

# A CRITIQUE OF POLYGENESIS IN BHARATI MUKHERJEE'S *JASMINE*

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Despite her [Jasmine] welcoming tendency towards transformation, it is obvious that killing one part of her identity each time is not so easy but she knows that no other option exists for her. On the other hand, from an optimistic perspective, she gains the ““multiple” consciousness of the narrative” which shows itself in Jasmine’s “cataloguing her selves” (Carter-Sanborn 582) and thus achieves to bring all her parts together (Erten 37).

Literature portrays people through various facets of life. Bharathi Mukherjee has penned the novel *Jasmine*. In the novel, the marriage of Jyoti to Prakash has paved the way for the constant transformations in the life of Jyoti called as Jasmine by Prakash. The journey she starts from Hasnapur ends in America. The journey implies the metaphorical journey she undertakes in her life. Though at certain moments the characters seemed to have come at a dead end, the readers would understand that it is a sojourn. They retrace their steps and again take a different route. Jyoti is tuned to Prakash’s dreams of America. It propels her to proceed towards America to perform *sati* with Prakash’s clothes. As a widow not having anyone to support her, Jasmine journeys without knowing what is in store for her there. Hence the quest is endless. The paper analyses the novel *Jasmine* in the backdrop of the theory of polygenesis.

In general, Polygenism is a theory of human origins which postulates that the human races are of different ancestry. According to the literary critic, Aparajita De, “Polygenesis is a continual self-refashioning that characterizes diasporic identity. This identity is inflected by multiple socio-cultural and political forces that shape and reshape it. Thus, identity is always in a state of flux; it is a continual birthing process resulting in

the evolution of the self under diverse contexts”(De 37). He adds that he has got the idea of polygenesis from Samir Dayal’s essay “Postcolonialism’s Possibilities: Subcontinental Diasporic Intervention.” The identity that differs according to the situations is termed as “multiple births” by Szu-Ping Huang in his article “The Liminal Space: the Negotiation of Identity in Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake*” (103). Szu-Ping Huang explains that “For these South Asian immigrants, who have straddled two cultures or even have polygenesis or multiple births, their immigration experience frustrates a complacent location as simply a South Asian or an American, and refuses a single incarnation that can be domesticated or assimilated...Their borderline position in the United States has not only enriched the South Asian traditions but also woven plurality or diversity into the skein of American society”(103-104).

The story begins with the prediction of the life of Jyoti of Hasnapur who is the protagonist of the novel *Jasmine*. The astrologer predicted “widowhood and exile,” when she was seven years old(Mukherjee 3). When the astrologer threw a twig on her head, it created “a star shaped” wound(3). Jyoti felt “helpless and doomed”(4) but considered it as “third eye”(5), like the sages. Jasmine thinks about the disappointment of the family when they have known that a girl child, fifth daughter, seventh of nine children is born.

I had a ruby-red choker of bruise around my throat and sapphire finger prints on my collar bone...My mother was a sniper. She wanted to spare me the pain of a dowryless bride...I survived the sniping. My grandmother may have named me Jyoti, Light, but in surviving I was already Jane, a fighter and adapter(39,40).

The development of the protagonist has started right from her birth. Despite all negligence and hatred, Jyoti survived in the womb. To counter the neglect, Jyoti topped in the studies.

Jyoti was married to Prakash in a register office. Jyoti’s friend Vimla’s perception of modernity fits for the cultural crisis of the immigrants: “once you let one tradition go, all the other traditions crumble”(75). Prakash’s approach to the aspects of life was revolutionary. After marriage he disappointed his uncle’s family by living independently with Jyoti. “For Prakash, love was letting go. Independence, self-reliance...But I felt suspended between two worlds”(76). Due to Prakash’s ideas Jyoti

felt dandling between two opposing notions. As she has been brought up in a village with traditions she has imbibed the customs in her heart. At the same time, the revolutionary actions of Prakash impress Jyoti. While she could not overlook tradition she is lured towards the modern thoughts: “he gave me a new name: Jasmine...Jyoti, Jasmine: I shuttled between two identities”(77).

Jyoti understands that her husband’s sole aim is to be in America. She wanted to lead a life of a normal girl by having progeny. But he repeatedly asks her not to be like other ladies, “caring only about pregnancies?”(83). Jyoti realises Prakash’s obsession for America. Hence she decides to go along with him. Prakash wanted to follow the foot prints of his Professor Devinder Vadhera. She convinces herself that the prognostications of the astrologer would not affect her if she goes to America. “We’d start with new fates, new stars. We could say or be any thing we wanted. We’d be on the other side of the earth, out of God’s sights”(85). It shows that she has been carrying the burden of the words of the soothsayer. It also suggests how naive she is in consoling herself that she can evade the anger or the plan of God if she moves on to the other side of the globe. In the mean while Prakash has got admission in the Florida International Institute of Technology. Jyoti could not join him as she has to become a major to go to America. In order to give her a gift, he took her to a textile shop. Unfortunately Prakash was killed as a bomb exploded which was the handiwork of Sukhwinder Singh a terrorist, of Khalsa Lions’ Group.

Jyoti goes back to Hasnapur. In widows’ clothes and in the company of widows Jyoti felt isolated and polarised in life. “*A bull and a bomb have made them widows, mother and daughter!...A houseful of widows...House of Sorrows! House of Ill Fortune!*”(98). In a miserable circumstance, Jyoti gathered confidence only by remembering Prakash’s words: “There is no dying, there is only an ascending or a descending, a moving on to other planes. Don’t crawl back to Hasnapur and feudalism. That Jyoti is dead”(96). Jyoti as Jasmine undergoes many ordeals to reach America. With fake passport and visa, Jasmine is scared whenever any official scrutinizes it.

We are the outcasts and deportees, strange pilgrims visiting outlandish shrines, landing at the end of tarmacs, ferried in old army trucks where we are roughly handled. We are dressed in shreds of national costumes, out of season, the wilted plumage of intercontinental vagabondage. We

ask only one thing: to be allowed to land; to pass through; to continue...We must sneak in, land by night in little-used strips(101).

When there was no one to receive Jyoti on the shore she was compelled by Half-Face to get inside his car. He took Jyoti to a motel and raped her. Unable to stand the torture she killed him and then ran out of the motel. From an innocent Jyoti of Hasnapur, to a modern Jasmine of Prakash, she blossomed to become noticeable. But, the experience with Half-Face incarnates Jasmine as Kali, the Goddess of Destruction. The essence she got as Jasmine due to Prakash ended in Jyoti becoming a murderer. The struggles she had when she was with Half-Face haunted her. She analyses that her life has always been like walking on a tight rope. “I was walking death. Death incarnate”(119). Ignited by her vow to reach Tampah to fulfil the desire of her dead husband, she regains control over her life. She wanted to perform *sati* under the same tree which was in the brochure. It propelled her to be stoical when she faced dire challenges. Apart from being an illegal immigrant, she has also become a murderer. It shows that if the situation demands she has the vigour to take any identity.

When Jyoti was stranded without knowing her destination, Lillian Gordon helped her to cope with the life in America. The character of Lillian Gordon is portrayed in such a way that she remains as a light house for the survival of the destitute and the polarised: “She had a low tolerance for reminiscence, bitterness or nostalgia...she was a facilitator who made possible the lives of absolute ordinariness that we ached for”(131). Lillian guided and directed Jyoti to learn “the American talk and walk...the transformation. Jazzy in a T shirt, tight cords, and running shoes”(133). From Jyoti of Hasnapur to Jasmine of Jullundhar, she became Jazzy of Florida. Lillian empowered the illegal immigrants in their own way to get into the American nation “as domestics”(134).

Jyoti moved to Professor Devinder Vadhera’s house in New York who was Prakash’s Professor. Jyoti analyses her constant journey in her life: “like a stone hurtling through diaphanous mist, unable to grab hold, unable to slow myself, yet unwilling to abandon the ride I’m on. Down and down I go, Where I’ll stop, God only knows”(138,139). Amidst all the chaos, Jasmine feels that she will be able to withstand the situation. Jyoti ruminates of her decision to step out of Professorji Dave Vadhera’s house as she wanted more American experiences. According to Jasmine, Professorji’s

family lived in an illusory life: “a certain kind of Punjab alive, even if that Punjab no longer existed”(162). Hence, Jasmine moves from Flushing to Claremont Avenue.

Jasmine felt at home in Taylor’s house. Jasmine feels happy when she earns \$95 a week for being the nanny of Duff. And moreover she liked Taylor and Wylie as they had great respect for Kate Lillian Gordon. Moreover, the next year since Duff would spend the full day at school, she would have time for her education. Taylor and Wylie were very casual in informing her that Duff was an adopted child and that they allowed Duff’s mother to meet Duff. It is beyond her vision to have “a non-genetic child...as a monstrous idea. Adoption was as foreign to me as the idea of widow remarriage”(170). Whenever she faces a situation so peculiar from her homeland, she is bewildered.

Jasmine was elated when she found a companion in Duff. She curiously looked at America through the eyes of Duff. She perceives the necessity to accommodate herself to the American life style. She assimilates and adjusts to the new environment. Her happiness at her progress is evident when Jasmine hears the remarks of Wylie on the phone: “Caregiver...Caregiver...I was a professional, like a school teacher or a nurse. I wasn’t a maid servant”(175). Instead of saving the salary, she became a spendthrift for a while.

I wanted to become the person they thought they saw: humorous, intelligent, refined, affectionate. Not illegal, not murderer, not widowed, raped, destitute, fearful. In Flushing, I had lived defensively in the midst of documented rectitude. I did not want to live legally if it also meant living like a refugee(171).

Jyoti analyses her incarnations. The journey she has been through so far as Jyoti, Jasmine, Kali, Jazzy, and Jase. It bewildered her.

Jyoti was now a sati-goddess; she had burned herself in a trash-can-funeral pyre behind a boarded –up motel in Florida. Jasmine lived for the future, for Vijn&Wife. Jase went to movies and lived for today...For every Jasmine the reliable caregiver, there is a Jase the prowling adventurer. I thrilled to the tug of opposing forces(176,177).

Though she feels that she doesn’t really belong to America, slowly but steadily she becomes part and parcel of America. It is due to the earning and the saving sense she has

got of late. The independence to choose her ways shows her transformation. “America may be fluid and built on flimsy, invisible lines of weak gravity, but I was a dense object, I had landed and was getting rooted”(179).

When Duff had to be in school completely from morning to evening, Taylor recommended her for a part-time job at Columbia in the Mathematics Department, in the front office. She was happy that she was able to earn double the amount of the caregiver salary and that she can pursue Columbia extension courses, in addition to tutoring Punjabi to some graduate students. Jasmine analyses that for certain people recollecting their past illuminates them, while for her remembering the past pains her: “*For them, experience leads to knowledge, or else it is wasted. For me, experience must be forgotten, or else it will kill*”(33).

The immigrant caregivers feel elated about their past and about their homeland and they felt that they share similar nostalgic thoughts and experiences while Jasmine wants to be in a mere oblivion: “They assumed I had a past, like them...Most of them had children back in Jamaica or Trinidad or Santo Domingo. They assumed I did, too. I didn’t have a child, but I had a past that I was still fleeing. Perhaps still am”(33,34). “To bunker oneself inside nostalgia, to sheathe the heart in a bullet proof vest, was to be a coward. On Claremont Avenue, in the Hayeses’ big, clean, brightly lit apartment, I bloomed from a diffident alien with forged documents into adventurous Jase”(185,186). When she begins to enjoy her successful career, the American independent attitude of Wylie jolts her: “In America, nothing lasts...We arrive so eager to learn, to adjust, to participate, only to find the monuments are plastic, agreements are annulled. Nothing is forever, nothing is so terrible, or so wonderful that it won’t disintegrate”(181). She perceived her life thus as she was informed by Wylie that she was in love with an economist Stuart Eschelman. Jane feels orphaned again as her future would be bleak if the family of Taylor disintegrates. Wylie added that she need not bother about her survival in America as Taylor loved her and that she also needed her presence whenever she had to meet Duff. Jasmine analyses her love and affinity for Taylor. Jasmine liked Taylor for his unassuming nature. She loves him for the way he calls her as “Jase.” In the absence of Wylie, Jane felt that, “...we- Duff, Taylor, and I – became a small, self-sufficient family,”(183) and were happy in one another’s company. Jane felt very happy at the marriage proposal of Taylor. She not only felt comfortable in his presence but also felt confident. It seemed that the journey of Jasmine had come to an end when she saw

Sukhwinder because of whom, her husband was killed. When Taylor insisted that they should inform the police, Jasmine confided about her life for the first time. She disclosed that her stay there in America was illegal. Hence she decided to move to Iowa.

The threatened Jasmine flees to Iowa and lives with Bud Ripplemeyer. Jyoti of Hasnapur becomes Jasmine, Kali, Jazzy, Jase and Jase becomes Jane in Iowa. She ruminates about the persons with whom she had been with, in varied incarnations. “I have had a husband for each of the women I have been. Prakash for Jasmine, Taylor for Jase, Bud for Jane. Half-Face for Kali”(197). At the same time she understands that she has been inspired by the confident Lilian Gordon, an independent Mother Ripplemeyer and that, “One day I want to belong to the tribe”(197). The thoughts of Jasmine show her determination.

Every human person is not one and the same person to every one. In *Jasmine* the protagonist has varied identities based on the people with whom she is. A woman assumes the identity of a daughter to her parents; sister to her siblings; wife to her husband; daughter-in-law to her in-laws; and mother to her children. All the roles that she plays in her life are not one and the same. She has different duties and responsibilities for all these roles. “We wear the Masks,” by Paul Lurance Dunbar illustrates how the blacks with self-esteem do not show their pain and frustrations by having a smile on their faces. It also happens in the life of the protagonist of *Jasmine*. Rushdie observes that “America, a nation of immigrants, has created great literature out of the phenomenon of cultural transplantation, out of examining the ways in which people cope with a new world” (11).

Jasmine is hesitant to marry Bud as she remembers the soothsayer’s words of widowhood. Bud falls in love with Jasmine within six months of meeting her. Bud was fifty years and father of Buddy and Vern who were married and lived in near by counties. Jasmine and Bud adopted Du, a fourteen year old Vietnamese. She perceives Bud’s idea about her thus: “Calamity Jane. Jane as in Jane Russel, not Jane as in Plain Jane. But Plain Jane is all I want to be. Plain Jane is a role, like any other. My genuine foreignness frightens him. I don’t hold that against him. It frightens me too”(Mukherjee 26). Jane understands the friendship between the Lutzes and Ripplemeyers as they are neighbours. Darrel Lutz has lost interest in farming and hence he would like to sell them. He loves Jasmine and would like to settle in New Mexico.

Jasmine feels that Bud is attracted towards Jane for certain reasons: “because I am alien. I am darkness, mystery, inscrutability. The East plugs me into instant vitality and wisdom. I rejuvenate him simply by being who I am”(200). While Bud has carved her image in his mind thus, Jasmine feels that he has not understood the real Jasmine. “I was a catalyst, not a cause. I make him feel what he’s never felt, do what he’s never done. There’s a shape-changing, risk-taking pirate rattling the cage of his heavy flesh”(200). Bud divorces Karin in order to be with Jasmine unmindful of the twenty eight years of marital relationship. Jasmine is in the family way with Bud’s baby.

Jasmine ruminates about the background of Bud and of herself. While Bud had five brothers and three sisters, Jane has eight siblings. Though they were from different backgrounds she feels that, “the add-ons cozy me into thinking that all of us Ripplemeyers, even us new ones, belong”(13). Before Du became a Ripplemeyer, he was Du Thien. At the same time Bud has not faced any complexities in his life till Harlan’s intervention. Bud was maimed as Harlan shot him. Jasmine never suspected Harlan Kroener would shoot Bud. From an ignorant person, Jasmine becomes stuffed with experiences. After the accident, Bud becomes sensitive as he is maimed. He cries even for trivial things. He feels guilty for his inability to take Jasmine for sightseeing. Jasmine thinks about the different phases she has had in her life. “I feel the tug of opposing forces. Hope and Pain. Pain and hope...In the white lamp light, ghosts float toward me. Jane, Jasmine, Jyoti”(21). Jasmine reflects over the words of the astrologer. “On the edge of the world, in flaming deserts, mangled jungles, squelchy swamps, missionaries save the needy. Out There, the darkness. But for me, for Du, In Here, safety. At least for now”(21). Jasmine understands the necessity of safety after a series of challenges she has faced right from the day of her husband’s death due to the terror attack, the atrocities meted out on her way to America and the day she had to kill Half-Face.

Du’s troubled childhood experiences as a refugee always made a difference in his life. Jasmine analyses that Du always has a perfect control over his actions and she also identifies her qualities in him as they have faced similar challenges in life. The similarities of their miserable condition bring them closer:

he has lived through five or six languages, five or six countries, two or three centuries of history; has seen his country, city, and family

butchered, bargained with pirates and bureaucrats eaten filth in order to stay alive; that he has survived every degradation known to this century,...Once upon a time, like me, he was someone else. We've been many selves. We've survived hideous times(214).

Despite similarities of the trials and tribulations, Jasmine knows the line of demarcation while sharing the experiences as she knows that her stay is illegal in the U.S. Jasmine feels that amidst all the difficulties she has faced, she has had hopeful moments also. She considers that her relationship with Bud has helped her lead a safe life and that it has also given safety to Du. Jasmine feels indebted to Bud for having given her the luxuries which she would not have had in Hasnapur: "they had air conditioning. Bathrobes, dark glasses, whiskey, cigarettes: these were shorthand for glamour that we Hasnapuris were meant not to have. I have triumphed"(231).

As an adopted mother of Du, Jane attends the PTA meeting. There she met Mr. Skola, Du's history teacher who said that Du is hastening to "become all American"(28). Jasmine analyses the way the immigrants try to belong to the mainstream by imitating the Americans and in the process, they lose the culture and the tradition of their homeland. The difficulty in mimicking an American becomes their yearning and dream. It reminds Jasmine that, "Once we start letting go- let go just one thing, like not wearing normal clothes, or a turban or not wearing a tika on the forehead- the rest goes on its own down a sink hole. We murder who we were so we can rebirth ourselves in the images of dreams"(29). Whenever Jasmine thinks of Du and his skill with the electrical gadgets, she feels that he is fit to be the son of Jasmine and Prakash. The analysis of Du's actions and attitude by Jasmine throws light on the sufferings and challenges faced by him. Jasmine compares Du's sufferings with hers.

Jasmine narrates how their family had to flee from Lahore to Hasnapur, of Punjab during the partition of India. Jasmine's father liked his prosperous life in Lahore, so that he listened to Pakistani radio broadcasts: "Lahore visionaries, Lahore women, Lahore music, Lahore ghazals: my father lived in a bunker...He'll never see Lahore again and I never have. Only a fool would let it rule his life"(42,43). The character of Jasmine's father reminds one of a cocoon. The larva gets everything inside the cocoon. The cocoon is sufficient for its survival. The nostalgic thoughts made him lead his life. Jasmine remembers how her masterji has complimented her intelligence. Though

Jasmine's father had encouraged her to pursue her studies and to find a job as a steno or as a teller, he was enraged when she said that she wanted to be a doctor and have her own clinic. It shows that her quest becomes predominant at a very tender age and more so being in a village.

Jasmine recalls about her friendship with Dr. Mary Webb who teaches Social work at the University Club in Dalton. Through Dr. Mary Webb, Jasmine meets people who say that they know about their previous births and they share their experiences to others. Jasmine nods that she has also had similar experiences of, "revisiting the world. I have also travelled in time and space"(126,127). She narrates the various stages of her life.

Jyoti of Hasnapur was not Jasmine, Duff's day mummy and Taylor and Wylie's *au pair* in Manhattan; that Jasmine isn't *this* Jane Ripplemeyer having lunch with Mary Webb at the University Club today. And which of us is the undetected murderer of a half-faced monster, which of us has held a dying husband, which of us was raped and raped and raped in boats and cars and motel rooms?(126,127)..

Jasmine remembers the emotional Karin when they were at the fair of Mennonites for their Relief Fund. Jasmine felt embarrassed when Karin narrated how she wrote her name in a paper and burnt it. And Karin confided that she hated Jasmine. At the same time since she wanted to be a good Christian and she asked her to help her not to hate her. The metamorphosis of the character Karin is clear. While Karin says that, "Forgiving's going to take me the rest of my life, but I'm going to do it"(203), it reminds Jasmine of her revenge for Sukhwinder who killed her husband, Prakash.

I do not seek to forgive, and I have long let go of my plans for revenge. I can live with both impulses. I have even written an anonymous letter to the INS, suggesting they look into the status of a certain Sukhwinder Singh, who pushes a hot-dog cart in New York City, Goodness and evil square off every moment. Forgiveness implies belief in an ultimate triumph. I dream only of neutralizing harm, not absolute and permanent conquest(203).

Jasmine was polite towards Karin when she blames her for her situation. She understands the pain Karin would have in losing Bud all of a sudden. “I have no way of competing with you! Last night I dreamed that Baden was hit by a tornado. I don’t have to ask a shrink to know that you are the tornado. You’re leaving a path of destruction behind you”(204,205). A reconciled Karin lived in Iowa in the house given by Bud and she even invited Jasmine to her house. The progress in the mindset of Karin was tremendous. She not only has accepted her situation but also has taken up a job to help the people who have got suicidal tendency.

Jasmine watches Karin explain in a television channel that since the farming becomes part and parcel in the life of the farmers they loose their temper when the bankers are strict to collect the loans. The maturity in handling people who have got vengeance is evident in the character of Karin. Jasmine acknowledges Karin’s skill and feels guilty of various accidents happened in the life of the people who come in her life: “For, Prakash’s death, Bud’s, maiming. I’m a tornado, blowing through Baden”(206). Karin’s sentiments are affected due to the pregnancy of Jasmine. The matured approach of Jasmine also gets a blow there. “Screams, taunts, meanness would have been easier for me to fight...Then soft, raspy noises floated at me...I thought I heard the sighs of a wild, despairing woman”(206). Though the confrontation is about the sentiments of getting the affection of Bud, both resolved it quickly as both Jasmine and Karin are practical. Karin understands Jasmine’s difficult situation in coping with the illness of Bud. Karin perceives that Jasmine has not targeted the money and property of Bud.

Bud is happy for Darrel as he had got his loans sanctioned. When they proceed towards Darrel’s house to inform the news, they were alarmed to hear a strange noise. Bud guessed it as the sound of the hogs. They found Darrel becoming the food for the hogs. Jasmine feels guilty about the destruction she has caused in the life of others in her journey of life.

I still think of myself as caregiver, recipe giver, preserver. I can honestly say all I wanted was to serve, be allowed to join, but I have created confusion and destruction wherever I go. As Karin says, I am a tornado...How many more shapes are in me, how many more selves, how many more husbands?(214,215).

Du explains his decision to meet his sister who is in Los Angeles(L.A.). He adds that she has consented to take care of him since Bud and Jane would have their kid very soon. “Abandonment, guilt, betrayal: the boy in front of me would consider them banal dilemmas”(221). When Jasmine realises that Du is to leave them, she feels distressed. She feels that she does not know about Du’s past completely, so “is a mystery, but the prospect of losing him is like a miscarriage. I had relied on him, my silent ally...The perfect young, unblemished face has aged into a hundred jagged cracks”(222). Jasmine compares herself with him. “My transformation has been genetic; Du’s was hyphenated. We were so full of wonder at how fast he became American, but he’s a hybrid, like the fantasy appliances he wants to build”(222). Jasmine feels guilty of bringing misfortune in the lives of Du, Bud and even on herself. Jane feels agitated and upset when Du is about to leave the house. She feels frustrated as she has pinned her hopes on him. She has always held him as her mirrored self. “His education was my education. His wirings and circuits were as close to Vijn & Vijn as I would ever get”(222). She wanted to have a detached attachment like Lillian Gordon who does a selfless service. At the same time Jasmine convinced herself that Du’s exit was unavoidable. It would bring relief to the inmates of the house as he would feel alienated in their house. Then she reflects over the life style of most of the Americans which are all disconnected and disintegrated. She recollects Du’s interest in designing, “Computer Scrabble, like computer chess, a chance for the lonely and word-obsessed to play themselves”(225). If she had noticed his interests, she would have understood the sense of alienation in Du.

Days have gone after Darrel’s death and Du’s exit from the family of Bud Ripplemeyer. From Du’s letter she understands that he works in a hard ware company and hence does not pursue his studies. “Last year a boy, this year a man, “he writes”(235). Jasmine awaits for Taylor and Duff arrival. Jasmine feels guilty to leave Bud and informs Taylor that she has a family in California. She added that she did not have Du when she was in Taylor’s house as Duff’s caregiver. The thought of Bud agonises her but the image of Taylor relieves her from all anxieties about her future. “I am not choosing between men. I am caught between the promise of America and old-world dutifulness. A care giver’s life is a good life, a worthy life”(240). She compares her experiences as a destitute to Du’s experiences as a refugee: “Du and I have seen death up close. We’ve stowed away on boats like Half-Face’s, we’ve hurtled through

time tunnels. We've seen the worst and survived. Like creatures in fairy tales, we've shrunk and we've swollen and we've swallowed the cosmos whole"(240).

Once she meets Taylor, she feels like Jase and not as Jane. Jasmine feels relieved once she comes out of Bud's house unsure about the qualities she has had in the past and she has to have in future. But she concentrates only on her future with hope: "Adventure, risk, transformation: the frontier is pushing indoors through uncaulked: windows...I cry into Taylor's shoulder, cry through all the lives I've given birth to, cry for all my dead...Time will tell if I am a tornado, rubble-maker, arising from nowhere and disappearing into a cloud"(241). As Yadav points:

Jyoti, Jasmine, Jane, Jase, each of her different identities, took place in a different space, i.e. India, Florida, and New York, Iowa. Such a character who embraces wanderings is attempting to destroy traditional ways of conceiving female identity. She is marginalized by both gender and race and changes herself according to her surroundings which are characterized by an ever-changing uncertainty just as Jasmine herself is. Her continuous movement and vagueness in which nothing was rooted anymore and everything was in motion, makes her a diasporic individual(4).

Hence, *Jasmine* is a microcosm of the experiences of people who go through various phases of life.

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