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**TRANS CULTURALISM IN BHARATHI MUKHARJEE'S JASMINE**

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Abstract

Diaspora refers to the migration of people from their homelands. Contemporary Diasporic literature deals with issues such as Transnationalism, Diaspora, Hybridity and Identity crises. These issues are reflected in many Indian Writers. Bharati Mukherjee an Indian writer from West Bengal is a significant Diaspora writer settled in America. She attempts to bridge the gulf between the homeland and adopted land. Bharati Mukherjee concepts of Americanness are an outlook on the life that is overtly reflected in the personality of Jasmine, the protagonist of the novel "Jasmine". This paper highlights the culture religion and society of the homeland in different characters in the novel to the same in the host land of different characters under the study namely U.S.A. The focus is on the East-West Encounter by the characters in the home country.

Keywords: *Americanisms, Diaspora, hybridist, and transnationalism.*

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Diasporic studies originated from Jewish diaspora and it forms the basis of all immigrant literature. The term Diaspora is used for people those who immigrate and live as communities outside their homeland. Diasporic literature addresses various issues such as the quest for Identity, duality, trans culturalism, hybridization, transition, assimilation. Mukherjee's characters illustrate the existing cultural difference, racism, marital conflicts and dilemma of acculturation and assimilation.

Issues related to women are the central vision of Mukherjee. She deals with tribulation of Indian immigrants mainly women. The predicament of cross-cultural crisis and ultimate search for identity is also one of her signature themes in her novels. In Jasmine, the bold events had permitted the protagonist transformation from ill-fated village girl, Jothi to self-confident emancipated American women. Jothi was born in Hasnapur village in Punjab. She fights with her destiny which unfolds itself when some unexpected events like strangulation by her mother being a fifth girl, to liberate her from harms of marriage. Her childhood memories became an instrument in changing her identities several times so that she can live up to the culture she

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thrusts herself into. Jothi falls in love and marries Prakash, a very young and ambitious engineer. He wanted to change the identity of Jothi to Jasmine and was looking forward to settling in America. Unfortunately, Prakash was killed by terrorists. This incident shatters Jasmine's dream and she is discouraged. Finally, she determines to go to America on a Fake Passport. In America Jasmine faces many challenges courageously and struggles hard to survive against all likely odds. She changes her identity in the journey of her life with different characters in America and America taught her to live with straightforwardness and self-confidence. She realizes that the true identity of a person does not lie in being an Indian or American, but lies in the inner strength of mind of the person to be peace within herself. She is a true feminist who confronts in life to ascertain herself and her identity in the society.

This paper aims at studying the author's treatment of eastern and the western culture, religion, and society through different characters in the novel. The focus will be on the issues of Diaspora and settlement faced by different characters in different countries where they migrate.

The journey of Jasmine directly deals with the subject of immigration and in the process offers an insight into the issue of Transmigration. With the death of Prakash, Jasmine's husband in the hands of terrorists, who plans to lead a Joyful life in America shatters at once. She refuses to lead a destitute widow life in Hasnapur. So, she seeks help from her brothers to arrange for settlement in America on a forged passport. She travels by plane to Amsterdam to create her own identity. Transmigration begins: " We are the outcasts and deportees, strange pilgrims visiting outlandish shrines, landing at the end of tarmacs, ferried in old army trusts where we are roughly handled and taken to roped off corners of waiting rooms where surely, barely waken, barely wakened custom guards await their bribe. Jasmine's way to America is characterized by distressing experience, the first and the worst, in a long series of adoption which requires her to manage ethics in order to survive. The conversion of identity from obedient submissive widow to self-confident and individualistic American women is in full swing. Jasmine crystalizes her dream of becoming American by fighting against all odds.

The journey of the protagonist from India to the U.S. and shift from one culture to the other in the course of living, change of culture and multiculturalism makes up the important themes of Jasmine. The very typical aspect of multiculturalism in the novel appears to be the cause and effect of the other. A careful analysis with an introspective and critical view, it appears that multiculturalism has a great role in Jasmine's journey from India to the United States. The protagonist, Jothi is a beautiful and intelligent child in her family. The way she has been controlled by the male members of her family and reveals the side of male dominance over the female in Indian families. Jothi's life is also controlled by her father or brothers.

Cultural changes in various forms are also revealed through the events in the novels. Early marriage is still a part of the culture in some parts of India. Yet, Jothi has a mind characterized by the new way of thoughts usually young generations in most cultures do. Jothi does not refuse to marry Prakash, who was raised in a culture that does not believe in the dowry system. He is a man who is based in the U.S.A and has a modern way of thinking.

We get a glimpse of Trans culturalism through the journey of Jasmine in the novel. When Jasmine falls down out of shock, hunger, and weariness in America, Mrs. Lillian Gordon meets her and gives her a new life. Jasmine is ready for next recreation as Jazzy and lets herself be refashioned by Lillian Gordon, whose assignment in life is to help aliens who service in America. She gives her mental strength to Jasmine. "Now remember, if you walk and talk American, they will think you were born here. Most Americans can't imagine anything else" (134-135). She is not Jasmine, the city girl anymore.

She is Jazzy, the American illegal immigrant, full of promises and possibilities. Thus Jasmine undergoes transformation by readily accepting the American culture to make her dreams come true.

The second instance of immigration in Jasmine's life seems to have much to do with culture and also with multiculturalism. The time that Jasmine had spent in the U.S.A with Prakash had made her adapt to a western culture that is not at least, as superstitious as that of India. When Jasmine returns from U.S.A to her family in India, she has to choose either performing "sati" according to the rigid tradition of her family or to lead the life of Jasmine in America. Now she chooses to become an illegal immigrant to Florida symbolizing her journey of transformations, displacements, and shift of identities. Jasmine's journey towards western culture begins as her identity as a typical Hindu widow as she meets people like Taylor or Bud. Her identities as 'Jase', as Taylor called her, and as 'Jane' as Bud called her, are not reflections of her shifting identities but also her shedding one culture and adapting the other.

The way the character of Jasmine has portrayed, especially her role as an immigrant to the United States, Jasmine seems to be representative of immigrants to the United States from the East. However, the attitude and outlook towards life that Jasmine has, makes her stand out as a unique character, deserving to be the protagonist of the novel.

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