



# Domesticating and Reinventing Identity and Space in Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine*

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**Abstract**— Bharati Mukherjee's novel, *Jasmine*, discusses gender discrimination and Jasmine's docile integration into a new culture. Mukherjee expresses the unpleasant realities of the immigrant diaspora, such as identity breakdown, homelessness, and displacement. In Indian patriarchal culture, where males are the narrators and voices are heard, women are blamed for a variety of traditions and rituals. The complicated social structure controlled by Indian patriarchal society, which may also be a significant driver of her economic well-being and therefore affect identity development, is one facet of the protagonist's experiences. This limits the protagonist's ability to express herself freely. *Jasmine*, the protagonist, challenges the concept of gender and reinvents her life to become more American by attempting to adopt a new identity in America. As *Jasmine* embarks on a voyage of self-discovery, each change in her personality is accompanied by a new moniker that a male character gives her. This article contends that *Jasmine*, the primary character, depicts a strong immigrant woman who battles marginalization in India and by mainstream white American culture and is compelled to move between identities. She bravely and tenaciously searches for a new self and identity in America until she discovers a way of living that fulfills her.



**Keywords**— culture, dislocation, identity, patriarchy, third space.

## I. INTRODUCTION

My story began in Egypt, Continues in America. But how tell that story of disjunction, self-exile? In fragments, I think, in slips of memory, scraps of thought. In scenes of a life time, remembered like the scattered bones of Osiris.

Ihab Hassan (1986)

*Out of Egypt: Scenes and Arguments of an Autobiography*  
(1986)

*Jasmine* by Mukherjee explores cultural and geographic dislocation in the life of a diasporic immigrant, leaving the diasporic protagonist disenfranchised. Amin Malak (1989) claims that the immigrant's perception is dualistic, bound by the principles of perplexity, and not entirely associated with the old root culture or fitting with the recently accepted one. In these situations, people negotiate and express their experiences, which occur in a parallel universe, a third world, a world of their memories and nostalgia (pp. 189–95), or as a means of preserving a group's memory, vision,

or myth (Safran, 1991, pp. 84–99). The capacity to remember and recreate details about prior events from various angles in the present is thus referred to as memory or vision.

The transformation of an Indian country girl into an American lady and how she deals with the issue of cultural loss are the subjects of Mukherjee's well-known work, *Jasmine* (1989). In her autobiographical essays, Mukherjee describes her battle to define herself as an immigrant in the United States, an Indian expatriate in Canada, and eventually an exile from India. She felt exiled despite having lived in Canada with her Canadian husband, Clark Blaise, from 1966 to 1980 and having become a citizen. In a *Massachusetts Review* interview in 1988, Mukherjee said that her fourteen years in Canada were "some of the hardest of her life, as she found herself subjected to prejudice and treated... as a member of a minority group." As a result, *Jasmine* is the tale of a diasporic figure who is torn between two countries, fights

for survival, and is therefore left with nothing but the harsh reality of loneliness. Jasmine, the protagonist, has had physical and psychological issues as a result of her displaced existence as a migrant who battles with hybridized identities in order to thrive in the new society.

Jasmine is born into a rural patriarchal society, where she suffers greatly as a result of abstract values imposed on her in the name of tradition and culture. Rather than remaining a part of the dominant Indian culture and feeling displaced, Jasmine decides to reinvent herself as an immigrant in order to break free from social taboos. She defies social norms and values, and her fate takes her from India to the United States. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2002) point out that if one is displaced, one's subjectivity becomes fragmented. In this sense, Jasmine wishes to be free of the constraints imposed by her family's rules and regulations. She transforms her fragmented identity into a new diasporic identity by arriving in a foreign land after crossing national and cultural borders to reinvent herself as a westernized immigrant. Accordingly, Borgohain, I., and Ammari, D. assert their claim in their article published in the *World Journal of English Language* (2022) that "characters who ended up in the west struggle to effectively re-establish themselves in a new cultural setting. However, practically every character develops a sense of self-identity and confidence in the course of their search for liberation" (p. 227). The novel depicts Jasmine's struggle to shape her identity as an outsider in order to fit into mainstream America, where she constantly shifts from one identity to another, eventually settling in a foreign country.

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employs a qualitative and analytical technique to examine the perspective on gender inequality presented in *Jasmine* by Bharati Mukherjee. For this research, the chosen novel was carefully read and studied. The novel is used in this research to offer background for the argument in the book, along with the history of India's sociopolitical framework. The information used in this study was gathered from a variety of primary and secondary sources. Books, journals, articles, interviews, and some websites on the internet are examples of secondary sources. Secondary sources include things like books, journals, articles, interviews, and certain websites on the internet. This article examines and discusses the bulk of *Jasmine's* analyses and portrayals of identity and place, which is the main work under consideration. The literary references are examined utilizing postcolonial theory (the struggle for cultural and political economy and freedom) concepts in order to draw the appropriate conclusions. The researcher's claims are supported with pertinent extracts and references. The ideas

of postcolonial intellectuals who acknowledge identity and culture, such as Homi Bhabha, Bill Ashcroft, and Stuart Hall, are examined. Textual proof from the text is gathered to understand Jasmine's attempts to communicate. The study next closely examines the main text, *Jasmine*, examining and debating the majority of its depictions of patriarchy, identity, and third space. The investigation concludes with some last thoughts on how Mukherjee depicts identity in her book and how Jasmine defies societal conventions and ideals in India.

## III. DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Jasmine's identity of rejuvenation in *Jasmine*

Jasmine was born as Jyoti in a rustic Indian feudal village named Hasnapur, in a war-torn Punjab, during the Sikh war for Khalistan. In many Indian villages, giving birth to a girl entails suffering and pain in collecting dowry when the girl becomes a bride. Dowry is a fundamental part of the marital system, and girls are seen as a financial burden since it is still traditional for women to pay large, if unlawful, dowries to their husband's family at the time of their marriage. The dowry system is so severe that it may put a poor family with more than one daughter into financial ruin. A woman's family must provide a dowry to secure a suitable husband (Soman, 2009). As a daughter, she is considered a curse (*Jasmine*, 39), and giving birth to a girl is regarded as a burden for the parents because it would result in a large financial struggle for the family. The fact that parents begin saving money for their daughter's wedding even before she is born might be used to examine the issue of rising dowry demands and their societal harm. In Indian society, the husband and his parents demand dowry, and if the woman's parents decline to contribute, conflict between the two families results, and the wife is tormented and treated cruelly, which at times results in murder. Being poor, her parents would not be able to afford a dowry. They become fearful and paralyzed by the worry about the dowry that her upcoming marriage would need instead of appreciating their daughter's development into a brilliant young girl.

A daughter had to be married off before she could even enter heaven (p. 39). Jasmine's parents attempt to strangle her to death so that they can be free of the problems of marriage, but she survives (p. 40). Jasmine, the narrator, unveils the passage thus:

When the midwife carried me out, my sisters told me I had a ruby-red choker of bruises around my throat and sapphire fingerprints on my collarbone. [...]; my mother was a sniper. She wanted to spare me the pain of being a dowry-less bride. I survived the snapping. (p. 40)

In the novel, Bharati Mukherjee portrays female infanticide, which is a common method of population control and management in Indian rural civilizations. This practice is mostly a result of gender inequality, in which men are valued more highly in society than women. The traditional perspective and prejudice against females in society are demonstrated by how rural Indian cultures react to the birth of a girl child. As Rajib Bhaumik argues:

*Jasmine* is a tale about a woman's trauma from circumstantial subjugation. It is a story of semi-feudal rural India in which a mother has to strangle her baby girl to avoid dowry at the time of her marriage, as well as an astrologer who menacingly determines the fate of others. (Bhaumik, 2014, p. 402)

Indians have a widespread idea that girls are a financial burden since their families must still pay exorbitant dowries after they are married. Looking back into her past, Jasmine reports, "Unlucky spouses, disobedient women, and infertile wives plagued our region everywhere. They died while cooking milk on kerosene stoves, falling into wells, being run over by trains, and burning to death" (p. 41). Women are generally perceived as being weak on the physical, mental, and ideological fronts. A growing number of suicides and dowry killings among women are caused by the degrading effects of the odious dowry system and the unjust demands made by greedy and unscrupulous husbands and their families. This paragraph gives an overall view that women occupy a lower position than men in Indian society, as well as being subjugated and exploited.

Women in patriarchal societies are frequently subjected to oppression. Kamala Bhasin defines "Patriarchy" as a system in which males have complete power in social, economic, and political arenas, as well as gender roles that are appropriate for these arrangements. It is a type of male domination in which men dominate women, implying the father's or patriarch's rule (Bhasin, 1993, p. 3). In a similar vein, Sylvia Walby describes "Patriarchy" as a network of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress, and exploit women (Walby, 1990). Women are generally perceived as being weak on the physical, mental, and ideological fronts. The social position of women is viewed as secondary in a patriarchal culture. Men have rights in every area of life in a patriarchal society, whereas women are consistently denied such rights. Despite the fact that both men and women are necessary for reproduction and societal growth, the birth of a woman is not favoured on a social level.

Jasmine's first conflict is with her mother, but she later comprehends why her mother attempted to strangle her to death and does not blame her. Jasmine says, "Rural girls are like livestock" (p. 46). Her struggle to live and fight

against patriarchal society begins with her father's statement that "intelligent women are having intelligent sons, and that is nature's design" (p. 51). Her father's behaviour indicates gender inequality. Despite her family's belief that education is a waste of a girl's time (p. 40), Jasmine is allowed to stay in school longer than her sisters (p. 45). Standing in defiance of rigid patriarchal rules, she rebels against the demands of patriarchy and the traditional values of her family and society. In her book *The Dialectics of Sex* (1970), Shulamith Firestone suggests that patriarchy exploits women's biological dimension to reproduce as their essential weakness. According to Firestone, the only way for women to break free from this oppression is through the abolition of the biological bond between mothers and children by establishing communes devoid of nuclear families, and this is what Jasmine does in the novel. Jasmine's desire to change her destiny in some ways mirrors Mukherjee's personal life. In a conversation with Sybil Steinberg (1989), Mukherjee says,

Jasmine embodies the shape of my life and desires, but no incident is at all autobiographical. Personal striving is something I believe in. I, too, want to reposition the stars, like Jasmine. Simultaneously, I'm aware of a larger plan. My solution is to say that every single moment has a purpose. I'd like to find out what that purpose is. (Steinberg, 1989, p. 34)

In her quest for American selfhood, Jasmine, like Mukherjee, rejects the postcolonial expatriate identity in favour of the life of an American immigrant, a life of a liberated self-made individual in the United States.

Jyoti fulfils a small part of her dream by falling in love with and marrying an engineer, Prakash Vih. He wants Jyoti to shed her past and name her Jasmine. Names hold a significant emotional impact and serve as a representation of a person's identity. The personal significance of a name may come before its cultural and societal significance for a person, whose alteration would indicate an internal shift in his sense of identity or an incapacity to integrate a dispersed sense of identity. With a new name, she moves from a village to a city and enters a hybrid space; this is the beginning of her new journey. Although she is happy with her husband's love and modern ways of life, she seems to be in a transition phase where she "felt suspended between the worlds" (p. 77). She laments, "Jyoti, Jasmine: I shuttled between identities" (p. 77), which shows not only her fluctuation from one name to another but also from one personality to another to facilitate her adaptation to her new world. Her husband says, "I desire us to move away and have a true life. I've had enough of these substandard, corrupt, mediocre fools" (p. 81). Jasmine changes from a village girl to a modern woman at the request of her

husband, but at the same time, she remains a traditional, dutiful wife willing to devote her life in service to her husband. This marks the beginning of Jasmine's new identity. According to Erickson, identity formation is a process that is dependent not only on the agency of the individual but also upon the individual's surroundings (*In Identity: Youth and Crisis*, 1968). Erickson means that identity formation is a process that results in a socially negotiated temporary outcome of the interplay between internal attempts, external conventions, and regulation. Her marriage to a modern man liberates and transforms her. Prakash opposes her traditional desire to have children when he tells her, "We are not going to spawn! We are not ignorant peasants" (p. 78). Instead, he teaches her to read and repair VCR manuals and electrical goods, which helps her embrace to be her liberated self. He tells her: "There is no dying; there is only an ascending or descending, a moving on to other planes. Don't crawl back to Hasnapur and feudalism. That Jyoti is dead" (p. 96). With a new name, Jasmine represents a new idea of herself and looks forward to going to America with her husband to pursue his further education.

Jasmine's married life does not last long. On the eve of their departure to the U.S., the Khalsa terrorist Sukhinder kills Prakash. After the death of her husband, Jasmine comes back to Hasnapur, and her grandmother rebukes her, telling her: "If you had waited for the man I picked up, none of this would have happened. God was displeased. God sent that Sardarji boy to do that terrible act" (98). Jasmine experiences a loss of hope for the future, but she doesn't stop here. She refuses and revolts against this orthodox notion and replies to her grandmother, "Dida, I said, if God sent Sukhi to kill my husband, and then I renounced God, I spit on him" (p. 98). Instead of spending the rest of her days as a helpless widow in the clutches of her family's rules and regulations, she revolts against the patriarchal norms and decides to go to America, where her husband was supposed to study.

Unquestionably, Jasmine is anxious to escape the confines of her Hindu cultural identity and the predetermined codes of femininity in her community. Earlier in the novel, speaking as Jane after she returns to Taylor in Manhattan, she says, "There are no innocent, loving methods to rebuild oneself. We murder who we once were in order to reincarnate ourselves in the images of dreams" (p. 25). This declaration also heralds the start of Jasmine's new identity. She has to kill her tight Hindu culture—the dilemma she faces every day as a girl in a conservative Indian society—which will help her to actively proceed into a mysterious yet promising future. Ihab Hassan (1995) said something along these lines: "True, names may cause distraction, reveal pretense and pedantry, and worst

of all, they can replace thought with allusions if you don't already have a clear understanding of the subject's boundaries and the names that fall within and outside of them. Let me stretch, please" (Hassan, p. 106). The reported pieces describe recurring patterns, typically of grievance and suffering that have been repressed, which mar the tidy causal chain of the formal past. Jasmine's eternal suffering is depicted as an unsettling point in an established historical past.

Jasmine has resided in a fictional realm that the patriarchy has constructed. She inhabited a false reality that was primarily made up of common beliefs that regulated and held her social and private image under control. She has made it her mission to discredit falsehoods. She has condemned conforming to a patriarchal, male-identified social framework that by nature favours masculinity and masculine attributes above femininity and feminine characteristics. To escape male-oriented hegemonic fixity, Jasmine deconstructs the notion of home, enabling free mobility on alien soil. Home is meant for women who are preservers of "traditions, heritage, and continuity" (McLeod, 2000, p. 245), but Jasmine terminates this notion. For Jasmine, "home" might be portrayed as worry, a confined environment, or a constricting universe devoid of crucial referents. Likewise, critic John K. Hoppe records in his article "The Technological Hybrid as Post-American: Cross-Cultural Genetics in *Jasmine*" (1999) that "Jasmine is uninterested in cultural preservation, the upholding of traditions, and obligations to the past...she is uninterested in such nostalgic aspects of preservation" (p. 152). Born into a conservative family, she does not want to spend the rest of her life with her parents because she clearly understands the dilemma she will face again about Indian tradition and values. She says, "Prakash created the new and modern Jasmine from innocent Jyoti, and Jasmine would complete Prakash's objectives." (p. 97). She embarks on a journey of self-discovery, joyfully sharing her husband's ambition.

### 3.2. Jasmine's rebirth and rediscovery

In her Indian socio-religious obligations, Jasmine is required to end her life after the death of her husband, but her ambition and dreams of a new life in America persuade her to travel to the United States. To fulfil her husband's dream and partly to avoid widowhood, ostracism, and oppression from her family, she challenges dominant group ideologies, patriarchy, upper castes, and religious hierarchies and travels to America on a forged passport. A woman becomes more empowered when patriarchy is challenged. It entails taking charge of her life with respect to her family, neighbourhood, and wider society. By depicting Jasmine travelling alone, Mukherjee hopes to demonstrate that female characters can overcome the



challenges of patriarchal practices in traditional society and emerge as strong characters.

Jasmine's willingness to transform herself allows her to actively adapt and survive in the unknown. She encounters new people, but her fate in America begins on a depressing note. She is raped in a hotel by Half-Face, the ship's captain, who has "lost an eye, an ear, and most of his cheek in a paddy field in Vietnam" (p. 104). After being raped, Jasmine contemplates: "I [...] prayed for the strength to survive, long enough to kill myself" (p. 116). While Half-Face sleeps, Jasmine manages to kill him by becoming Goddess Kali, a personification of the Indian Goddess of destruction:

I was looking forward to the moment when he saw me above him and saw me as I had been last time: nude, but now with my mouth open, blood streaming from my lips, and my tongue sticking out in crimson... I yanked the bedspread off the bed and flung it over him, and then stabbing madly into the fabric as the human shape underneath shrank and grew stiller. (*Jasmine*, p. 118)

She symbolically kills her identity in order to resurrect a new one. The murder of half-face that night can be seen as a death and a rebirth experience.

Jasmine, a rebel from the start of the novel, adopts the image of Hindu mythology's goddess Kali, the goddess of death, ready to avenge murder on those who exploit and taint her femininity. Kristin Carter-Sanborn, in "We Murder Who We Were" (1994), demonizes Jasmine by drawing parallels between her and Jane Eyre, especially the victimized figure of Bertha Mason, and wonders if "Jasmine's discovery" of American selfhood conceals similar complicity in the erasure of the "third world" woman Mukherjee's narrator purports to speak for (Carter-Sanborn 1994, pp. 574–75). Sanborn deduces that the vengeance was not her own but rather the result of Kali, the Hindu goddess, temporarily possessing her (p. 589). Jasmine realizes she must fight to survive, and this is the beginning of her rebirth, a life-affirming transformation.

Accordingly, Jasmine's transformation is the journey of acculturation into a new culture, which can be difficult for an immigrant, and it is here that she becomes trapped between the two cultures. In order to interpret Jasmine, one must compare Rutherford's (1990) conversation with Homi Bhabha's "Third Space," which Bhabha described as a location where new things originate. According to Homi Bhabha, a non-native living in a diaspora lives in the third space, where they create a new identity and culture for themselves, separate and distinct from the cultures of their homeland and the host country. Jasmine has travelled a long distance to escape the bitter

nostalgia of her past, and the act of killing gives her the courage to begin a new life in America. Jasmine feels a sudden "sense of mission" (p. 117). She sets ablaze to the majority of her belongings and her husband's suit, a metaphorical act of committing Sati, a purification ritual that she had carried from India. She did this to begin her journey by "travelling light" (p. 121) and avoid the shameful life of a widow in the Indian tradition. Jasmine says:

I had not even considered how I would survive in America for a single day. This was the place where I had chosen to die, on the first day if possible... Beneath the tree, I had dreamt of arranging the suit and twigs. All those weeks of restless, partially famished travel were fueled by the fantasy of relaxing on a bed of fire amid palm trees while donning a white sari... (pp. 120-21).

The murder of Half-Face is the birth of a new self and is not discussed later but rather portrayed as a turning point in Jasmine's life.

Jasmine meets Lilian Gordon, a saint who rescues, educates, and assists her in settling in America. Gordon starts calling Jasmine Jazzy and advises her to adopt and adapt to the ways of American life to survive: "Let the past make you wary, by all means. But do not let it deform you" (p. 131). Jasmine remembers Lilian's words, "Walk American; she exhorted me, and she showed me how. I work hard on my walk and deportment" (p. 131). Within a week, she says, "I lost my shy side, and I'd also abandoned my Hasnapuri modesty" (p. 133). Soon after discarding the self that belonged to Hasnapur and learning to talk, walk, and dress like an American, the protagonist decides to flee her traumatic past, openly stating, "I wished to distance myself from everything Indian and everything Jyoti-like" (p. 145). To thrive, Jasmine engages in a process of personal development and adopts a new persona. She claims, "I looked in the mirror and was astounded by the change. Jazzy in sporting tight chords, a T-shirt, and jogging sneakers" (p. 133). As Bhabha points out, identity is a process that does not have a fixed point (Bhabha, 1994, p. 162). Jasmine's identity emerges as an unsettled space, or an unresolved question in that "Third Space", between several intersecting discourses. As has been demonstrated, Jasmine, now living in the diaspora, is in a continuous state of formation and reformation.

Thus begins the process of Jasmine's acculturation by learning how to become an American. Like Bharati Mukherjee, Jasmine engages in the processes of adaptation and assimilation. Jasmine says she's looking forward to adapting to American culture and forming a new identity: "I changed because I wanted to. Being a coward was to bunker

oneself inside nostalgia, to sheathe the heart in a bulletproof vest" (*Jasmine*, p. 185). Jasmine, now with a new name and an American identity, accepts a position as a caregiver for Taylor and Wylie Hayes in Manhattan. Jasmine, against all odds, moves away from her past in search of a stable identity. There, her name is changed from Jazzy to Jase, and she develops a new American identity. This is Jasmine's second phase of transformation in America. Taylor starts calling her Jase, and she gradually falls in love with both her name and Taylor. She now feels more Americanized, improves her proficiency in English, and becomes a member of the Hayes family. Jasmine accepts that her genuine metamorphosis occurred at Taylor's house and says, "I became an American in an apartment on Claremont Avenue [New York]" (p. 165). Additionally, she adds, "I fell in awe of the things he represented to me: a professor who offered a servant cookies, smiled at her, and welcomed her into the expansive democracy of his jokes" (p. 167). For the first time as a caregiver, Jasmine is treated as an equal, and she appreciates the liberal viewpoints and their regard for Americans.

At the same time, Jasmine works part-time and provides tutoring. By fully immersing herself in the new alien culture, she regains her personality and confidence. She states, "I yearned to be the person they perceived me to be: funny, intelligent, polished, and charming. Not a criminal, murderer, widow, victim of rape, indigent, or frightened" (p. 171). Furthermore, she continues saying, "I was drawn to everything he did or said. He gave me the name Jase. Jase was the kind of lady who wore silk chartreuse trousers and spangled heels" (p. 176). From Jyoti to Jasmine, Jazzy, and now Jase, Jasmine manages to assimilate into a culture that is not hers in a very short period of time. This assimilation involves a loss of identity. Jasmine later acknowledges, "In America, nothing lasts... We arrive so eager to learn, to adjust, to participate, only to find monuments are plastic and agreements are annulled" (p. 181). She is impressed by Taylor's sincerity, and becomes closer to him, and feels the need to replace her old identity with a new one. She states, "I changed because I wanted to. To bunker oneself inside nostalgia, to sheath the heart in a bulletproof vest, was to be a coward. On Claremont Avenue, in the Hayes' big, clean, brightly lit apartment, I bloomed from a diffident alien with forged documents into an adventurous Jase" (pp. 185-86). She "rebirths" herself and begins "getting rooted" by accepting Taylor (p. 176). Borghain, I., and Ammari, D. (2022) contend that "Jasmine embraces her numerous names and selves at different points in her life in order to have a healthy connection with those relationships." They further state that "since cultural identities are inextricably linked to 'the different ways we are positioned by and position ourselves

within the narratives of the past' (Hall, p. 225), they are always changing. In other words, identity is both predetermined and intentionally created" (p. 226). As a result, identity is not an adulterated, innate, or completely transparent human quality. Jasmine accepts her new identity and begins to forget the traumatic events of her previous days.

Jasmine's previous identity, which was too painful with deaths and sufferings, is replaced with a new identity full of love and contentment, giving shape to identity formation. Gradually, Jasmine feels a sense of belonging, but her happiness with Taylor is only a fleeting moment. The presence of Sukhwinder, the Khalsa terrorist who murdered Jasmine's husband Prakash in India, causes her to flee in terror. She is an "undocumented caretaker," ineligible to work in the United States, and flees to Iowa to avoid conflict, writes Nagendra Kumar in *The Fiction of Bharati Mukherjee: A Cultural Perspective* (Kumar, 2001, p. 114).

Mobility has been a characteristic trait of human societies. Jasmine gets a job at a bank and wins the heart of the banker, Bud Rippelmeyer. There she assumes a new identity, and again her name changes to "Jane" from "Jase." In this vein, Stuart Hall, in *Cultural Identity and Diaspora* (Hall, 2000), says that identity is not as transparent and unproblematic as we think it to be (p. 222). Instead of viewing identity as an already accomplished fact, we should consider it as a product that is never complete and is always in process, always constituted within, rather than outside, representation. It is a matter of both "becoming" and "being" (p. 223). In this regard, identity is not something that already exists, transcending time, place, history, and culture. It undergoes constant transformation (Hall, qtd. in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory*, 1994). Jasmine becomes a stepmother to Du, a sixteen-year-old Vietnam War victim adopted by Bud, and becomes pregnant with Bud's child. Jasmine not only gets a new identity but also a new name. The more she drifts away from her native culture, the more American she becomes. She accepts her new name without hesitation. Jase now transforms into Jane Rippelmeyer. She says:

Bud refers to me as Jane. Me Bud, you Jane. At first, I didn't get it. Calamity Jane. Not Plain Jane, but Jane as in Jane Russell. But Plain Jane is all I want to be. Plain Like every other character, Plain Jane is a person. (p. 26)

Jane is taking another step towards becoming an American woman. She has created an identity that is not her own—an identity that was given to her. She doesn't receive an identity from her culture; rather, she creates and re-creates one for herself as she travels. The new identity was a

necessity to bind her subjectivity into an American cultural matrix. The community of Iowa sees her as a well-known figure, not someone unfamiliar. She feels assimilated and has a sense of belonging, and she becomes the typical American that she always wanted to be.

Through integration, Bharati Mukherjee's protagonist, Jasmine, attempts to strike a balance between the 'world of origin' and the 'world of adoption,' shattering the notion of a single identity. Violence strikes her again after Bud is shot and leaves him crippled. Taylor reappears in her life and persuades her to leave Bud. Jasmine feels the urge to put an end to identity-seeking, changes, and displacement. She says, "The moment I have been waiting for has finally arrived, and I am not selecting between two men. I am caught between the promise of America and old-world obedience; a caretaker's life is decent and a worthy life" (p. 240). Jasmine thinks that Taylor comes with "the promise of America", whereas staying with Bud would entail being stuck with "old-world dutifulness," stuck with being an Indian wife looking after and serving Bud. Jasmine, like any true American, seeks true happiness, the American dream, and self-hood. Furthermore, as a stateless person who frequently lives in insecure and vulnerable situations, he or she may occasionally fall victim to difficult circumstances.

Having survived the worst part of her life in America, Jasmine realizes she no longer gains anything from the relationship with Bud. Although pregnant with their child, she leaves Bud, and accepts Taylor without any guilt, and travels to California in search of adventure. In an interview with Alison Carb (1988), Mukherjee says, "In the novel, Jasmine sees all of this as an opportunity." Jasmine says, "It isn't guilt that I feel. It's a relief. I realize I've already stopped thinking of myself as Jane" (*Jasmine*, p. 240). She must evolve, adapt to her changing surroundings, and pursue her desires. She says, "There is nothing I can do. Time will tell if I am a tornado or a rubble-maker that appears out of nowhere and vanishes into clouds. I'm out the door and into the potholed and rutted driveway, sprinting ahead of Taylor, greedy with desires and reckless with hope" (p. 241). Jasmine has been through many trials and tribulations in her life, all while attempting to restore her rational self through her constant attempts to assimilate into a foreign culture. She accepts the various names and identities she has had throughout her life to have a balanced relationship with those identities. In this sense, Jasmine, who is trapped between India and America, deconstructs the concept of home, allowing women to move freely and advance on foreign soil.

Mukherjee's use of the female protagonist is to describe how personal freedom can be attained as an immigrant through a psychological transformation. Despite

being born into a poor, conservative family, Jasmine challenges society's patriarchal norms, which deny women the right to speak for themselves. She is represented as a postmodern woman who rebels against social standards, like a rebel who goes from being weak to being strong and from being constrained to being free. Jasmine goes through a number of changes to adapt to the new host culture. Jasmine has a plethora of opportunities to develop and widen her horizons by immersing herself in a new culture. Learning a new culture's language is one way to assimilate and integrate. To adapt to the American way of life, Jasmine assumes new identities in different phases of her life: from "Jasmine" to "Jane" and "Jase." She says, "I have had a husband for each of the women I have ever been. Prakash named me Jasmine, Taylor named me Jase, Bud named me Jane, and the name Half-Face for Kali" (p. 197). As F.T. Ruppel (1995) puts it, "she must change to survive and to continue her journey" (p. 183). She has made a valiant attempt to find, organize, and confirm her identity after being separated from the original. Jasmine's renaming becomes a means for her to survive and develop further through transformation and the adoption of different selfhoods.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

*Jasmine* explores family dynamics and challenges social norms and ideas in India. Through Jasmine, Bharati Mukherjee delivers a message that is quite clear. Her persona expresses her own personal experiences as an Indian lady living in America. Through her work and the tenacity of women, she has demonstrated the portrayal of women in the diaspora. The tale illustrates both the struggle and the brutal reality of rural India. Jasmine uses a falsified passport to enter America in order to flee the harsh reality of the patriarchal caste system. The search for identities occasionally highlights Jasmine's identity conflict. Of course, Jyoti, a typical Indian girl, changes her name to Jasmine to overcome her background, and so her life adventure starts. She arrived in America and was given the name Jase by the Wylie family. She ultimately decides to go by the name Jane after Bud Ripplemeyer, an admirer of oriental allure. Jasmine struggles to fit into American culture and switches identities multiple times in order to live in the country. She frantically seeks an identity while trying to adapt to a continuously shifting environment. In the process, she reinvents herself and gives her life direction and purpose. She loses her family in the process of becoming. However, she also challenges patriarchal and racial rigidity. Indian women's struggle to adapt to life in a foreign country and the harsh realities of American culture are both highlighted by Mukherjee. However, Mukherjee

has given Jasmine a very powerful voice to combat unfair practices and resolve any issues.

Humans need approval from other appropriate individuals. This acceptance can come in a variety of shapes, from acceptance of one's membership in various organizations to acceptance of one's rights in society. A diminished manner of being, emotions of exclusion, stress, and conflict can all emerge from a lack of acknowledgment, which can also have major ramifications and consequences. To preserve a sense of "self" and "other," people participate in social interactions via a variety of inter-textual identification processes. They can establish their individual and public identities as social agents by adhering to such practices. Additionally, the idea of "identification" may be seen as a crucial notion for bridging the gap between the individual and society because such behaviours link the social and personal. Jasmine relocates to America, adapts to life there, transforms who she is, carves out an identity for herself in society, and succeeds as a result.

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