



A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE NOVEL JASMINE

Dr. Muktha Manoj Jacob

Associate Professor and Head,

Department of English & Business Communication,
Narsee Monjee College of Commerce and Economics,
Mumbai -400056.

ABSTRACT:

The **Jasmine** written by Bharati Mukherjee (1990) is actually an innovative fiction about the successful attempt of the Indian widow to correct her destiny and gain happiness. In this work Bharati Mukherjee also handled the theme of the immigrant experience well. The novel is about Jasmine, an Indian immigrant and her encounter with the new world and her gradual transformation as she fully teaches culture. Bharati Mukherjee introduced culture as more or less modern as the polar opposition to this novel. **Jasmine** follows and is bound by tradition, really loves royalty for women and is especially cruel to women like her. America, on the other hand, is seen as a land of freedom, promise and fulfillment. Here is the reward for each effort and where the relationship of the man and the woman is based on an equal and equal relationship. The novel is about Jyoti's 'widowhood and exile'. Here Bharati Mukherjee allowed his Indian character to interact freely with American culture. The present study is about the main character Jasmine who flees the Indian ghetto and follows the patterns of prominent American culture.

Key Words: Immigrant, womanism, feminism, culture, tradition, expatriation, immigration,

Jasmine by Bharati Mukherjee (1990) is a novel about cultural inclusion. It is about the successful attempt of the Indian widow to correct her destiny and find happiness. Bharati Mukherjee also handled the theme of the arrival experience carefully. The novel is about Jasmine, an Indian immigrant and her encounter with the new world and her gradual transformation as she fully teaches culture. Bharati Mukherjee introduced culture and modernity more or less as opposed to the novel. India Jyoti or Jasmine follows and is bound by tradition, loves domination of women and is especially cruel to women like her. America, on the other hand, is seen in America as a land of freedom and promise and fulfillment. Here there is a reward for each effort and where the relationship of the man and the woman is based on an equal and equal relationship. The novel is about Jyoti's 'widow and exile'. Here Bharati Mukherjee allowed his Indian character to interact freely with American culture. So that he not only takes but also gives. And by giving you give a new perspective on the world in which you live. He made his main character Jasmine escape from the Indian ghetto and adapt to the patterns of prominent American culture.

The Jasmine theme is a reunion of an Indian adventure with the new world. "Although they (immigrants) are often injured or depressed because of problems in their new lives and careers, they do not give up" (183). Like the evolution of other immigrants, the novel discusses Jasmine's gradual transformation as she teaches a new culture. At the beginning of the novel, Bharati Mukherjee emphasizes the superstitions and superstitions, customs and traditions embedded in the Indian ethos.

The main character, Jasmine, (Jyoti in India) belongs to a poor Punjabi family in the village of Hasnapur whose life is surrounded by evil fears. But at the beginning of the novel, Jasmine tries to elevate herself beyond the blind belief of Fate. While searching for wood, Jasmine finds a star-shaped wound on her forehead. That scar becomes his third eye and with the archetypal image (Shiva's third eye) Bharati Mukherjee shows that Jasmine was already looking into the invisible world.

After Jyoti's husband Prakash was killed by a terrorist he somehow managed to get to America physically disabled but not on the air. He begins by having sex with the Vadheras but the Indian ghetto in Flushing suffocates him and so he joins Taylor, Wylie, and their adopted child, Duff. Become a caregiver: Duff's day mummy. But when he falls in love with Taylor he knows he has to break up with his past - a woman who has been repeatedly raped and murdered and is going to Elsa Country, who is

going to live with Bud, the bank manager, and her mother and their children. adopted child, Vietnamese - American, Du. But since what he hears about Bud is only sad (he was paralyzed when one of his clients shot him). When at the end of the novel Taylor and Duff come to him, the final separation from Bud is inevitable.

In short, Jasmine is the story of one Jyoti Vijh who was born in the Punjab region. When a terrorist bomb blasts through a window, he finds his way to New York with fake papers and successfully changes his route to suit the illegal activity of those immigrants. Among the many activities, Jasmine changes her name to reflect the changes she is experiencing in the new 'Americanization' category. The novel concludes that Jasmine is still accustomed to America. To quote Malashri Lal:

But, in Jasmine, a strong Indian seems to cling to a place below her habit. "Maximalism", reduced from "theory to practice, tells us about the predictable nature of the fast-approaching arrival experience and refugee movements across the country. America - anywhere in America the story of Jasmine changes ... But Mukherjee's main character carries the subsequent India and the feminine society within her wherever she goes, and she does not seem to come from the patriarchal frameworks of her upbringing in her homeland. (Qtd. E Kirpal 152)

After the wedding, Jasmine hands over everything to her husband. She becomes a true wife in the true sense of the word. "She is the giver of her name and the decisive power for her future. Prakash creates local girls in his favorite image of the 'city woman' (Lal 152). Prakash wants to be accepted into an American college. killed in Punjab terrorist bombing of Khalsa Lions demanding Sikh Khalistan.

Jasmine's first encounter with America is with an American called Half-Face "which leads to a kind of violent revival, which is also described in comedy mode" (Lal 153). This bad guy had lost his eye and ear and most of the time he got into a paddy field in Vietnam. She begs him to come to a remote party in Florida and strip him of his Indian attire and rape him despite his many protests of being an innocent Hindu widow. She squanders her husband's clothes, certificates, photographs and college entrance papers. He then falls asleep after promising more sexual pleasure later that night. Grieved Jasmine goes to the bathroom and decides to "equate her filth with my (her) death" (Jasmine 117).

Jasmine feels like she has been born again by not committing suicide but Half-Face and is preparing for an upcoming trip to America in search of a new identity. So the first part of the novel is full of pictures and symbols. In America, Jasmine meets Lillian Gordon, a kind Quaker lady who helps her out of compassion. He calls her Jazzy and teaches the art of being an American in his speech and actions. He advises her: "Let the past make you careful, for sure. But don't let it hurt you" (131). Jasmine later travels to New York with a letter from Gordon to her daughter looking for a suitable job. Her visit to the Vadhera area, who was her husband's teacher, gives her a different experience. Her five months living in Flushing were painful and full of despair. Vadheras, being a Punjabi ghetto, does not allow him to enjoy life because he is a widow.

Here, in the Hayes family, Jasmine feels at home. He is surprised to find Taylor helping his wife cook, clean, and put the baby to bed. "The purpose of the chapters of Hayes is to paint in native America as considered by an Indian immigrant. Mukherjee, unfortunately, built on ideas" (Lal 154). Jasmine, in time, became an American and became more confident in her English. But her Indian culture and culture always comes to her mind. For example, when she finds out that Duff is an adopted child, she responds like India:

I could not imagine a non-genetic child. A child who did not belong to me, or to my husband, struck me as a bad idea. Adoption was not uncommon for me as the idea of remarrying a widow. (170)

Jasmine next appears as Jane in the Mid-West (this one) along with a disabled bank official, Bud Ripplemayer. He lives with Vietnamese "Du" from a refugee camp. Ripplemayer's mother helps him get a job at his son Bud's bank as a salesman. He, after six months, becomes a lifelong friend of Bud Ripplemayer. Bharati Mukherjee tries to present his character with many unusual 'family' meanings in order to further the American personality. He is a divorced man living with an Indian immigrant woman Jane in a rented house five kilometers from the city. Asia had changed him and made him careless and emotional. He wanted to close the 50 years of "selfishness", as he called it (14).

Jane loves Iowa because she is so similar to Hasnapur. The farmers here are very polite, never arrogant, irritable and behave in their own way. Jane's love for Bud is growing rapidly. Jasmine spends her personal needs in order to play whatever role Bud wants her to have. He also "emphasizes sexual intimacy so that the paralyzed lover, Bud can feel confident about his manhood" (Lal 155). So to her he is a perfect wife who tries to please her husband in every way. He has no moral barriers and does not feel guilty about his actions. He challenges the comedian who predicted his widowhood. But now she is not a widow. She lives the life of a happy woman by embracing a different culture in her home country, America. He is trying to free himself from his past traditions and his former identity. But he does not forget the memories of the past. He sees his relationship with Bud as follows:

But he condemns me because I am a foreigner. I am darkness, mystery, and unrepentant. The east connects me to the fastest and wisest. I just renew him for being who I am. (200)

One can find significant changes in Jasmine's personality and schooling. Jane-Jasmine is now slowly entering American culture. Jasmine had previously murdered Half-Face by raping her, now living with an American out of wedlock and having her baby. His role as adapter, rebel and survivor is evident. He realizes that the immigrant must live many lives in one life. Mukherjee himself stated:

I have been murdered and reborn at least three times, a righteous young woman who is trained to be and I am very happy, very different from a politically motivated, ruthless human rights activist. I was in Canada, and since the emergency writer I have been a few years ago in the United States. (Lowa update 18)

Mukherjee's description of Jasmine's character to hear the various social and local codes enables her to express her immigration experience in order to integrate with the country's common adoption culture, one has to forget the past. In this way Jasmine has to face a few trials and tribulations:

Fear, anger, pain, resentment, confusion, silence, humor, humor, and pathos - emphasize what he sees as he finds himself an unexplained coordinator between the preservation of the old world and the inclusion of a new one. (Parekh 117)

However, Jasmine's growing sense of isolation and loss of self-esteem in an oppressed world is magnified by her inability to share with Bud's memories of her past, which is a major part of her present identity. Bud Bud avoids talking about his past life. With Du, their adopted Vietnamese son, he tries to retain his identity as an immigrant. "In her past and present exploration and contemplation of her future, she faces the complexity and repetition of her identity as a foreign woman" (Kumar 119). He is thinking about the changes that are reshaping his future:

I still think of myself as a recipe and preserver. I can honestly say everything I wanted to serve, I was allowed to join, but I created confusion and destruction wherever I went. As Karin puts it, I am a tornado. I've hit trailer packs first, prefabs, very weak links. How many situations there are in me, how many behaviors, how many husbands. (Jasmine 215)

Both the main character - Jane and Jasmine - want to unite the past and the present, dreams and reality, India and America into one. You understand that you are an inside-out person, "someone" in America. India itself (wife) has refused to marry Bud. "He is constantly harassed, and tortured, his ghostly ownership He walks between different identities" (Samir Dayal 11). Although Jasmine understands the hidden realities of American life, she also knows India from her character. Eventually, he leaves Bud because of tragic events - Du's departure, Darrel's suicide and finally, Taylor's suggestion. He sees Taylor's choice of India and America:

I do not choose them. I am trapped between the American promise and the operation of the ancient world.... Not a case I hear, its relief.... Sacrifice, danger, change: the border enters the house through unlocked windows. I watched and reset the stars. (Jasmine 240)

These last words expose the power of the invading aliens. Eventually, Jasmine became an American, but she is still Indian. As Malashri Lal notes:

The passport provides immediate legal recognition, does not determine immediate cultural transfer. That fact explains Bharati Mukherjee's predicament and her relentless Jasmine movements. (63)

Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine* is feminine with its voice to rebellious actors not only against ancient superstitions and traditions but also influences the proper balance between culture and modernity. Mukherjee revealed the strengths and weaknesses of *Jasmine* in her quest. *Jasmine*'s position on women's rights is further highlighted in her speech when she leaves Bud. Mukherjee, in this novel, also commends the need for change in the social system that does not recognize young widows like *Jasmine*. With her creative strategy, she can introduce different parts of *Jasmine*'s life. Melanie Kaye comments on this:

Mukherjee's special gift is the montage, the exit movement that creates a bond with the first narrator and the distance from everyone, thus emphasizing the great economy the segregation of immigrants, the product of American opportunity. (*Jasmine* Review 7)

Eventually, *Jasmine* reaches the point of pretending to be real and becomes a real American as her creator and finds peace in the American dream. Thus, *Jasmine* is the story of a foreigner from the Third World to the United States who was uprooted and re-implanted in a foreign land. His main character, Bharati Mukherjee comments on the lack of confidence in America. He says:

In America, nothing lasts longer. I can say that now and it is not scary, but I think it was the hardest lesson for me to learn. We get so excited to read, fix, participate only to get reminders are plastic, contracts are broken. Nothing eternal, nothing so bad, or so wonderful, can be shattered. (*Jasmine* 181).

The novel is an account of adaptability, not defeat. Like his model Bernard Malamud, Bharati Mukherjee shows how one can escape guilt and "become familiar with the patterns of prominent American culture". The center of morality and focus is disputed, just as Thomas Hardy declared his *Tess* a 'pure woman', Mukherjee declares her *Jasmine* as a true woman and a heroic woman.

WORKS CITED

PRIMARY SOURCES

Mukherjee, Bharati. ***Jasmine***. New York: Grove Weidenfield, 1989.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Blaise, Clark and Bharati Mukherjee. **Days and Nights in Calcutta**. New York: Doubleday, 1977.

Connel, Michael Grearson, Jessi and Grimes Tom. "An Interview with Bharati Mukherjee, **Iowa Review** 20, 3, 1990.

Jain, Jasbir. "Foreignness of Spirit: the World of Bharati Mukherjee's Novels. **Journal of Indian Writing in English**, 13, 2, (1985).

Kumar, Nagendra. **The Fiction of Bharati Mukherjee: A Cultural Perspective**. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 2001.

Pathak, R.S. **Indianisation of English Language and Literature**. New Delhi: Bahri Publications, 1994.

Sivaramakrishna, **Recent Indian Fiction**. Pathak R.S. ed. New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1994.

Steiner, George. **Extra-territorial: Papers on Language and Literature** (London: Faber and Faber, 1968).

Woodcock, George. Quoted in 'Mulberry Bush', Canadian Literature, No.107, Winter 1985.