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The Transition From Alienation To Integration In Bharati Mukherjee's Jasmine

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Abstract

Bharati Mukherjee's works focus on the phenomenon of migration, the status of new immigrants, and the feeling of alienation often experienced by expatriates and Indian women and their struggles. The protagonist of Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine* faces the problem of the loss of culture and tries to assume a new identity in the United States. Born into a traditional family as Jyoti, Jasmine is married in her teens to Prakash, an ambitious, bright young man and soon becomes a widow. She rebels against the idea of spending the rest of her life as a destitute widow and decides to go to America. After enduring physical abuse on her way to America, the assertion of her will lays the germ of a fruitful culmination of Jasmine's spiritual quest. The voyage that has transformed her from a chronicler of exile to a champion of immigration, and this paper explains in detail how the protagonist of the novel strives to succeed from alienation to integration.

Keywords: alienation, immigration, women, culture, identity.

1. Introduction

An outsider's encounters are among the significant recurring subjects of non-resident Indian writing in English. Bharati Mukherjee's works centre around the wonder of movement, the status of new outsiders, and the sentiment of estrangement frequently experienced by exiles, just as Indian ladies and their battle. She has received significant fundamental consideration for turning stories of immigrants. She connects great endurance incentives to the capacity to absorb the embraced culture. She praises absorptions, and her champions, specifically in her novel *Jasmine*, as they continue looking for endurance in an outsider culture and go through different changes prompting the development of new subjectivities.

Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine* (1989) is principally a novel of social and cultural transplantation. Not quite the same as Mukherjee's *Wife*, it presents an oppositely inverse image of the one who can be named the 'new woman.' Mukherjee expresses, "This is about a youthful widow who comes illicitly into the United States and makes a renewed person of herself", as Malashri Lal mentions in the *Law of*

the Threshold (151). Jasmine, first presented as the sassy, courageous woman of a short story, is later made with adjustment, the protagonist of a periphery novel. Mukherjee clarifies that:

It is a sort of continuation from Jasmine, one of the short stories in the *Middleman* in which this little youngster from Trinidad functions as a live-in housekeeper young woman. I completed that story, yet the character wouldn't bite the dust. She stayed inside my head. So I changed her identity from Trinidadian to Indian. She's actually changed, yet the embodiment of the character is the equivalent (Lal 151).

The story recounts Jyoti Vijn, born in a Punjab town, who widowed after a bomb attack. At that point, she discovers her way to New York and effectively adjusts to the illicit businesses accessible to such settlers. Jasmine is confronted with the issue of the loss of culture and is trying to accept another identity in the U.S. Throughout numerous exchanges; she gets numerous names, every demonstrative of another stage in her 'Americanization'. The novel's end leaves us with the image of a woman acclimating to American culture.

In *Jasmine*, Mukherjee attempts to disentangle the confounded layers of diverse reality through a progression of undertakings which the protagonist embraces during her odyssey from Punjab to California through Florida, New York and Iowa. Her battle represents the fretful mission of a rootless individual provoked by a painful feeling of confinement in general. The critical outsider in this novel is Jasmine, yet she is a foreigner by decision. Jasmine, naturally introduced to a customary family as Jyoti, is married to Prakash, a yearning, brilliant youngster. Prakash's fervent desire is to make sure about affirmation in some American Institute of Technology. Jasmine defies spending a fantastic remainder as a penniless widow and chooses to go to America. She intends to visit the alleged establishment where Prakash needed to get confirmation and to bum herself a 'sati' on the grounds of that organization. She approaches her siblings to mastermind her vehicle to America on a fashioned visa.

Jasmine leaves for America on fashioned papers, knowing not what the future holds available for her. Jasmine knows about the destiny of her preferences. The state of such workers is portrayed in unprecedented detail:

... we are evacuees and hired soldiers and visitor labourers; you see us dozing in air terminal parlors, you watch us opening up the remainder of our local nourishments, unrolling our supplication floor coverings, perusing our heavenly books, taking out for the 100th time an aerogram promising a work or spot to rest, a paper in our language, a photograph of more joyful occasions, an identification, a visa, a laissez passer (*Jasmine* 100-101).

Her first experience with America is somewhat what Malashri Lai says, "recovery through brutality" (Lal 153). To arrive in America, Jasmine stows in a boat captained by Half-Face. After arriving in America, the boat commander, an appalling individual, Half-Face, mercilessly assaults her. After Half-Face has assaulted her, she wants to kill herself. However, she chooses to live because her main goal is not yet finished. Immediately she understands that she has proved unable. This statement of her will lies the germ of a productive perfection of Jasmine's profound mission.

Sumita Roy, in her *The Fiction of Bharati Mukherjee: Critical Symposium*, says, "Her own shame getting subordinate to this "mission" is a helpful exercise of will which spares her from self destruction and pushes her forward on an excursion of self-discovery and smugness" (Roy 185). Frustrated by the shock, she turns into a genuine "Kali" and executes Half-Face. "In killing Half-Face," composes Samir Dayal, "She encounters an epistemic savagery that is likewise a daily existence certifying change." (71).

Indira believes that “In the midst of the other outsider domestics who drape suspended between the two universes. Jasmine feels pleased that she is getting established in the new world” (170). Be that as it may, despite being in America, Jasmine is attached to Indian ethos, which is clear in her revealing to Duff the account of Nachiketa and Yamma. Furthermore, when Wylie talks out on Taylor, she is stunned and comments:

In America, nothing keeps going. I can say that now, and it doesn't stun me, yet I think it was the hardest exercise to learn...nothing is awful to the point that it won't break down (*Jasmine* 181).

Jasmine has encountered the best snapshots of remaining in America in the organization of Taylor and Duff for a very long time is the most productive time of her life in America, “This period in Jasmine's life is the most tranquil and consoling, sincerely and mentally, in any case, it is a period of moment perceptions of complex internal consultations on, and sharp association in her new climate” (Parekh, *Bharati Mukherjee: Critical Perspective* 113). Jasmine falls pitifully infatuated with Taylor. Jasmine's life in Iowa again starts with her opportunity to meet with Mother Ripplemayer, the Iowan partner of Lillian Gordon. Mother Ripplemayer causes her to find her a line of work in her child Bud's bank. “Her unfamiliarity entrances the fifty year old Bud who views her as a questionable puzzle and feels restored by her Eastern imperativeness and insight” (Indira 171).

Jasmine's development is a determined advance in her Americanization. Her trip to Iowa and her excess as Jane are characteristic of moderate yet consistent drenching into the American culture. “Through her protagonist Jasmine, Mukherjee attempts the critical achievements of a foreigner's last ingestion in a received social milieu” (Kumar 148). Jasmine accepts that on the off chance one needs to acclimate oneself to the traditional culture of the embraced land, one ought to overlook one's past. She accepts that “When we begin letting go...let go only a certain something, as not wearing our ordinary garments, or a turban or not wearing a tika on the forehead...the lay goes all alone “down a sinkhole” (*Jasmine* 29).

Yet, this absorption of Jasmine is not so smooth as Pushpa N. Parekh watches, “Dread, outrage, torment, sharpness, disarray, quiet, incongruity, humour, just as sentiment underline her perceptions as she finds herself the vague middle between the safeguarding of the old world and the absorption into the upgraded one” (Parekh 117). While Jasmine promptly receives the American culture, Du, stays an insubordinate foreigner who refuses to absorb it. In contrast to her, he has attempted to create contact with the other Vietnamese in Baden and keep up his hyphenated character, Vietnamese-American. Jasmine understands that Du can never become a real American because “My change has been hereditary, Du's was hyphenated...he's a mixture like the dream machines that he needs to fabricate” (*Jasmine* 222).

At Iowa, Jasmine is an ideal spouse who attempted to satisfy her significant other by all means and has figured out how to live not just for her better half or for her kids but also for herself. Though Jasmine attempts to receive the American lifestyle yet, as Jaiwanti Dimri comments:

Jasmine has accomplished another personality just through and with the assistance of her social past. She carries passing to Half-Face as goddess Kali, she carries joy to Duff and Taylor as a conventional, generous Indian Woman, and she offers affection to Du as a caring Indian mother who glories in her parenthood (174)

She originates from the third world and is in sharp contrast to America. She always remembers her previous who encroaches upon her detects. “She never-endingly frequents, and is spooky by her spooky personalities ... She carries between contrasting characters” (Dayal 11).

2. Conclusion

The personality of Jasmine has been made to portray Mukherjee's faith in the need to design and evaluate one's self by going past what is given and by rising above one's roots. For Mukherjee, migration - explicitly, migration to America is a crucial step in any transition to redo oneself in the light of one's cravings. Presumably, Jasmine attempts her level best to embrace the American lifestyle and culture; however, she can never confine herself to her Indian past. Sarah Curtis accepts that "Before the end of the book she is practically all American, yet quintessentially she is as yet Indian" (Curtis 436).

Diasporic limits appear to disintegrate as protagonists endeavour to prevail from alienation to integration. Bharati Mukherjee has introduced this part of outsider life well in *The Tiger's Daughter* and *Jasmine*. The novel encapsulates the significant subjects that pulled Mukherjee in as a writer previously and are the peak of the artistic journey that has changed her from a recorder of an outcast to a victor of migration. At her best, she has had the option to bring to her direct experience of outcast, exile, and movement her extensive account aptitudes and an energetic, creative mind to deliver critical and bright stories of the energies just as injuries of changing per another world.

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