



## EXISTENTIAL DILEMMAS IN BHARATI MUKHERJEE'S 'JASMINE'

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### Abstract:

Bharati Mukherjee is one of the pioneer writer who approached to give her point of view about the influence of western cultivation in her novels. 'Jasmine' is a novel, written by Bharati Mukherjee set in the 1980s. The novel exposes how Jasmine, the womanish protagonist, as an outsider, strives to adapt her identity to fit in the mainstream American culture. In order to be capable to survive, she changes her identities several times. Mukherjee's own experiences of dislocation and exile in her life helps her in recording the emigrant experience of the protagonist in this novel. In this context this paper tries to delve on how Jasmine scabble throughout her life and existential dilemmas of the novel 'Jasmine'.

**Keywords:** influence, cultivation, identity, dislocation, existential

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'Existentialism' is a philosophical way that rejects the ideal that the creation offers any indications about how humanity should live. A simplified convention of this consideration complex can be established in Jean-Paul Sartre's constantly-repeated dictum, "Actuality precedes substance." What this means is that the identity of any one person — their quiddity — can not be constituted by querying what distant people are like, but only in what that particular person has done. Because no one can declare that his or her actions are "caused" by anyone else, existentialist literature focuses on liberty and liability.

Jasmine, the appellation character and narrator of Bharati Mukherjee's novel. The exploration paper is a study of the sundries realized in the character of Jasmine, whose struggle for actuality is entangled with her diasporic conflicts. Jasmine goes all the way to become an emigrant of America. Though "her description" of life and the particular choices are laid against the Indian and the western societies and persuasions, Jasmine gambles towards the path of freedom.

In book, 'Existentialism and Human Emotions', Jean Paul Sartre propounds individual choice and freedom as the base of empirical gospel. In addition to that, the champion gives a positive outlook to 'the free will'.

Man is nothing additional but that he makes of himself, similar is the first principle of existentialism. It's also what's cried subjectivity.... "For we mean that man first exists, that is, that man first of all is the being who hurls himself toward a future and who's conscious of imagining himself as being in the future." (Existentialism and Human Emotions 14-15)

The novel 'Jasmine' opens with an astrologer's prediction about Jyoti's widowhood and banishment. Jasmine continues beyond the consummation of the prediction indicating displacing of the stars and the heroine's gaining enough strength for a perambulatory metamorphosis. She's renamed Jasmine after her marriage to Prakash Vih. Prakash wants her to get a modernistic megalopolis lady and as he aids her in her conversion from 'Jyoti' to 'Jasmine'; she perceives herself as the lady he envisions her to be, and eventually becomes the person that Prakash desires to bring about. "He wanted to break down the Jyoti as I'd been in Hasnapur and make me a new kind of megacity woman. To break off the history, he gave me a new name; Jasmine. Jyoti, Jasmine I shuttled between individualities."

Prakash, Jasmine's husband is murdered and she emigrates to America each alone to fulfill his dreams. Upon her entering America, she meets

Half-Face, the captain of the boat on which she entered the country, and his discourteous treatment gives her, her first taste of American ethnical categorization.

Jasmine is also embraced by Lillian Gordon, staying with whom she begins the proceeding of assimilation by getting how to become an American. Lillian bestows upon her the surname 'Jazzy', a symbol of her access into and acceptance of American accomplishment which she welcomes reluctantly. After that she moves in with a conventional Indian family in Hushing, New York. Jasmine shortly finds herself strangled by the indolence of this habitat for it was fully insulated from everything American, accounting it to be a counterpoise in her progression towards a substitute life, she tries to disassociate herself from all that's Indian and forget her past fully.

Jasmine proceeds with her migratory plans and moves to New York City, and stays with an American family. After gaining a fresh self-perception, she forges yet another identity with Taylor, his wife Wylie, and their daughter Duff. Taylor starts referring to her as "Jase," implying once more that she lacks choice in creating her new identity because Taylor does it for her. Jasmine becomes apprehensive of her ethnical identity because Taylor and his friends conclude that she was from South Asia and try to associate her with that community.

The end of the novel finds Jasmine moving to California with Taylor, uncertain of what the future will bring but nevertheless confident in her decision to leave. Her identity transitions from "Jyoti" to "Jasmine" to "Jane" to "Jase" all allude to the passing of one personality and the birth of a new one, but they are not unfavorable.

The words of Jasmine prove her to be an existentialist, who can not be caged by any cultural and religious codes. She cannot be Jyoti (the illuminating lamp of a traditional family), a Jasmine (to decorate and add flavour to the life of a well educated man), a Jazzy (dancing to the tunes of a white man) or a Jane (idly resting under the shade of a rich man); for she wants to be free. Freedom is her ultimate choice. Bharati Mukherjee heavily draws on her own ideas about acclimatization when creating the character Jasmine.

Just like Mukherjee, Jasmine in the serious process of making herself as a naturalized rightful citizen of The United States of America. Mukherjee freedom of consideration and her propagation of respective choice on identity, for she consciously calls herself an American author; and not an Indo-American author or an Indian diaspora writing in America — infiltrates into the

character Jasmine. Jasmine finds happiness in the subjective choices that she makes; and freedom is the result of her every choices—ultimately leading her to hope for the future. Thus, existentialism can be generally attributed to the novel 'Jasmine'.

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