Chapter I

Diaspora, Transnationalism and the Formation of Dual Consciousness

> The borderline engagements of cultural difference may as often be consensual as conflictual; they may confound our definitions of tradition and modernity; realign the customary boundaries between the private and the public, high and low; and challenge normative expectations of development and progress. (Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 3)

This research examines Bharati Mukharjee's debutant novel The *Tiger's Daughter* and Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* from transnational lens, characterized by migration, transnationalism, hybridity, and diasporic experience. With the application related to formation of identity between different cultural and national borders, as liminal space in which the immigrant characters diverge and intersect, ultimately constituting a subjectivity marked by hybridity.

Most of the immigrant writers depict the themes of complexities of lifestyles, cultural assimilation, and portray their characters as torn between conflicting loyalty to their family traditions and the new way of life. My reading of these two immigrants and post-colonial writers go beyond this conventional wisdom about the alienated postcolonial subject.

Bharati Mukharjee's debutant novel *The Tiger's Daughter* and Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* from transnational lens. By focusing on the issues migration, transnationalism, hybridity and diasporic experience my thesis seeks to bring diaspora characters and their dynamic identities into limelight. I apply Bhabha's notion of third space to explore the formation of identities across the national borders. Specially, I examine how immigrant characters living their life beyond national borders.

Bhabha and Hall, depict—the themes of complexities of lifestyles, cultural assimilation, and portray in their theories regarding diaspora. My reading of these two diaspora writers, Lahiri and Mukherjee go beyond territory to the alienated postcolonial subject by claiming that diaspora characters though seem perplexed and confused identities in transnational locations, they attempt to maintain their identities related to the culture of their origins. This thesis revolves the issue of diaspora, transnationlism and hybridity of migrating subjects.

Generally speaking diaspora is a large group of people with similar heritage or homeland who have since moved out to places all over the world. Likewise, transnationlism is a broad phenomenon the resulted from the interconnectivity between and among the people for the sake of socio-economic and political interplay beyond the boundaries among the nation states.

In the same way, hybridity is a concept used in postcolonial theory specially associated with Homi k Bhabha. According to Bhabha, hybridity is the synthesis that takes place in a space where an encounter between distinct cultures with the implication of combination. As my prime focus is on diaspora characters, who constantly embrace the impacts of globalization, migration and transnationlism.

The Namesake by Lahiri and *The Tiger's Daughter* by Mukherjee also discuss the complications faced by the first-generation immigrants who have to be reborn into a new diasporic identity. They are bound to remake and reshape their cultural values in new sets of surroundings. These diaspora characters (Tara and Ashima) in the novels, while struggling to recover their fixed and stable identity, embrace emergent multiple identities made possible by the context of transnational migration or immigration. Although they make efforts to adapt to the mores of the new world, they cannot fully drift apart from the culture they are nurtured in. Moreover, they do not want to give up their Indian ties as a result, they are fated to embrace dual cultural allegiance.

Similarly, the second generations of immigrants' families of these immigrants struggle to come to terms with their hyphenated identities and divided loyalties. They grow up in two different worlds simultaneously, and are made to live two separate lives. Being instilled with a hybrid culture, they cannot fully belong to any culture. Thus, the immigrants and their children are ambivalent in terms of their cultural identity. This tug of tradition causes cultural alienation in them.

Jhumpa Lahiri's novel *The Namesake* and Bharati Mukarjee's *The Tiger's Daughter* basically deal with the issue of immigration and the characters' infatuation towards non-native culture. They depict the socio-cultural reality in transnational location. Lahiri's protagonist Ashima and Mukherjee's Tara feel culturally dislocated in the above mentioned novels. This thesis gives the highest premium on the issue of diaspora that has become the frequent discussed topic in the era of transnationlism. In order to study the issue of diaspora I have executed the idea the theorists like Homi Bhabha , Stuart Hall, R. Radhakrishna and others. My research tries and gives value to the people living diaspora life and seeks the tendency to live into the transnational society not regretting as alien rather celebrating the diversity, which is lied in the life style of the characters in above mentioned novels. At the heart of those novels, the authors create the dynamics of diaspora defining various cultural hazards, displacement, and transformation in their identities, new possibilities, and new ways of thinking and complex experiences faced by the Diasporas in the process of their assimilation in a new country.

Psychological aspects of the major characters in novels lead us to the state of recreating self of the protagonists. Ideology and memory lead them to be the nostalgic one, which is indeed researchable issue in academic level. Imaginary homeland and their dream directly indicate the memory of the writers. They think of the motherland that is long back left, and survives merely in the layers of frayed and fragmented memories. They celebrate the anxiety of remembering and at the same time forgetting. They love to keep a distance from the mainstream in their current land.

Talking about Jhumpa Lahiri, born as Nilanjana Sudeshna, on July 11, 1967, is an Indian American author. She was born in London of Bengali Indian parents, who later moved to the United States when she was there in order to settle in Kingston, Rhode Island. Despite her diasporic image, she is an American at heart. In one of her interviews published in the USA Today, she explains, "I wasn't born here, but I might as well have been" (N.pag.). But as a young girl while growing up brown and foreign in a predominantly white neighbourhood, she perceived that she was neither Indian nor American. Like other ABCDs (American Born Confused/Conflicted Desis), she experienced a tug of tradition.

In an article published in the *Newsweek*, Lahiri quotes her self-experience, "I felt an intense pressure to be two things- loyal to the old world and fluent in the new-approved of on either side of the hyphen. I fell short at both ends, shuttling between two dimensions that had nothing to do with one another" (43). Recounting her diasporic trauma that she has evaded from her American peers, she writes, "At home I followed the customs of my parents, speaking Bengali and eating rice and dal with my fingers. These ordinary facts seem part of a secret, utterly alien way of life, and I took pains to hide them from my American friends" (43). Nevertheless, as an adult, Lahiri has reconciled with her conflicted self and so she admits, "The traditions on either side of the hyphen dwell in me like siblings, still occasionally sparring, one outshining the other depending on the day. But like siblings they are intimately familiar with one another, forgiving and intertwined" (43).

Lahiri graduated from South Kingston High School, and earned her Bachelor's degree in English Literature from Barnard College. Later, she was educated at Boston University where she received multiple degrees: an M.A. in English, M.F.A. in Creative Writing, M.A. in Comparative Literature, and a Ph.D. in Renaissance Studies. She was awarded with a two-year fellowship at Provincetown's Fine Arts Work Center. She then served as a teaching faculty at Boston University and the Rhode Island School of Design.

Lahiri's fiction is brimmed with autobiographical elements. Her prizewinning stories, whether set in Boston or Bengal or beyond, are evoked by her own experiences as well as those of her parents and acquaintances of her Bengali community. In fact, she started writing so that the two worlds that she occupied could at least mingle on the page, which she otherwise could not have allowed to come together in her real life. Her stories that are flavored with plain language, a pinch of humor and subtle details give a glimpse of Indian immigrants' lives of the 1960s as well as those of the contemporary times. Often, these plots are imbued with Bengali cuisines and pujos (religious ceremonies) reinforcing the immigrants' nostalgic experience and their attempts to create an imaginary homeland in foreign soil.

Lahiri is a writer who prefers simplicity over sophistication. Her frequent visits to Calcutta nourished her imaginative power and made her see things from different lights that are visible in her mentioned text. One can find traces of India through her sharply outlined, varied and detailed characterization in the novel. She often portrays the lives of Indian Americans who are bound to live two conflicting cultures. She examines her characters' struggles, anxieties and biases in order to narrate the nuances of immigrant attitude and behavior. Michiko Kakutani of *The*

New York Times writes:

> Jhumpa Lahiri's characters tend to be immigrants from India and their American-reared children, exiles who straddle two countries, two cultures, and belong to neither: too used to freedom to accept the rituals and conventions of home, and yet too steeped in tradition to embrace American mores fully. (27)

Similarly, in an article entitled “Jhumpa Lahiri: The Quiet Laureate” Lev Grossman clarifies:

> Lahiri is a miniaturist, a micro cosmologist, and she helps us understand what those lives mean without resorting to we-are-the-world multiculturalism. Everyone in Lahiri's fiction is pulled in at least six directions at once. Parents pull characters backward in time; children pull them forward. America pulls them west; India pulls them east. The need to marry pulls them outward; the need for solitude pulls them inward. Lahiri's stories are static, but what looks like stasis is really the stillness of enormous forces pushing in opposite directions, barely keeping one another in check. (5)

Lahiri especially focuses on the universal theme of displacement. She writes of the ‘intellectual’ upper middle-class/middle-class Indian immigrants - the suburban population of Boston and other East Coast cities. Since they come from a different country and practice a different culture, they are bound to encounter trying times. Often being troubled by the sense of loneliness, emotional isolation, cultural alienation and a deep sense of remorse, they have a hard time fitting in. Her sketch of reality is more evident in her fiction. In my view, anyone who has lived in exile as an emotionally detached outsider and has felt a deepest yearning for home may find these tales interesting.

Furthermore, her novel also presents cultural break and generational gap between first-generation Indian immigrants and their American-born children. Particularly, she highlights the theme of alienation that the Indian immigrant parents feel toward their American-reared children and the guilt those children feel as they assimilate into the melting pot of the US. The first-generation immigrants always live with a constant sense of insecurity and alienation. They are doubtful of America and its American culture, and make zealous efforts to retain their Indian ties. Moreover, they find it difficult to adapt to the mores of the new world, and feel out of place in the American soil. On the other hand, the children of these immigrants are bound to live with a case of divided identities and parted loyalties.

They are of Indian descent but not of India. They have to grow up in two different worlds simultaneously, and are made to lead two separate lives. They are ambivalent of their cultural identity. Raised in a hybrid culture, they cannot fully belong to any (one) culture.

Lahiri's literary career took off with short stories. She has been awarded the Pulitzer Prize (2000) for her debut short story collection *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999). These stories tell a tale of sensitive dilemmas encountered by Indian immigra*n*ts who are bound to straddle between the cultural values of their birthplace and their adopted home. Ketu H. Katrak in *The Women's Review of Books* observes:

> The Interpreter of Maladies as reflecting the trauma of self-transformation through immigration, which can result in a series of broken identities that form multiple anchorages. Lahiri's stories show the diasporic struggle to keep hold of culture as characters create new lives in foreign cultures. Relationships, language, rituals, and religion

> all help these characters maintain their culture in new surroundings even as they build a hybrid realization as Asian Americans. (5-6)

Similarly, a novel, *The Namesake* that is the prime focus of the researcher here, follows her Pulitzer winning short story collection. It has garnered rave reviews and has been made into a movie by Mira Nair in 2007. Gogol, the protagonist of her novel, despises his unusual name. This character is, in fact, inspired by her own ambivalence over her identity. When she was a kindergarten pupil, her teacher decided to call her by her pet name, Jhumpa because it was easier to pronounce than her proper name, Nilanjana Sudeshna. However, as she grew up as Jhumpa, she always felt embarrassed by her name. David Kipen reviews in the San Francisco Chronicle thus:

> It is a novel about an immigrant family's imperfect assimilation into America. The story opens in 1968, as Nikhil's pregnant mother is mixing herself a Bengali American concoction of green chili peppers and Planters peanuts. It closes just three years ago, with grown Nikhil – born in the United States, yet in his way as hyphenated an American as his parents – at last reconciled to reading a book once given to him by his father, who used to embarrass him. (1)

The Namesake weaves a story of the Ganguli family making a voyage between two worlds. The newlywed Bengali couple, Ashoke and Ashima, immigrates to the United States where they struggle to raise a family in an alien soil. Yet, they want their children to upkeep their Bengali heritage, and often visit their relatives in Calcutta. However, the children, Gogol and Sonia, grow up experiencing constant cultural chasm and generational gap.

They are mired between two conflicting cultures with their highly distinct religious, social and ideological differences. They feel as if there is no single place to which they fully belong. It is especially Gogol, who feels like a perennial outsider and struggles to fit in. In his youth, he tries to stave off his Indian roots. He does not befriend Indian-American students, and does not consider India as his homeland. He is constantly bothered by a sense of alienation, rootlessness, cultural dislocation and a tug of tradition. On the other hand, Ashima, too, cannot call America her home though she spends over thirty-odd years of her life in its soil.

She always finds something missing. Nothing feels normal to her. For her, making a life in America is like a lifelong pregnancy—a perpetual wait, a constant burden, a continuous feeling out of sorts. She is lonely and she moans for the world she has left behind.

Bharati Mukherjee was born on July 27, 1940 to wealthy parents in Calcutta, India. In 1947, she moved to Britain with her family at the age of eight and lived in Europe for about three and a half years. After getting her B.A from the University of Calcutta in 1959 and her M.A. in English and Ancient Indian Culture from the University of Baroda in 1961, she came to the United States. Having been awarded a scholarship from the University of Iowa, she earned her M.F.A. in Creative Writing in 1963 and her Ph.D. in English and Comparative Literature in 1969.

Her works focus on the phenomenon of migration, the status of new immigrants, and the feeling of alienation often experienced by expatriates as well as on Indian women and their struggle in United States. Her own struggle with identity, first as an exile from India, then an Indian emigrants in Canada and finally as an immigrant in the United States has led to her current state of being an emigrant in a country of immigrants.

According to Indian tradition, a man should lead the woman. He plays a protective role. Travelling alone, living alone and moving alone are parts of unfamiliarity in many parts of India. In Indian tradition, one should marry in his own caste. If anyone marries from another caste, he will be treated as an outcast or a sinner. However, the protagonist Tara violating these rules and marries a foreign man who is a Jew. She totally forgets her caste and religion through her marriages. Ironically, Mukherjee makes a criticism of the conservative attitude of the Indians who are crazy of foreign things and clothes but they do not appear of marriage with foreign people.

In the presence of her mother, Tara feels alienated. Within herself, Tara becomes mentally turbulent and makes her return to the USA. Thus, in the first novel one finds the feeling of alienation of Tara.

The Tiger's Daughter is an immigrant novel about returning home. An immigrant novel by definition is a prose fiction of some length that deals with the protagonist leaving his or her homeland and settling down in a foreign country to start a new life. In the process, the protagonist goes through trials and tribulations while settling down in the adopted land: fighting discrimination, getting married, finding work—in short, integrating into the county of adoption. Typically, the protagonist of an immigrant novel goes through the phases of desire, control, displacement, and integration. Although *The Tiger's Daughter* evinces all these characteristics, the primary event in the novel is the protagonist returning home after seven years of living abroad.

Seven years before the story begins, Tara Banerjee, the only daughter of a wealthy industrialist in Calcutta, on the East coast of India, sent to Poughkeepsie, New York, to study at Vassar, a famous women's college. After graduating, she went to New York to study for a doctorate in English. Meanwhile, she met, fell in love with, and married David Cartwright, an aspiring American writer, while working on her doctoral dissertation on Katherine Mansfield.

The novel begins by Tara Banerjee returning home to her parents in order to reconnect with them, as well as with her other relatives, and the school and college friends she had left behind. Hence, the purpose of her visit is to rediscover her roots and to understand more about her Bengali Indian culture.

What begins as an innocent home-coming ends up as a sensational and frightening experience in which Tara is immersed in a proletariat uprising. Tara herself is caught in a riot that takes the life of a loyal family friend. Throughout the novel, Bharati Mukherjee subtly builds the tension between the aristocratic upper classes and between the factory workers, the proletariat and the poor.

The relationship between the self and place is a major theme of *The Tiger's Daughter*. It is not to be understood as being displaced from one's home because of a natural disaster like an earthquake or a hurricane. In immigrant novels, a displaced person undergoes a gradual process of settling down in the new place. Tara's displacement is happening to her in her own birth country where she returns after seven years. In the context of this novel, displacement is as much of a mental state of being as it is a physical state. From the moment she arrives back in Bombay, Tara begins noticing various mannerisms, diction and accent, and exaggerations among her relatives that she finds alternately amusing and irritating.

She is a person of a taciturn disposition, not given to expression of emotion. As such, Tara describes their exaggerated gestures of hospitality, combined with aggressive profession of their love for her, with irony and subtle sarcasm. Unable to fit in with the society she has left behind, Tara Banerjee is also unable to appreciate the fierce, raw tribal love that her relatives seem to feel for her, expressed innocently and freely. In the West, people need to be in contact to have a relationship, regardless of how closely they are related. In India, by contrast, contact is not a necessary condition for family ties; the fact that one is related by kinship is enough for people to show affection to each other, even if they have literally never met before. Tara is not accustomed to this and feels very alienated from her relatives and friends.

A second theme what I see in this novel is actually a consequence of alienation. In the context of immigrant novels, alienation is a part of displacement during which the alienated individual goes through a period of very uncomfortable adjustment, especially in relationships. Tara seems to be unable to establish a relationship with anyone, not even her husband, David. Only her parents seem to be exempt from caustic criticism, although she seems unable to talk to them.

The second form of her alienation seems to come from her adverse relationship with Calcutta society, the working poor, those whom her father employs and gives them pitifully low wages and exploits them in every way. Alienation is a form of displacement.

By analyzing the diaspora subjects and their struggle for fixed identities, my thesis attempts to make contribution in a couple of areas of critical concern. Firstly, this study contributes by bringing the diaspora characters undergone with difficult paths to have fixed identities in the countries beyond their origin in the purview of critical analysis. Besides, this project also contributes by showing how diaspora characters keep enjoying with multiple identities in the nexus of emigration and immigration. The purpose of this study is to spotlight on the dynamic identities of diaspora characters, who, unlike the traditional notion of migration as a compulsive phenomenon, involve in voluntarily driven forces.

In both novels, characters are creating self in migrated land through hardships.

Despite their labor, they never get chance to celebrate their happiness and they tend to be the nostalgic ones. Frequent haunts of the homeland in every moment of their life is their fate and they always limit in neither in nor out condition. My thesis seeks to explore and excavate the liminal yet very flexible and dynamic position of migrating people in the era of transnationlism.

In the successive chapters, I have discussed how diaspora characters lead their life amidst alienation and hybridity along with the persistent struggle to formulate fixed identities with sparks of culture, language and home. Normally, people tend to expect them as wanderers as having no clear-cut destination; they formulate their own distinct identities to tackle that come across in the era of transnationlism and globalization. I have extensively discussed this idea in the following chapters.

Chapter II

The limit of Hybridity: Emergent Identities in the Transnational Context

Through an analysis of the major themes in *The Tiger's Daughter,* and *The Namesake* that center on the issues of cultural and national border crossing. this research contends that Mukherjee and Lahiri attempt to show how transnational identities for immigrants while stabilizing them in the 'third space' as Bhabha has explained in "The production of meaning requires that these two places be mobilized in the passage through a Third Space" (*LC*, 36) such that,

> [Cultural] "difference" is not so much a reflection of pre-given ethnic or cultural traits set in the tablets of a "fixed" tradition as it is a complex ongoing negotiation – against authorities, amongst minorities: the "right" to signify concerns, not so much the teleologies of tradition as much as its powers of iteration, its forms of displacement and relocation, its ability to signify symbolic and social relations outside of the mimetic transmission of cultural contents.
>
> ("Frontlines/Borderposts," 270)

Cultural difference in the third space becomes the issue of collision. But that is not the case all the time there happens a kind of cultural harmony too, even in the diversified cultures. Given the nature of the mobility of people and their cultures across nations, both writers de-territorialize the definite national and cultural identities suggesting that individuals cannot confine themselves within the narrow concept of national and cultural boundaries in this globalized world. In the novels the migration can be seen prominently hindering the issue of third space as Bhabha says in foresaid lines, nevertheless in *The Tigers's Daughter* the setting is from Kolkata to America and in *The Namesake* Bangal to America. There in the minds of characters like Tara in

Tiger's *Daughter* and Ashima in *The Namesake* 'the third space' have been created, that demonstrate that identities are becoming more transnational and global due to the development of technologies, and global connections among people. In this regard, this research I attempt to offer a re-vision of the 'Third Space' not as a static and insular territory but a participant in transnational relations which helps to create an emergent identity in transnational context.

In the colonial society people occupy an 'in-between' space by mimicking the colonizer which creates a hybrid culture. Hybridity, thus, is an expression of everyday life in the post- imperial era. Ambivalence; therefore, gives rise to a controversial proposition in Bhaba's theory that comes to be the colonial relationship that is always ambivalent in nature. This relationship ultimately produces the seeds of its own destruction. This is controversial because it implies that the colonial relationship is going to be disrupted, regardless of any resistance or rebellion on the part of the colonized. Bhabha mentions in his book *Location of Culture* about the construction of subjectivity in this way:

> Caught between the desire for religious reform and the fear that the Indians might become turbulent for liberty, Grant paradoxically implies that it is the partial diffusion of Christianity, and the partial influence of moral improvements which will construct a particularly appropriate form of colonial subjectivity. (Bhabha, 87).

Formulation of subjectivity especially in postcolonial translational milieu is effected by Christian culture prior to any other affecting factor. The only solution was to mix Christian doctrines with divisive caste practices to produce a partial reform that would induce an empty imitation of English manners. Bhabha suggests that this demonstrates the conflict within imperialism itself that will inevitably cause its own downfall: it is compelled to create an ambivalent situation that will disrupt its assumption of monolithic power.

People of the diasporic location have the access to a second tradition quite apart from their own racial history to live in. Diaspora is to experience that trauma of exile, migration, displacement, rootlessness, and the life in minority group haunted by some sense of loss. In such a situation some urge to reclaim while some look back. As Rushdie writes, "I have been in a minority group all life- a member of an Indian Muslim family in Bombay, then of a mohajir- migrant- family in Pakistan and now as a British Asian"(4), creating an ‘imaginary homeland' and willing to admit, though imaginatively, that he belongs to it. People in the diasporic milieu have been forced by cultural displacement to accept the provisional nature of all truths and their identities are at once plural and partial. Though they feel torn apart between two cultures and the ground is ambiguous and shifting, it is not an infertile territory to occupy. As Hall argues:

> The diasporic experience… is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity, by a conception of 'identity' that lives and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves a new, through transformation and difference. (Culture, 119-20)

Hall critiques the essentialist notion of identity in the name of innovation and change by promoting ethnic sameness and differences— a changing same. Moreover, it is used to describe a dispersed intellectual formation or the spread and interlamination of ideas. Because of this global development and variety of forms of cultural studies, it has been described as 'Diasporas story' and cultural identities are represented as hybrid or Diaspora identities.

The conflicting nature and attitude of Diasporic subject that makes very confusing and perplexed leading to the state of hybridity. Hybridity, therefore, is an inevitable outcome associated with a diaspora subject who always is in quest for an interstitial space between two cultures; one native and other foreign, and as compromise between the two, assuming a position that doesn't belong to both in entirety, and yet, assimilations elements from both. Bhabha asserts that "a hybrid cultural space that forms contingently, disjunctively, in the inscription of the science of cultural memory and sites of political agency" (*LC*, 11). Hybrid cultural space in this sense comes at the zone of conflict between two cultures, neither in nor out. It is a status in the limbo – a condition of indecisiveness as far as identity is concerned. Politically, one might have acquired citizenship or voting right in the migrated land, but that doesn't undo the anxieties associated with cultural dislocation, and it is this cultural dislocation that makes all the difference in the case of the Diaspora.

This dissertation explores to what extent do the immigrant writers locate and attempts to create the transnational identity in their work. Do the immigrant live in a land of nowhere, resulting from their attempt to overcome cultural issues and negotiate diverse racial identities? Do the conflict between rootedness, constituting a tie to their past and up-rootedness, living in the present contemporary immigrant writer no longer cling to the themes of dislocation, displacement and up-rootedness but they are affected by the notion of globalization and trans nationalism, they attempt to locate and stabilize their identities in the new territories.

The present work also explores how immigrant writers go beyond the nationally forged identity and create the 'third space' where they create their transnational identity which is taken as emergent identities in transnational context.

Bhabha's concept of 'third space' is the space, where we negotiate between different identities) is the common ground of negotiation and transformation, which is neither assimilation nor otherness but represents the history of coalition building and the transnational and cultural diasporic connection. He further puts about the third space such:

> It is the that third space, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive condition of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same sings can be appropriated, translated, rehistorisized and read anew. (55)

Here, Bhabha means to say that in the third space is always striving aspiring in nature, therefore, it is distinctly dynamic and dynamically distinct.

Bharati Mukherjee's *The Tiger's Daughter* is written from a limited third person point of view. In all but a few places, that point of view belongs to Tara Banerjee, a young Bengali Brahmin woman, a capitalist's daughter, who returns to Calcutta after some years away in the United States of America. She had been sent there to study, and she had married a white American man. The novel traces the arc beginning from her arrival in Bombay and a train ride to Calcutta to a moment where she sits in a locked car amidst a violent street demonstration, yearning for departure.

During her visit, Tara reunites with her parents and friends, but the book is mostly about return to the place of her girlhood, to Calcutta. It is a radically different city than the one she had left. To her eyes and those of her upper-class social circles, the city is on the verge of revolution.

Factory owners feel under siege and there are daily mobilizations of workers and youth on the streets. Tara embraces the fears and anxieties of her class, even as she recognizes a distance from them, a distance, the book suggests that comes from values and outlooks acquired through living in the U.S. Tara arrived already feeling a certain distance from Calcutta and India. The novel traces an arc of her plunging alienation. Her confrontation with the changed face of Calcutta takes place through repeated journeys: some in the company of friends and family and others in the company of new people she encounters.

By going outside the circle of characters from her past, Mukherjee strays from the core Narrative Strategy. There is Joyonto Roy Chowdhury, an aged aristocrat who takes as his mission to save Tara from the narrowness of her friends by taking her to certain parts of Calcutta she would not otherwise see, such as the community of refugees who are squatting on his estate on the outskirts of the city. But more significant is Tuntunwala, a capitalist magnate Tara first encountered on the train ride from Bombay. He becomes the political candidate preferred by the city's upper classes to save themselves from the angry poor. Despite some unease, Tara finds herself drawn to him, suggesting that her class loyalties remain steadfast. But Tuntunwala has other intentions and in the end, a journey Tara takes with him ends in him raping her, an act that seals her final alienation from India.

Mukherjee also brings in two characters from the U.S. into her return visit. One is a black exchange student who initially is housed in one of her friends' houses, and the other is a white woman who Tara and her associate run into during a trip to Darjeeling. There is already an American character in the novel that is part of Tara's life; that is David, her husband, present off-stage, mostly through her memories or their correspondence. These other Americans seem to play a role of allowing the narrator to comment on American society. Mukherjee, however, has chosen to represent the visitors as stereotypes. Washington McDowell, the exchange student, represents the 'other America' that recognizes its solidarity with the masses on Calcutta's streets, while Antonia Whitehead carries a version of 1960s-style 'white people's burden' with her ambition 'to rouse [India] to help itself.' (198)

Mukherjee has made an interesting choice by creating dynamic character. This kind of character helps her go near the vicinity of the 'other Calcutta,' to bring aspects of U.S. society in a living way into the narrative (without having to break the linearity of the journey structure). But the narrative never emerges beyond the privileged upper class society to which Tara belongs; the other Calcutta never gets to be present as character, it is simply the mob. As for the presence of the Americans, they are too caricatured to offer any deep insight into the society which Tara has chosen as her new home. They do allow us to see that Tara comprehends Americans in a way that her circles in Calcutta do not, still stuck as they are by awe of American capitalism and the icons of Western modernity.

This limited break from the typical narrative strategy is not used to take the novel beyond the story of one person's quest. Indeed the break even reinforces this aspect. It is the despicable Tuntunwala, an outsider, who is the agency of Tara's final alienation.

The Tiger's Daughter appears to be a novel in a way that reflecs Mukherjee's personal choice. She has become a major spokesperson for an assimilationist perspective among migrant writers, with repeated polemics against hyphenated identities. I read the novel as a working out, in fictional form, of the author's recognition that she no longer belongs to Calcutta. She belongs to North America, therefore; her mind constantly and continuously hankers after America.

Talking about state of hybridity and ambivalence, Jhumpa Lahiri describes the lives of two generations of an immigrant Bengali family, the Gangulis in America in her novel, *The Namesake.* The attempts of Ashima and her husband Ashok to adjust to the United States and the sense of alienation and rootlessness experienced by their son, Gogol, from the theme of the novel. Gogol insists on being renamed Nikhil as a kind of assertion of his Indianness. Later, he has himself renamed Gogol, now synonymous with his international, rootless status.

Mukherjee's novel *The Tiger's Daughter* moves on with the independent story of Tara Banerjee, the great-grand-daughter of Harilal Banerjee and the daughter of the Bengal Tiger (named so for his temperament), the owner of famous Banerjee and Thomas (Tobacco) Co. Ltd. At a tender age of fifteen, she is sent to America for higher studies. Homesick and scared, she tries to adjust to the demands of a different world. Her adjustment travails are described in detail, often using the flashback technique.

Tara's early experiences in America-her sense of discrimination if her roommate did not share her mango chutney, her loneliness resulting in her vehemently taking out all her silk scarves and hanging them around to give the apartment a more Indian look, her attempt to stick to Indian ways by praying to Kali for strength so that she would not break down before the Americans--all portray the cultural resistance put forward by an innocent immigrant who refused to be completely sucked into the alien land. As Kumar says, "an immigrant away from home idealizes his home country and cherishes nostalgic memories of it and so does Tara in America" (31). Tara's habit of retaining her maiden surname after her marriage symbolically reflects her subconscious need to be rooted in her native land. Circumstances so contrive incidentally that she falls in love with an American, David Cartwright. Tara's marriage with David is reported in a summary manner, "Within fifteen minutes of her arrival at the Greyhound bus station there (at Madison), in her anxiety to find a cab, she almost knocked down a young man. She did not know then that she eventually would marry that young man" (Mukherjee 14). David Cartwright is wholly Western and she is always apprehensive of this fact. She could not communicate with him the finer nuances of her family background and life in Calcutta while he asked naïve questions about Indian customs and traditions.

Her split self also raised doubt about her husband not understanding her country through her and in turn, her concluding that he may not have understood her either. Thus, she felt completely insecure in an alien atmosphere.

The new immigrant has to deal with people essentially different from him; he or she has to learn and understand alien ways, language; he or she has to face unaccustomed problems; in short, he/she has to survive in a grossly foreign environment. (Chowdhury 94) assimilating in alien society.

After a gap of seven years, she plans a trip to India. These intervening years though have changed her perception about her surrounding; she has not been able to override gender stereotypes and clings to past memories for sustenance. On her return to India, her initial reaction is that of shock and disgust. At the airport she is received by her Bombay relatives and is introduced as the American auntie to the children and she responds to her relatives in a cold and dispassionate manner. When her relatives call her "Tultul" (nick name) it sounds strange to her Americanized ears (qtd. in Kumar 31). The railway station looks like a hospital with so many sick and deformed men sitting on the bundles and trunks. In the compartment, she finds it difficult to travel with a Marwari and a Nepali. Now she considers America a dreamland. When surrounded by her relatives and vendors at the Howrah railway station Tara feels uncomfortable. It is likely that she hates everyone and everything in India where she was born, brought up and taught many values, all because of her acculturation in

America.

Mukherjee here shows that nostalgia and cultural memory are integral parts of an expatriate's mental state but as one spends some years in the adopted country, the effectiveness of these things gradually wear out. One, then, finds it difficult to adjust to the ways of life and habits in the home country one has left years ago, particularly when the country goes through a serious socio-political crisis.

Similarly Tara Banerjee Cartwright is in an intermediate stage when she is unable to negotiate the cultural terrain of Calcutta she has left behind seven years ago and is looking forward to overcome the loneliness she feels in the alien space and to be part of the nation. As "each atom of newness bombarded her" at Vassar, she longed for her usual life in Calcutta (13). Her attempts to communicate with fellow students were largely futile. There was an invisible wall between Tara and the White students. As the narrative claims, her privileged Bengali upper class background and an effective training by the nuns at St. Blaise School in Calcutta helped her survive initial problems of cultural adjustments. She clung to the religious icons and old cultural habits, which comforted her in small ways. Later, socializing with fellow Indians through gatherings in Indian Students' Association helped her to ward off loneliness to a certain extent. She kept contact with her parents, relatives and friends through correspondences, which at the initial stage was of great emotional help. Her visit to Calcutta is designed to highlight her expatriate sensibility and to show the extant of psychological distance created because of physical separation from her home country and its culture. As the novel demonstrates, she no longer feels at ease with the Indian way of life, not even when she is in the midst of friends and relatives. This sets the stage ready for her eventual acceptance of the socio-cultural values of the new nation. As Rani says, "Assimilation and acceptance in the new culture appear impossible if the past is not forgotten” (83). Tara has no more an Indian identity and is always in clash with the culture of her native soil. The clash is deeply felt in the psyche of Tara who finds it difficult to adjust with her friends and relatives in India; and sometimes with the traditions of her own family.

Tara’s psyche is not always tragic resulted by tension created in the mind between the two socio-cultural environments, between the feeling of rootlessness and nostalgia. She feels both trapped and liberated at the same time. She can take refuge neither in her old Indian self nor in her newly discovered American self. This situation forces anyone to assimilate in new world feeling the sparks on nationalism with the people from the same nationality. It might have been easier for Tara to leave her past untouched if she could find her old home contemptible, but she does not. She does not fit in any longer. The outcome of this confrontation is her split personality, which is full of potentialities.

Tara finds it difficult to relate, since her marriage to an American and her Western education brand her as an alienated woman. Since Tara is exposed to the West and has absorbed its values, she must be necessarily alienated and, therefore, even if she tries to voice her continued attachment for, and identity with India, the voice does not carry conviction because it is at variance with the usual stance of indifference and arrogance as these are associated with the Westernized Indian. (Tandon 32)

Tara’s relatives attribute her arrogance to her American attitude to life and think that her seven years stay in America has transformed her thoroughly into a strutting peacock. But the fact of the matter was that she was not happy in America either:

> New York, she thought now, had been exotic. Not because it had

> Laundromats and subways. But because there were police officers with dogs prowling the underground tunnels. Because girls like her, at least almost like her, were being knifed in elevators in their own apartment buildings. New York was certainly extraordinary, and it had driven her to despair. (qtd. in Sunitha 264)

Tara's mind is constantly at conflict with the two-personalities—one of an Indian and the other of an American. Caught in the gulf between these two contrasting worlds, Tara feels that she has forgotten many of her Hindu rituals of worshipping icons she had seen her mother performing since her childhood. She is convinced of her alienation when she forgets the next steps of the ritual after the sandalwood paste had been grounded "It was not a simple loss, Tara feared, this forgetting of prescribed actions; it was a little death, a hardening of the heart, a cracking of axis and centre" (51). The phrase "cracking of axis and center" symbolically points out, "the psyche of Tara which has come in her due to the loss of her own cultural heritage" (qtd. in Sharma 69). She even grows nervous and feels the changed attitude of her mother towards her:

> Perhaps her mother sitting severely before God on a tiny rug, no longer loved her either. After all Tara had willfully abandoned her caste by marrying a foreigner. Perhaps her mother was offended that she, no longer a real Brahmin, was constantly in and out of this sacred room, dipping like a crow. (50)

The American culture has covered Tara like an invisible spirit or darkness. In the deepest core of her heart, Tara has an intense desire to behave like an ordinary Indian but her re-routed self in America made such common rituals alien to her. She realizes that she has become rootless now. She has become an outsider looking at her own life, from outside. She sees everything with an American eye and comments on everything from the point of view of an Americanized Indian. She finds herself marginalized on the psychological level and suffers from a split self. Tara was literally, neither here nor there but still constantly and continuously made attempt to assimilate herself in the vortex of multicultural. As Chowdhury puts:

> She was a misfit with her Calcutta milieu and she was always under stress in America– trying to be correct, trying not to be a gauche immigrant, trying to be American. Tara is intelligent, highly educated and capable of self-analysis. She is conscious of her instability, insecurity yet she visions happiness even in uncertainties. (95).

The statement is hinting at the intense possibility of assimilation from the part of Indian immigrants in America. As in the case of the novel, Tara, who, though remains in the volatile western society, strives and aspires to reconciliate her with the vision of multity in unity. Transnational location itself is lucrative platform celebrating multitudes of activities by people from multiple socio-culture backgrounds.

While Ashok settles into the US as a professor at MIT and makes Indian Bengali friends, Ashima feels dislocated. She keeps an old Bangali magazine, Desh, which she has read several times. She tries to combine Krispies and Planters peanuts to resemble a snack sold for pennies on Calcutta sidewalks. She makes Samosas to sell at the international coffee house and begins to feel useful after not working for many years. Later she takes up a job in the library. When Ashok dies of heart attack, she decides to spend six months in India and another six months in the USA. This is what we can call it as an attempt to merge Old and New Worlds. Lahiri recalls it as: Ashima feels lonely, suddenly, horribly, permanently alone… she feels overwhelmed by the thought of the move she is about to make, to the city that was once home and is now in its own foreign (278).

Googol represents the second generation immigrant, alienated, rebellious and attempting to find roots, placement and cultural identity. This is marked by his changing his name twice. He takes up typical subjects in college: Spanish, Art History. He breaks the immigrant code of typecast professions: “Like the rest of their Bengali friends his parents expect him to be if not an engineer, then a doctor, a lawyer and an accountant” (87).

He acquires American girlfriends, Maxine and Ruth, and earns the disapproval of his traditional parents who point out the examples of Bengali men who have married American girls and been divorced. Eventually, he marries a Bengali immigrant girl, Moushami, who, like him, is a maladjusted outsider figure. Her parents’ once commanded her not to marry an American. By the age of twelve she has made a pact with other Bengali girls never to marry a Bengali. As a teenager she is forbidden to date. In college she enters a reactive, promiscuous phase and begins to have a number of affairs. At brown University she takes up French as a third alternative language/ culture context to her American present and Bengali past. Gogol and Moushmi attempt to break from the stereotypical model of the immigrant who is highly motivated to climb the ladder of professional success and dream the Indian version of the American dream.

Exilic Subject and Memory

Being an exilic subject means bearing multiple anxieties caused by being in different location with constant and continuous memory of the home culture. To a large extent, the personal agency of the subject might minimize the impacts of those anxieties by being adapted to himself or herself, but hybridity has its limits beyond which the human agency of the subject cannot operate. In other words, the anxieties come about right from the processes that determine the formation of Diaspora.

Leaving the very nature of the multiple anxieties aside for the time being, it appears worthwhile to engage in the process of the formation of the Diaspora. Diaspora is not a new term, though it came into currency after the onset of colonization. From its entomology itself, it suggests a long history. Diaspora the term came from Greek 'diaspeirein' that stands for 'disperse', from dia 'across' plus speirein 'scatter' (OALD, 8th edition). The term originated in T*he Bible* (28:25) "thou shalt be a dispersion in all kingdoms of the earth." Later, it denoted the Jewish people leaving their land to settle and work in other places, and gradually, the term began to be applied to all people who left the land of their origin, and settled in a foreign land with a foreign culture" The Bible (32: 27).

Of late, particularly in periods following the decolonization of many nations in Asia and Africa, the term diaspora has gained popularity in discourses in literature and social sciences. According to Brubaker, "it has proliferated much of the boundaries, and has become a pervasive term" (1). Many scholars tend to perceive the spread as a problematic shift in meaning from its original connotation that was confined to Jewish case. In a way, there is a shift from classical paradigm of understanding diapsora in relation with the Jews, to a modern analytical paradigm wherein the term has become more pervasive.

According to William Safran, the key components of this classical diaspora paradigm are "dispersal from a homeland, collective memory of the homeland, lack of integration in the host country, a 'myth' of return and a persistent link with the homeland" (1991: 83-4). It is evident that with shift in the paradigm and pervasion of theoretical categories across disciplines, the connotation was destined to get supplemented in interpretation. This is best served by the definitions forwarded by Robin Cohen:

> Diaspora connotes dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically, to two or more foreign regions or expansion from a homeland in search of work/for trade/colonial ambitions, a collective memory and an idealization of the homeland and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety and prosperity, even to its creation, the development of a return movement that gains collective approbation;, a strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time and based on a sense of distinctiveness, a common history and the belief in a common fate, a troubled relationship with host societies, a sense of empathy and solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement, the possibility of a distinctive creative, enriching life in host countries with a tolerance for pluralism. (515)

There is however a type of inherent tension between these two paradigms of the understanding of Diaspora. The classical paradigm lays an emphasis on the link between a group and a particular territory – a homeland. According to Anthias, the paradigm doesn't avoid the risk to slide into primordiality. This inevitably connects the formation of diaspora with a tendency to get back to roots and notion and ethnic and national belonging. It also connotes that classically understood; the term bears a negative meaning, and pertains to dispersal away from home, the term itself being a word of stigma and discrimination. Since it has more to do with the dispersal of Jews, it inevitably addresses the exiles – a negative term once again.

Paul Gilroy's understanding of the terms revises the earlier definitions by instilling an element of reluctance on the part of the diasporas to disperse. This reluctance is what causes most of the anxieties among the Diasporas. Gilroy projects his definition like this:

> Diaspora identifies a relational network, characteristically produced by forced dispersal and reluctant scattering. It is not just a word of movement, though purposive, urgent movement is integral to it. Under this sign, push factors are a dominant influence. “They make Diaspora more than a voguish synonym for peregrination or nomadism.” (Gilroy, 1994: 292)

What Gillory contents is that in the formation of the Dispaora, there are what he calls push factors, rather than “pogroms, slavery and genocides” (Gilroy, 1994: 292). This doesn't however lead to the conclusion that all types of diasporas have similar predicaments and suffer from the same anxieties. Problems of the diasporas, in spite of bearing similarities, have person-specific differences:

> Despite the similarity of challenges faced by Diasporas in their host countries, individual diasporas differ in how they were created, how they define themselves, and how their diasporic identities are shaped. These factors influence the way members of a Diaspora related to each other, to the large transnational community, and to their home country. (Merz et al. 3)

Since the term Diaspora came into currency in the critical literary discourse after the onset of colonization, its relation with colonization deserves an analysis here. Colonization itself is a debatable term when considered as a particular span of time in history, for there has been cases of intermittent and sporadic colonization. The Greek nation states were colonizers, and the Greek empire that sprang out of their amalgamation relied on colonization for its power and expansion. The Romans were colonizers, without being which, they would not have moved out of Rome to ensure the outreach of their empire to West Asia through Europe. But as understood in literary discourse, the period of colonization starts after Europe starts reaching out, staring approximately in the fourteenth century, up to the end the Second World War, which was followed by a rapid session of independence, the colonized countries announcing their freedom from the colonizers – especially European nations and America – one after another.

In any era that showed expansion of Empires, there were migrations. Migrations basically necessitated by three reasons: colonization, natural calamity, and geographical reasons. For the evolution of Diaspora, colonization has played the most crucial role, and for this paper, the world colonization shall strictly mean the reaching out of Europe to conquer other nations since the fourteenth century, right to at least two decades following the Second World War.

For whatever reasons, the Diasporas are people who migrate, or exile on will or on force. Of late, globalization, which directly or indirectly evolved out of colonization has enhanced the tendency of people migrating globally, and hence there has been a massive increase in the diasporic population around the world. Jackie Assayag and Veronique Benei observe:

> Today, this migratory trend is intricately connected to the multifaceted process called 'globalization', which encompasses geographical, economic, political, technological and cultural dimensions. The geographical expansion and ever greater tendency of interrogational trade, as well as the global networking of finance market and the growing power of transnational corporations, have to

> be seen in relation to the ongoing 'revolution' in information and communication technology as well as to the stream of images flowing from the culture industries. (4-5)

Whatever be the reason for their migration, the migrants and the exiles – that basically constitute the Diaspora – are removed from the land and culture native to them by a considerably long timeframe, some accounting to many centuries even. This detachment and displacement is the reason why the Diasporas suffer from multiple anxieties. It should be borne in mind that these anxieties are not necessarily negative.

The anxieties of the Diasporas are of multiple categories. First and the foremost, they are in a state of in-betweenness, being sandwiched between two cultures –native and foreign. The anxiety evolved from the fact that the native culture has been left far behind in history, so much so that it remains in fragments in their nostalgia, and the new culture is still not quite easily to adapt to. This existence between the two cultures – and in some cases more than two – constitutes one of the strongest anxieties among the exilic subjects, triggering simultaneous ramifications – formation of cleft identities, and development of ambivalent attitude. Out of the many anxieties people of Diasporic origin suffer, what Salman Rushdie opines is one characteristically true to almost all the Diasporas:

> It may be that writers in my position, exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to claim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt. But if we do look back we must also do so in the knowledge-which gives rise to profound uncertainties. (428)

Avtah Brah in the essay “Thinking through the Concept of Diaspora” defines

Diaspora in terms of multiple journeys. At the heart of the notion of Diaspora is the image of a journey:

> Yet not every journey can be understood as Diaspora. Diasporas are clearly not the same as casual travel. Not do they normatively refer to temporary sojourns. Paradoxically, diasporic journeys are essentially about settling down, about putting roots 'elsewhere'. These journeys must be historicized if the concept of Diaspora is to serve as a useful neuristic device. The question is not simply about who travels but when, how and under what circumstances? What socio-economic, political and cultural conditions mark the trajectories of these journeys? (443)

One of the most inevitable predicaments the Diasporas is that they tend to form cleft identities, for their absolute identity as belonging to a location or culture is jeopardized by dislocation and displacement from their homeland. In such cases, identity becomes an issue fundamentally important. It is therefore, worthwhile to turn to identity here.

Identity is an ambiguous term as it can refer to many things at the same time. The ambiguity is catered by the fact that our identities simultaneously can be social, national, ethnic, personal, sexual identities and so on. The meanings of different aspects are changing but never finished or completed. According to Hall:

> Persons are composed not of one but of several, sometimes-contradictory identities. The subject assumes different identities at different time, identities which are not unified around a coherent self. Within us are contradictory identities, pulling in different directions, so that identifications are continually being shifted about if we feel

> that we have unified identity from birth to death, it is only because we construct a confronting story or narrative of the self about ourselves. (277)

Thus, identities are wholly social constructions and cannot exist outside of cultural spaces. Identities are constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth. Cultural identities, thus, are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification or future, which are made, within the discourse of history and culture. After colonialism, there emerged a new transformation of social consciousness, which exceed the rectified identities and rigid boundaries invoked by national consciousness.

Uncertain identity is one among the multiple anxieties the exilic subjects are prone to experience in their dislocated position. What marks their existence more is difference, and across those differences, their identities are sought in all media of expression, including writing. Stuart Hall further explains thus:

> It may be true that the self is always in a sense, a fiction, just as the kinds of closures which are arbitrary closures […] I believe it is and immensely important gain when one recognizes that all identity is constructed across differences and begins to live with the politics of difference. (117)

As far as the identity of the Diasporas is concerned, their national, ethnic and social identities are the most pertinent subjects for discussion. What in fact characterizes the Diaspora is an ambivalent and hybrid identity, and this discussion limits itself to the discussion of ambivalence and hybridity, without delving into further details of identity as such.

Ambivalence did not simply emerge as a popular theory but it is a byproduct of postcolonial theory emerging after the decolonization of African and Asian nations.

Due to changing and proliferating nature of postcolonial literatures, many critical approaches like subaltern studies, hybridity, mimicry, ambivalence and many others emerged. All these are later propounded as theories. Although these have close relation with each other they differ in some of their trends and approaches.

Ambivalence is the situation of the person, group or community in which they are caught in dilemma or dual nature. One encounters confusion, dilemma from which one remains in trap where to head, what to decide, what to do, and what not to do. Ambivalent condition becomes the most debatable issues in transition. The term ambivalence has very much link with the human life and their cultures. Therefore, ambivalence encompasses widespread area of studies such as psychoanalysis, culture, colonial subject, mimicry, hybridity, and history.

Further, with respect to the situation, an individual is in great trap in-between the world. In addition, the forthcoming result of the third world or third space will be, no one knows but dreams of uncertainty and anxieties follow him/her. Thus, a critic such as Homi K. Bhabha intellectually purposes the "third space of enunciation" (Signs Taken for Wonders 37) with extreme hope that leads to the hybridization as cultural process. Moreover, hybridization as cultural process has become widely discussed phenomenon, has also become the cultural adaptation to each other that clearly exposes the ambivalent tendencies, attitudes, and behaviour.

Again referring to the ideas of Bhabha, postcolonial discourse theories adopt an ambivalent attitude. He writes, "Ambivalence describes the complex mix of attraction and repulsion, which characterizes the relation between colonized and colonizers. The relation is ambivalent because the colonized subject is never simply and completely opposed to the colonizer" (*LC,* 12). Bhabha reduces his whole ideas concerning the colonized and colonizer's relation. Among them, both kinds of attitude and behaviour co-exist. It is assumed that some colonized subjects are complicit and some resistant. Now, the ambivalence suggests that complicity and resistance exist in a fluctuating relation within a colonized subject. Moreover, there is either the exploitation or nurturing situation to the colonized subject that characterizes ambivalent attitude.

However, more importantly ambivalence is also regarded as unwelcome aspect of the colonial discourse for the colonizer because it violates the clear-cut authority of colonial domination, and leads to the situation of dilemma. Contrarily, it is the attitude of colonized subjects who strongly tend to resist or separate that colonizer's authority, hegemonic attitude on the one hand. They also reproduce assumptions, habits values patterns or tendencies of the colonizer that is the mimicry of the colonizer on the other hand. So, Bhabha extends the ideas-"instead it produces ambivalent subject whose mimicry is never very far from mockery. Ambivalence describes this fluctuating relationship between mimicry and mockery that is fundamentally unsettling to colonial dominance." (*LC*, 13)

In regard to this, what Bhabha in his colonial discourse theory says is that colonial relation is always ambivalent. It generates the seeds of its own destruction that means the downfall from the hegemonic position. For example, when colonizer regards any colonized or educated. To do so, they exercise their assumptions, beliefs, values, and practices towards the colonized subjects that stand as the controversial debates or issues. Then, it implies that colonial relationship is going to be disrupted, regardless of any resistance, rebellion on the parts of colonized. Ambivalence, thus, gives rise to a controversial or dual proposition in Bhabha's theory.

According to Robert Young, "The periphery, which regarded as the borderline, the marginal, the unclassifiable, the doubtful by the centre responds by constituting the centre as equivocal, indefinite, indeterminate ambivalence" (Young 167). Ambivalence decanters the hegemonic authority form its position of power. When we space the colonial context, there is the exchange. That is often influenced by contact to each culture and is very much related to hybridity. Ambivalence, therefore, is the possibility of the formation of the third space that is neither the separation, resistance, and dogma nor the integration, and complicity form the new direction. Rather the cultural adaptation and cultural process fill the gap between the spaces. But the teleological end of the formation of the options or new direction leads to ambivalent situation because ambivalence, in a nutshell, gives rise to dilemma, confusion, and dualistic proportion with respect to the colonial discourse theory of Bhabha.

One of the most widely employed and most disputed terms in post-colonial theory; hybridity commonly refers to the creation of new Tran-cultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization. In diasporic situation there is more possibility of hybridization. Bhabha takes diaspora as the phenomenon produced with in contact zone that can be accepted on the cultural process. He further asserts diaspora as:

> […] the voluntary or forcible movement of peoples from their homelands into new regions is a central historical fact of colonization. Colonialism itself was a radically diasporic movement, involving the temporary or permanent dispersion and settlements of millions of Europeans over the entire world. (69)

As used in horticulture the term refers to the crossbreeding of two species by grafting or cross-pollination to form a third hybrid species. Hybridization takes many forms: linguistic cultural, political, racial, etc. Linguistic examples include Creole and pidgin languages, and this echo the foundational use of the term by the linguist and cultural theorist Mikhail Bakhtin, who used it to suggest the disruptive and transfiguring power of multivocal language situations, and by extension, of multivocal narratives. Bakhtin thus makes comment:

> It is a mixture of two social languages within the limits of a single utterance, an encounter, within the arena of an utterance, between two different linguistic consciousnesses, separated from one another by an epoch, by social differentiation, or by some other factor. (Critical Theories, 358)

It defines hybridity as a colonial experience. Hybridity is the result of the orientalist project of the west. The colonial settlers, once they arrived in an alien land, they felt the necessity of establishing new identity since they were displaced from their own point of origin. In a colonized society there emerged a binary relationship between the peoples of two cultures, races and languages and such relation produced a hybrid or cross- cultural society.

Jhumpa Lahiri and Bharati Mukherjee's novels project how diasporic migration affects South Asian women in particular ways. The most positive outcome is that these women adopt new trans-border identities but that these remain shaped by class, culture and gender. The milieu imagined in Jhumpa Lahiri's text, a middle-class, suburban environment, creates a solitary, transnational identity, lived between countries, where travel between the land of birth and the land of adoption remains accessible.

New Diasporic Narratives: Women's Writing and the Shaping of the Diasporic Imagination.

The term 'diaspora' signifies the political as well as individual consequences of cultural alienation, a strong sense of exile and a terrible reality of homelessness resulting in the loss of geo (physical) boundaries in an essay “Progress of India in the Matrix of Diaspora” Ali and Devi view as, “… diaspora’s desperate attempt to grapple with the truth and extent of the loss, there is always a constant effort to build the lost boundaries in the host space” (Ali and Devi, 55). By examining the debut novels by writers Jhumpa Lahiri and Bharati Mukherjee, to suggest that South Asian diasporic fiction by women may indeed be the space, which leads to a re-articulation of the nature of South Asian women’s diasporic identity. The central claim of this dissertation is whole-heartedly based on a reading of the novels,

I see difference between the conceptualization of an immigrant identity versus a transnational one. While both these concepts relate to contemporary realities of shifting national boundaries, multiple locations of home, multiracial and multicultural identities, *transnational* refers to the conjoining of the local with the global. Bill Ashcroft suggests that the concept of transnational is:

> diasporic aggregation of flows and convergences, both within and without state boundaries. In his conception, transnational subjects live in the interstices of one or more bounded territories, travelling easily between them, and through their experiences de- and re-territorializing dominant definitions of identity and space. In contrast, immigrant is seen as an identity paradigm characterized by “movement, displacement, relocation” (319).

The fundamental discourse of hybridity lies in the anthropological and biological discourses of conquest and colonization. The modern move to deploy hybridity as a disruptive democratic discourse of cultural citizenship is a distinctly anti- imperial and anti-authoritarian development. The antecedents for this discourse lie in an intricate negotiation between colonial abjectness and modernity's new historic subjects, who are both colonizer and colonized.

Hybridity at best can be understood by referring to Bhabha's ambivalence. For Bhabha, it is the 'cultural crossover' of various sources emanating from the encounter between colonizer and the colonized. Bhabha contends that all cultural statements and systems are constructed in a space that he calls the 'Third Space of enunciation' (1994:37). Cultural identity always emerges in this contradictory and ambivalent space, which for Bhabha makes the claim to a hierarchical purity of cultures untenable. For him, the recognition of this ambivalent space of cultural identity may help us to overcome the exoticism of cultural diversity in favor of the recognition of an empowering hybridity within which cultural difference may operate:

> It is significant that the productive capacities of this Third Space have a colonial or postcolonial provenance. For a willingness to descend into that alien territory… may open the way to conceptualizing an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity. (*LC* 38)

This dissertation examines the shared diasporic sensibilities but separate thematic concerns of two women diasporic writers – Jhumpa Lahiri and Bharati Mukherjee, Americans of Indian descent. Lahiri’s *The Namesake* and Mukherjee’s *The Tiger’s Daughter* are the sets among Indian middle-class immigrants in the United States. The dissertation analyzes their fiction with the view that literature produced out of diasporic experiences constructs imagined realities that can influence, or at least create a prism to examine, the lived realities.

In the mentioned novels, I explore ideas of borders and the borderless as the authors express them. I also argue that the simultaneous containment and porousness of borders, and the idea of borderlessness that the two novels explore, offer an arena within which it is possible to construct creative, cosmopolitan and plural identities for diasporic women. What I view here is that the traditional immigrant discourses of alienation and loss can be subverted by women, liberating them from established norms and allowing them the space to review the social fault lines, conflicts, differences, fears and challenges that make up their traditional roles, thereby interrogating the very roles themselves.

Mohanty refers to the "emancipatory potential" of border crossings, suggesting "a feminism without borders must envision change and social justice" (2). This idea is relevant when discussing emerging identity constructs which are manifestly without borders and thus without the lines of familial and cultural demarcation and division. At the same time, this dissertation argues that the nature of both the border crossing and its aftermath vary greatly with rooted experiences of class, and thus the nature of the new freedoms varies as well.

Referring to "asymmetrical worlds" of hybridity, Bhabha speaks of Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* as an example that "the truest eye may now belong to the migrant's double vision" (7-8). To Bhabha, Rushdie's immigrant is one who grapples with the choice between assimilation and isolation in the new location but also one who can dismantle these binaries and develop hybrid subjectivity:

> In his mythic being, he has become the 'borderline' figure…that is not only a 'transitional' reality, but also a 'translational' phenomenon. The question is …whether 'narrative invention' …becomes the figure of a larger possible [cultural] praxis. (320)

This idea of migration as translation promotes fictionalization as the reworking of a universe, partly created but also partly real. Consequently, fiction appears in its space-creating function, in the sense that it creates new conceptual worlds and this is the opportunity that writers like Mukherjee and Lahiri use to articulate a literary 'reworlding' for their protagonists. Bhabha explains 'newness creation' or 'reworlding' as follows:

> This liminality of migrant experience is no less a transitional phenomenon than a translational one; there is no resolution to it because the two conditions are ambivalently enjoined in the 'survival' of migrant life. Living in the interstices… makes graphic a moment of transition…in which the very *writing* of… transformation becomes…visible. (321)

Mukherjee and Lahiri explore the lives of two ordinary South Asian diasporic women, Tara (*The Tiger's Daughter*) and Ashima (*The Namesake*), whose experience of migration causes them to interrogate their traditional roles. Their migration is propelled by their unquestioning acceptance of the social norms that define their destinies; but their quiet acquiescence is turbulently challenged by the overwhelming experience of their compulsive migration. Perhaps the most significant aspect that distinguishes narratives of male migration from female migration is choice. In the novels under consideration, the women are not the primary agents of emigration – the diasporic experience is one that is forced on them by the circumstances of their choiceless marriages – but they emerge, through this experience, as evocative symbols of a new and aspirational, more justly ordered society.

Chandra Talpade Mohanty argues that "being a woman has political consequences in the world we live in; that there can be unjust and unfair effects on women depending on our…marginality and/or privilege" (3). In this context, Mukherjee and Lahiri propose that the absence of the boundaries of home, lost through exile, permits the vision for transformation and hence the creation of modern, contextual, identities. In 'Representations of the Intellectual', Edward Said argues that a condition of marginality, stemming from being an expatriate or exile, "frees you from having always to proceed with caution, afraid to overturn the applecart, anxious about upsetting fellow members of the same corporation" (et. al Ashcroft 380).

Jhumpa Lahiri and Bharati Mukherjee explore narratives of women who are freed through the experience of immigration from familiar but circumscribed constructs of home and identity. Estranged from the known comfort of traditional boundaries and constantly yearning for their lost home, Lahiri's and Mukherjee's heroines tenaciously cling to the idea of creating a home such as they have known, but the omnipresence of foreignness and the necessity of grappling with its influence renders this act a creative reconstruction, liberating it from circumscribed limits. Both of the writers use the territory of the literary text as an arena for cultural production, to challenge notions of spatially rooted, homogeneous identities that conform and often constrict.

In referring to notions of 'home' Edward Said (2001:236) asks, "What must it be like to be completely at home?" Said understands 'home' as a conceptual and not literal space, an image, a placeholder for nostalgia. On the contrary, for women diasporic, home is literal, for they are tasked with the material and symbolic work of creating a new home in the new land. Hence, in the context of diaspora, current feminist scholarship has been "interested in the configuration of home, identity and community; more specifically, in the power and appeal of 'home' as a concept and desire, its occurrence as a metaphor" (Mohanty 2003: 85).

To explore the problematic of 'home', both Lahiri and Mukherjee reconceptualize the relations between ‘home’ and ‘identity’. The notion of home, while presented differently by the two authors, nevertheless undergoes a similar transformation in the two novels – from a clearly recalled, profoundly missed, physical space, to a nuanced, ambiguous, metaphorical state of mind. Writing on immigrant discourses of home, Griffiths and Tiffin say:

> [Immigrant discourses] appear to be an ongoing negotiation between a pragmatic approach to daily life (in the West) and nostalgic and often painful memories of lost villages… The juxtaposition of the lost rural home and the urban context of exile magnifies memories…they hold onto the idealized memories of what was left behind as way of laying claim to the past and the future, in order to remember who they are. (2-4)

While this nostalgia for the lost ‘home’ is consistently reflected in the two novels under study, there is also in the texts a gradual move away from the purely personal experience of nostalgia to a more complex working out of the relationship between home, identity and community. These factors provide specificity for the narratives, moving them forward to:

> The tension between two specific modalities: being home and not being home. ‘Being home refers to the place…within familiar, safe, protected boundaries; ‘not being home’ is a matter of realizing that home was an illusion of coherence…based on the exclusion of specific histories […]even within oneself. (Mohanty 2003: 90)

In this context, viewing the changing identities of Ashima and Tara is not simply seeing them move from constraint to liberation but recognizing that “change has to do with the transgression of boundaries…so carefully, so tenaciously, so invisibly drawn around… identity.” (Mohanty 2003: 97).

For Lahiri’s and Mukherjee’s heroines, the blueprints of their past remain with them always and so their histories are in constant flux. There is no linear progression in their recognition of their own identities or self; instead there is a slow and continuous expansion of what Mohanty calls the “constricted eye” (2003: 90). The two protagonists revisit and configure, continuously, their relationships with husbands, lover, children, workmates and friends, in contexts that are foreign and for which they have no precedents to guide them.

This constantly underlines the fundamentally relational nature of their identities and the plural reference points, which are in direct contrast to the assumption of the singular, fixed sense of self that they had grown up with. For Lahiri and Mukherjee, who can both lay claim to transnational, multicultural identities, the question of how to define ‘home’ for their women immigrants could be examined as a political one. The idea of ‘home’ encompasses notions ranging from fundamental concepts of enduring and determined traits to the post-modern assumption that ‘home’ is a construction, a series of self-narratives. As diasporas, these two authors grew up in two worlds simultaneously, inheriting their parents’ sense of exile and “the feeling that there was no single place to which I fully belonged” (Lahiri 278).

Their construction of ‘home’ for their characters therefore, is influenced by their “struggle to come to terms with what it means to live here, to be brought up here, to belong and not belong here” (Lahiri 279).

To both, the idea of home is self-defining and crucial to their experience of exile. The notion of home, to them, is simultaneously a geographical space, a location of memory, an historical space and an emotional and sensory space. Yet ultimately it is not the place where they were born nor the place where they grew up – it is the place where they are, metaphorically and consciously, at the end of the novels; and in that analysis 'their concept of home is linked to their construct of self and is, therefore, political.

The diasporic identity is often about choosing between selves. In other words, identity, in the process of diaspora, is transformed and translated into a new system of relationships that gives Diasporas an alternative position from which they come to re-formulate their visions of the local and global.

The Namesake is the story of a young Bengali girl, Ashima, who is uprooted from her native and beloved Calcutta, India, to be married off to a young and promising Bengali academic, Ashoke, in Boston, America. In the novel Ashima is not a diasporic by choice as her husband Ashoke is. As the dutiful and obedient daughter of middle-class Bengali parents living in Calcutta in the early 1960s, she enters marriage, "obediently but without expectation" (7). She marries the groom that her parents choose for her, grateful only that he is neither too old nor incapacitated (7). The marriage is arranged by the two sets of parents and Ashoke and Ashima exert little personal choice in the decision and barely meet each other prior to the marriage: "It was only after the betrothal that she'd learned his name" (9).

The marriage itself is a typically Bengali, hectic, noisy affair, full of people and family. Following their wedding, the two virtual strangers, Ashima and Ashoke Ganguli, leave Calcutta for the cold climes of Cambridge, Massachusetts in America where Ashoke is studying for his PhD. Here Ashima confronts the unfamiliar cold, the unexpected smallness of her cramped, three-roomed house and comes to know her husband:

> Eight thousand miles away in Cambridge, she has come to know him.

> In the evenings she cooks for him, hoping to please… By now she has learned that her husband likes his food on the salty side… At night, lying beside her in bed, he listens to her describe the events of her day. (10)

The apartment consists of three rooms all in a row without a corridor… It is not at all what she had expected… The apartment is drafty during winter, and in summer, intolerably hot. The thick glass windowpanes are covered by dreary dark brown curtains. There are even roaches in the bathroom, emerging at night from the cracks in the tiles. But she has complained of none of this. (30)

Her expectations of married life are minimal, conditioned as she is to marry a stranger and travel thousands of miles away from her known and loved spheres of family and friends. Nevertheless, she is unprepared for the extreme feelings of loneliness and alienation that she feels in Boston as she begins to live her life with her husband. Her husband, on the hand, is living the life that he has chosen, in America. After a serious accident in his youth in Calcutta, he opts to move to America to pursue education, prospects and the middle-class life of an academic:

> He was…nearly killed at twenty-two. Again he tastes the dust on his tongue, sees the twisted train, the giant overturned iron wheels. None of this was supposed to happen. But no, he had survived it. He was born twice in India, and then a third time, in America. Three lives by thirty. (21)

Growing up in Calcutta, surrounded by crowds of family and loved ones, Ashima finds her singular foreign-ness in Boston deeply unsettling after her ubiquitous rootedness in Calcutta. The lack of familiarity with her surroundings in Boston, the absence of a large and involved family, the strangeness of language, the sparse presence of her own community, all contribute to Ashima's sense of helplessness and isolation, "Nothing feels normal to Ashima. For the past eighteen months, ever since she's arrived in Cambridge, nothing has felt normal at all" (6). And when some months after her arrival in Boston Ashima becomes pregnant, the experience of pregnancy, childbirth and the prospect of child-rearing in this land that feels so utterly foreign to her is almost more than she can bear:

> Until now Ashima has accepted that there is no one… But now, with a baby crying in her arms… it is all suddenly unbearable. 'I can't do this,' she tells Ashoke…'In a few days you'll get the hang of it,' he says, hoping to encourage her…'I won't,'she insists thickly...'What are you saying, Ashima?'…'I'm saying I don't want to raise Gogol [her son] alone in this country…I want to go back.' (33)

But they do not go back. Ashima gets busy with motherhood and running a home and learns to make a life in the foreign land:

> She begins to pride herself on doing it alone, in devising a routine. Like Ashoke, busy with his teaching and research and dissertation… she, too, now has something to occupy her fully… Before Gogol's birth, her days had followed no visible pattern… But now the days that had once dragged rush all too quickly toward evening. (35)

As Ashima adjusts to the alien-ness of her life in Cambridge, so she learns to maintain fierce contact with her hometown, Calcutta and her absent family through a quotidian traffic of letters, written and received. And she builds a community of Bengalis like herself, adrift and seeking the comfort of familiars:

As the baby grows, so too does their circle of Bengali acquaintances…. Every weekend, it seems, there is a new home to go to, a new couple or young family to meet. They all come from Calcutta, and for this reason alone they are friends….The families drop by one another's homes on Sunday afternoons. (38)

Gogol, Ashima and Ashoke make plans and save up for Ashima's first trip back home to Calcutta. She shops and saves and buys presents for her family; loses her shopping bag on the subway and finds it again, untouched and pristine: "Somehow, this small miracle causes Ashima to feel connected to Cambridge in a way she has not previously thought possible" (43). But the trip is a grief-stricken one as she hears of her father's death before her departure and her first trip back becomes one of loss and mourning.

For the next few years, Ashima's life follows the trajectory of success that Ashoke charts for it:

> The Gangulis have moved to a university town outside of Boston. As far as they know, they are the only Bengali residents… Ashoke has been hired as an assistant professor of electrical engineering at the university… The job is everything Ashoke has ever dreamed of…. For Ashima, migrating to the suburbs feels more drastic, more distressing than the move from Calcutta to Cambridge had been. She wishes Ashoke had accepted the position at Northeastern so that they could have stayed in the city. (48-49)

But this too, she accepts, as she has everything else that her life has thrown at her and finally, Ashima and Ashoke are ready to purchase a home. In the evenings, after dinner, they set out in their car, Gogol in the back se at, to look for houses for sale… In the end they decide on a shingled two-storey colonial in a recently built development… This is the small patch of America to which they lay claim….The address is 67 Pemberton Road. (50-51)

This is the house where Ashima lives for the next 27 years, till Ashoke's death. It is in this house that her daughter Sonali, who is called Sonia, is born and in this house that her children grow up, go to school and leave home. It is in this house that she entertains her swelling community of Bengali friends with lavish parties, full of painstakingly cooked foods that recall the taste of home for her and her community of migrants. As her children grow up, she learns to accept their American tastes in food, clothes, friends and relationships, including their relationships with their parents:

> Having been deprived of the company of her own parents upon moving to America, her children's independence, their need to keep their distance from her, is something she will never understand. Still she had not argued with them. This, too, she is beginning to learn. (166)

Every few years she visits her hometown, Calcutta, with her children and Ashoke and one year she and her family spend eight months in India for Ashoke's sabbatical, which she and Ashoke love and her children hate.

As the years pass, Ashima becomes the centre of her community of Bengalis and her life in New England expands as she takes on a part-time job at the community library and builds alliances and friendships there. But through it all Ashima remains the tremulous immigrant. When Ashoke takes a job in Cleveland, she reluctantly learns to live on her own, "At forty-eight she has come to experience the solitude that her husband and son and daughter already know, and which they claim not to mind" (161).

It is when Ashoke suddenly dies in Cleveland that she realizes the outlines of her own identity. Surrounded by her community of friends and flanked by her children, she decides to stay in this adopted land, where she has made a home for her husband: For the first time in her life, Ashima has no desire to escape to Calcutta, not now. She refuses to be so far from the place where her husband made his life, the country in which he died. (183)

At the end of the novel, Lahiri leaves us with Ashima's decision to sell the house that she has lived in for most of her married life and become a transnational, living partly in India and partly in America with her children and friends:

> Ashima has decided to spend six months of her life in India, six months in the States… In Calcutta, Ashima will live with her younger brother, Rana, and his wife…in a spacious flat in Salt Lake. In spring and summer, she will return to the Northeast, dividing her time among her son, her daughter, and her close Bengali friends. True to the meaning of her name, she will be without borders, without a home of her own, a resident everywhere and nowhere. (276)

Ashima, the immigrant, by circumstance transforms into the transnational by choice, as she decides to carve her own life and identity, lived between countries and beyond borders. The interplay of class, community and identity in *The Namesake* is so flexibly intertwined.

In this dissertation, I have examined the shared diasporic sensibilities but separate thematic concerns of two women diasporic writers – Jhumpa Lahiri and Bharati Mukherjee, Americans of Indian descent. Lahiri's *The Namesake* and Mukherjee's *The Tiger's Daughter* express and expose the situations and circumstances of the middle class immigrants who lead the life in multitude of ways in transnational social set ups.

I argue that both the writers have debunked the traditional immigrant discourses of alienation and loneliness. This idea becomes clear from the main characters in the hereby-mentioned novels, who by liberating them from established norms and allowing them to review the social fault lines, conflicts, differences, fears and challenges, tend to live their life in its utmost dynamism.

Chapter III

Diaspora and Transnationalism as social Dynamism

Trans-bordered relations of individuals, groups, firms and to mobilizations beyond state boundaries share a common aspire to live. Individuals, groups, institutions and states interact with each other in a new global space where cultural and political characteristic of national societies are combined with emerging multilevel and multinational activities. Transnationalism is a part of the process of capitalist globalization. The concept of transnationalism refers to multiple links and interactions linking people and institutions across the borders of nation-states.

Some have argued that diasporas, such is a historical precursor to modern transnationalism. However, unlike some people with transnationalist lives, most diasporas have not been voluntary. The field of diaspora politics does consider modern diasporas as having the potential to be transnational political actors. While the term transnationalism emphasizes the ways in which nations are no longer able to contain or control the disputes and negotiations through which social groups annex a global dimension to their meaningful practices, the notion of diaspora brings to the fore the social dynamism.

When immigrants engage in transnational activities, they create "social fields" that link their original country with their new country or countries of residence. Transnationalism in this sense is a process by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement. These social fields are the product of a series of interconnected and overlapping economic, political, and socio-cultural activities.

Socio-cultural transnational activities cover a wide array of social and cultural transactions through which ideas and meanings are exchanged. Recent research has established the concept and importance of social remittances, which provide a distinct form of social capital between migrants living abroad and those who remain at home. These transfers of socio-cultural meanings and practices occur either during the increased number of visits that immigrants take back to their home countries or visits made by non-migrants to friends and families living in the receiving countries or through the dramatically increased forms of correspondence such as emails, online chat sessions, telephone calls, CDs/ VDOs, and traditional letters.

To say that immigrants build social fields that link those abroad with those back home is not to say that their lives are not firmly rooted in a particular place and time. Indeed, they are as much residents of their new community as anyone else. But the difference is that their daily lives also depend upon people, money, ideas, and other resources located in another setting. Essentially, therefore, transnational social fields comprise stable, durable, and dense sets of ties economic, political, and socio-cultural that reach beyond and across the borders of sovereign states.

Transnationalism or diaspora has significant implications for the way we conceptualize immigration. Traditionally, immigration has been seen as an autonomous process, driven by conditions such as poverty and overpopulation in the country of origin and unrelated to conditions (such as foreign policy and economic needs) in the receiving country. Even though overpopulation, economic stagnation, and poverty all continue to create pressures for migration, they alone are not enough to produce large international migration

Instead, they are rooted within the broader geopolitical and global dynamics. Significant evidence of geographic migration patterns suggests that receiving countries become home to immigrants from the receiving country’s zone of influence. Then, immigration is but a fundamental component of the process of capitalist expansion, market penetration, and globalization. There are systematic and structural relations between globalization and immigration.

The emergence of a global economy has contributed to the creation of potential emigrants abroad and to the formation of economic, cultural, and ideological links between industrialized and developing countries that later serve as bridges for the international migration. For example, the same set of circumstances and processes that have promoted the location of factories and offices abroad have contributes to the creation of large supply of low-wage jobs for which immigrant workers constitute a desirable labor supply.

Unlike the manufacturing sector, which traditionally supplied middle-income jobs and competitive benefits, the majority of service jobs are either extremely well paid or extremely poorly paid, with relatively few jobs in the middle-income range. Many of the jobs lack key benefits such as health insurance. Sales representatives, restaurant wait staff, administrative assistants, and custodial workers are among the growth occupations.

In the above-mentioned scenario, we can say that transnational social set up is such a location in which is very flexible and potential in scope. In the era of transnationalism, migration is not all the time compulsive but volunteer for the reason that migrating subjects tend to strive and aspire for better and bright career. Even if they are far from their culture of origin suffering from sense of alienation adopting hybrid identity, they also tend to enjoy multitude of identity in a more dynamic and distinct way.

Mukherjee and Lahiri explore the lives of two ordinary South Asian diasporic women, Tara (*The Tiger's Daughter*) and Ashima (*The Namesake*), whose experience of migration causes them to interrogate their traditional roles. Their migration is propelled by their unquestioning acceptance of the social norms that define their destinies; but their quiet acquiescence is turbulently challenged by the overwhelming experience of their compulsive migration. Perhaps the most significant aspect that distinguishes narratives of male migration from female migration is choice. In the novels under consideration, the women are not the primary agents of emigration – the diasporic experience is one that is forced on them by the circumstances of their choiceless marriages – but they emerge, through this experience, as evocative symbols of a new and aspirational, more justly ordered society.

Chapter IV

Conclusion

In this dissertation, I have examined the shared diasporic sensibilities but separate thematic concerns of two women diasporic writers – Jhumpa Lahiri and Bharati Mukherjee, Americans of Indian descent. Lahiri's *The Namesake* and Mukherjee's *The Tiger's Daughter* express and expose the situations and circumstances of the middle class immigrants who lead the life in multitude of ways in transnational social set ups. I have argued in this dissertation that both the writers have debunked the traditional immigrant discourses of alienation and loneliness. This idea becomes clear from the main characters in the hereby-mentioned novels, while struggling to recourse their fixed and stable identity, embrace emergent multiple identity made possible by the context of transnational migration/immigration. By liberating themselves from established norms and allowing them to review the social fault lines, conflicts, differences, fears and challenges, tend to live their life in its utmost dynamism.

Although Diasporas involve the movement of a particular people to several places at once or over time, a migration is usually of a more limited scope and duration, and essentially is the movement of individuals from one point to another within a polity or outside of it. The boundaries between the two processes are, to be sure, very elastic because diasporas are the products of several migratory streams unlike due to the compulsive factors viewed traditionally.

Regardless of their location, members of a diaspora share an emotional attachment to their ancestral land, are aware of their dispersal and, if conditions warrant, of their oppression and alienation in the countries in which they reside. Members of diasporic communities also tend to possess a sense of "racial," ethnic, or religious identity that transcends geographic boundaries, to share broad cultural similarities, and sometimes to articulate a desire to return to their original homeland. No diasporic community manifests all of these characteristics or shares with the same intensity an identity with its scattered ancestral kin. In many respects, Diasporas are not actual but imaginary and symbolic communities and political constructs; it is we who often call them into being. They always in the process of assimilating themselves amidst uncertainties

Mukherjee and Lahiri show their women characters, more particularly Tara and Ashima not only as the victims of immigration, but also as the characters having agencies to tackle the problems and consequences that come across in the alien locations. These women characters fight for their rights as a woman and then as an individual. No matter women characters undergo with great trials and troubles in the process of searching their proper identity, they finally assimilate themselves in transnational sites which offer them boundless opportunities to make their lives worthy to live.

In conclusion, the spilt characters in transnational social set up narrated in the texts of Mukherjee and Lahiri represent examples of interculturality personified. Once such situations are taken into account, self - fashioning becomes relatively easy thereby making hybrid existence less painful. Defining selves in dislocated existence is an ever-changing process. The process leads from one's initial definition of self to an adopted definition, one that ultimately gives way to a definition of hybridity. Only by going through the pain of living in hybridity can one hope to reconcile with one's dislocation and arrive at a new definition of self. Individual self-fashioning brings about this condition of increasing hybridity cleft character of the Indian diaspora and the relationships between the protagonists of the texts discussed are part of this phenomenon. The textual exploration of such human relationships adds to the canon of the study of the modern Indian diaspora, which is full of dynamism and potentiality.

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