



Feminine psyche in India (Bharati Mukherjee's Jasmine)

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Abstract

Post-freedom writing uncovers the lady's mission for her personality leading to several issues. Ladies authors in India effectively embraced the anecdotal mode to manage different social and mental issues. Bharati Mukherjee endeavored to extend ladies as the focal figure in her books. The female heroes are for the most part ladies ethnic ladies who relocate from India to America. They think that it's troublesome to split away from the ties of their parent country, and are believed to be nostalgic all the time. There is a yearning to have a superior existence. Their perspective on America is that it is a country that praises freedom, receptiveness, and independence, and anybody including a foreigner, can positively prevail throughout everyday life. Be that as it may, reality ends up being distinctive because the encounters of the ethnic ladies are unpleasant. They are presently in the problem of whether to stay in America and keep on affliction or get back to their local land where life may not be as indicated by their assumptions. Their predicament brings about a feeling of personality emergency. These individuals are mentally influenced. Their physical and mental assets are tested by each new involvement with America. This paper centers around the personality emergency and mental injury gone through by the female heroes of Mukherjee's books.

Keywords: ethnic ladies, assumptions, estrangement, new experience, the feeling of an outcast, mental sufferings

Introduction

"Woman" has been the urgent topic of writing everywhere in the world. Ladies, who are likewise makers of Writing, establish a significant piece of contemporary fiction by zeroing in commonly on the part of ladies in society. This is valid for Indian English fiction as well. Ladies scholars in India effectively embraced the anecdotal mode to manage the "woman-subject": their job, position, and status in the public arena. These "women novelists" raised their voices on such subjects by mentally examining the mind of their characters. Henceforth, the lady introduced in contemporary writing is not the same as the prior one regarding actual and mental necessities of a lady as an "individual". The female heroes of Bharati Mukherjee's prior books are described by their rootlessness furthermore, their insufficiency to have a place; while even their endeavors to discover roots are either weak or ridiculous. Mukherjee is an ostracized author who says she is "expounding on the present time and place of America". The Diaspora reasonableness comes through in the compositions of Bharati Mukherjee. She has set up herself as an amazing individual from the American scholarly scene. Her books and short stories have been consistently winning recognition in abstract circles. The primary subject all through her compositions spin round the state of Asian Diaspora with specific consideration regarding the progressions occurring in South Asian ladies in the new world. Her works manage issues radiating from the experience with the world external the country. Changes in the planet's situation induced huge developments of individuals everywhere in the world. The world progressively changed into a "global village". Development across the world presented a bunch of difficulties. With this, multifaceted awareness has likewise accepted incredible importance in the current universe of globalization, talking about ensuing pressures of variations and osmosis. The excruciating experience of confinement, feeling of

banishing, emergency of personality, and endeavors to bond with embraced lands uncover English writing with multifaceted stories. These stories are united into a bound together entire, by and large, alluded to as "Diaspora" works. The stories of multifaceted conflicts have set up "Diaspora studies" as a scholarly field in the late 20th century. In writing, the term "Diaspora studies" is aligned with works created by a universally scattered local area of journalists unyieldingly composing on their encounters abroad. Sentimentality, misfortune, double-crossing, and obligation are the establishments of new homes as diasporic Indian heroes acclimate to new nations. In changing by new homes abroad issues of assimilation and/or osmosis become the point of convergence as outsiders and first or second era Indians arrange the un-equilibrium of their hyphenated characters. Bharati Mukherjee's Jasmine opens in-country Punjab of the 1980s against the bigger scenery of the compromising thunderings of arising fundamentalist savagery of the Lions of Punjab or BabbarKhalsa development. A vile astrologer's sensational prediction of widowhood and outcast for seven-year-old hero Jyoti Vihh haunts her.

Research Methodology

A couple of years later, it seems that there is no escaping destiny, when her engineer husband, preparing to leave for higher education in America is killed by a terrorist bomb. Jyoti has two choices, either she can quietly submit to her fate or she can find another way. She packs her bags, acquires a false passport, and leaves for America. Her perilous passage and journey through America transform her from a shy, village girl into an intrepid woman "greedy with wants and reckless from hope". She arrives in New York, settles in, initially as a home-help, with Taylor and his daughter Wylie. One day she spots the terrorist who killed her husband and flees to Iowa. In Iowa, she marries a

banker, Bud and they adopt a Vietnamese boy. Bud is semi-paralyzed by a shooting incident. In the end, a heavily pregnant Jasmine leaves Bud to head west with Taylor: she acknowledges, "I am not choosing between men. I am caught between the promise of America and old-world dutifulness". (240) The promise of America is self-evident in the literary pioneering trope invoked of heading West. The "old-world dutifulness" Jyoti flees is an exoticized India embodied in the astrologer and Jyoti escapes him, her destiny, and India itself. This fleeing is but the first of her many attempts to run away from her past. The astrologer's prediction marks her with all the overtones of the mark of Cain and the scarlet letter but it is re-configured in another exotic trope of the third eye of the god Shiva. This third eye gives Jyoti insight, wisdom, and the courage to escape her destiny. In her construction of India, it is a site of violence and terrorism, of both fundamentalists and the state. Escape and rejection can be read as both inevitable and almost necessary. There are no redeeming features to India, Jyoti leaves behind, and her desperate desire to assimilate and buy into the American advertisement slogans of "be what you want to be" and "just do it" are not merely condescending but dismissive and judgmental of other immigrant realities such as those of the Wadehra family that initially give her refuge in New York. But Jyoti, and to an extent, Mukherjee herself, does not see this. Mukherjee's New York Times essay "Two Ways to Belong in America" portrays her assimilation as a choice but does not see her sister's desire not to assimilate her insistence to retain her "resident alien" status as an equally valid choice. Changing appearances or names are suggested as a possible path of escape from Indianness. Jasmine's name changes are problematic as both an Indian and as a woman. Jyoti's name changes, however, cannot be read as conscious acts of agency. She avers, "My grandmother may have named me Jyoti, Light but in surviving I was already Jane, a fighter and adapter" (40). Each of Jyoti's name changes is instigated by the various men in her life. She is the first to acknowledge, "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" (97). Each new name signals a particular man's vision of what he wants her to be. Jyoti's marriage to Prakash is not arranged nor does he have a family who forces their will upon her, yet she lovingly recounts her transformation from Jyoti to Jasmine: He [Prakash] wanted to break down the Jyoti I'd been in Hasanpur and make me a new kind of city woman. To break off the past, he gave me a new name: Jasmine. He said, "You are small and sweet and heady, my Jasmine. You'll quicken the whole world with your perfume" (77). For Mukherjee, despite the violence inherent in a word like "break down", the name change is seen as transformation. In Prakash's desire to remold Jyoti from a rural to an urban woman, there is an unquestioned rejection and dismissal of rural values as backward and superstitious that holds women down. The educated, urban, English-speak-America will rescue and transform the Indian village girl and make her worthy compassion for him. The myth of the urban Indian male rescuer seamlessly replaces the myth of the white knight in shining armor of colonial times. In Iowa, as banker Bud's "Jane", Jasmine defiantly asserts that "plain Jane" is all she wants to be because "plain Jane is a role, like any other". But she recognizes that the real reason for playing this particular role is that her foreignness frightens him. The

foreignness is a double-edged sword that can frighten and intrigue. She acknowledges that Bud courts me because I am an alien. I am darkness, mystery, inscrutability. The East plugs me into instant vitality and wisdom". (200) Jasmine/Jane manipulates the Orientalist mystique to work for her in a way. Yet, what does "foreign" mean here? The reader is left wondering if Jasmine has become foreign not only to Bud but also to herself. Is the foreignness a threat even to her because she does not recognize her new self or is it because of her location in a context that marks her as so other? In diaspora novels, both women and men see duty and Indianness as synonymous but, for women especially, Indianness is inseparably intertwined with notions of sexuality and independence. New homes and countries seem to promise freedom. But unmoored from old homes and ideas of duty, however, often seem to cast them adrift on a sea of empty loneliness. The contradictory impulses of flight and anchor complicate diaspora homes. Jasmine understands that "There are no harmless, compassionate ways to remake oneself. We murder who we are so we can rebirth ourselves in the images of dreams" (29). Violence is inherent both in Jasmine's departure from India and her arrival in America and so she cannot conceive of a remaking of the self without the murder of the old Jyoti/Jasmine. In Mukherjee's vision, even the liberal and entrepreneurial post-colonial Indian male, Prakash, does not measure up. He cannot save himself from the dark forces of destiny let alone rescue or elevator. Dimple is helplessly caught in a gripping quest for a new female American identity. For Dimple a happy guiltless amalgamation seems impossible. What goes inside her is a simultaneous fracturing and evolving of identity. If she had remained a housewife living with her extended family in India, she probably would not have asked herself questions regarding her happiness, freedom, identity, and liberation. In India she experienced a comfortable but restricted existence. For Dimple the loss of old culture is not an exhilarating experience. Freedom from the bonds of caste, gender, and family instead of turning her free, leave her utterly lonely and desolate. An attempt to immerse herself in a strange but exciting world gives rise to a host of questions in Dimple's mind. This causes misunderstanding and confusion. She confronts a different set of conditions that pose a challenge and adventure. She becomes a prisoner of the ghetto in Flushing Queens. Unable to accept the contradictions of this existence, Dimple descends into depression, madness, and murder. She also finds that it is not easy for a young woman like her, born and bred up in a very different environment, to adjust to the American ways. The cultural and social gulf dividing the two worlds is too vast and deep for her to bridge over. The frustrations of her lonely and dull existence in the apartment make her depressed and neurotic. Thinking she is ready to venture forth in America, she finds that she is not prepared for it and in no time gets depressed and dejected. Despite all her attempts, she experiences total estrangement from herself and her surroundings. The multicultural reality leads to a variety of new exposures in the new world but does not deny the past affiliations. She tries to reconcile the Bengali ideal of a perfect, passive wife with the demand of her new American life. She takes a drastic step at the end to get away from the cultural maladjustment that enmeshes her. She is driven to an aggressive behavior after becoming conscious that she is a misfit in both the cultures, the adopted Western culture and the Bengali cultures, the desperate to leave

behind. The Indian woman, when facing an unfamiliar cultural environment, has problems that take unpredictable turns. Having nothing and nobody to fall back upon, she has to tackle her problems by herself. Dimple caught up in a cross-cultural dilemma, has to be her saviour. In trying to adapt to American society she is portrayed as rootless. She belongs to nowhere at the end of the story. Through *Jasmine and Wife*, Mukherjee comments on the lives of the female immigrants from Third World countries and their attempt to adjust to a fast-paced American society. A close experience of the Western and Eastern worlds gives her an authentic and unbiased perspective of these cultural codes. An attempt to immerse in a strange but exciting world gives rise to a tumult of questions in the human mind. This causes misunderstanding, confusion, and incomprehension in the mind of the female protagonists. Diaspora is confronted with different sets of conditions that pose a kind of challenge and adventure. The colliding worlds of their exile and immigrants spawn some psychological glitches that merge into one another to form a curious blend of cross-cultural consciousness.

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