

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Dislocation can be of different kinds, physical, psychological, emotional and political. It can be estrangement, self-alienation and social ostracism, an exclusion from familiar environments of family, kinship and culture. It can come through political upheaval, mass migration or natural disaster. It can be individual or collective. But no dislocation is ever absolute, terminal or enduring in itself. In it there is always a kind of holding back, a sort of nostalgia, and the perception of difference. There is always a looking back at the transgressive edge of history. This may be through memory, recollection, history, images and fantasy. Dislocations are unavoidable, perhaps essential for the voyage towards maturity, self-knowledge and recognition at the historical and discursive margins of the New World.

Similarly, multiculturalism works at many levels. It is not merely a projection of multiple ethnicities; it finds itself constantly in opposition to the dual concepts of modernity and uniformity. The drift and tendency towards globalization aims at reinforcing sameness for cultural and existential survival, where dislocation is necessary and difference is a truth. The major movement for social change has, over the years, moved from the demand for sameness towards recognition of difference, the transition from nature to culture, thus seeking to redefine the meaning of the contested location of diaspora.

The narratives of dislocation have given rise to new aesthetics and new rationalities, not merely in terms of post-colonial aesthetics but also by using fluidity and ethnic acculturation as a new concept. It recognizes translational alternative version as equally relevant, and a new narrative of cultural fragility is born out of this conflict. Bharati Mukherjee writes on the Indian Diasporas. Like diasporic writers she is inclined to inhabit the same liminal or threshold region of intercutting subjectivities that define the experience of the migrant and the sense of dislocation.

Her novels trace the split in the diasporic subjects, expressed in the sense of being here and elsewhere, of being at home and abroad. In her novels, Mukherjee has been able to bring to her first hand experience of exile, expatriation and immigration. In her works she recognizes the same translational alternative reality as an insurgent orientation in the contravening zone. Her substantial narrative skills and lively imagination produce

memorable and colourful tales of the excitement as well as the trauma of adjustment to a new world. She gives shape to the transparently translating moments born out of the difference.

The present study aims at tracing how the home country is affected by the diasporic space and if it, in anyway, assists the process of decentering when the spontaneous diasporic translation is in the process. There is need to realize the significance of the cultural encounter which takes place in diasporic condition, the bi-cultural pulls and the creation of a new culture which finally emerges out of the psychic uncertainty of the diasporic split and dislocations. It is equally important to understand the resultant paranoid structure and the dynamics of receptions, as both the ends are rooted in cultural contexts.

Over the years, diasporic writing has developed its own theoretical position in the changing cultural context, privileging a double image on home and location. But these theoretical explorations work in different ways and throw up questions, which affect both personal and social concerns and have political and cultural implications. The expatriate is a shifting and challenged metaphor of culture. In the new transnational global context such uprooted and exilic subjects need to locate themselves afresh in relation to the new location and center. In that connection, the geographical dislocation raises several questions with respect to the poetics of exile, the nature of expatriate writing, the writer's relationship to his culture and his work, the specifics which govern identity construction and the concept of decentering. It is at one level, a move out of the expatriate's dilemma of avoiding schizophrenic split, of being pulled in two contradictory directions, dismantling of social and personal self and dislocations at multiple points.

At first glance, the list of Mukherjee's works look like ethnic and cultural offerings of an energetic and prolific writer. But, on closer scrutiny, it becomes apparent that all of Mukherjee's creativity is focused with razor sharp precision on a diasporic imagination and multiple dislocations in expatriate sensibility. Increasingly, Mukherjee has preoccupied herself in showing the impact of America on recent Asian immigrants, but she has also made an effort, especially in her major fictional works to trace the way the white Americans have been registering these new Americans in their consciousness. The studies undertaken in the thesis are especially designed to find out the social dislocations in expatriation, her treatment of Diaspora and the contributory aspects causing binaries and centricity, displacement and ruptures.

In the process of the research study the most powerful inspiration has been my teacher and research supervisor, Prof.G.N.Roy, University of North Bengal. My parents have been the constant source of divine motivation behind all my activities, and I must admit the enthusiastic companionship of my sisters Jaya, Jayatri-my brother in-laws Subrata and Surajit- wife Samiparna and my daughter, Sandepta in the long drawn exercise of the research. I'm thankful to the American Library, Kolkata and the library of the Women's Studies, N.B.U. I must express my gratitude to Dr.Bithika Dutta, Co-ordinator of the Women's Studies for her help in that regard. I'm indebted to Dr. Subrata Panchanan, Principal, Alipurduar College, my teachers Dr. Dilip Kr. Roy and Dr. Debkumar Mukherjee for their inspiration and blessings. I'm grateful to Dr. Saumitra Mohan, DM, Darjeeling for his continuous encouragement and motivations during the difficult hours. I am also obliged to all my University teachers, especially to Dr C.A. Laha, Dr. S. Samanta, Dr. A. Sengupta and Dr. R. Ghosh for their brisk and invigorating support in course of the present study. I'm thankful to all my teachers and colleagues and also my dear friend Joydeep for his inspirational inputs from time to time. I must also admit my indebtedness to Manik and Atreyee for technical support they provided whenever needed. Above all I must bow my head to the Almighty, for nothing can happen in this world without His will.