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Identity predicament and search for values in Bharati Mukherjee's Jasmine

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Abstract--Identity is fundamental to each and every human being because it is the means by which a person locates himself or herself in society and culture. In the case of immigrants, nevertheless, many of them face identity crises as part of their integration into the host community. 'Jasmine,' by Bharati Mukherjee, is the narrative of an Indian rural girl who immigrates to America and faces many identity crises in order to find her place in American culture. This dissertation delves into Jasmine's journey of changing identities and also how she arises as both a survivor and a successful immigrant in America. It also explains why these various identities are so important to her survival as an immigrant.

Keywords--identity, transformations, immigrant, survival, predicament.

Introduction

Bharati Mukherjee is a writer who explores the meaning of life via her novels. Mukherjee's writings are mostly concerned with issues related to women. She primarily focuses on women and manages the issues of the Indian workers. The battle of worries and terrible problems by Indian women are illustrated by her. The issue of cross-cultural crisis and an identity for personality is likewise one of her authoritative subjects. Similarly, her writings reflect the current American society's personality and state of mind as observed by Indian immigrants in America. The problems of adjustment faced by the Indians in the West are illustrated by Bharati Mukherjee. Her works project the descriptions of Indians, who look for a superior life, and challenge the issues of adjustment and survival. Additionally, Mukherjee delineates the social conflict between the East and the West. At one stage, when a person leaves his/her own country of life and goes into another culture, his/her unique culture collides with the new culture one, unlimitedly which she finds in the outsider land. This social transformation leads to identity predicament of a person. As migrants are torn between two distinct communities, the search for identity becomes critical and unquestionably necessary in their lives.

Search for identity has a extensive implication and it is shown to survive against all odds. Identity on language and culture are a standout among the most critical influences in the life of a man. In *Jasmine*, Bharati Mukherjee takes up the subject identity crisis. She composes how the female hero attempts to handle the concern of hurt of culture and tries to project character in the U.S. in addition, the female protagonist Jasmine abandons her nation to satisfy her desires. On reaching U.S., she starts to search for self-freedom and new identity. However, she works hard to attain it, and eventually realizes that her new identity is not to be an Indian or an American. Previously, it was to find pleasure in herself. Jasmine, the heroine of *Jasmine*, has been searching for her identity from the day she was born. Eighteen years after the Partition Riots in that area, she was born as Jyoti in the town of Hasnapur in the Jullandhar province of Punjab.

Jasmine investigates the Americanization process and highlights the tension between assimilation and cultural preservation. It is a moving narrative of survival, expediency, concessions, losses, and the adaptations that come with acculturation to American life. Jasmine was an unwelcome addition to the family because she was the fifth child and the seventh of nine children. Her mother wanted her to be killed when she was born because she did not want her daughter to go through the agony of India's dowry system.

She was nearly strangled to death as a girl child so that her parents might liberate her from the troubles of marriage; nonetheless, she escaped that assault. Jasmine never let go of her childhood memories, and she never forgot them. An astrologer predicted her widowhood and exile when she was just seven years old. She was, nevertheless, unconcerned about her fate. She made an effort to rise

above irrational beliefs and superstitions in general. Bharati Mukherjee deserves credit for changing a country girl into the goddess of strength and demonstrating that women are not meek and subservient by nature, but rather strong-willed and outspoken. Her quiet protects the most powerful storm within her, and when it comes to personal dignity, she, like the goddess, can punish the wrongdoer as well as slay and finish the most powerful demons. She also exposes the society's excruciating wicked side, in which the other ex becomes a devil when it comes to physical fulfilment. At one place, Jasmine says:

“For the first time in my life I understood what evil was about. It was about not being human....It was a very simple, very clear perception, a moment of truth, the kind of understanding that I have heard comes at the moment of death.” (Jasmine, P. 116)

When Beulah's spouse was destined to die to snakebite on their wedding night she thought it is fate. Even in adolescence, she realized that she could battle, win all fights and build up a solid personality. Jasmine, as a result of her religious and cultural upbringing, has been conditioned to believe in fate. Regardless of Jyoti's quality and certainty, she was undermined by dangers, obstacles, and various impediments on her path to individuality. Despite her capacity to understand concepts of power and control, she was educated by the society into which she was born. Furthermore, this was the primary reason that she chose to conceal her own self more often than not and conform to the images shaped by others. Her fathers' announcement that brilliant women are bearing splendid children, that is nature's outline, she outrages her dad by uncovering her desire that she need to wind up a Doctor.

At the same time, Jyoti's father's unwillingness to obey regulations did not deter her from conveying a small bit of her wish or desire. She realised a little part of her vision when she started staring at Prakash, an extraordinarily young and promising designer. He needed Jyoti to lose her past and become a different kind of woman. Prakash needed to isolate Jyoti in Hasnapur and transform her into a different type of city woman. To dissolve the past, he gave her another name: Jasmine which was the start of another trip for her. Jasmine marries a contemporary Indian guy in the end. On the surface, her existence appears to be nothing more than a break with tradition, a trade of new values for old. Jasmine additionally dealt with her husband's driving aspiration. At that point she understood that she also could battle to demonstrate the forecast which had been following her strides since her youth which she had been endeavoring to flee from it. Renamed as Jasmine, she was anticipating going to America with her better half to seek after his further instruction. She was sharing the desire of her husband cheerfully. Nevertheless, her husband Prakash was murdered by the fundamentalists – the Khalsa terrorists on the eve of their journey to USA. Jasmine felt distressed and upset, and her fantasy was destroyed and shattered as a result. Rather than spend the rest of her life as a helpless widow in Hasnapur, she elected to travel to America and confer Sati after arriving at the University where her husband was anticipated to study. It was a way for her to express her wrath at breaking her husband's fantasy. In such a situation, her internal will helped her achieve her main purpose efficiently.

At that point, Jasmine went to America on a forged passport. She cleared out India to get by against the powers of fate, however shockingly her American

journey started on a tragic note. Half-Face, who had lost an eye, an ear, and the most of his cheek in a paddy field in Vietnam, assaulted her. Half-Face was the Captain of the ship that brought Jasmine to America. Half-Face attacked Jasmine in an inn in America at the same time. After Half-Face assaulted she did not want to kill herself as she felt that her main goal was not yet finished. Furthermore, she slaughtered Half-Face by getting to be Kali personified, the Goddess of Destruction. She additionally played out a sort of death for her by consuming her shamed garments emblematically. It was just the death of her old self and the birth of a new one. Jasmine was reborn not by murdering herself, but by completing a half-confrontation. As a result, she embarked on her journey to America. Jasmine's voyage to America to achieve her goal spawned her interior search — to discover her true self and identity. She takes on the shape of the furious goddess Kali. She stretches out her tongue and slashes it, the blood spilling out creating the ideal picture of the goddess of destruction. She kills the demon and becomes concerned for a little period, at which point she reacts:

No one to call to, no one to disturb us. Just me and the man who raped me, the man I had murdered. The room looked like a slaughter house, blood has congealed on my hands, my chin, my breast...I was in a room with a slain man, my body blooded was walking death, death incarnate. (Jasmine, P. 119)

Jasmine was present day young woman who challenged the difficulties of life strongly and battled hard to make due despite all evils. At the time, Jasmine met Lilian Gordon, who became an expectation in her life. Mrs. Gordon was the one who taught her, persuaded her to let go of her former memories, and strengthened her determination to live. She proceeded to visit Professor Vadhera, who assisted Prakash in anchoring affirmation in a designing course, with her guidance. She first stayed at Professor Vadhera's house. In any event, Jasmine was perplexed when she found that Mr. Vadhera made his money by teaching and exchanging human hair. She was not procuring by the rigid ethnicity in the home she had to follow as a widow. Consequently, she chose to go out and this move demonstrated that self-realization was creating in her life.

It may be because of the cultural assimilation to the American mindset and dressing. That was a challenge made by Jasmine not against Indian culture but rather against its retentiveness. Before long, Jasmine acted as a parent figure to Tylor and Wylie Hayes's little daughter Duff in Manhattan. Her name was changed from Jasmine to Jase there. While acting as a parent figure, she also worked in low-wage jobs like as answering phones and teaching graduate students in Punjabi at the University. She devoured the strange culture with zeal. Jasmine had developed a personality and was quite self-assured about it at this point in her life. The tug between these two opposing powers, the Indian and the American, did not frighten her, but instead stimulated her. Regardless of whether alternate migrants stayed suspended between these two powers, Jasmine was glad that she could acclimatize the new culture.

The foreign country instructed her to live effortlessly and certainty, disregarding her shaky personality Jasmine gave her care and love to those individuals who required her and who accepted and helped her. Taylor helped Jasmine particularly independent of what she was. After his significant other Wyle left him, he felt that he required enthusiastic help and admitted his adoration to

Jasmine. She was overpowered by his genuineness and delicacy and turned out to be nearer to him. Her settler status did not give any prevention to the enthusiastic bond between them. Another milestone in Jasmine's life was when she cleaned out Taylor and Duff out of dread and worry due to the proximity of Sukhawinder, the Khalsa psychological oppressor who executed Prakash in India. At that moment, she travelled to Iowa and met another advocate, Mrs. Ripplemayer, who served as her mother. She obtained a job at a bank in Iowa. She also persuaded Bud Ripplemayer to take a position in the broker's core.

Jasmine had a serene life in Bud's home. She was upbeat of landing another position and of her status as a stage mother to Du, a sixteen-year old Vietnam War casualty embraced by Bud. Bud was isolated from his Karin and his adult children had abandoned him. There she accepted another character and she moved toward becoming Jane from Jase. She viewed herself as an stimulus and not the explanation behind the separation of Bud and Karin. Inhumanity struck her life again after a disappointed rancher shot, Bud from a point clear range which left him injured midriff downwards. Jane served him affectionately and caringly after he was disabled. She endeavored to comfort him and make him certain. Furthermore, she wound up pregnant conveying Bud's tyke, nevertheless, did not wish to wed him she influenced Karin to comprehend that she was not her foe but rather it was Bud's satisfaction that made a difference to them two.

Jane had a peaceful life in the American family; however she was sitting tight for real love. At that point abruptly she got a letter from Taylor informing her that he would shortly come to take her. Similarly, it was an unforeseen pleasure for her. She was stressed over the effect on Bud when Du chose to go to California and remain with his sister and her family. She understood Du's predicament since she, too, was an outcast, and she broke the news to Bud gently. Taylor returned to her life at that point and persuaded her that leaving Bud would not be a mistake. At that point, she quit Bud's life and agreed to run with Taylor and Duff as a caregiver. Until now, she had been fulfilling her commitment to others, but now she was thinking about her admiration and herself. She felt no remorse and simply did what she thought was proper for her. Jasmine's craving need to make the best choice would prefer not to be an appalling individual demonstrated that she didn't feel regretful and never again was thinking of herself as Jane. She had survived the most noticeably bad piece of her life in America and now was allowed to influence her to put in Taylor's life. Jasmine had a sense of relief at leaving Bud as opposed to feeling remorseful. She was upbeat of doing what she had been wishing to do from quite a while back. It can be seen that finally Jasmine was out of bonds and had picked up her actual self. Henceforth, Bharati Mukherjee's Jasmine is the development of Jasmine's life towards accomplishing genuine character.

Conclusion

The voyage to America is part of the quest for authentic self. Despite the fact that the protagonist goes through the worst events of her life, she overcomes the hurdles and achieves self-awareness and a new identity, ultimately overthrowing her previous existence. Jasmine, the female hero, repositions her stars in the welcomed nation by choosing to remain as a maternal figure to Duff, from whom

she derives her genuine tranquilly. Jasmine is a conqueror at every stage of her life; she does not allow her inconveniences and conflicts to stymie her progress through life, and she is making a name for herself in the general public. At the end of the day, she is a true women's activist who tackles every challenge in life in order to establish herself in the public eye. The genuine identity of a person, according to Jasmine, does not lay in being an Indian or an American, but in the individual's inner soul to be at peace with her. Bharati Mukherjee has used transformational changes in Jasmine's life as she searches for her actual identity.

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