



## **Mythical Elements In Jasmine by Bharathi Mukherjee**

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### **Abstract**

Jasmine (1990) by Bharati Mukherjee is essentially a novel about cultural transplantation. The story follows a young Indian widow who succeeds in reshaping her destiny and finding happiness. Indian myths and stories reflect the sensibilities of the Indian people. The broken and the shattered are two key archetypal imagery imprinted in the collective unconscious of the race. The third eye and the pitcher When Jasmine murders Half-Face, who had raped her later in the narrative, Bharati Mukherjee does it brilliantly. Kali, the goddess of destruction, and the broken pitcher are combined in this artwork. Jasmine has been through a lot. For her recognition, the spiritual knowledge she inherited directs her to live a less deviant life from the path. Indian mythology and culture suggest a regimented and spiritualized manner of living.

**Keywords:** broken pitcher, the third eye, archetypal image of Kali.

## **1. Introduction**

Since 1961, Bharati Mukherjee spent most of her time in Canada or the United States, gaining degrees, raising sons, lecturing at universities, and producing numerous articles, including two nonfiction books. volumes, seven novels, and two collections of short stories Bharati Mukherjee, who styles herself as "a natural-born leader," says she was born "a natural leader. "In Calcutta in 1940, a Hindu Bengali Brahmin met with a Hindu Bengali Brahmin. freely with American culture, not merely taking but also transforming it. She gave the region she lived in a new perspective. She does not toss away her native culture since she has adopted it. Her race, religion, and beliefs were all tossed to the wind. Her ethnicity is Indian. In her third novel, Jasmine, she expresses her sensibilities. She died on 28th January 2017.

## **2. Mythical Elements**

The protagonist, Jasmine, begins her profession in a Punjabi village. An astrologer foretells Jasmine's widowhood and exile when she is seven years old. Jasmine, who is given the name Jyoti by her parents, marries at the age of fourteen to an educated engineering student who renames her Jasmine. He desires to immigrate to the United States, but is assassinated by a Sikh terrorist bomber before he can do so. Jasmine then travels to the United States to fulfill her husband's desire of immigrating by proxy, as well as to perform suttee by cremating his suit (in place of his shredded corpse) and

immolating herself in the flames, as a virtuous Hindu widow would. She sells herself for food and passage in order to realize her ambition.

In one case, a Vietnam veteran turned smuggler rapes a woman. She retaliates when he mocks her and her husband's suit. He is killed. She is aided by a kind woman who is assisting her illegally. Jazzy, another reincarnation, is renamed by the refugees. Jasmine becomes a caretaker for an academic as a result of her. While the couple's marriage was at Columbia University. When the couple splits up, Taylor, the husband, becomes Jasmine's lover. Yet another reincarnation, he calls her Jase. When Jasmine moves to the Midwest, she undergoes a final reincarnation.

When she recognizes a neighbourhood hotdog vendor as her husband's murderer, she escapes New York in terror and leaves Taylor. Jane Ripplemeyer is her name after she ends up in Iowa as the common-law wife of Bud Ripplemeyer, a prominent small-town banker. Bud is shot by a distressed farmer facing foreclosure shortly after he and Jasmine began living together, and Jasmine refuses to marry him for fear of her astrologer's prophecy of widowhood. Bud gets shot and forced to sit in a wheelchair. She becomes pregnant in an attempt to make him feel at ease and confident, but she does not want to marry him.

She's fully integrated into American family life, with adopted children and pregnancy, but she's still looking for love, which she finds when Taylor comes to her. She's moved on from her responsibilities to others to her responsibilities to herself. She changes because she wants to, and she is concerned with her happiness, love, and self-esteem. Indian sensibility is manifested in Indian myths and traditions, which she so deftly weaves into the novel's fabric that they don't appear as "scattered pictures," but rather as an organic whole. The broken pitcher and the third eye are two major archetypal images hidden in the collective psyche of the race that Bharati Mukherjee employs.

Let's start with the shattered pitcher. When a man loses his earthly existence (his name and appearance), in other words, when his body perishes, one who has had an understanding of Brahma (the Absolute) blends with Brahma to become one with him, just as when the pitcher breaks a part of the sky (or air, one of the gross elements of which the universe is composed) inside the pitcher becomes a total and inseparable part of the great void outside.

In *Jasmine*, Bharati Mukherjee elucidates this archetypal pattern: villagers say that when a clay pitcher breaks, the villagers see that the air within is identical to the air outside. Vimla inadvertently lit herself on fire due to the fact that she had shattered her pitcher (her husband was dead); she saw that there were no insides and outsides. We are just shells of the same Absolute. (p.15).

Bharati Mukherjee effectively merges two classic images of Kali, the goddess of destruction, and the broken pitcher later in the narrative when Jasmine kills Half-Face, who has raped her. She wants to murder herself after Half-Face has raped her, but she stops herself because she believes her duty is not yet complete: I didn't feel the passionate embrace of Lord Yama that could turn a kerosene flame into a lover's caress. I could not let my personal dishonor disrupt my mission. There would be plenty of time to die... I extended my tongue and sliced it. (p.117-118).

And when she does so, she transforms into Kali, the goddess of vengeance — Death embodied — and the killing becomes so simple. And she has been resurrected by killing Half-Face rather than herself, and she is now on her way to America, traveling light. She sees herself as a sati-goddess in the metaphorical sense. "... she had burned herself in a trash-can-funeral pyre behind a boarded-up motel in Florida". (p.176). In this scenario, her burning of Prakash's suit becomes very symbolic: it's as if she commits sati—the pitcher is broken, there's no difference between the inside and the outside, and her spirit, as it were, seeks a new dwelling, her journey for a new identity has begun.

The second significant archetypal image (embedded in Indian mythology) that Bharati Mukherjee uses, aside from the broken pitcher, is Shiva's Third Eye — the eye through which Shiva peered out into invisible worlds; past, present, and future would coalesce, allowing him to "swallow the whole of the

cosmos." Later, the sages developed the Third Eye: an extra eye in the middle of their foreheads, and with that eye, they became "trikaldarshi," or being able to see into the past and future.

Jasmine (Jyoti of Hasnapur) receives a star-shaped wound while scavenging for firewood, which becomes her third eye, giving her a broad and truthful perspective on existence itself. She learns to look into the future with this third eye, as a catalyst between two cultures, with pain and hope, hope and pain, and when she embarks on her final journey in America, she is a catalyst between two cultures, with pain and hope, hope and pain, and when she embarks on her final journey in America, she is a catalyst between two cultures, with pain and hope, hope and pain, and "greedy with wants and reckless with hope" (p.241).

It's as though she's eaten the universe completely, like Shiva. We have seen death up close, she says decisively at the end of the novel. We've stowed away on Half-boat faces and hurled through time tunnels. We've been through the worst and come out on top. As a result, Bharati Mukherjee's singular skill is to incorporate the most important elements from Indian philosophy into her fiction.

Bharati Mukherjee successfully transmits a message to Jasmine, despite the fact that she is subjected to different social codes and physical locations. Jasmine integrates herself into the adopted country's dominant culture. It is necessary to erase the past. The novelist acknowledges that an immigrant's life is a series of reincarnations. She confided in *Lowa Review* in one of her interviews:

I have been murdered and reborn at least three times, the very correct woman I was trained to be and was very happy being, is very different from the politicized, shrill, civil rights activist I was in Canada, and from the urgent writer that I have become in the last few years in the United States. (Mukherjee 18).

Similarly, Jasmine has experienced rebirth even before she was born. Since she was the fifth daughter and seventh of nine children, she experienced rebirth directly at birth when her own mother attempted to murder her. Daughters were considered a curse in ancient days. In her own words, she says: My mother was a sniper. She wanted to spare me the pain of a dowryless bride. My mother wanted a happy life for me. I survived the snipping. My grandmother may have named me Jyoti, Light, but in surviving I was already Jane, a fighter and adapter. (p.40)

Pitaji, Jasmine's father, was gored by a bull while visiting a Lahori with whom he enjoyed playing chess. Her mother was consoled by the Lahori: Why cry? Crying is selfish. We have no husbands, no wives, no fathers, no sons. Family life and family emotions are all illusions. The lord lends us a body, gives an assignment, and sends us down. When we get the job done, the Lord calls us home again for the next assignment. (p. 58-59)

Hurling from the dreary confines of an Indian widow's incarceration, she encounters the stark brutality of illegal entry, rape, and murder in America. The ensuing quiet of terror that envelops Jasmine's world is literalized in the cutting of her tongue, as she spills blood from her mouth on Half-Face, the modern embodiment of evil, in Goddess Kali-like fashion. Jasmine's inarticulacy is highlighted by her silent ability to convert herself from Lakshmi, the goddess of domestic bliss, to Kali, the goddess of war.

### 3. Conclusion

Jasmine becomes a metaphor for the type of Indianness that has received and absorbed all that is good and decent from every country, religion, and culture throughout the millennia. It has an Indian flavour to it. Jasmine's makeover appears to be American on the surface, yet she is Indian in her heart. Though the Jasmine goes through many transformations in order to be recognised, the spiritual awareness she inherited guides her to live a life that is less deviated from the regulated and spiritualized style of life that is theorised in Indian mythology and tradition. Summita Roy's evaluation appears to be nearer to the point: her (Jasmine's) search for self-recognition takes her in social and spiritual directions ... till

she arrives at a time when she can view the future 'greedy with wants and reckless from hope'. (Roy 203).

As a result, the woman character in *Jasmine* is anchored to her Indian origins in the same manner that the author is; like her, she loses her external connection to India but retains a core of belief in the interior of the self against which all-new experience is judged.

## References

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