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## DIASPORIC WRITING IN INDIAN LITERATURE FROM THE NOVEL "JASMINE".

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### ABSTRACT

Diasporic theory, a significant part of English literature portrays about the writings of the fondness of the motherland and the experience of immigrants in an alien land. The immigrants from the native land to new country, whatever the reason for migration may be social, economical, religious, political, as labourers, as preachers, as exiles, or a workers, or in search for better life. They have to adopt the new environment in the new land to survive. They have to torn between the two homes and two languages. Most of the immigrants suffer from the memories of their homes. Everyone migrants should face the experience of agony by the dominant host society. Immigrants don't want to detach from their motherland. They wants to continue their tradition and culture in their new land. The first generation immigrants faces problems in clothing and food. They wants to pass their own tradition and cultures to the future generation safely. From the endeavour they faces many issues like nostalgia, loneliness, dislocation, alienation and rootlessness. Due to the discrimination on the basis of race, culture, religion they leads to conflict for their dual identity. Those desolated immigrants in certain situation starts writing their feelings. They prompts to write to share their experiences in the alien land. Their main themes of these diasporic writings are dislocation, loneliness, unsettlement...This paper views about the experience of Indian diasporic writer and novelist Bharathi Mukerjee in her novel Jasmine. The protagonist Jasmine crosses many phases throughout in her journey. In her journey she portrays in many names to sustain in her life.

**Keywords** : Migration, loneliness, dislocation, Experiences, Indian diaspora, Bharathi Mukerjee, Jasmine.

## **Introduction:**

Diaspora, a term coined from the Greek word “diasperien” where “dia” means “across” and “sperien” means “scattering seeds”. This paper focuses on the diaporic experience by the protagonist Jasmine as an immigrant from the novel *Jasmine* by Bharati Mukherji. The displacement from the native land to the new environment for the purpose of making new life, to earn money, etc., through migration. From the alien land the migrants want to make a new life after a great struggle. They face depression, nostalgia and loneliness. This article portraits about the cultural transformation and resistance to change of the immigrants. In the novel *Jasmine*, Bharati Mukherji tries to teach the nature and culture of America through her characters. From her point of view, America is the place of transformation. All the lives of migrants have many ups and downs on their journey. Jasmine takes several births throughout her migration. The transformation has three phases. The first starts with a predictor’s voice that Jyothi become a widow. Jasmine replies him as “watch me reposition the stars”. She starts her search for self-recognition. Jasmine travels through various identities and different faces in the every phases of her life. The journey starts when she got married and moves to a city with her husband. Her husband dreams her to be a modern woman living in America. From there itself she starts changing her identity. At first she changes her name as Jasmine. With her husband she faces the conflict between her two identities. One is the identity of Indian woman and another one is what her husband wanted her to be.

For the uncle, love was control. Respect was obedience. For Prakash, love was letting go. Independence, self-reliance: I learned the litany by heart. But I felt suspended between worlds. (*Jasmine*, p.76)

Jasmine compares Prakash's philosophy of love to that of his more conservative, traditional uncle. Prakash's aunt and uncle wish for Jasmine and Prakash to live in their home with them after they marry, but Prakash insists that they have their own place as a way of distancing themselves from what he considers the "feudal" traditions of their upbringings.

The theme of fate returns when Prakash is tragically killed in a bombing in the sari shop. The circumstances of the bombing seem unfortunately to validate the prophecy of the fakir, who predicts that Jasmine will end up a young widow in exile. After her husband’s death, she started travelling to America. There she gets raped by a half faced man and she starts taking revenge. She cuts her tongue before killing the rapist. After the incident she meets Lilian Gordan, who teaches her how to look like a pure American, she begins to adopt the American culture fully.

Jasmine becomes settled with Taylor and Wylie, where she receives a new name, Jase. She starts to enjoy her new life and learn more about American culture. After then she moves to Iowa to find her “American lover” Bud, who also given her a name, Jane. She also adopts a son named Du, with whom she connects the most. Du is also an immigrant from Vietnam.

“I am not choosing between men. I am caught between the promise of America and old-world dutifulness”.

Hereby she wants to marry Taylor over Bud. She breaks the shell of traditional Indian woman and chooses a satisfied way. She moves away with Taylor as a true American.

Jasmine exposes her characters as “I have had a hundred for each of the women I have been, Prakash for Jasmine, Taylor for Jaze, Bud for Jane, and half face for Kali”.

The villagers say when a clay pitcher breaks, you see that the air inside is the same as outside . We are just shells of the same absolute. (JS, p15 )

This village adage speaks to the higher concept of understanding that what is outside of us is the same as what is inside of us. Jasmine wonders why someone as old as Mother Ripplemeyer bothers with trying to look younger when there is no difference between her insides and outsides.

"Daughters were curses", (39) says Jasmine, as she recalls the bruise marks on her infant neck when she was born. She relates these early memories through the lens of sharing them with Taylor and his wife Wylie.

She don't want to become a dead body. We see herself looking at a dead dog floating in the river and broken pieces sank in the river as,

“A Stench leaked out of the broken body, and then both pieces quickly sank”

She swims out into the river to evade her sisters' criticism and while swimming, brushes against a decomposing dog. When she touches the dog, its body splits open, and it sinks into the river. Jasmine then tells the reader that, as she is narrating, she is twenty-four, and lives in Iowa. She says that every time she drinks a glass of water, she remembers that dead dog in the river.

She faces many obstacles by the patriarchal society, her family and others, but she explores herself to cross the hurdles. She learns quickly to adopt new shape of her in the American culture by broken all the barriers she crossed.

“Calamity Jane. Jane as in Jane Russell, not Jane as in Plain Jane. But Plain Jane is all I want to be. Plain Jane is a role, like any other”. (p26)

Jasmine's statement exposes some element of her acceptance and underlying restlessness at being cast in yet another role “Jane”. Here, she is Bud's partner, the mother of his unborn child, and she wants this new chapter of her life to be as monotonous as possible.

We murder who we are so we can rebirth ourselves in the images of dreams. (p29)

Jasmine makes this comment to herself when talking with Du's history teacher after he admits he tried speaking Vietnamese to the young man. She is upset with this man for his subtle racism and for his inability to see that people

like Jasmine and Du, foreigners in a strange land, have to leave behind who they were and imbibe into a new culture if they are to survive. There are many things I deserve, not all of them better. Taylor thought dull was the absence of action, but dull is its own kind of action. Dullness is a kind of luxury. (Jasmine, p.6)

This quote is an early instance of how Jasmine contrasts the Hayes experience with her own. The Hayeses seek thrills and avoid "dullness" and "flatness," but for Jasmine, who has traversed several oceans in the undercarriage of ships, dullness is a welcomed respite from insecurity and danger.

I fell in love with what he represented to me, a professor who served biscuits to a servant, smiled at her, and admitted her to the broad democracy of his joking, even when she didn't understand it. It seemed entirely American. (Jasmine, p. 167)

Here Jasmine describes the nature of her initial love for and attraction to Taylor, which was not a physical attraction necessarily but a symbolic one. He represents a benevolent, generous, and democratic spirit; loving him was loving the possibility of sharing his ease. It represents the most flowery, optimistic shade of America's mythology of social mobility.

I remember the thick marking pen in his hand printing a confident RETURN on packages of books, records, knife sets I'd thought I wanted. The cord feels dusty. (Jasmine, pp. 239-40)

Here Jasmine call backs one of Taylor's lessons to her about ways to manage the onrush of materialism. She experiences when she starts earning a steady wage and buying nonsense out of catalogs. He says she can simply "RETURN TO SENDER" the things she realizes she doesn't need. At this point, she's considering leaving Bud, and Taylor is assuring her that she has no obligation to stay. The way her non-committal behavior is reflected as a function of returning merchandise shows how American values differ from the values she was raised with, where obligation, commitment, and sacrifice take center stage.

She says, "Crying comes over him suddenly these days. They call it posttraumatic syndrome. Small things, mildly depressing things, suddenly become too poignant to bear" (158).

She decides to flee New York and move to Iowa, choosing the destination solely because Taylor and Wylie adopted Duff from a student at Iowa State.

Jasmine recalls a time shortly after Bud divorces Karin when Karin calls her a gold digger at the grocery store. Jasmine responds, "Bud is gold ... and if digging him out of the sadness he was in when I met him was what she meant, then, yes, I was a gold digger" (196). Jasmine believes that Karin may have been able to talk Harlan down from shooting Bud, and in that way, she feels especially guilty for her inability to read the signs that afternoon. Karin calls Jasmine a "tornado blowing through Baden" (206), uprooting everything in her path.

Each life even has a different name corresponding to it: Jyoti, Jasmine, Jase, Jane. Jasmine says, "I have had a husband for each of the women I have been. Prakash for Jasmine, Taylor for Jase, Bud for Jane. Half-Face for Kali" (197). Kali is a Hindu goddess of, among other things, the destruction of evil forces in the world. At several points in the novel, Jasmine refers to herself as a goddess, or as a woman who has transformed into a goddess. She exposes herself as "I think sometimes I saved [Bud's] life by not marrying him. I feel so potent, a goddess," (12).

When Jasmine says, "I've never been to Lahore, but the loss survives in the instant replay of family story: forever Lahore smokes, forever my parents flee" (41), her words reflect her own mission to express her past traumas through repetition, trying to find a way to relate these stories in a meaningful way for herself. She attempts to make this connection with Du, who resists her attempts to have him share his experiences from before he was adopted by the Ripplemeyers. Jasmine, the assimilated immigrant changes America as she floats through different identity.

### Conclusion:

Through her novel, Bharati Mukherji presents Jasmine as a Phoenix who rises from her ashes again and again in the form of different names and characters. She clearly exhibits the life of an Immigrant Indian as well as woman and the obstacles she need to break for the transformation of her life in an alien land.

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