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## 'Transport Me ... into the Hearts of Men': Bharati Mukherjee's Darkness

### Abstract

In the miniature painting described by Bharati Mukherjee in 'Courtly Vision', the final story of *Darkness*, we see an emblem of Mukherjee's own art,<sup>1</sup> an example of intertextuality in which the description of a painting becomes a text that provides the entire book 'with a means of interpreting it and of justifying its formal and semantic peculiarities'? Mukherjee's anonymous painter depicts 'Count Barthel my, an adventurer from beyond frozen oceans', admiring 'a likeness of the Begum, painted on a grain of rice by Basawan, the prized court artist' (p. 195); at the end of the story, the Emperor Akbar - third and most notable of the six great Mughal emperors- cries out: 'You, Basawan, who can paint my Begum on a grain of rice, see what you can do with the infinite vistas the size of my opened hand ... Transport me ... into the hearts of men' (p. 199). As he leads his army out of the capital, Akbar wishes not merely to travel to meet the enemy but to engage in a more thrilling kind of travel, a voyage of the mind and heart. He wants to be transported.

CAROL SICHERMAN

## 'Transport Me ... into the Hearts of Men': Bharati Mukherjee's *Darkness*

In the miniature painting described by Bharati Mukherjee in 'Courtly Vision', the final story of *Darkness*, we see an emblem of Mukherjee's own art,<sup>1</sup> an example of intertextuality in which the description of a painting becomes a text that provides the entire book 'with a means of interpreting it and of justifying its formal and semantic peculiarities'.<sup>2</sup> Mukherjee's anonymous painter depicts 'Count Barthelmy, an adventurer from beyond frozen oceans', admiring 'a likeness of the Begum, painted on a grain of rice by Basawan, the prized court artist' (p. 195); at the end of the story, the Emperor Akbar – third and most notable of the six great Mughal emperors – cries out: 'You, Basawan, who can paint my Begum on a grain of rice, see what you can do with the infinite vistas the size of my opened hand... Transport me ... into the hearts of men' (p. 199). As he leads his army out of the capital, Akbar wishes not merely to travel to meet the enemy but to engage in a more thrilling kind of travel, a voyage of the mind and heart. He wants to be transported.

In this kind of 'transport', a spiritual and intellectual ecstasy, individual identity is expanded, translated, so that multiple identities coexist in a single consciousness. Mukherjee is herself a 'translated' person, in the root sense (borne across) noted by Salman Rushdie,<sup>3</sup> and Mukherjee's fiction translates Indian and Western cultures into one another. As Rushdie says, while 'it is normally supposed that something always gets lost in translation ... something can also be gained',<sup>4</sup> rootlessness 'can lead to a kind of multiple rooting'.<sup>5</sup> This may be a peculiarly Indian concept: for Mukherjee and Rushdie, the 'translated' person experiences loss *and* gain, not one or the other, as Shiva is male *and* female, not one or the other.<sup>6</sup> Such a person does not have a single identity but, instead, 'a set of fluid identities' (*Darkness*, 'Introduction', p. 3).

In her introduction to *Darkness*, Mukherjee charts her path from a V.S. Naipaul-style 'expatriate' living in Canada and describing her characters' pain with 'mordant and self-protective irony' to its opposite – an assimilated, Henry Roth-style 'American writer' of tolerant insight into an extraordinary range of characters (pp. 2-3).<sup>7</sup> Like her character Dr. Manny Patel, a psychiatrist at Creedmore State Mental Hospital, she 'is not one for nostalgia ... not an expatriate but a patriot' (p. 98) who has accepted the

task of defining the term 'American', welcoming assimilation as something 'genetic' rather than 'hyphenated' or 'hybrid',<sup>8</sup> abandoning her earlier irony because it was 'the privilege of observers and of affluent societies'.<sup>9</sup> 'Chameleon-skinned,' Mukherjee now enters 'lives ... that are manifestly not my own ... across the country, and up and down the social ladder'.<sup>10</sup>

The final stage of Mukherjee's transformation from 'expatriate' to 'immigrant' – an immigrant whose 'roots are here' in the United States<sup>11</sup> – took place while she was writing her section of *Days and Nights in Calcutta*, a nonfiction account published in 1977 of a year spent in Calcutta with her Canadian-American husband, Clark Blaise, and their two sons. Although in May 1979 she still referred to herself as an 'expatriate writer',<sup>12</sup> she had shifted to the term 'immigrant writer' by 1981, when she said she was 'still hoping to write the great Canadian novel'.<sup>13</sup> That hope was destroyed by her increasingly bitter perception of Canadian racism, described in her controversial article 'An Invisible Woman',<sup>14</sup> and her liberating immigration to the United States. That immigration resulted in *Darkness*, in which for the first time she achieved her ambition to 'break out of mimicry to re-invention'.<sup>15</sup>

The range of theme and setting achieved in *Darkness* is the ground of Mukherjee's subsequent work to date. *Middleman and Other Stories*,<sup>16</sup> the book that followed *Darkness*, implied her willingness to be a 'middleman' for the stories of Americans and permanent residents of many ethnicities besides the Indo-Americans who dominate *Darkness*. The stories in *Middleman* are located throughout the United States and in Mexico, Canada, and Sri Lanka; they depict Americans of varied ethnic backgrounds as well as Hungarians, Filipinos, Vietnamese, Trinidadians, Afghans, and Asian Indians of many stripes. Continuing this expansiveness, her latest novel, *Jasmine*, takes place in Punjab, Florida, New York City, and rural Iowa.

I wish here to define the connections between Mukherjee's art and her themes in *Darkness*, above all the titular theme. I begin by demonstrating how 'Courtly Vision' serves as summation though not summary of the book, for the themes of 'Courtly Vision' – art, sex, the encounter between East and West, spirituality – echo those of the preceding eleven stories. In attempting such large themes in the frame of a miniature – 'Courtly Vision' occupies a mere five pages, *Darkness* itself only 199 – Mukherjee the American adopts and adapts the aesthetic of

the Moghul miniature painting with its crazy foreshortening of vanishing point, its insistence that everything happens simultaneously... In the miniature paintings of India there are a dozen separate foci, the most complicated of stories can be rendered on a grain of rice, the corners are as elaborated as the centers. There is a sense of the interpenetration of all things.<sup>17</sup>

'Total vision': that is what Mukherjee's Emperor Akbar demands of Basawan,<sup>18</sup> his leading painter and it is what Mukherjee demands of herself.

In 'Courtly Vision', Mukherjee describes a painting such as we've encountered in earlier stories – a painting such as Nafeesa in 'The Lady from Lucknow' hangs in rows in her house in Atlanta (p. 30), such as Leela's husband takes her to see at Sotheby's in New York (p. 129), such as the cynical Maharaja 'sell[s] off ... for ten thousand dollars' to Americans 'who understand our things better than we do ourselves' (p. 135), such as Dr. Manny Patel's American ex-wife, Camille, retains as part of the divorce settlement. Wayne, Camille's lover, holds her 'against dusty glass, behind which an emperor in Moghul battledress is leading his army out of the capital... Wayne has her head in his grasp. Her orange hair tufts out between his knuckles, and its orange mist covers the bygone emperor and his soldiers' (p. 154). The violent collocation of red-headed American and Mughal emperor – the painting may be the very one described in 'Courtly Vision' – is typical of Mukherjee's work, leaving the reader to tease meaning out of the mist.

Mukherjee's extraordinary verbal miniature in 'Courtly Vision' is not immediately recognizable as a story in the sense that the other pieces in *Darkness* are. The opening paragraphs are disorienting:

Jahanara Begum stands behind a marble grille in her palace at Fatehpur-Sikri.

Count Barthelmy, an adventurer from beyond frozen oceans, crouches in a lust-darkened arbor... The Count is posed full-front... (p. 195)

Gradually, one realizes that some, although not all, of the language is that of a subliterate genre, the auction-house catalogue, as the concluding words make plain:

"Emperor on Horseback Leaves Walled City"

Painting on Paper, 24 cms x 25.8 cms

Painter Unknown. No superscription

c. 1584 A.D.

Lot No. SLM 4027-66

Est. Price \$750 (p. 199)

As the dollar sign indicates, the painting is being auctioned in the United States; one remembers 'the Fraser Collection of Islamic miniatures at the York Avenue galleries' that Leela Lahiri in 'Hindus' visits at Sotheby's New York auction house (p. 129).<sup>19</sup>

'Emperor on Horseback Leaves Walled City' is divided into a number of distinct scenes. The title points to the figure of highest stature, the Emperor Akbar, who 'occupies the foreground of that agate-colored paper' (p. 198). In the story, however, we do not hear about his scene until more than halfway through. Mukherjee's opening paragraph focuses on another scene, singling out one of Akbar's numerous wives and naming her – Jahanara Begum<sup>20</sup> – just as many of these stories place in the center those who appear marginal in North American society. In contrast to

Mukherjee's stories of the marginal, however, in the painting we see major figures on the stage of Indian history as well as the slave girls, courtiers, and other anonymous attendants.

Anyone acquainted with Mughal painting would recognize the 'walled city' as Akbar's City of Victory, Fatehpur-Sikri, the splendid complex of buildings that the emperor ordered constructed in 1571 and then abandoned in 1585, a year after the date of Mukherjee's painting;<sup>21</sup> Mukherjee's visionary Akbar knows that soon 'my new capital will fail, will turn to dust and these marbled terraces be home to jackals and infidels' (p. 199), although Fatehpur-Sikri will remain preserved in paintings and in fact exists today for tourists. In including Basawan in his painting, Mukherjee's painter is paying tribute to the most phenomenally gifted of Akbar's stable of brilliant painters. Basawan and Mukherjee's unknown painter share the twin purposes of documenting historical events and 'transporting' the viewer into the 'hearts of men'.

Mukherjee's painting records a specific moment in history, when Portuguese Jesuit priests arrived in response to Akbar's warm invitation to visit and to bring 'the principal books of the Law and the Gospels'.<sup>22</sup> Their visit was documented by Akbar's artists.<sup>23</sup> But just as Akbar's painters reached far beyond merely documenting Fatehpur-Sikri, the verbal art of 'Courtly Vision' reaches far beyond the confines of a catalogue description; interwoven with the language of the catalogue is the language of the fiction writer – interpreting, describing, implying:

[The] simple subservience [of the Begum's slave girl] hints at malevolent dreams ... The Begum is a tall, rigid figure as she stands behind a marble grille...

Oh, beautiful and beguiling Begum, has your slave-girl apprised the Count of the consequences of a night of bliss? (p. 196)

Mukherjee is playing (seriously) with her reader, melding the genres of fiction, history, and the auction-house catalogue in order to clarify her subject. That subject is nothing less than the complexities of mind and feeling produced when a person from one highly developed culture travels to, and then enters into, another such culture.

Besides the lustful (and apparently fictitious) Count Barthelmy, two other (and historical) European travellers are depicted in Mukherjee's painting. 'Fathers [Rudolph] Aquaviva and [Francis] Henriques, ingenuous Portuguese priests' who 'have dogged the emperor through inclement scenery' (p. 197), now sit under the Begum's window. While Barthelmy is transported by lust, the supremely assured Jesuits have come in order to transport – that is, to proselytize the people whom they meet – but not to be transported themselves. Through the letters of the historical Aquaviva and Henriques rings their anticipation of Akbar's conversion in response to the Christian texts and paintings that they have brought. Although failing in its ultimate aim, the Jesuit mission left lasting aesthetic traces, for the 'wondrous paintings' (p. 197) that they brought introduced themes and

techniques of Western art that had an immediate influence on Indian painting.<sup>24</sup> 'Courtly Vision' invites us to look back on *Darkness* to observe the multiple perspectives of Western and Indian art, to see how Mukherjee herself has 'accommodate[d] a decidedly Hindu imagination with an Americanized sense of the craft of fiction'.<sup>25</sup> In 'Courtly Vision' she implies that what appears to be a book of short stories about mostly unconnected characters<sup>26</sup> has a unity analogous to that of a Mughal miniature incorporating several related but separate scenes, a unity discoverable by the discerning viewer.

The structure of 'Emperor on Horseback Leaves Walled City' – and therefore of 'Courtly Vision' and, ultimately, of *Darkness* – is distinctly nonWestern. As Mukherjee leads us through the painting's multiple scenes, it may seem (to a Western eye) an exquisitely painted hodgepodge, intolerably overpopulated with innumerable anonymous bit players and six named major characters (Akbar, Basawan, Fathers Aquaviva and Henriques, Count Barthelmy, and Jahanara Begum). Yet the painting is unified by style and by themes that it shares with many of the stories in *Darkness*, above all the themes of art and of darkness.

'Courtly Vision' is about a work of art that itself includes two scenes with a specifically artistic content, the scene in which the Jesuits display European paintings 'on the arabesques of the rug' (p. 197) and the scene depicting Akbar's farewell to Basawan; the latter, which concludes the story, occupies the largest space. Whereas Mukherjee's imagined painting offers 'life's playful fecundity' (p. 197), the European paintings depicted within it – monotonously repeating the theme of 'Mother and Child, Child and Mother' (p. 197) – set 'precarious boundaries' on that fecundity: here Mukherjee implies a sort of allegory of the relationship she establishes between the 'precarious boundaries' set by Western rules and the non-Western rules that paradoxically enclose the 'boundaries' as her imagined painting includes the European art. To the emperor, raised in Islam, the European paintings seem 'simple and innocuous, not complicated and infuriating like the Hindu icons hidden in the hills' (p. 197) and implicit in the imagined painting. When Akbar calls a last command to Basawan, his 'co-wanderer' – 'Give me total vision' – Mukherjee implies that Basawan's vision will incorporate Western perspectives; even more important, she implies that Basawan will experience that state of being 'united with the universe' that she describes as her own feeling when she wrote these stories (p. 1). This experience, of course, is what used to be called 'inspiration,' and it is related to the state of 'grace' to which several of her characters aspire (pp. 10-11, 60, 69, 146) and which may be symbolized by the light toward which Akbar rides.

Going toward but not yet engaged in battle, Mukherjee's emperor rides out into the 'grayish gold' of 'late afternoon' into light that 'spills' over the entire painting, 'charg[ing the scene] with unusual excitement' and 'discover[ing] the immense intimacy of darkness' (p. 198). Akbar's Indian

darkness beckons, intense and sexual, in contrast to the North American darkness that is a setting for other characters' painful illuminations of their fractured conditions.

When, in the story entitled 'Tamurlane', Mounties arrive hunting illegal immigrants in Toronto, the employees of the Mumtaz Bar B-Q swing into their defensive routine: 'Mohun and I headed for the basement and since I was taller, I unscrewed the light bulb on my way down' (p. 123). Into the tense darkness of the basement one of the Mounties calls, 'Light?' – and illuminates the basement himself with 'a torch, brighter than a searchlight' (p. 123). These immigrants bring darkness with them but not their own light. In North America the energizing interchange of light and dark depicted in 'Courtly Vision' vanishes; Indian darkness proves untranslatable, and North American darkness is threatening. Perhaps, having crossed the taboo *Dark Water*, the immigrants have forfeited cultural protection. When Leela Lahiri in 'Hindus' speaks of 'the gathering of the darkneses we shared' (p. 135), she refers to the literal dark skins of the immigrants but even more to the shadows they inhabit within American society; she refers as well to the ghettos Mukherjee shuns, to self-protective gatherings of the dark-skinned such as the party hosted by a maharaja in a 'third floor sublet in Gramercy Park South [in New York] ... where the smell of stale turmeric hung like yellow fog from the ceiling' (pp. 132-33).

For the most part, the darkneses of *Darkness* are metaphoric; they affect the atmosphere of the book subtly, much as the turmeric enters Leela's nose or the 'winter light ... discovers' the darkness in the Mughal miniature (p. 198). In a California darkness inhabited by ancient Hindu deities, 'even a nine-year-old American boy with good grades can confess his fear of gods and unholy spirits' and beg his Punjabi-speaking grandfather for a 'new ghost story' to allay his fear of the old (p. 183). In 'A Father', Mr. Bhowmick wonders how he could 'tell these bright mocking women', his sceptical wife and daughter,

that in the 5:43 a.m. darkness, he sensed invisible presences: gods and snakes frolicked in the master bedroom, little white sparks of cosmic static crackled up the legs of his pajamas. Something was out there in the dark, something that could invent accidents and coincidences to remind mortals that even in Detroit they were no more than mortal. (p. 61)

How, indeed, can he speak of quintessential Hindu darkness when his wife shouts in idiomatic American English, 'Hurry it up with the prayers' (p. 60), and his engineer daughter, Babli – graduate of Georgia Tech – tells him: 'Face it, Dad.... You have an affect deficit' (p. 61)? In the pre-dawn darkness he prays to the image of Kali, 'the patron goddess of his family' in Ranchi (p. 60). Adorned with her customary 'garland strung together from sinners' chopped off heads,' Mr. Bhowmick's Kali resides in a 'make-shift wooden shrine' that he himself has made for her in 'Woodworking I and II at a nearby recreation center' (p. 60). Detroit seems an appropriate



location for a goddess 'associat[ed] with the periphery of Hindu society' and 'worshipped ... in uncivilized or wild places'.<sup>27</sup> As he chants Sanskrit prayers, however, Mr. Bhowmick mistakes her expression, imagining her to look 'warm, cozy, pleased' (p. 60); in Detroit he forgets that Kali is 'glistening black' (p. 60) because she represents destruction and disorder on a cosmic scale.

At the end of the story, Babli Bhowmick *becomes* Kali – 'her tongue, thick and red, squirming behind her row of perfect teeth' – a monstrous echo of Mr. Bhowmick's image of Kali with her 'scarlet and saucy ... tongue ... stuck out at the world' in a gesture of defiance familiar to Westerners (pp. 73, 62).<sup>28</sup> Babli and Kali have 'the same terrifying personality, ... the same independence'.<sup>29</sup> Incarnate in an American young woman who considers 'this Hindu myth stuff ... like a series of super graphics' (p. 65), such darkness attains a thoroughly Hindu power.<sup>30</sup> 'Both terrible and sweet ... alternately destroying and creating',<sup>31</sup> Kali is 'a destroyer of evil so that the world can be renewed'.<sup>32</sup> Like Kali 'without husband, consort or lover',<sup>33</sup> Babli is nonetheless pregnant – by artificial insemination, to her father's Hindu horror. If her pregnancy is a kind of renewal, it is one beyond the ken of Mr. Bhowmick, who in the final paragraph brings a rolling pin 'down hard on the dome of Babli's stomach' (p. 73).<sup>34</sup> As the kind of mother to whom Kali's devotees prayed – 'Mother ... thou art the spoiler of my fortunes'<sup>35</sup> – Babli is indeed like Kali-Mata, to whom her father prays (p. 71), for she is 'capable of shaking one's comfortable and naive assumptions about the world' and inviting 'a wider, more mature, more realistic reflection on where one has come from and where one is going'.<sup>36</sup>

When Mukherjee reveals the defiantly American engineer Babli translated into Kali, she illustrates how Indian immigrants and their children may be swept up into the darkness of their ancestral past. Those Indians who, like Leela in 'Hindus', marry white Americans may find themselves separated from their dark community. Leela has to be dragged by her husband to Sotheby's to view an exhibit including paintings such as that described in 'Courtly Vision': 'It bothered Derek that I knew so little about my heritage. Islam is nothing more than a marauder's faith to me, but' – and the 'but' is revelatory – 'the Mogul emperors stayed a long time in the green delta of the Ganges, flattening and reflattening a fort in the village where I was born, and forcing my priestly ancestors to prove themselves brave' (p. 129). Similarly forced to acknowledge her complicated heritage, this would-be American without an accent is in fact keenly aware of her Brahmin ancestry, and when she speaks 'Hindu' (Hindi) to a fellow Indian, she admits her inescapable inheritance. Even those of Mukherjee's characters who have 'wanted all along to exchange [their] native world for an alien one' (p. 164), who seek to be 'pukka Americans' (p. 170), are betrayed by their own words; for them, English remains a 'step-mother tongue'.<sup>37</sup>

In 'Nostalgia', Dr. Manny Patel (M.D., Johns Hopkins) attempts to be a 'pukka American'. But when Mr. Horowitz, a schizophrenic patient, attacks Dr. Patel physically and abuses him verbally as 'Paki scum' – a phrase 'about as appealing as it is for an Israeli to be called a Syrian'<sup>38</sup> – Dr. Patel 'reach[es] automatically for the miracle cures of his Delhi youth', in this case masala tea (p. 105). 'Shuttl[ing] between the old world and the new' (p. 105), in the aftermath of Horowitz's attack Dr. Patel instinctively takes himself 'home'; home, however, is Little India in Manhattan, not his native land or his 'three-hundred-thousand-dollar house with an atrium in the dining hall' (p. 98). In his Horowitz-weakened state, Dr. Patel easily transforms a venal shopgirl named Padma into the lotus goddess Padma, mentally replacing her "'Police" T-shirt and navy cords' with 'a sari of peacock blue silk' and 'bracelets of 24-carat gold' (p. 101). No lotus goddess, Padma of Little India turns out to be part of a blackmail scheme. Having discovered the treachery of nostalgia, Dr. Patel writes 'WHORE' in his own feces on the hotel mirror and resolves to 'make up for this night with a second honeymoon' with his American wife (p. 113). But as we learn from a second story in which he figures, 'Saints,' his marriage is already wrecked, and soon his 'big house in New Jersey' will be sold (p. 146).

In 'Saints', Dr. Patel's fifteen-year-old son, Shawn, doesn't feel himself to be a 'real American' (p. 151) despite his American mother. As he scans the telephone directory looking for some version of his Hindu father, he comes upon 'Batliwalla, Jamshed S., M.D.'; too ignorant to recognize the name as Parsi (Batliwalla is himself a minority in the Indian context), he walks at midnight to Batliwalla's house. Seeking to 'become somebody else's son' (p. 156), Shawn identifies with Batliwalla's 'dwarfkid' son, whom he can see studying energetically as if 'he's the conqueror of [the] alien' (p. 157), a kind of miniature Akbar translated to the upstate New York town to which Shawn and his mother have moved. As the story reaches its climax in the literal dark, we observe Shawn identifying at once with Ramakrishna – the 'Hindu saint who had visions' (153) about whom he's read in a book sent by his father – and with the emperor in the miniature painting against which Wayne thrusts his mother. Told in the first person, the story poignantly describes Shawn's fantasy that, like Ramakrishna, he is 'in a trance in the middle of a November night' (p. 158). But Shawn's trance, unlike Ramakrishna's, fails to relieve him of his daily pain.

Ramakrishna is never named in 'Saints', because for Shawn the name means nothing. Readers acquainted with the renowned ascetic and visionary, however, will identify the Calcutta saint of the gift book as Ramakrishna (1836-86), famous for 'see[ing] the Divine Mother [Kali] in all things' (p. 153). It is not surprising that a follower of Kali in his trances 'sometimes ... kicks his disciples', who beg him: 'Kick, kick' (p. 153); he tells his 'young boy followers' that he loves them as he would love 'a sweetheart' (p. 155).<sup>39</sup> When he breaks an arm while entranced by the

Ganges, he finds 'no separation' between 'love and pain' (p. 155).<sup>40</sup> Mukherjee chooses those aspects of Ramakrishna that would appeal to Shawn, who resembles the saint because he suffers and 'can't hurt' (p. 158), aspires to transcendence, dresses like a woman,<sup>41</sup> and has a boy follower (Tran, a Vietnamese refugee). The book Dr. Patel has sent is one that once gave him, so his inscription reads, 'happiness ... when I was your age' (p. 153), but there is another connection as well: 'The saint died of throat cancer and was briefly treated by your great-uncle, the cancer specialist in Calcutta' (p. 153).<sup>42</sup>

Whether the teenage Dr. Patel really felt 'happiness' or whether his recollection is colored by nostalgia we cannot know. We do know Shawn's misery; like Ramakrishna, he is 'mentally confused about his own identity'.<sup>43</sup> Later in the upstate-New York night, darkness enables him to feel a momentary surge of identification with his other model, Akbar, the 'potentate in battledress' (p. 158). Yet Shawn has conquered nothing, and his pathetic claim to be a 'visionary' (p. 158) is belied by his mother's shocked realization that his night-walking is accomplished in her coat, hat, and thick make-up. One moment a transfigured transvestite, another moment a breather of adolescent obscene phone calls, Shawn is one moment an American, another moment an Indian. In his unstable national and cultural identities, he is a recurring type of character in Mukherjee's fiction.

The title of Shawn's story, 'Saints', alerts us to another aspect that ties him to other characters, including Akbar in 'Courtly Vision'. While most of Mukherjee's characters are resolutely secular, in key stories characters seek for grace, for light in their spiritual darkness, for grace triumphing 'over all that's shameful in human nature' (p. 17). Dr. Patel believes that 'gods and goddesses ... could leap into your life in myriad, mysterious ways, as a shopgirl, for instance, or as a withered eggplant, just to test you' (p. 105), and Mr. Bhowmick senses spiritual presences in the Detroit pre-dawn. This theme frames *Darkness*, appearing at the end of the book in 'Courtly Vision' and at the very beginning in 'Angela', in which the title character is a Bangladeshi orphan rescued by nuns from the ditch where she was left for dead at dusk during the Indo-Pakistani war of 1971. Renamed and raised a Catholic, the Muslim-born Angela has been adopted by a Protestant farming family in Iowa and is now being wooed by Goan doctor.<sup>44</sup> 'Only a doctor could love this body', she thinks, aware of her scars (pp. 19, 11). In America 'for less than two years' (p. 9), Angela has been 'forced to assimilate' (p. 17): a high-school cheerleader, she speaks of her newly acquired Iowan 'sisters' and her 'Dad'; she knows how to soothe grief with Diet Coke (p. 9); and she has learned to enjoy a Sunday pork roast because 'pigs aren't filthy creatures here as they are back home' (p. 14).

It is 'grace [that] makes my life spin', says Angela (p. 10). As she puzzles over the meaning of grace, she visualizes it as 'a black, tropical bat, cutting through dusk on blunt, ugly wings', an image associated with the beauty

and horrors of the Bangladeshi war that took place in 'the lavender dusk of the tropics' (pp. 11, 19).<sup>45</sup> Angela, who seeks grace, is herself an instrument conveying grace to others, for the Lord has given her the capacity to express beauty, a means of transcendence; in the orphanage in Bangladesh she learned to play the piano, and 'together, pianist and audience, we have triumphed over sin, rapacity, war' (pp. 16-17), over all that's dark in human nature. Having endured violence, she has been transfigured by it; Mukherjee agrees with an interviewer's suggestion that violence is 'necessary to a transformation of character',<sup>46</sup> a view apparent in the incidents of political and domestic violence that figure in nearly every story and in most of Mukherjee's other work. Believing in miracles, Angela 'wait[s] for some sign', knowing that 'I've been saved for a purpose' (p. 19). It is toward such a sense of spiritual purpose that Shawn Patel gropes as he leafs through the book on Ramakrishna.

Although none of Mukherjee's characters aspire as consciously as Shawn to be saints in America, most are trying in some way to adjust the dreams of their prior life to their present condition, and often they have trouble reading the present; even so, all – in the words of the title character of *Jasmine* – seek 'enlightenment ... sensing designs in history's muddles' (p. 52). In *Darkness*, often the characters' 'English isn't good enough' (p. 8), even when it's so fluent that they sound as if they've 'lived here always' (p. 140).

'English', we must recognize, means the entire panoply of cultural signs that so fascinate Mukherjee, not merely the American dialect of the world language. In 'Visitors', a recently arrived bride named Vinita understandably thinks that a Calcutta-born but United States-raised young man shod in muddy 'two-tone New Balance running shoes' is 'just another American' (pp. 167, 172) or, if not exactly an American, then a 'looter of American culture' (p. 172), another modern-day Mughal emperor. Although Vinita's education as a French major at Loreto College has prepared her to 'disarm an emaciated Communist pointing a pipe-gun at her pet chihuahua' in Calcutta (p. 173), she has no idea how to handle 'the mad passions of a maladjusted failed American' (174). She finds in Rimbaud the *mot juste*: 'Oh! quel Rêve les a saisies ... un rêve inouï des Asies' (p. 172). What can a 'dream that has seized them, the unheard-of dream of Asias' mean in Guttenberg, New Jersey (a suitable setting for newly invented Indo-Americans)? When the dreamed-about now must do the dreaming, it is small wonder that they experience some sense of dislocation.

A displaced person at home nowhere, Ratna in 'The World According to Hsü' is expert in 'the plate tectonics of emotion' (p. 54). As she sits in a hotel dining room far from her Montreal house, she feels 'for the moment at home in that collection of Indians and Europeans babbling in ['step-mother'] English,' a 'mutually agreed upon second language' (pp. 56, 54). The half-Indian, half-Czech Ratna demonstrates how Mukher-

jee's vision encompasses those whose misfortune it is to have no vision, nothing more than a bleak awareness of their dislocation.

'The World According to Hsü', which takes place in an unnamed former French colony, is the only story in *Darkness* to be set outside of North America. Although at first glance 'Courtly Vision' is set in India, the actual New-York auction-house setting may hint at a kind of cultural bargaining that goes on in many of these stories. Many of Mukherjee's characters are trying to make 'small trade-offs between new-world reasonableness and old-world beliefs', like Mr. Bhowmick in 'A Father' (p. 64). In being 'caught between rules' (p. 72), the Bhowmicks may remind us of Akbar when he attempted to foster a syncretic religion and admit alien aesthetics to his artists' visions. In choosing that moment in Mughal history for 'Courtly Vision', Mukherjee reveals her characters' and her own dilemma and opportunity. 'Hide nothing from me, my co-wanderer', Mukherjee's Akbar commands Basawan (p. 199) – and thus Mukherjee commands herself, traveling into the inner spaces of characters both settled and homeless. 'Nothing was excluded', Mukherjee comments on a Hindu temple frieze;<sup>47</sup> her remark helps explain the essential Hinduism of a writer at home everywhere.

Concluding *Darkness* with a rich allusion to Akbar's deliberate mixing of East and West, Mukherjee emphasizes the emperor's intellectual curiosity and spiritual exploration, reminding us of the representatives of different cultural, religious, and aesthetic traditions whom he invited to his court. At Mukherjee's command, a similar variety of characters people her stories – Angela, the Muslim from Dakha turned Catholic by a twist of fate; Horowitz, the Jewish schizophrenic in a Queens psychiatric hospital; Batliwalla, the Parsi doctor in upstate New York; the Sikh grandfather in California who claims to have killed Gandhi in Delhi ('The Imaginary Assassin'); innumerable others from Calcutta, Ranchi, Ludhiana, and elsewhere on the subcontinent; and assorted North Americans ranging from the Iowa Presbyterians of 'Angela' to Ann Vane of 'Isolated Incidents', a graduate of 'Miss Edgar's and Miss Cramp's' school in Toronto who stares at the 'Chinese and Indians and Jamaicans, bent over their snack-packs of Kentucky Fried Chicken' (pp. 81, 93).

As she sits in 'a Colonel Sanders spot on Bloor' in Toronto, Ann reflects that 'home was a territory of the mind' (pp. 89, 90). No matter whether in Toronto or Georgia or New York, any immigrant or immigrant's child attempting to integrate and still retain fundamental ties with 'home' may comfort herself by claiming to be 'a traveller ... at home everywhere, because she is never at home anywhere' (p. 31); but more likely he will find himself, like Dr. Patel, 'a traveller over shifting sands' (p. 112), sometimes striding onward, sometimes stumbling, sometimes falling. For all their particularity, Mukherjee's characters are part of a world-wide phenomenon; they struggle to be 'at home' in North America while attempting to avoid

what Rushdie has called 'the largest and most dangerous pitfall' that may entrap the immigrant, 'the adoption of a ghetto mentality'.<sup>48</sup>

For these travelers intend to stay, to become settlers, to lay claim to North America as the Mughals laid claim to India. Although Mukherjee declares that her fiction is 'about conquests, and not about loss',<sup>49</sup> her characters do endure the disorientation that is the lot of most immigrants. If there is a conquest, it is that of Mukherjee the artist as she gives shape to her characters' experience of fragmentation. Implicit in 'Courtly Vision' is Mukherjee's wry revision of Akbar's yearning for 'a utopian India' where all peoples could live in peace.<sup>50</sup> Perhaps the best way of penetrating *Darkness* is to understand it as another work in the spirit of Akbar, tolerant of diversity while seeking unity of vision. As Akbar was a conquerer and a syncretist, hoping to create a new vision out of elements of previous ideas, so Mukherjee's 'insurrections of language, [her] subversions or deliberate destructions of sacrosanct literary forms', aim at creating new vision.<sup>51</sup> In *Darkness* she charts the territory to be conquered, territory worthy of 'epic' treatment in some future 'maximalist' fiction.<sup>52</sup> In closing *Darkness* with 'Courtly Vision', Mukherjee may look not only back to the preceding stories – sad, often violent, sometimes funny – but forward to some future fiction in which her characters' life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness come a good deal closer to the goal than they do in *Darkness*.

In Mukherjee's writing of the 1980s we see the pursuit but no more than a fleeting achievement of happiness. Yet her reader, like the viewer of a Mughal miniature, does experience happiness. As he rides into the darkness of war, Mukherjee's Akbar demands a kind of light, for he expects Basawan to describe the future 'in a way that makes me smile' (p. 199). This suggestion of the delight afforded by Mughal paintings, even when they describe subjects such as fear and death ('Tell me who to fear and who to kill'), also applies to Mukherjee's own works of art. Into her 'simple and innocuous' Western narratives she enfolds the 'complicated and infuriating' lives of her Hindu characters in North America, striving for the realistic description, multiple perspectives, and transcendent delight afforded by Basawan and his colleagues. The final command that she attributes to Akbar sums up Mukherjee's own effort as an artist: 'Transport me ... into the hearts of men'.<sup>53</sup>

#### NOTES

1. A number of reviewers made this observation, including Peter Nazareth ('Total Vision', *Canadian Literature*, no. 110 [1986], p. 190), Patricia Bradbury, and Hope Cook; for Bradbury and Cook, see excerpts in *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, vol. 53 (1989), pp. 266, 267. Subsequently, Mukherjee herself declared: 'My image of artistic structure and artistic excellence is the Moghal miniature painting' ('A Four-Hundred-Year-Old Woman', in *The Writer on her Work: New Essays in New Territory*,

- vol. 2, ed. Janet Sternburg [NY and London: Norton, 1991], p. 38). Textual references are to Bharati Mukherjee, *Darkness* (Markham, Ontario: Penguin Books Canada, 1985), p. 195. All other references are included in the text. Although placed last in *Darkness*, 'Courtly Vision' was written earlier than most of the stories, while Mukherjee was still living in Canada (*Darkness*, 'Introduction', p. 1).
2. Michael Riffaterre, 'Textuality: W.H. Auden's "Musée des Beaux Arts"', in *Textual Analysis: Some Readers Reading*, ed. Mary Ann Caws (NY: Modern Language Association, 1986), p. 2.
  3. Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991* (London: Granta Books, 1991), p. 17.
  4. Op. cit.; repeated virtually verbatim in Rushdie's *Shame* (1983; NY: Aventura [Vintage], 1984), p. 24.
  5. Rushdie, qtd. by Michael Kaufman, 'Author from 3 Countries', *New York Times Book Review*, 13 Nov. 1983, p. 23.
  6. Mukherjee has written approvingly of Rushdie's concept 'that immigration ... is a net gain, a form of levitation, as opposed to Naipaul's loss and mimicry' ('Prophet and Loss: Salman Rushdie's Migration of Souls', *Village Voice Literary Supplement* [March 1989], p. 12).
  7. Rejecting Naipaul as a model, Mukherjee asserts: 'Immigration is the opposite of expatriation' ('Immigrant Writing: Give Us Your Maximalists!', *New York Times Book Review* [28 Aug. 1988], p. 28); see also Alison B. Carb, 'An Interview with Bharati Mukherjee', *Massachusetts Review*, 29, 4 (1988), p. 650. The misreading of Mukherjee's Introduction to *Darkness* by Amin Malak - who thinks she continues to be Naipaul's 'disciple' - typifies the hostile misreading of Mukherjee by Indian intellectual men who have settled in Canada ('Insider/Outsider Views on Belonging: The Short Stories of Bharati Mukherjee and Rohinton Mistry', in *Short Fiction in the New Literatures in English: Proceedings of the Nice Conference of the European Association for Commonwealth Literature & Language Studies*, ed. Jaqueline Bardolph [Nice: Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines de Nice, 1989], pp. 189, 192). See also Neil Bissoondath, 'Flaws in the Mosaic', *Books in Canada* 14 (Aug. 1985), p. 22.
  8. Bharati Mukherjee, *Jasmine* (1989; NY: Ballantine Books, 1991), p. 198. All other references are included in the text.
  9. Bharati Mukherjee and Clark Blaise, *Days and Nights in Calcutta* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977), p. 200. All other references are included in the text.
  10. Bharati Mukherjee, 'Immigrant Writing', op. cit., p. 29.
  11. Ameena Meer, 'Shorts: Bharati Mukherjee', *Bomb* 29 (Fall 1989), p. 26. Mukherjee's most recent and emphatic statement of this idea appears in 'A Four-Hundred-Year-Old Woman', op. cit., p. 34.
  12. Bharati Mukherjee, et al., 'Writers' Panel', in E.M. Forster: *Centenary Revaluations*, ed. Judith Scherer Herz and Robert K. Martin (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1982), p. 291.
  13. 'Mimicry and Reinvention', in *The Commonwealth in Canada: Proceedings of the Second Triennial Conferences of ACLALS, Part Two, University of Winnipeg 1-4 October 1981*, ed. Uma Parameswaram (New Delhi: Writers Workshop, 1983), p. 147; Mukherjee delivered this paper after she had left Canada. Three years later she experienced the 'three-month burst of energy' in Atlanta during which she wrote most of *Darkness* ('Introduction', p. 1).
  14. Mukherjee, 'An Invisible Woman', *Saturday Night* (March 1981), pp. 36-40.
  15. 'Mimicry and Reinvention', op. cit., p. 147.
  16. NY: Grove P, 1988.
  17. Bharati Mukherjee, 'A Four-Hundred-Year-Old Woman', op. cit., p. 38.

18. Basawan's work (like Mukherjee's) is characterized by 'vitality in the representation of human figures' and 'violent action' (Som Prakash Verma, *Arts and Material Culture in the Paintings of Akbar's Court* [New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1978], p. xxvii). For examples of paintings designed and/or painted by Basawan or attributed to him (with those similar to Mukherjee's painting asterisked), see Stuart Cary Welch, *The Art of Mughal India: Paintings & Precious Objects* (NY: Asia Society, 1964), 3A, 4A, 5B, 8A, 8B, 11A; Stuart Cary Welch, *India: Art and Culture 1300-1900* (NY: Metropolitan Museum of Art; Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1985), illustrations 88, 93a, 94, 108, 110; Stuart Cary Welch, *Imperial Mughal Painting* (NY: George Braziller, 1978), Plates 8 and \*12-\*13; Michael Brand and Glenn D. Lowry, *Akbar's India: Art from the Mughal City of Victory* (NY: The Asia Society Galleries, 1985), illustrations 9, 17, 26, \*32, \*35, 38, 41, 46, 47, 66; Michael Brand and Glenn D. Lowry, eds., *Fatehpur-Sikri: Selected Papers from the International Symposium on Fatehpur-Sikri Held on October 17-19, 1985, at Harvard University...* (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1987), illustrations 7.11, 7.12, \*7.13, 7.22, 7.23, 7.25; Emmy Wellesz, *Akbar's Religious Thought Reflected in Mogul Painting* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1952), plates 15, \*16, \*17, \*23; and Verma, op. cit., plates 10, 11, \*13. Of the nine asterisked paintings, seven are from the Victoria and Albert Museum's *Akbarnama*, a history of Akbar's life; we might assume that this is the source of the imagined painting.
19. Sotheby's did indeed auction the Malcolm Fraser collection in 1980 in three lots, in London on July 7-8 and October 13-14, and in New York on December 9; Leela must have made her visit during the New York public exhibition on Dec. 4-8. The painting depicted in 'Courtly Vision' is not, however, in the New York Sotheby's sale, though one can imagine it in the London sales. The July sale in London included a painting (Lot 84) depicting 'a ruler on horseback leading an army across a battlefield, warriors firing arrows and brandishing swords and maces as a decapitated soldier falls from his horse' (*Catalogue of Fine Oriental Manuscripts, Miniatures and Qajar Lacquer ... The Property of Malcolm R. Fraser ...*). Lot 240 in the London October sale is in a class with Mukherjee's painting (*Catalogue of Fine Oriental Manuscripts, Miniatures and Qajar Lacquer ... the Property of Malcolm R. Fraser Esq. and Other Properties*). The Dec. 9 New York sale included a painting somewhat similar to Mukherjee's, lot 10: 'A Procession of Figures Moving to the Right, Mughal, circa 1590-1600' (*Fine Oriental Miniatures, Manuscripts and Islamic Works of Art Including the Fraser Album*); its estimated price was \$3000-\$5000 (it sold for \$4600); Mukherjee's eye for detail was clouded when she provided an estimated price of \$750.
20. Mukherjee's Jahanara Begum is apparently a resident of Akbar's harem, which one European visitor claimed housed 'more than 300 wives', another 'as many as a hundred women' (qtd. Brand and Lowry, *Fatehpur-Sikri*, op. cit. pp. 105-06). Akbar had a granddaughter named Jahanara, the daughter of his son Shah Jehan and Mumtaz-Mahal.
21. See Brand and Lowry, *Akbar's India*, op. cit., p. 159. Akbar's successors continued to use the palace complex occasionally until at least the middle of the seventeenth century and 'a considerable portion of Akbar's haram [sic] remained ... long after 1585' (Brand and Lowry, *Fatehpur-Sikri*, op. cit. pp. 3-4).
22. Akbar's letter, in John Correia-Afonso, ed., *Letters from the Mughal Court: The First Jesuit Mission to Akbar (1580-1583)*, Foreword by S. Gurul Hasan (Bombay: Heras Institute of Indian History and Culture, 1980), p. 1. Fathers Rudolf Aquaviva and Francis Henriques arrived at Akbar's court from their base in Goa on 28 Feb. 1580, soon joined by Father Anthony Monserrate; the mission ended in Feb. 1583 (Correia-Afonso, pp. 9-10, 123). The battle for which Akbar is leaving might be one in his 1580-81 war against his half-brother, whom he defeated at Kabul in 1581 (Correia-Afonso, p. 93; Brand and Lowry, *Akbar's India*, op. cit., 'Chronology of



- Important Historical and Artistic Events', pp. 158-59 – this chronology is the source for other dates I mention). Fr. Monserrate was part of Akbar's entourage in the final expedition of this war (Correia-Afonso, pp. 96-97).
23. See frontispiece in Brand and Lowry, *Akbar's India*, op. cit.
  24. The first painting by a Mughal artist to show the influence of Christian art is dated ca. 1580, the same year that the Jesuits presented Akbar with several examples (Welch, *India: Art and Culture*, op. cit., p. 164). Basawan's painting of the subject is dated 1590-1600; see Brand and Lowry, *Akbar's India*, op. cit., p. 102 (plate 66). Akbar's enthusiasm over Christian religious art is a frequent theme of the Jesuits' letters (Correia-Afonso, op. cit., pp. 31, 33-34, 48-49, 58-60). As for 'dogg[ing] the emperor', Akbar ordered Fathers Monserrate and Aquaviva to accompany him on military campaigns, an experience made more difficult by illness 'alone in a Muslim country, without physician or medicines' (Aquaviva, letter dated 25 April 1582, in Correia-Afonso, p. 101).
  25. Mukherjee, *Days and Nights*, op. cit., p. 286.
  26. Dr. Patel and his family do, however, appear in two stories, 'Nostalgia' and 'Saints'.
  27. David Kinsley, *Hindu Goddesses: Visions of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), p. 117.
  28. The eponymous heroine of *Jasmine* also becomes Kali when she murders her rapist (p. 106). Kinsley notes that later Hinduism modified Kali's terrible aspect to some extent, so that she became 'not only the symbol of death but the symbol of triumph over death' (op. cit., pp. 124, 118, 125).
  29. Cornelia Dimmitt and J. A. B. van Buitenen, ed. and trans., *Classical Hindu Mythology: A Reader in the Sanskrit Puranas* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1978), p. 225.
  30. Kinsley suggests that 'Kali may be one way in which the Hindu tradition has sought to come to terms ... with the built-in shortcomings of its own refined view of the world ... by reminding Hindus that certain aspects of reality are untamable, unpurifiable, unpredictable, and always a threat to society's feeble attempts to order what is essentially disorderly: life itself' (op. cit., p. 129).
  31. Anon., *Life of Sri Ramakrishna Compiled from Various Authentic Sources*, 2nd ed. (1928; Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1964), p. 66.
  32. Mukherjee, qtd. Michael Connell, Jessie Grearson, and Tom Grimes, 'An Interview with Bharati Mukherjee', *Iowa Review* 20, 3 (1990), p. 21.
  33. James A. Kirk, *Stories of the Hindus: An Introduction through Texts and Interpretation* (NY: Macmillan, 1972), p. 224. In some traditions, however, Kali is a consort of Shiva (Kinsley, *Hindu Goddesses*, op. cit., pp. 119-22).
  34. Roshni Rustomji-Kerns notes the tendency of Mukherjee's 'fellow South Asian immigrants', who see themselves as 'successful citizens of America', to dismiss such scenes of violence in Mukherjee's work as 'only well-written South Asian American gothic'; Rustomji-Kerns herself implies that Mukherjee has provided 'a voice to speak of the immigrant experience' ('Expatriates, Immigrants and Literature: Three South Asian Women Writers', *Massachusetts Review* 29, 4 [1988], p. 659).
  35. Qtd. Kinsley, op. cit., p. 127.
  36. Kinsley, op. cit., p. 130.
  37. Mukherjee used the term to describe her own relation to English in 'Mimicry and Reinvention', op. cit., p. 147. Soon after, however, she dropped any claim to linguistic alienation (Carb, 'Interview with Bharati Mukherjee', op. cit., p. 649).
  38. Mukherjee, 'An Invisible Woman', op. cit., p. 38.
  39. Ramakrishna describes himself 'writhing in anguish of heart[,] cry[ing] at the top of my voice, 'Come, my boys! ...' A mother never longs so intensely for the sight

- of her child, nor ... a lover for his sweetheart, as I did for them!' (qtd. Anon., *Life of Sri Ramakrishna*, op. cit., p. 196).
40. Christopher Isherwood describes this often-related incident in terms close to Mukherjee's (*Ramakrishna and His Disciples*, 2nd ed. [Hollywood: Vedanta Press, 1980], p. 245).
  41. Like Shawn, Ramakrishna began dressing like a woman as a teenager (Isherwood, op. cit., pp. 35-36). Carl Olson devotes a chapter to this and related behavior, said by some to be insane (*The Mysterious Play of Kali: An Interpretation of Ramakrishna* [Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1990], pp. 49-67). Toward the end of his life, Ramakrishna's 'sex-role confusion was "gradually" being cured, and he was becoming ... more certain of his male sexuality' (Olson, p. 50). Another possibly relevant aspect of Ramakrishna's thought is the religious eclecticism that he shared with Akbar. Ramakrishna's vision of Mohammed, in 1866, led him to a period of Islamic practice; his much more intense Christian experience, in 1874, lifted him 'into a new state of ecstasy' in which 'Christ possessed his soul' (Solange Lemaître, *Ramakrishna and the Vitality of Hinduism*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann [Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 1984], pp. 109-10).
  42. The great-uncle is presumably one of the 'well-known physicians of Calcutta' who examined Ramakrishna in 1885, diagnosed his throat cancer, and declared it incurable (Swami Saradananda, *Sri Ramakrishna: The Great Master*, trans. Swami Jagadananda, 5th ed. rev. [Mylapore and Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1978-79], vol. 2, p. 961).
  43. Olson, *The Mysterious Play of Kali*, op. cit., p. 49.
  44. As a Goan, he is presumably Catholic.
  45. This dusk is darker than but still related to the dusk of only other scene set on the Indian subcontinent, that in 'Courtly Vision'. The image of the bat appears later in *Jasmine* (p. 162).
  46. Qtd. in Connell, Grearson, and Grimes, 'An Interview with Bharati Mukherjee', op. cit., p. 8. This interview develops the theme with particular reference to *Jasmine*, in which Mukherjee's preoccupation with violence reaches its fictional apogee. That preoccupation may have been furthered by the nonfiction book that she wrote with Clark Blaise, *The Sorrow and the Terror: The Haunting Legacy of the Air India Tragedy* (1987; Markham, Ontario: Penguin Books, 1988); 'The Management of Grief' in *The Middleman*, which is narrated by a grief-benumbed woman whose husband and two sons have gone down in the Air India crash of 23 June 1985.
  47. Mukherjee, *Days and Nights in Calcutta*, op. cit., p. 171.
  48. Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands*, op. cit., p. 19. Mukherjee declares that she 'look[s] on ghettoization ... as a temptation to be surmounted' ('A Four-Hundred-Year-Old Woman', p. 34).
  49. Geoff Hancock, 'An Interview with Bharati Mukherjee', *Canadian Fiction Magazine* 59 (1987), p. 37.
  50. Welch, *The Art of Mughal India*, op. cit., p. 11.
  51. Mukherjee, 'Mimicry and Reinvention', op. cit., p. 149.
  52. Bharati Mukherjee, 'Immigrant Writing', op. cit., pp. 1, 28.
  53. For their advice regarding an earlier draft, I am indebted to members of the Westchester Women Writers group: Eileen Allman, Jayana Clerk (whose knowledge of Indian culture illuminated my darkness), Phyllis Fahre Edelson, Mary Ellen LeClair, and Ziva Pilch.