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EXILE, EXPATRIATION AND IMMIGRATION IN BHARATI MUKHARJEE'S 'JASMINE'

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ABSTRACT

Bharati Mukherjee's third novel 'Jasmine' commences with the talk of exile which is predicted by the astrologer. The family of Jyoti lives in exile as they are dissociated with their homeland, Lahore and begin to live in Hasnapur Their thought of home coming is a far cry as they are part of the partition. So, the theme of expatriation and immigration are evident in major part of the novel. The basic difference between the two terms of expatriation and immigration is that the former is colored by a feeling of alienation in the host culture while the latter is more positive stance of acceptance and adaptation. Since her childhood Jasmine has been thoughtful about moving to other nations for better career prospects. She is tempted by the talk of better prospects in Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Bahrain from her brothers. But Jyothi's husband, Prakash, has the dream of studying and settling in the USA. Her Masterji, who taught her at school level also encouraged the comparison of other countries for brighter prospects. So, she has taken a firm decision to take the remains of Prakash to the land of his dreams. Since then, till her final merging with American culture what Jasmine attains is a clear exploration of expatriation and immigration.

Keywords: Exile, Expatriation, Immigration, Jasmine

Introduction

Bharati Mukherjee was born in Kolkata, West Bengal, India during British role, she later travelled with her parents to Europe after Independence, only returning to Calcutta in the early 1950's she next travelled to the United States to study at University of Iowa. Joined as professor in the department of English at the University of California, Berkeley. She was the author of a number of novels and short story collections, as well as works of nonfiction.

Jasmine is a novel by Bharati Mukherjee set in the present about a young Indian woman in the United States. Jasmine, which was based on an earlier short story the middle man and other stories, tells the story of a seventeen-year-old girl widowed after her husband's murder in a bomb attack. She and her husband originally planned to move America, but as a result of his death Jasmine continues with the trip on her own. In her path she faces many obstacles as she travels from Florida to Newyork city to Iowa. The novel begins with jasmine telling a story from her childhood about an astrologer who predicts her future as a widower living in exile. She fast forwards to live in Baden, Iowa where Jasmine (known as Jane in Iowa) is 24 years old, pregnant and living with 58-year-old banker Bud Ripple Mayer and his adopted son Du. Bud insists on marrying Jane. Who refuses

for unknown reasons? Bud is also in a wheel chair because he was shot in the back two years ago. Jane and Bud have a neighbor named Darrel Lutz, a recent college grad who inherited his family's farm. He is contemplating whether or not to sell his farm. Bud refuses to loan Quarrel money to expand his hard and grow his cross because Bud doesn't trust Darrel's character as a farmer and a manager. Darrel also shows some romantic interest in Jane.

Jane walks us through her life with Du and Bud before flashing back to her life in Hasnapur, In Punjab. She is known as Jyoti, she has a teacher named Masterji, who teaches her English. Soon after Jyoti's father's passes away, she meets Prakash and marry her. He begins to call her jasmine. Prakash receives a letter from professor Vadhera who encourages Prakash to study in America. He makes plans to move them to Florida, when while out shopping for saris, Prakash is killed try a bomb. As "a matter of duty and honour" Jasmine continues with Prakash's plans to move to Florida travelling by plane, train and ship. Half – face the captain of the ship drives Jasmine to a motel when they arrive to land. He then sexually assaults her. She burns Prakash suit that she carried with her and leaves the motel. Bud begs for Jane to tell him she loves him, but she doesn't respond. Du has decided to stay in California, while Jane is working in the Kitchen, she sees a car pull up the drive away and Taylor and Duff get out of the car. Taylor tries to convince Jane to come with him to California. She is conflicted thinking of bud who will lose everything if she leaves, she calls Karin and tells her she's "going somewhere" to see Du. Jasmine stops thinking of herself as Jane and follows Taylor and Duff to the car, whispering "watch me re-position the stars", to the astrologer who fore told her widowhood and exile.

The state of exile, a sense of loss, the pain of separation and disorientation makes bharati mukherjee's novel, Jasmine. It is a quest for identity in alien land. The protagonist of the nove, undergoes several transformations during her journey of life in America, from Jyoti to Jasmine to jane and often experiences a deep sense of estrangement resulting in a fluid state of identity uprooted from her native land India. Jyoti does her best to introduce herself into the new and alien society as an immigrant. Jasmine shows the most predictable crusade towards Americanization and its obvious uncertainty and without feeding infuriated she survives to make a new start in the host country.

Geographically, the story begins in India and takes off from Europe to America, where it bounces back and forth from Florida through New York to proceed to Iowa, then finally lands in California the novelist deliberately transports her in time and space again and again so as to bring in a sense of stability into the novel. Born in Hasnapur in India, Jyoti has the distinction of being the most beautiful and clever in the family. She is seen against the back drop of the rigid and patriarchal. Indian society in which her life is controlled and dominated by her father and brothers who record female as fellows, "village girls are cattle; whichever way you lead them, that is the way they will go".

Her transformation from a village girl under the shell of her father and brothers to a wife of an American traditional husband who gives her all liberties. Jasmine's happiness is short lived. She is widowed and return to India to her family. She has to now choose between the rigid traditions of her family and perform sati, or continue to live the life of Jasmine in America. Jasmine sways between the past and the present attempting to come to turns with the two world's one of the nativities and the other as an "Immigrant". Hailing from an oppressive and a rural family in India. Jyoti comes to American in search of a more fruitful life and to realize the dreams of her husband, Prakash Jasmine sets off on an agonizing trop as an illegal immigrant to Florida, and thus begins her symbolic trip of transformations, displacement, and a search for identity. The author depicts this transformation and transition as a positive and an optimistic journey.

Mukherjee has explored her theme with its many nuances. The transformation of Jasmine from a semi conducted Punjabi rustic to an American is not psychologically convincing. Perhaps Bharati Mukherjee's purpose of bringing to the contemporary American fiction the reality of the experiences of the floating elements in American society, the immigrant who are trying to establish themselves is fulfilled. It is not easy to overcome the "aloofness of expatriation" or disunite oneself from the roots and tradition of the culture that one comes from thus, caught between the two cultures of the east and west past and present old and new, Jasmine constantly "shuttles" in search of a concrete identity.

The writing of bharati mukherjee focus on the rootless created within the concerned section of the population, a sense of being marginalized and there by leading a sense of otherness within the geo-political

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territory they have migrated to these immigrants are placed in a situation of both mental and physical nuances and effects of a hybrid culture. Mukherjee does not wish to be called an exile or an expatriate because to her acculturation is a process which is the exuberance of assimilation and not the pain of alienation.

Her writings reflect a pain of exclusion while her later ones portray the ability to forge an identity while being also accepted for the new cultural milieu. In her works Mukherjee attempts to delineate the fractal identities of the protagonists. She poignantly depicts the pain of the loss of identity in an alien land.

### **Conclusion**

An Astrologist informed her that she will be widowed and exile on day. The astrologer told the girl that one day she could not challenge the destiny. Bharati Mukherjee has depicted Jasmine's transition as a positive and optimistic journey. Throughout the novel Jasmine re-invents herself. She encounters violence at every step. Jasmine herself describes her journey as "was between my fate and my well". Jasmine has carved out the assimilation of third world immigrants into the American melting pot which is itself enriched by those she describes as "new pioneers" Jasmine ascritic, Deepika Bahri, 1998. Bharati Mukherjee ends the book on a novel note, and reemphasizes the complex and alternating nature of identity of a woman in exile.

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