinated with India and its traditions in this novel. She indicates the irony for her country. "We were hungry for America, but they were sated with it. They professed no interest in American wars, but when India stumbled, they mourned. They loved us more than we loved ourselves" (*Miss New India* 8-9). While the people in her country yearn for western countries, the Americans have the inclination to live in the East more than the easterners. What's more, not only do the white Americans love the East and the easterners but also they conduct as exactly as

Indians do, which surprises the orient readers very much. Mukherjee states in her novel as;

You could see them at dawn or dusk, pounding out their kurtas on flat stones along the riverbank like any dhobi or housemaid. These rich Westerners—the Aussies, the Canadians, the Germans, the Finns, but especially the Americans—the ones who stayed a few months, then years—lived like poor villagers; these rich Western kids sometimes resorted to begging and got sick, and others died from beggars' diseases. (*Miss New India* 8)

Furthermore, one of the major characters, her English teacher Peter Champion is a white American who stimulates Anjali for abandonment of her house and ascertaining her job. His last name is well chosen by Mukherjee because of his deepest impact on the heroine Anjali contrary to other characters. It is distinctive for Anjali that he sometimes takes her students his home. However, the impression she gets is not creditable because the rooms are unfurnished and dirty. “She had been brought up to revere her elders and teachers, but whenever she visited Mr. Champion's place, she'd imagined his shame: the rooms were so barren, so like a servant's quarters” (*Miss New India* 19-20). The fact that Anjali is the only schoolgirl visiting home is a proof that she is raised up in how much free society she is. In this sense, Mukherjee depicts Anjali's family as modern upper class parents. To make more exemplification, when Anjali looks for a job, she meets a landlady Mr. Champion refers. The situation Anjali encounters is very ironic; " In this very room, on these very plates, a very long time ago, His Majesty Edward VII dined, as well as innumerable minor royalty." And they haven't been washed since, she thought (*Miss New India*)

On the other hand in one of the lessons Peter Champion gives, he mentions about the colonial period. In fact, it is the first time there have been statements made by an Englishman about colonizer's bad effects on the land in Mukherjee's fiction. That is, Mukherjee is able to hurl her American imitation and identity and wear objective glasses. Mukherjee implies in *Miss New India* as;

Mr. Champion was back in teaching mode. He explained that for two hundred years Bangalore had been a British army base, a cantonment, and the Britishers had *left a few scars*—golf courses and racetracks and private gymkhanas—that moneyed Indians adopted a little too enthusiastically. (my italic *Miss New India*)

Not only Peter Champion but also Indian born characters are well aware of the illusion of the western countries. In Mukherjee's earlier novels and short stories, the west is the only place to have a prosperous life. On the one hand, the idea of the Occidentalism is becoming lower and lower in Mukherjee's fiction. For example; "...before there were real opportunities in this country and you didn't have to fill your head with *nonsense dreams of England or America*" (my italic *Miss New India*). On the other hand the protagonist is more conscious about the progression in India than previous heroines. The trend to western cultures agitates Anjali very much. The lack of protection of own traditions becomes of the main problems for Indian culture. Mukherjee gives this message like that;

While still on the intercity bus, glancing out the window, she'd seen more crosses than she'd ever imagined in India. Christians, then? Certainly not South Indian Christians like Father "Elephant Fart" Thomas. Who supplied the energy, the go-for-broke, rule-bending, forget-about-yesterday, and let's-blow-it-all confidence for this transformation? Foreigners like Peter Champion? (*Miss New India*)

However, on the next pages, Mukherjee makes self-criticism. Anjali represents the intelligentsia of India in that stage. When Mukherjee predicts the future of India, she hesitates what India will be because of the obscurity whether India becomes a western country losing her own heredity or not. Anjali asks herself what they create. Mukherjee asks the objective questions to her Indian readers for the first time in her fiction. As the critic states in his article that "Bharati Mukherjee examines Bangalore, the Silicon Valley of India and its fastest growing metropolis, as a high-tech site of social striving" (Kellman). What India gains or loses from the 'striving' depends on the way you think.

I look at modern Bangalore, and at Delhi and Bombay, and I wonder, what are we creating? Not in our private sector, but in the public? Can we keep that old patience—dignity, as our hostess calls it—and the passion? Have we lost our sense of civic morality forever? The newfound prosperity in this city is breathtaking, and I don't mean to disparage it.

Prosperity is a good thing. But I'm not so sure of the wealth that comes from outsourcing. I wish the prosperity was rooted to something. I wish it built something beyond glass monuments. It seems as flimsy as a kite or a balloon. (*Miss New India*)

Furthermore, the characters seem to get over the feeling of being despised by the west. The feeling of equality with the western people makes them more confident and assertive among those who are from western countries. To make an exemplification, Anjali is self-confident enough to make Americans think that she is a native. "...girls with good English and soothing voices who could fool American callers (I can do that? she was about to ask. I'm good enough to fool Americans?) into thinking they're talking to a girl in Boston or Chicago. (*Miss New India*). In this sense, it can easily be said that Mukherjee's characterization turns into the idealized individuals.

As aforementioned, Anjali Bose is nineteen years old, which means it is high time to be married. However, instead of marrying, "She wanted something exciting, life-changing, to save her from the tedium of Gauripur" (*Miss New India*). Being an energetic and passionate girl, Anjali does not wish to get married to a man who has an ordinary job but actuaries. Her dream is a man having a good career and big house. "'From day one. I could have married an actuary and lived in a big house in Patna" (*Miss New India*). On the other hand, Mukherjee interrogates whether or not a woman writes her own destiny. Even though the traditions and customs are very harsh in India, Anjali finds the power inside to struggle. "She could believe that she was still in control and that the orchestrated tsunami of marriage preparation could be reversed, that she had the power to call it off" (*Miss New India*). Also her teacher Peter Champion and friends supports for her idea. Bish, Tara Chattarjee's son, contravenes the idea by saying "You're getting married for your parents? That's crazy" (*Miss New India*).

Unlike the previous fiction, Mukherjee pays attention to individualism rather than traditions. Anjali has the power on her to reject the man her parents chose for her. Fulfilling her desires in India, Anjali abnegates cultural and parental pressure on her by refusing her bridegroom candidate who make her sexual harassment in their

first date her parents permit. When she decides to abandon her home, she writes a letter to her parents. “I will not marry any boy selected by anyone but myself, especially not this one. If this leads to a barren life, so be it. As you should plainly see, the boy you selected has dishonored me” (*Miss New India*). Furthermore, apart from Anjali the protagonist, even the minor characters profoundly think about the incidences they encounter. To make an exemplification, when Sonali, Anjali’s elder sister talks about the marriage, she deals with the failure of horoscopes used in India for a long time. Sonali logically describes how a person is able to be happy when married.

But for Sonali, as Sonali explained to Anjali on their rare secret reunions, successful marrying off of one's offspring was neither an art nor a science. Horoscopes might correctly calculate astral compatibility. But marital happiness? That was in the hands of fate. (*Miss New India*)

Not only Anjali the protagonist but also other characters no longer sustain the cultural pressure on them. Flirting with someone or adultery becomes a normal attitudes in Anjali and her milieu. “Her fun-time guy was Rajoo, a local bartender (“A badass, but what a trip, man”)” (*Miss New India*). Furthermore, the new generation does not adapt the traditions and customs. For instance, one of the most distinctive matter in India, sex becomes an ordinary conversation among her friends. “Tookie's job-site-and-Barista beau was named Reynaldo da Costa, a goody-goody Goan who wanted to marry her before sleeping with her (“What a bore, no?”)” (*Miss New India*).

Mukherjee, again, uses the extreme characterization such as homosexuality or lesbianism in her novel. Instead of North America, the characters live in India. The society conservative and bigoted like India can accommodate the people like that in Mukherjee’s new India. For illustration when Anjali finds out Bish’s homosexuality, she is surprised. “Being homosexual—did Rabi say “gay”?—was more exciting than being CIA, which is what the smart boys in her class assumed the American was. Tranny?” (*Miss New India*). Afterwards, the relationship between Bish and Anjali becomes more intimate and closer. It is a sign for Mukherjee that India developing fast resembles the western countries. What’s more, Mukherjee mentions about the

gay bars and others in India. When she tells about them, she implies that there is nothing wrong even if the characters are in India;

Just imagine how helpful they'd be in tracking down gay bars and whorehouses! I went out with a bunch of hijras—a blast! Natural performers." What he referred to as a "gay bar" sounded like a happy place, but she wondered how a Brahmin boy from a good family would be admitted to a whorehouse, and when she thought of hijras and their leering made-up faces and men-in-women's-clothing and flowers in their oily hair... (*Miss New India*)

The language Mukherjee uses in some conversations is just the same as the language used in American streets. Mukherjee hitherto uses the slang language in the plots happening in North America. However, the characters in India are able to use the slang language like in the example; “She was numb with confusion. Brick-shitting was a new one on her. Shit, piss, fuck, asshole: so much to learn. And cool, cool, cool: everything cool or not cool, but never warm” (*Miss New India*).

On the other hand, her soul interrogation is very distinctive incidence in the novel. The questions like A girl like me? What did it mean, and who or what, exactly, am I like? Why does he hope I'll stay? And so she voiced the question. "A girl like me, Mr. GG?" (*Miss New India*) indicate that the characters are conscious about their selves and souls. Mukherjee characterizes her heroine as a decisive and cognizant what to do. For example, Mr. GG, her lover, offers her a new identity and passport, yet she refuses because she is contended with her Indian identity. “I don't want a passport. My new beginning is here, but different from Baba's and Ma's generation” (*Miss New India*). Apart from the earlier protagonists, she wishes to construct her future in her own homeland. Furthermore, the intervention to her ideas and behaviours are complained by the protagonist. Such incidences including her parents' order for marriage, changing her dialect make her irritated. Rejecting new identity, Anjali Bose endeavours to live her own life. The sentences below indicate the situation as;

Everyone in my life has tried to change me, make me want something alien, and make me ashamed that I might not be good enough. Why should I want to change my name and my accent, why should I plead

for a chance to be allowed to take calls from people who've spent too much money or driven their cars into a ditch? (*Miss New India*)

To sum up, Mukherjee's last novel of her trilogy, *Miss New India* concerns about Anjali Bose abandoning her house because of her parents' desire to marry her off. However, the incidences she encounters supply her experiences and life lessons. Unlike her previous novels, Mukherjee authors the heroine who is glad to live in her homeland. No matter how obstacles she meets, she aims that she will have a prosperous life in India. In this sense, Mukherjee manages to reconcile with her homeland and people. As the critic states that Mukherjee takes the reader to the fabulous country India.

Mukherjee does an excellent job of giving us India on the page: its sights, sounds, smells, society, flora, fauna, food, history, and clothing. She sometimes gives us almost too much loving detail - and I always love detail; and she lives up to her reputation for witty satire. The book has loads of charm, and is well-written. (DePue)

CONCLUSION

Bharati Mukherjee dealing with disorientation, dislocation and immigration in her novels and short stories is a distinctive American writer coming from India. Acquainted with both western and eastern cultures and traditions, Mukherjee is a good agitator. Alam delineates Mukherjee as "...an American storyteller writing about the lives of new immigrants to the United States" (ix). Especially, the ability to see the western world from the feminine immigrants' eyes comes not only from her skill of observation but also the experiences she severely encounters in North America and India. On the other hand, the contradictions among the critics enable her known in the literary world. On summarized her entire fiction, it can be easily indicated that her protagonists are eager to transform. Consisting of three chapters, this dissertation concerns about the improvement of woman protagonists in Mukherjee's novels and short stories.

In the first chapter, the psychology of new immigrant women is the main theme. Two novels, *Tiger's Daughter* and *Wife* deal with the traumatic terms of the protagonists, Tara and Dimple, which results in catastrophic incidences. Also, co-written with her husband Clarke Blaise, *Days and Nights in Calcutta* is about the authors' life spending in India where they spend in their sabbatical year. Again, like the previous heroines, Mukherjee encounters the same experiences including alienation and dislocation. Confrontation with vicious experiences in Canada and the policy of 'mosaic' to the immigrants drag the author to pen the same issues. "In her fiction written in Canada, the experience of expatriation is reflected" (Nalini 190). Having the same fates, the heroines are exposed to violence or traumas. In this sense, the fiction authored by Mukherjee in this term has the alienation and aloofness in the desired country even if they have officially the residence permit. The critic summarizing the earlier fiction states as;

The entry of an Indian into the middles class is not made conditional upon acculturation. They find out that they cannot blend easily into American society because of their distinctive physical and cultural characteristics. They notice that they cannot share the life style of the

Americans. The Indian immigrants start feeling ‘structurally isolated; although they are professionally settled in America (Tandon 15)

After moving to America with her husband Clarke Blaise and starting their new career, her style slightly changes. An examination of the works of Mukherjee reveals a movement from expatriation to immigration. This movement coincides with her migration from Canada to the U.S.A.” (Nalini 189). *Darkness* written in both Canada and America has the contradictions that the short stories penned in America have more hope and happiness than the ones written in Canada. In *The Middleman and Other Stories*, Mukherjee pronounces her Americanness because all female protagonists are determined enough to declare their inclinations, desires and wishes. As Drake indicates that “Mukherjee fabulizes America, Hinduizes assimilation, and represents the real pleasures and violences of cultural exchange” (61). On the other hand, her mostly discussed novel *Jasmine* reflects that an individual wishing to realize the dreams ought to do everything s/he is able to do. Despite many an obstacles she encounters, Jasmine manages to fulfill her dreams. However, unlike her earlier novels and short stories, *The Holder of the World* deals with a puritan American woman migrating to India where she falls in love with a raja. The protagonist confronts with the similar obstacles with the immigrants coming to the western world. Aiming at both the indication of harshness of immigration and the same feelings of women in all over the world, Mukherjee asserts her argument.

In fact, Mukherjee overcomes the feeling of expatriation and has a confidence all immigrants are able to live prosperously. The association and adaptability of protagonists are the very common characteristics in her American term. The policy of ‘melting pot’ carried out to the immigrants by American government is positively regarded by the immigrant authors. Also, the immigrants’ struggle for improvements is supported by the author as Mollo connotes the argument as;

In several lengthy interviews, she speaks of her intention to explore the disturbing but undeniable conclusion that one must remake or “reinvent” oneself in the process of entering and becoming a vibrant force within another culture. (Mollo 280)

In the last chapter, Mukherjee becomes a contemporary American writer whose protagonists are reconciled with their past and future. Rejecting an ethnic or exotic writer, Mukherjee prefers to be an American author. Nalini depicts “Bharati Mukherjee who rejects a hyphenated identity has avowedly become one of the Americans” (188). The novel *Leave it to Me* written by Mukherjee concerns about a protagonist whose root comes from India. The heroine chooses both to live independently and take her decisions by herself even though she is abducted by her own father. In *Desirable Daughter* the first novel of trilogy, the protagonist divorcing and living with her homosexual son is viable to go for her destiny. The Indian heroine absolutely succeeds in confrontation with difficulties in America she lives. On the other hand, Tara Lata, the protagonist of *Tree Bride* which is the second novel of trilogy, is an eighteenth century heroine fighting for colonialist countries. Loved by a white westerner, Tara becomes a prototype for Indian woman. In the last novel of trilogy *Miss India*, Mukherjee returns to her homeland India where the protagonist seeks her prosperous destiny. Instead of migration to western, the heroine accepts that India is able to give her happiness and glory future.

To sum up, Mukherjee proceeds through her whole life. Her experiences inspire her. Bloom represents as; “Her allegiance to her native country was weakened by the message ingrained in her by school, family, and community: that the future lay in the West” (68). The indoctrination stressed by her family and community turns into painful experience. While the novels in the first chapter have the characteristics of expatriation, psychological traumas and irrevocable afflictions, the short stories and novels in the second chapter give the reader the idea of pursuit of happiness and determination. For instance, Jasmine and Devi chase the happiness no matter what they experience. However, in the later novels written after *Leave It to Me*, the characters are reconciled with both their homeland India and America they migrate. The protagonists are dignified enough to acknowledge that they have two cultures, traditions and countries they must live. Besides, Mukherjee is a distinctive writer dealing with expatriation, immigration and the psychology of immigrants. Also, the author can be regarded as postmodern writer depending upon the

characteristics of her fiction such as historifiction, pastiche. Hence, Mukherjee is a contemporary postcolonial and postmodern American writer.

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ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, we sought to explore the feminine protagonists and their effloresces in Bharati Mukherjee's fiction. Mukherjee is one of the prominent authors dealing with immigration and immigrants' psychology. Also it is evident that Indian born Mukherjee using postmodern characteristics such as historifiction and cultures is both postcolonial and postmodern writer.

The earlier novels authored by Mukherjee concern about the difficulties the immigrant women encounter. When considered that the author herself has harsh times in Canada, she pens the immigrant women characters who are imaginatively expatriated. All protagonists have the feeling of dislocation, alienation and traumatic consequences. In the later short stories and novels author by Mukherjee moving to America, the heroines turn into more determined and radiant characters than the earlier ones. They never give up for the pursuit of happiness no matter what they experience. However, in the last novels, the protagonists are reconciled with their two homelands, traditions and societies. Hence, on scrutinized Mukherjee's novels and short stories chronologically, it can be easily understood the traumatic heroines convert into respectable individuals.

To sum up, the women's effloresce are ascertained in all Mukherjee's short stories and novels. Also, the usage of English language in her fiction enables her to be known all over the world. At the same time Mukherjee becomes a distinctive writer in contemporary American literature.

ÖZET

Bu çalışmada Bharati Mukherjee'nin eserlerindeki kadın kahramanlar ve bu kahramanların psikolojik yönden gelişimleri ortaya konacaktır. Mukherjee Amerikan Edebiyatı'nda göçmenlik ve göçmen psikolojisi üzerine yazan önemli kadın yazarlardan biridir. Ayrıca Hindistan doğumlu olan yazarın, eserlerinde postkolonyal ve tarihsel anlatımcılık ve kültürlülük gibi öğelerin bulunmasıyla da postmodern bir yazar olduğu aşikârdır.

Yazarın ilk romanlarında göç eden kadınların karşılaştığı zorluklar ele alınmaktadır. Kendisinin de o dönemlerde Kanada'da sıkıntılı bir süreçten geçtiği düşünülürse bir nevi sürgün hayatını kaleme aldığı düşünülebilir. Kahramanların hepsini yalnızlık, mekânsızlık ve sarsıcı sonuçlar beklemektedir. Daha sonra Amerika'ya yerleşen yazarın roman ve kısa hikâyelerinde kahramanlar artık daha kararlı, mutluluğu kovalayan karakterlere dönüşmeye başlamışlardır. Geçmiş deneyimleri ne kadar kötü olursa olsun azimlerinden vazgeçmeyeceklerdir. Bununla birlikte sonraki romanlarda artık kahramanlar her iki toplumla barışık, ileriye bakarken geçmişini de unutmayan karakterlere dönüşmüştür. Böylece kronolojik olarak incelendiğinde Mukherjee'nin eserlerinde sorunlu kadın kahramanlardan sağlam kişilikli karakterlere doğru adımlar atıldığı görülmüştür.

Böylelikle yazarın tüm eserleri incelendiğinde kadın kahramanlarda bir gelişim olgusundan söz edilebilir. Ayrıca eserlerini İngilizce kaleme almış olması yazarın tüm dünyada tanınmasını sağlamıştır. Aynı zamanda bu yönü Mukherjee'yi çağdaş Amerikan edebiyatında önemli bir yazar kılmıştır.