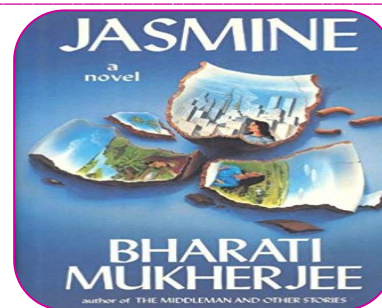




JASMINE THE REAL ESSENCE OF ALIENATION IN BHARATI MUKHERJEE'S NOVEL JASMINE

Arpita Daud Parmar

Research Scholar , Sardar Patel University, VV Nagar.



ABSTRACT

This research article is a study of Bharati Mukherjee's intense observation and portrayal of Indian woman protagonist named Jasmine, her alternative identities in family and society. The revolutionize attitude of transformation from an orthodox Indian woman to Modern Indian woman. In these process of sifting and adjustment their occur crisis of values, force of traditional identity and desires to be the part of new world. This study analyzed the Jasmine's crucial journey to Diaspora and émigré, maintaining and refusing identities, need and desire of a very new identity.

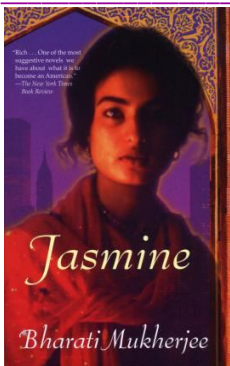
KEYWORDS: *craving for new identity, struggle & suffering, survival, new world.*

INTRODUCTION

The Indian women authors in English have contributed a great deal in representing the diasporic issues of Indian women. Along with this they have successfully portrays the immigrant experience, suffering, changes, alienation, economic situations, quest for identity, their needs, desires that leads to final assimilation. Anita Desai, Kamala Markandya, Shashi Despande, Shobha De, Bharathi Mukherjee, Arudhati Roy and many more are concerning on the alternative identities as wife, mother, sister, daughter, mother in-law and this list keep on going and going till the last breath of a women. Traditional image of an Indian woman is her strong attachment with family, values of Indian religion, culture and orthodox life style but the same does not allow her to adjust in the new world of adoption. The new Indian woman is new in her perception and her way of handling the change is new. **Jasmine is the one who is "re-position her stars".**

Bharati Mukherjee an Indian born Canadian/American novelist has made a deep impression on the literary canvass. Her literary works strongly give a picture of the issues of her own cultural location in West Bengal in India, and her own displacement **alienation** for her land y and her final re-location-assimilation to USA. Bharati Mukherjee has written the women centric novels of diasporic issues. The women characters of her novels are the greatest examples of quest of identity, struggling for searching their own identity, moving from their native land to some other country, holding all those memories and past experiences. The question arises in their minds and hearts all the time is *who am I?* The protagonist of the novel Jasmine also suffers and goes through the same dilemma of searching for identity. When Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine* was published in 1989, it grabs the spacious attention in the media. Mukherjee is defining a modern woman, and Jasmine is her mouthpiece, through her she express and explain the world that the immigrant are not meant to suffer and adjust only they can accept the change and adaptability would bring successful survival to concur the new world. Mukherjee herself writes:

"This is about a very young widow who comes illegally into the United States and makes a new woman of herself." (Lal 151)



Jasmine, the title character and narrator of Bharati Mukherjee's novel, was born approximately 1965 in a rural Indian village called Hasnapur. The novel opens so significantly where Jasmine herself encounters her future by an astrologer:

Lifetimes ago, under a banyan tree in the village of Hasnapur, an astrologer cupped his ears—his satellite dish to the stars—foretold my widowhood and exile... "No!" I shouted. (Mukherjee 1)

Jasmine at the age of seven only comes to know this might be her future but so bravely she replies NO. What is to happen will happen. She tells her story as a twenty-four-year-old pregnant widow, living in Iowa with her crippled lover, Bud Ripplemeyer, who is more than twice of her age. The two have adopted a son, Du, from Veitnam. Bud wants to marry Jane, she refuses, partially due to her attraction for the neighbor Darrel Lutz. It takes two months in Iowa to relate biographical events that span the distance between her Punjabi birth and her American adult life. Jasmine always feels so connected with Indian food that shows on the dining table whenever she cooks she brings all that cooking spices and method of cooking in her kitchen. She even planted some herbs in a small garden. She remembers her mother does complain to God...

"God's cruel", my mother complained, "to waste brains on a girl."
And God's still more cruel, she said, to make a fifth daughter
beautiful instead of the first. (Mukherjee 40)

At the age of fourteen **Jyoti** got married to Prakash and he gave her new name **Jasmine**. Her odyssey encompasses five distinct settings, to murders, at least one rape, a maiming, a suicide, and three love affairs. When she was seven an astrologer predicted that she was doomed to widowhood and exile. Determined to fight her destiny, Jyoti empower herself through learning English. Her notable transformation begins when, at fourteen, she marries Prakash. 'To break off the past' Prakash rename her "Jasmine" and gradually moulds her to become a new women.

"You are small and sweet and heady, my Jasmine.
You'll quicken the whole world with your perfume." (Mukherjee 77)

He implants the American Dreams in her mind. Prakash is tragically killed by a religious extremist in a bombing before they can fulfill their dream. Jasmine decided to move to Florida alone and carry out Prakash's plans. In her travel she is sexually assaulted by the ship's captain, Half-Face. She kills him in self defence. After paying three thousand dollars now Jasmine manages to work as a child care for Wylie and Taylor Hayes. Their adopted daughter Duff gave her new name that is '**Jase**'. She is happy in her position and even finds herself falling for Taylor. In the fear of the bomber she leaves and decided to flee the city of Iowa. Back in present-day Iowa she is with Bud and she receives a letter from Taylor that he and Duff are on the way to find her. Although she cares for Bud **Jane** realizes she doesn't truly love him. She realizes that she no longer feels like Jane and that fate doesn't have to be there. As she leave California with Taylor and Duff, she rejects the destiny the astrologer laid out for her as a child and chooses to forge her own path in the future.

Throughout the course of the novel, the title character's identity, along with her name, changes and changes again: from Jyoti to Jasmine to Jazy to Jassy to Jase to Jane. In chronological order, Jasmine moves from Hasnapur, Punjab, to Fowlers Key, Florida (near Tampa), to Flushing, New York, to Manhattan, to Baden, Iowa, and finally is off to California as the novel ends. *Jasmine* ends with impressive positive attitude where she finds her own new beautiful world.

Time will tell if I am a tornado, rubble-maker, arising from nowhere
And disappearing into a cloud. I am out the door and in the potholed
And rutted driveway, scrambling ahead of Taylor, greedy with wants
And reckless from hope. (Mukherjee 241)

CONCLUSION:

Bharati Mukherjee at her best, she has been able to bring the immigrants experiences of feeling isolated in the foreign land and strapping them to adjust with the system, their failure in adjustment, suffering and frustration. A very careful study of *Jasmine* brings out the remarkable result that how the seven years girl understand her future and gets marries to a dream boy Prakash, became widow, illegal migration in USA and her changing of the names gives her new personality which is far more better and strong than the earlier. Finally she proves herself strong new woman with new fragrance.

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