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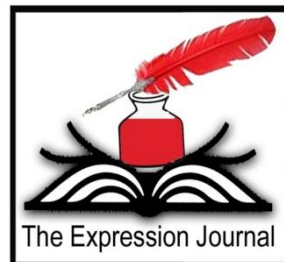
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THE TRAUMA OF ALIENATION AND IDENTITY CRISIS: AN ANALYSIS OF BHARATI MUKHERJEE'S NOVEL *JASMINE*

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Abstract

American-Canadian Indian writer Bharati Mukherjee has achieved milestones through her literary works through which she brings to light the segregation encountered by South Asian immigrants, this research paper aims to explore the transformations with disintegration of her artistic contents. In her works, she uses her own life experiences to highlight how American society is reshaping itself. Focusing on the women characters' struggle for existence, identity painful experiences, and eventual transformation into self-assured, self-opinionated persons freely without fear placed on them is fundamental to her storyline. There is a huge list of diaspora authors, because the roots of diaspora are very extensive. Bharati Mukherjee explores a woman's heterogeneous identity in her seminal novel *Jasmine*. It attempts to convey the protagonist Jasmine's harsh experiences of homelessness, exile, exploitation and oppression. All sincere attempts have been made to critically examine these discourses in the paper.

Keywords

Heterogeneous, Diaspora, Exile, Existence, Identity Crisis,
Homelessness, Alienation.

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Culture has a significant impact on an individual's inter-personal relationships with other people. Throughout history, every culture has developed its own set of meanings based on various practices, beliefs and ideologies. The diaspora's writings help the reader understand the culture's structure. In addition to connecting landscapes, cultural analysis and signs of different expatriate experiences of dislocation from their homeland, cultural diaspora writing also represents the sensible physiological problems between the dislocated people, with a brief interlude dealing with the marginalized through a new attitude of settlement. Bharati Mukherjee was born in Calcutta, India on July 27, 1940. Bharti Mukherjee is a prominent voice of the Indian diaspora in the United States, and she has a plethora of options. In her writings, she embraces a different diaspora identities and focuses on cross-cultural concerns. When it comes to her literary strategy, she focuses on the mobility of cultural boundaries by emphasizing hybridisation, migration, ethnicity and globalisation. A culture is a human being's social inheritance that generates togetherness and communication in a human civilisation. Different ideas and possessions are found in it, which is why it is referred to as tradition. A style of living shared by members of a community that has a common tradition, area, and culture. The cultural and intellectual structure of each human community is unique. A well-known American writer, Bharati Mukherjee is an Indian writer who writes in English. She is a feministic writer who provides women's literature a new voice and a fresh perspective. Even if it's difficult to categorize her fictional work, she has a predisposition for issues relating to identities, multiculturalism, post-colonialism, and globalisation, among other things. According to heterogeneity and globalisation, this study focuses on the cultural assimilation between East and Western culture through the use of Mukherjee's novel *Jasmine*. The term diaspora refers to diffused religious or ethical organizations that have been persecuted, forced or voluntarily migrated from their homeland. The name Diaspora comes from the forced exile of Jews to Babylonia. Any community that has moved to another country in order to accommodate their desire for a quality life is now considered a "foreign" community. Jasmine was seventeen years

old when her husband Prakash was killed in a bomb attack. Throughout the room, Jasmine can hear Prakash's voice encouraging her: "There is no death, only ascending or the descending, passing on to other realms. The fact that Jyoti is dead should not lead you back to Hassanpur and feudalism" (*Jasmine* 86). For this reason, she travels to New York, USA under a completely different identity from her previous one in order to remove herself from Indian feudal system.

All of these changes cannot be brought about by raising slogans alone, but the feminist movement should bring about changes in the approach of this society towards women. Feminism is not just a movement, it is the belief that all of a woman's social, economic, political, and educational rights must be the equivalent. West European feminist movements were born out of opposition to common denominators and established conventions. Reports of women's subjection may be found in every corner of the earth. The novel *Jasmine* shows the path of a woman from scared to fearless. We can discover how an Indian woman from the middle class background grows up to become a confident, self-assured American woman. There is a correlation between diasporic writings and auto ethnography, a genre of writing in which an author is motivated by consciousness integrating the personal to cultural factors. Bharati Mukherjee is an Indian-American writer and professor emirate at University of California's English Department. An Indian woman breaks all the constraints of patriarchy in Bharati Mukherjee's novel *Jasmine*, set in 1980s India. *Jasmine* was inspired by the author's own experience of dislocation and displacement. Salman Rushdie, V.S. Naipaul and Anjana Appachana are all integral members of the Diaspora literature, and their works likewise deal with the issue of multicultural identity and its subsequent crises. 'Identity' is a crucial concern in any country and for any human being because it is both personal and social. A person is nothing if he or she has no identity. Bharti Mukherjee's works are mostly concerned with topics of identity crisis, inclusion, and alienation, among others. *Jasmine*, the novel's main character, has to deal with a number of cross-cultural issues, yet she never gives up. Bharati Mukherjee's work *Jasmine* expresses her feelings of estrangement, adaption of culture, and custom. As Jyoti, Jasmine, Jazzy or Jase are all distinct names for the same person it demonstrates a cross-cultural identification. A young woman named Jasmine embarks on a journey from a small town in India to a foreign country like the United States of America. Tragic events such as murder, rape, and illegal relationships have marred her life journey. Because Prakash wants Jasmine to be fearless, he told her, "You are a little and sweet heady my Jasmine." The whole world's pulse will be quickened by your aroma" (*Jasmine* 77). Praksah is the one who inspires Jyoti to study English and offers Jasmine a unique identity and a fresh future. The Jyoti as she was recognized as in Hassanpur would be shattered, and Ishe would become a different type of metropolitan woman. Then he (Prakash) gave her a new name: Jasmine. When it came to her identity as Jyoti, Jasmine, she was constantly changing.

Jasmine is a novel about immigration and cultural assimilation. Adapting the Americanization experience, Bharati Mukherjee follows the struggles of a young Indian woman as she attempts to forge her own new identity. Ethnicity and assimilation are major concerns for Bharati Mukherjee. *Jasmine's* name is changing constantly depending on her circumstances. Immigrants are compelled to follow the laws of their new home.

As an immigrant, Bharati Mukherjee focuses on a variety of strategies for surviving: deviations, conversion, faultless identity, flexibility, and assimilation to illustrate *Jasmine's* immigrant mindset, she migrates to America after the death of her husband Prakash Vijn and is rescued by Lillian Gordon. She then chooses to escape to Iowa where she lives with her

adopted son Du, Bud, before leaving with Taylor and Duff in pursuit of a new life. When two or more cultures converge, assimilation normally occurs, as Jasmine explains. Jasmine, the novel's protagonist, is an immigrant with a sense of loss, separation anxiety, and perplexity. A fluid identity is the outcome of an intense feeling of alienation for Jyoti, Jasmine, and Jane. As a result of this adventure, a story of brave living, self-identification, and self-assertion is presented. After being displaced from her native land of India, Jyoti makes a heroic effort to integrate herself into the new society. A seventeen-year-old girl named Jasmine, whose story is based on a previous short story in *The Middleman and Other stories*, finds herself widowed after her husband is brutally assassinated in a bomb blast. After the mishap, her mind was scrambled. This nightmare, the darkest phase of her life, took her a long time to overcome. A woman's identity in India is always defined by her relationship with a man. For a woman to be recognized, she needs a hint of masculinity in her appearance. Women's identity remains still a mystery in twentieth century. Her first priority must be to keep the man's name above hers. Having a male around would make her complete. It is seen as an epitome of virtue if a woman holds up the umbrella word of woman in an Indian male-dominated environment. When her husband suddenly died, Jasmine's aspirations of moving to Florida were smashed. And like a phoenix she rises from the ashes and fearlessly embarks on a brand-new journey all by herself. She believes that she is able to support herself on her own. In her journey to discover who she is, she faces a lot of obstacles, yet she never loses her courage and keeps moving forward because life is always unpredictable.

As Jasmine chronicles her early memories, the narrative begins. In the depths of her heart, she remembers how an astrologer foretold her future as a widow confronting exile. A nonlinear narrative style is used to tell the story from the first person perspective. Jyoti, the heroine of Jasmine, is strangled to death by her grandmother because she is the fifth daughter, seventh of nine children. They still see girls as burdens on their families, and she becomes the victim of their prejudice. An umbrella term is required by a woman, a man who identifies her as his property under the protection of his presence. She was born a survivor and a warrior. The fact that Jasmine was a widow and wearing a white sari did not sit well with her. As a widow, they expected her to be humble in her appearance and demeanor. After fighting back against the infanticide, Jasmine becomes a rebellious woman of diverse deeds and personality. Jasmine tries her level best. It is against all odds that she selects the young man who renames her Jasmine, Prakash Vijh, an attractive, clever, and modern young man. She would continue to redesign herself, becoming a new version of herself every other time. Jasmine recounts the story of a young woman's assimilation into American culture and her adventurous journey and personal development on the process between two world identities: "Nativity" and "Immigrant." "I want to be a doctor and open my own clinic in a big city," Jasmine says (*Jasmine* 62). Jasmine, a twenty-four-year-old woman, is born and brought up in Baden, Iowa. Bud Ripplemayer, a handicapped banker, is her elder lover and she lives with him. As well as Du, their adopted Vietnamese son, they share a small home. Jasmine is the woman that replaced Bud's ex-wife Karen in his life. Throughout the story's narrative structure, we get brief flashbacks from her life. She's immersed in the memories of Hassanpur, Punjab, India, where she was raised and educated. In her village, she was known as Jyoti, and she was eager to learn new things. It was suggested that she should go to school, but her family insisted she marry a decent person. Prakash, Jasmine's husband, died in a terrorist bomb blast, but she honors his aspiration by traveling with a fake visa to the United States. In the nearby motel, the trawler's

captain, who had lost an eye and ear in a paddy field in Vietnam, rapes her. When it comes to vengeance, Jasmine plans to kill the captain instead of herself. In Florida, she meets Lillian Gordan, a woman who helps illegal female immigrants, and they become friends. Her daughter Lillian Gordan lends her a hand, as does Lillian's daughter. When Jasmine finds out that Taylor and Wylie Hayes' daughter Duff needs a babysitter, she tries to help out. Taylor renames Jasmine "Jane." In this stage of Jasmine's life, she undergoes a significant metamorphosis. As a professional, she is treated better than as a servant. After a while, Jasmine becomes aware that Taylor is interested in her. Sukhwinder, a hot dog vendor who eloped in terror incident, is one among the people she recognizes.

When a new man enters her life with a new name, she has to go through the transformation process again and resurfaces as Jane by Bud. An additional responsibility of guilt has been added to her as well as heavy load from Prakash's death. Her life in Iowa is driven by frustration and a desire to fit into Karen's love-hate relationship with Jasmine. Jasmine is encouraged to follow her heart by Du, Bud's adopted son. As a sign of love, she receives postcards from Taylor, who travels to Iowa to see her. When Taylor and Duff arrive at Jasmine's door, she recognizes that she is fond of Bud Ripplemayer, but in fact she finds no lover for him. She decides in a short moment to leave Bud and ignore the astrologer's predictions. Women who are highly independent and assertive are seldom accepted all over the world, and Jasmine is no exception of this. She is able to experience a taste of freedom owing to her opportunities of education. In order to achieve freedom, every action involves some risk. Despite the fact that she arrives in America with a false identity and goes through several periods of life, she never gives up and keeps moving forward with enthusiasm, without allowing herself to be constrained by anything. Taking full control of her life, Jasmine is ecstatic. Jasmine's search for identity is much more internalized than that of the English people, who always acknowledge India's inferior, ignorant, unethical, and backward strata. She takes on a range of responsibilities as a woman, including a more free Indian wife with Prakash, a couple in an apparently idyllic family with the Hayeses, and a modern woman with a job at a bank and an adopted child with Bud, among others. It has been said by her that we(women) should murder themselves in order to rebirth themselves in the images of dreams. Jasmine only mentions this to Du's instructor because she is unable to grasp the attitude of these white folks who have issues with immigrants. To adapt a newfound identity and culture, every immigrant must give up his/her cultural identity. How and why do Europeans harbor such a subtle racism in their hearts? "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 another" (*Jasmine* 26). Jane's comment demonstrates a blend of acceptance and restlessness. Why does she want this new chapter of her life to be uneventful? She's Bud's partner, and she's the mother of an unborn child.

In her event with Jyoti and Jasmine, when she feels like she is floating between the traditional and modern world, Jasmine maintains the morals and cultures of two distinct worlds. As a result of this, Jasmine meets Lillian Gordon, with whom she begins her assimilation loop by learning how to become American. A young girl named Jazzy is raised by Lillian Gorden who teaches her American etiquette. This new environment has her scrambling to get use to the customs. She felt like a stone speeding through mist, unable to take hold or to show herself, but unwilling to let go of the journey she was undergoing. The only one who

knows where she would end up was God. Again, another life is transformed. She tries to distance herself from her Indian heritage and forget about her history.

The novel *Jasmine* explores the themes of immigration and conversion in the narrative. As an Americanized cultural identity, it's compatible with the rest of the world. Jasmine is a rebel, a survivor, a warrior, and an adaptor in the faces of the astrologer's predictions and predictions. Jasmine, Jazzy, and Jane accompany her on her trip through life, taking her from Hassnapur to Jallundhar, Florida, New York, Iowa to California. As Jasmine points out there were no innocuous, sympathetic ways to reinvent oneself. So that they could rebirth themselves in the image of dreams, they murder themselves. Bharati Mukherjee does not reveal the protagonists' inner thoughts, instead focusing on the conflict that Americans have to overcome in order to relate with one another. From an immigrant's point of view, the novel describes American life as it is seen by those who have come to the country legally or illegally.

A country girl who comes from a tense and insecure background becomes a fierce and liberated Americanized lady in Mukherjee's novel *Jasmine*. Bharati Mukherjee has first-hand knowledge of the vibrancy of immigrant life. In order to survive, the immigrant must integrate into the dominant cultural norms. She undergoes the process of becoming Jazzy-Jane so that she might become accepted in the new culture. In the process of transitioning and assimilating into American culture, Jasmine discovers who she really is. However, Jasmine never ignores the Indian values and cultures, but instead protests against the Indian customs and conventions which discriminate against women. She's also disgusted by the moral exploitation of America, which she finds deplorable. Hence, the definitions of cultural integration are studied through an Asian-life American's experience as an immigrant. It is through this novel that Bharati Mukherjee illustrates the diversity of assimilation between immigrant households. When they try to maintain the standards of their own ethnic culture, they must adjust to the customs of the dominant US culture.

Bharati Mukherjee, a writer and a filmmaker, delineates Jasmine as a phoenix who emerges from Jasmine's ashes. If it's killing a rabid dog in Hassnapur or traveling the world as an illegal immigrant, she's equal to the challenge! Instead of being a symbol of vulnerability, the protagonist in this narrative is one of determination and strength and endurance that lead her to her new version of life, a new lease of life. An image of immigrants from third-world nations attempting to establish themselves in a culturally diverse environment has been created by author Bharati Mukherjee in an engaging manner. As a survivor, Jasmine is an essential part and instance of the modern, independent woman who refuses to conform to patriarchal stereotypes. A new world of new ideas, principles, attitudes and beliefs is continually being created by Jasmine to erase her past. Through new desires, she tries to establish herself in a new cultural identity. Because she was born in India, Bharati Mukherjee's writing focused on the battle for survival and cultural integration rather than the longing for home and sense of alienation. But in a heterogeneous global environment, she argues, cultural assimilation is not only desired, but necessary. As a consequence, it's evident that her concept of immigrant encompasses a voyage from one world to another, a change in culture, and adjustment to a new global civilization. Recognizing another culture, their way of life, and their way of life is essential in a globalized world. If you want to be truly democratic, multicultural and resistant to other religions, political ideologies, and lifestyles, you have to let go of your ethnic identity. With *Jasmine* as an example, Bharati Mukherjee's novel provides an alternative view on today's cosmopolitan world.

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