

## I. Introduction

Bharati Mukherjee was born in July 27, 1940, to an upper- middle class Hindu Brahmin family in Calcutta, India. Until the age of eight, she lived with nearly 50 relatives. So the extended family came to be one of the sources of favorable environment for her study because of constant inspirations. As Mukherjee was born into an extra-ordinary close knit and intelligent family, she was given ample academic opportunities and thus all perused academic endeavors in her career and has the opportunity to receive excellent schooling. By the age of ten, Mukherjee realized that she was going to be a writer.

In 1947, her father was given a job in England and brought his family to live there until 1951, where Mukherjee got an opportunity to develop and perfect her English language skill. In 1951, the Mukherjee family headed back to India. Bharati Mukherjee earned B.A with Honors' from the University of Calcutta at the age of nineteen and received her Master's Degree in English and Ancient Indian culture in 1961 from Baroda, India. Having planned to be a writer since childhood, in the same year, she attended a prestigious writer's workshop at the University of Iowa. However, on September 19, 1963, Mukherjee transferred into split world and impulsively married Clark Blaise, a Canadian writer. In the same year she received her Master in Fine Arts. Then she went on to earn her Ph .D. in English and comparative literature from the University of Iowa in 1969.

Bharati Mukherjee immigrated to Canada with her husband in 1968 and became a naturalized citizen in 1972. Although those years were challenging to her, she was able to write her first two novels, *The Tiger's Daughter* (1971) and *Wife* (1975). The first novel *The Tiger's Daughter* is a fractionalized story that draws Mukherjee's own first year of marriage. Same way, *Days and Nights in Calcutta*

(1977), co-authored with her husband Clark Blaise, is a shared account of the first trip the couple took to India to gather after being married. Her first collection of short stories, *Darkness* (1985), focuses on the natives of south Asia, who crave for success and stability but are burdened by their histories and face the difficulties of prejudice and misunderstanding. In 1988, Bharati Mukherjee was awarded the National Book Critic Award in Fiction for *The Middleman and Other Stories*, (1988) and became the first naturalized American to do so. Her recently published novel is *The Tree Bride* (2004).

Mukherjee has also become the author of nonfiction. Her first fiction writing is *Kautilya's Concept of Diplomacy: A New Interpretation* (1976). And her next writing co-authored with her husband Blaise, is *sorrow and the Terror: The Hunting Legacy of the Air India Tragedy* (1987). Usually her nonfiction writing deal with political and cultural aspects of India.

Mukherjee's most popular read novel is *Jasmine* (1989). And this extraordinary novel was published during the same time as Salman Rusdie's *Satanic Verses*, Jasmaica Kincaid's *A Small Place*, and Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*, that all these novels echo the voices from the third world.

Bharati Mukherjee's recent novel *Desirable Daughter* (2004) is achingly compassionate and ravishingly beautiful. She is a wonderfully subtle writer, who achieves her powerful and poignant effects by stealth rather than by direct action. Writing for her is a process of discovering 'truth' a necessity to think, to feel, to realize the condition of an immigrant to be assimilated in the new culture. A most promising creative writer of modern life in all its complicated aspects. Mukherjee with four novels so far, collection of short stories and other non-fictional works, has added a new and significant dimension to the Indian-American literature.

*Jasmine*, by Bharati Mukherjee, is published in 1989. *Jasmine* is the story of an ambitious young Trinidadian woman who migrates illegally to America to make her future good. Jasmine, the young woman is presented initially as an unformed mass of stereotypical values and beliefs. In her journey she loses her identity and finally seems to obtain a sharper definition and an identifiable personality. Her movement occurs in the context and because of the migration of the women into the west, there is the penetration of her body by the western males. As far as she remains an object of the contemplation within the boundary of Indian culture, Jasmine is seen as the victim of the text, she is victimized by Indian patriarchal culture which has turned her into the sati-performing bride, later victimized in the west when she is raped, or subjected to stereotypical reading. Therefore, she is the victim in the hands of the third World patriarchy and economics and of The First World imperialism. In this novel Mukherjee's major concern is to explore the problems of immigration and assimilation, on both physical and psychological level. Ironically, she is exploited by both her own countrymen (father, brothers, husband as well as mother and dida ) and new American employers ( Taylor and Bud ). In both position, she is nothing more than a thing in the domestic servant. Therefore, *Jasmine* is a story of a widow whose adventures make it as a story of survival expediency and the losses, compromises and the adjustments involved in the process of assimilation into the mainstream America. In the beginning part of the story the protagonist became bold but at the end her employers seduce her, it symbolically suggests the seductive power that the metropolitan city wields over new immigrants.

This study focuses on the ironic features of *Jasmine*. Jasmine the main protagonist of the story is very bold and ambitious lady. She belongs to traditional Indian community where she was hated or dominated by the patriarchal ideas. So

there is refusal to accept those established norms and values. The protagonist doesn't want to live in such a community. Therefore, there is an irony on the regressive traditional values even as it upholds them largely. When the protagonist enters into the American metropolitan city, there also she faces many obstacles during her journey. There also she finds domination of the native on the immigrant fellows. So with living Jasmine, as a reader we come to know that not only in feudal societies but also in the high well society as America is standing as a blood sucking to the foreign immigrant people.

Thus, the cultures, Indian culture and American are the main victim of ironic prospective .Although in traditional Indian culture females are dominated by male. They are in confined with in four walls, the females have secure image, but in modern America women are free, work outside, earn their livelihood as man, and they (women) are not safe. Their own employers seduce them. In India Jasmine wanted to come out from such masculinity world, but in U.S.A she herself accept that all values and beliefs, and same dominated society. That is why there Is irony upon the protagonist Jasmine.

In Mukherjee and her works there are different critics who have elicited much responses and criticisms on it. In the most of her stories the central characters are women and they endeavor to move from margin to the center. While assimilating themselves in the new culture they undergo through the very dreadful experiences. So, Mukherjee shows such painful experiences of those immigrant women who have to undergo sufferings while adopting themselves to the alien culture. And most of her characters feel the bitter experience of marginalization, discrimination and humiliation in the new culture. As Jaidka Manju, in her review of *Leave It to Me*,

portrays her as a marginalized woman writer, who aspires to move towards centre says:

Mukherjee has often gone to record in her insistent desire to seen herself as a mainstream American writer. But being a woman, she occupies a position outside the main stream, sometimes defined as “male stream”. Beside, despite her denials she belongs not to the dominant culture but to one of the Asian-American subculture, so as the product of two sub-cultures, she remains an outsider through aspiring eagerly for assimilation. (205)

Thus, it is quite natural that her women characters, too, endeavor to move from margin to centre.

Her women characters who people her novels are sometimes central and at other times the marginalized ‘other’. In most of her fictions, Mukherjee tries to move from the margin to center, toward their empowerment and toward an affirmation of their identities. (205)

In the same way, Chandra Mohanty comments on the kind of victimization of Third World women in the first, which, due to the burden of oppression, will not let the world. Woman speaks for herself. In this way, Mohanty distinguishes between “woman” as a cultural and ideological composite other constructed through diverse representational discourses and “woman” as “real, material subjects of their collective histories.” (53). The homogeneous image of the oppressed third woman that is thus created suggests Mohanty, is “an image which appears arbitrary constructed, but nevertheless carries the authorizing signature of western humanist discourse” (53).

As Bharati Mukherjee herself is a Hindu from her birth, she takes her protagonist from the same Hindu religion. Thus Richard Eder, in “Resisting the pull

of tradition, review of Jasmine, by Bharati Mukherjee Los Angeles Times Book Review, for ground a simultaneous interest in both Jasmine's alternate and her suitability for naturalization to an "American" way of life ... A Hindu woman flees her family's poverty and the Sikh terrorism the bloodies her village ... After a time in New York - only a foreign eye could fix the world of the upper west side with such hilarious and revealing estrangement - she moves to a small town in Iowa. In Corn and hog country - new prey to farm foreclosures and despair - she marks with unsparing brilliance the symptoms of new Third world.

Another Critic Gayatri C. Spivak further complicates this conversational dynamic, commenting on her own discussion of the suicide of a young Indian Woman, Bhuvanewari Bhaduri in Calcutta in 1926 she remarks:

What I was doing with the young woman who had killed herself was really trying to analyze and represent her text. She was not particularly trying to speak to me. I was representing her, I was writing her to be read and I certainly was not claiming to give her a voice, there again this is a sort of transaction of the positional between the westerner feminist listener who listens to me, any myself signified as a third world informant. (57)

In India females do not have been their own identity because they are male-defined. And after their husband's death they become widow they possess no identity other than of her husband. This is the rationale behind the Sati system. As R.C. Zaehner rightly comments:

It is true that a widow's lot was frequently so miserable that even death may have seemed preferable to a life in which she was still all too often held up to contempt and that she might be forced by public

opinion to make the extreme step, but this must be regarded as prevention of dharma which regarded voluntary sacrifice as the biggest virtue. (112)

Bharati Mukherjee is an immigrant writer, so in her stories we find her personal experiences with the social – politico- cultural background of both source and target cultures. An individual female life conditioned by those factors can be seen in her writings. The autobiographical elements are also explicit in her writing. That is why Anna Brewster in her article “A Critique of Bharati Mukherjee’s Neo Nationalism” states.

She constructs stories about the entry into American culture of immigrants from a variety of ethnic backgrounds from the most part of India. In addition she constructs a personal mythology of immigration or assimilation in the numerous autobiographical and semi – autobiographical writing. (1)

Mukherjee likes to identify her writing strategy as syncretic narrative strategy. Many post colonial critics are of the opinion that the experience of the post colonial elite is inevitably bicultural, and it is an experience of detachment and irony. Anne Brewster says:

The trajectory actually has an earlier starting point in a postcolonial India and the “biculturalism” of Mukherjee’s first novel *The Tiger’s Daughter*. Here Mukherjee explores the postcolonial dilemma of an English educated elite expatriate on a visit to India. The central character, Tara, is something of an outcast in this society because of her “Mileccho” husband and she feels alienated from her friends and their way of life which are depicted from an outsider’s viewpoint. (2)

“Mukherjee’s ‘conversion narrative,’” according to Brewster, “invests India with the status of the ‘old world’” (3). She explains further, “The old world of India is figured in ways that are repressive: India represented for her ‘that kind of Third world hierarchy where your opportunities are closed by caste, gender, or family’”(3).

Her style of representation makes it clear that she aspires to represent the diasporic postcolonial elite rather than new immigrant underclass or the rootless intellectual. So, this kind of “representation of the (diasporic postcolonial elite) immigrant,” according to vignission as cited by Brewster, “articulates the desire to be metropolitan, to be American, a ‘new world citizen’ and above all to not be a minority” (6).

Bharati Mukherjee’s writing style is well-known for its complexity. It is as complex as her characters are’ “The narrative structure of Juxtaposed setting and hybrid recollection,” as Donna Schlosser argues in her article “Autobiography, identity and self-agency: Narrative voice in Bharati Mukherjee’s *Jasmine*, “mirrors the complexity of the narrator’s identity” (1).

Similarly, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak thinks that the discourse of the migrant as metropolitan and the fantasy of the land of the opportunity could be described as “a phantasmatic hegemonic nativist counter narrative” ( qtd. In Brewster 4). Actually, she has used this phrase to indicate the writing of the post-colonial writers.

Mukherjee’s neo-nationalist discourse, too, can be equally called a phantasmatic hegemonic nativist, counternarrative despite the fact that “She uses the term in a different context (i.e. to describe the diasporic elite in representing the country of origin)” (4).

The main purpose of her writing is to discover for herself and then to describe and to convey the real experience of an immigrant woman. The both cultures show



the oddity, distortion of personality, dislocation of normal life, recklessness of behavior, morbidity of temperament, malignancy of motive, radical form of alienation, maladjustments and contradictions. Mukherjee presents both cultures in order to show her own condition, she makes her narrator of her works as her own mouth piece. As Mukherjee writes about the both east and west and her writings tend to be replete with elements of biculturalism. Mukherjee herself uses the bicultural aspect to describe her novels. While criticizing on the Mukherjee's character Donna Schlosser says "her narrator retains a duality of consciousness that allow her to merge wisdom and experience from east and west as a means from felicitating her cultural adaptation wherever she resides" (5).

The same bicultural experience of Mukherjee in her works is analyzed by Christine Gomez in her article "The on-going Quest of Bharati Mukherjee from Expatriation to Immigration", when she says "Mukherjee explores the immigrant sensibility recognizing its duality of fluid identity and acknowledging alternate reality" (75).

In 'Hindus' Mukherjee juxtaposes an expatriate an immigrant to draw out the contrast. In this story it is implied that the expatriate stance is futile. But in the term of her technique the very often expatriation is expressed through irony and an omniscient narrative with occasional shift in perspective and also authorial comment. As Gomez says: "The immigrant text appear in the first person narrative and reveal the author's supple voice, which can enter varied immigrant sensibilities" (79).

Typically, Mukherjee's protagonists are women from developing nations, trying to make their ways in an economically advantaged society with a deplorable history of sexism and racism, such characters are frequently objects of prejudice, exploitation, and violence that trend to brutalize and dehumanize them, violence is the

main subject matter of Jasmine, it is the another way for the transformation of the characters from one state to another. The story of Jasmine's self- identity turns out to be a arable for the social metamorphosis is, however, punctuated by outbreaks of sectarian violence As Samir Dayal puts it:

The obverse of the euphoria of independence was the horror of partition. The horror was continued in the uncaring violence between Muslim and Hindus, the bloody fighting in Bangladesh, the unresolved Kashmir problem. Before Indira Gandhi's "Emergency" quelled it, the Maoist Naxalite Violence in Bengal was another formidable chapter in post-colonial Indian history. The violence associated with the militant Sikh functions agitating for a new Khalistan in Punjab refuses to disappear and in fact in the matrix of Jasmine's emancipator struggle. As India moves toward modernity, it threatens to crack, if not 'Balkanise' itself ... Indian's progress toward the twenty-first century is anything if violent. But for the characters in Mukherjee's novel, the west to which Jasmine goes is equally violent, in different ways (66).

The journey made by Jasmine creates multiple nationalities. Mukherjee's characters are free from particular values and beliefs to be survived in an alien land. So characters are not static and straight. Bharati Mukherjee ironically presents her works in the distance between protagonist and her observed world. Through the subtle interplay between the protagonist's westernized perspectives her memories of her Asian youth and her inactively, Mukherjee provide an ironic critique of upper class Indian society.

## II. Irony

Generally irony refers to the contrast between the statement of what is spoken and what actual it means. According to chevalier, it is contrast between reality and appearance (qtd. in Hutcheon 93). If we try to see the irony in historical perspective,- irony is taken from 'iron' who demonstrates his behavior in different way than other characters. The character pretends to be doing one thing but the actual meaning is absolutely different. The Greek term ironical for irony has been first recorded in Plato's Republic referring to the irony implied in Socratic dialogue. In Latin term ironia is used by Cicero to elaborate the rhetoric of irony. It especially in Greek us, is the outcome of the deliberate pretension of the iron, an ironist, and the self deception of the alazon a victim of the irony. It is usually focused on the gap between what is said and what is intended, what is thought about situation and what actually the case is. Nowadays, the creative writers use irony as a literary device to show the gap between what is expressed and what is intended that brings the meaning contrary to the words. Irony has deserved as a permanent position in the field of literature a significant tool for artists even to reveal existence, life and death.

The irony was first available in the irony implied in Socratic dialogue which was later called as Socratic irony where the speaker pretends to be ignorant to make his\her argument logic stronger and the speaker wants to seek knowledge he wants to be thought by other but in contrary he / she teaches others about the knowledge of the universe. The Socratic irony has also been followed by Cicero and Quintilian who define irony as a figure of speech to elaborate the verbal strategy of a whole argument.(qtd.in Muecke17).Now a days an artist uses irony in his/her art and make his/her work effective. It is used as a strategy for analyzing the politics of representation (Hutcheon 194).

Verbal irony: It arises from the ostensible use of language intended a sharp contrast between the expressed meaning and the implied ironic meaning. Verbal irony is used to strengthen a statement by forcing a listener or reader to seek its true meaning. M.H.Abrams defines it as, Verbal irony is a statement in which the implicit meaning intended by the speaker differs from that which he ostensibly asserts (142). So the ironic statement generally involves the explicit expression of one attitude or evaluation, but with indications in the overall speech- situation that the speaker wants a different, and often opposite, attitude or evaluation. The ironic intensity of the verbal irony depends on the ironist's pretension to "aim at achieving maximum plausibility for his ostensible meaning" (45). That's why; ironists and ironic pretences are two basic features of verbal irony which is

... a game for two players, the ironist, in his role of naïf, the proffers a text but in such a way or in such a context as will stimulate the reader to reject its expressed literal meaning in favor of an unexpected 'Tran literal' meaning of constructing ...the basic technique is either that going with the ironic but and placing him in high relief or that of depreciating oneself, which is the countersinking intaglio method.

(Muecke 35-36)

Above statement explains that verbal irony shares its ironic intention with reader – a relation that allows for playing a verbal game of irony to take place. Verbal irony most often confused with Sarcasm. Sarcasm has also surface meaning and is differ from intended (implied) meaning but the difference is that the sarcasm is useful to restrict it only to crude and taunting use of apparent praise for dispraise so Sarcasm is crude and direct but verbal irony is gentle and benevolence. That's why irony becomes effective and aesthetically pleasing. It generates the curious feeling of

paradoxes of ambivalent and ambiguous and of a double contradictory reality indeed unmasks the appearances, Where lacks the feeling of liberation, the tone strongly conveys the intended message that no feeling of contradiction is possible.

Another type of irony is Structural irony: While defining it Abrams says, "some literary works exhibit structural irony: that is, the author instead of using an occasional verbal irony, introduces a structural feature that serves to sustain a duplex meaning and evaluation throughout the work" (142). The common device of such a irony is to invent a hero, or a naïve narrator or speaker who is either naïve or fallible and whose persistent judgment or interpretation is expressed meaning in the text impaired by the persons prejudice, personal interest and the limited knowledge. Structural irony is widely used rhetorical tool of enforcement which in a sense looks closer to verbal irony, but the basic difference between verbal irony and structural irony is that: verbal irony depends on knowledge of the fictional speaker's ironic intension which is shared both by the speaker and the reader. Structural irony depends on knowledge of author's ironic intention that is shared by the reader but is not intended by the fictional speaker.

Next type of irony is dramatic irony. It involves dialogue or spoken words .The ironic effect of the dramatic irony depends on the author's ironic intention shared with reader. Likewise Abrams defines dramatic irony as:

Dramatic irony involves a situation in a play or a narrative in which the audience or reader shares with the author knowledge of present or future circumstances of which a character is ignorant; in that situation the character is unknowingly acts in a way we recognize to be grossly inappropriate to the actual circumstances or expects the opposite of what we know that fate holds in store, or says something that

anticipates the actual outcome, but not at all in the way that the character intends. (143-144)

Therefore dramatic irony is a situation in which the reader or audience knows more about the immediate circumstances or future event of which a character is ignorant. In the Greek tragedy *Oedipus Rex* where the character Oedipus has married his own mother, but he is ignorant about the reality as he says, "A man should live only for the present day. Have no more fear of sleeping with your mother" (831). Sometime dramatic irony becomes tragic and sometime becomes comic. Dramatic irony becomes tragic when the demystification of the real situation leads to a "typical case involving a victim with certain fears, hopes or expectations, who is acting on the basis of these, takes steps to avoid a foreseen evil or profit from a for seen good, but his action serves only to lock him into a casual chain that leads inevitably to his down fall" (Muecke 69). In comic irony revelation of reality produces humor and the character leads to the happy resolution, So dramatic irony produces strong sense of existing and though audience and reader can grip the situation, intended irony meaning gets revealed. It locates irony by creating dramatic situation but in irony of fate, the irony is situated in the relationship between supernatural power and human beings, such kind of irony is known by cosmic irony," the irony of universe with man or individual as victim" (Muecke 23). When the individuals are usually struck with mocking tragedy and frustration then cosmic irony occurs, The tragedy and frustration are the result of their faith in supernatural power like faith, deity, this faith leads them to false hope, so they get frustrated and tragedy. The ironic intention of cosmic irony is generated by the character's blind faith in destiny and divinity. So the express meaning in this irony is supernatural power is very strong and all human beings are taken as toys in the hand of this power.

Another irony is romantic irony which is also known by paradoxical irony because it shows the contradictory relationship between nature and human being. Karl Solger and Friedrich Schlegel talked about romantic irony. For them nature is 'a dialectical process of continual creation and de-creation' (Muecke 23) where human being is created soon to be decreased because human being has a fix knowledge and ideas. So, they are unable to acquire the inner permanent knowledge of the inherently 'elusive and protean' nature. Nature creates human beings that mean it creates life that is also followed by inevitable truth, death. Romantic irony is true vision of nature and human beings. Irony lies in the structure of human existence. Human beings are much conscious about his limitations, but the life is arranged, individual could not know the nature. For Karl Solger irony situated in the center of human life," irony implies itself in the incessant paradoxes love versus death, finite versus infinite, meaning versus meaningless, success versus failure, the irony resides in the two fold movement in which each sacrifices itself to the other" (Muecke 25). And Schlegel says

Romantic irony is only the involuntary and yet completely deliberate dissimulation...everything should be playing and serious guilelessly open and deeply hidden. It originates in the union of *savour vivre* and scientific spirit, in the conjunction of a perfectly instinctive and perfectly conscious philosophy (Mueckes 24). M.H. Abrams states Romantic irony as:

a term introduced by Schlegel and other German writers of late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to designate a mode of dramatic or narrative writing in which the author builds up the illusion of representing reality, only to shatter it by revealing that the author, as artist, is the creator and arbitrary manipulator of the character and their actions. (144)

New critic like I.A.Richards , Cleanth Brooks have also taken the notion of irony as dialectic of paradoxes. Romantic irony sees the paradoxical relation of human being with nature whereas according to new critics the paradoxical irony is the result of various impulses and experiences in which one is supported by another, So that as romantics ,new critics also takes literature the representation of such paradoxes. K Burke, Cleanth Brooks. Richards have suggested that:

Every literary context is ironic because it provides a weighting or qualification on every word in it thus requiring the reader to infer meaning which are in a sense not in a word themselves all literary meaning in this view becomes a form of irony. (Booth 7)

Realizing such dynamic and complex nature of irony, Wayne C Booth in *Rhetoric of Irony* states irony into stable and unstable irony, where stable means the ironic intention of the speaker is shared with the reader or audience by some hints which were offered by the writer. Stable irony provides fixed ironic interpretation and it covers all kinds of ironies as verbal, structural,dramatic, cosmic. It is differ from expressed meaning. On the other hand unstable irony doesn't give any fixed hints. Now given the impact of De man's theories of the impossibility of univocal and stable meaning, irony has achieved a somewhat privileged status for some people; its over production of meaning through deferral and difference has been seen to point to the problematic nature of all language from a purely semantic point of view; the ironic solution of plural and separate meanings-(Hutcheon 57).

As Birendra Pandey posits in his essay on *Deconstructing irony*, becomes the motor of the entire rhetorical system. It signifies a refusal to hypostatize notions of the, of meaning, or interpretative as an end point "to the "otherwise vertiginous process of textual such as Booth's sharable norms" (55). So, the deconstructive irony



is inherent in signification, in its deferrals and in its negations of certainty. It is, in the words of Pandey in *Intellectual History Reader*. “a power to entertain widely divergent possible interpretations (665). Thus, irony is now saying something in a way that activates not one but an endless series of subversive interpretation. Irony also becomes political when it is used as a political weapon to subvert the centre of power.

Irony is supposed to be concerned with discursive analysis which examines how the knowledge that a particular discourse produces is connected with power and it connects the irony with wider historical and socio-structural contexts to put it more broadly. Irony includes all forms of societal practice and interaction between participants in particular situation that is why irony is a culturally shaped process. It can not be found in a single community, it becomes a place where different cultures meet and contact with each other. Pratt says that irony does not so much create “amiable communities” as it come into being in “contact zones” as the “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in context of highly asymmetrical relations of power (qtd. In Hutcheon 93) . Thus, irony might exist between a communitarian idea of shared beliefs and assumptions and an awareness of the diversity and mobility that will inevitably characterize that sharing. Hutcheon explains the notion of discursive community which is not unconstrained at all but acknowledges those strangely enabling constraints of discursive context and foregrounds’ the particularities not only of space and time but of class, race, gender ethnicity, sexual choice-not to mention nationality religion, age, profession and all the other micro-political groupings in which we place ourselves ore are placed by our society. This overlapping is the condition that makes irony possible, even though the sharing will inevitably always be partial, incomplete, fragmentary; nevertheless,

something does manage to get shared – enough, that is, to make the politics of irony happen (92).

The concept of irony's political function in socio-cultural contexts comes from Bakhtin's "notion of the double-voiced discourse" it is the forms of transmitting speech cannot be treated in isolation from the means of its contextualized "dialognizing"- the one is indissolubly linked with the other (B. Pandey, *Intellectual* 387). In other words, "it is irony's political functioning in contexts- in the sense of the more specific circumstantial, textual and inter textual environment of the text in the question," and it is "broader than the pragmatic notion of contextual background that generates overtones which facilitate an intercourse that enables are unsaid to enter into ironic" political "relation with the said" (Pandey 388).

It is very difficult to grasp the political meaning of irony because there is different micro-political power relation in society to which each of us belongs to. As Hutcheon says.

In ironic discourse the whole communicative process is not only altered and distorted but also made possible by those different worlds to which each of us differently words to which each of us differently belongs and which forms the basis of expectations assumptions and pre-conceptions that we bring to the complex processing of discourses, of language in use. Irony rarely involves a simple decoding of a single inverted message; it is more often a semantically complex process of relating, differencing and combining said and unsaid meanings. (89)

The said and unsaid with cultural ramifications becomes clear when the Bakhtinian notion of double-voiced discourse is extended further with respect to the concept of "double consciousness" by W.E.B. Du Bois (Davis 42). Though Du Bois does not

connect the double consciousness to irony explicitly, his “knowledge of two cultures (black and white) gives African American a keen sensitivity to ironic meaning to the dissonance created “when” two cultural ideas rub against one another” (Davis 46). As Du Bois claims that, ironic sensibility becomes political when it leads the black to the sad reality of “always looking at one’s self through the eyes of other”(qtd. in Davis 46)

Existing community in the society creates the scene for the use and comprehension for the politics of irony. Metaphor or allegory demands similar supplementing of meaning but irony has its evaluative edge because it provokes response from those who get it and in those who become victim of it (Hutcheon 2). So irony is always a social and political issue that involves, “relations of power based on relations of communication” which “unavoidably involves touchy issues such as exclusion and inclusion, intervention and evasion” (2). These all terms make the functioning of irony inevitably political. Our gender (male or female), nationality, working class and other factors condition the interpretation of the specific function of ironic meaning:

Irony is a kind of game where two major players are involved – the interpreter and the ironist. The interpreter may or may not be the intended addressees of the ironist’s utterance, but he/she is the one who attributes irony and then interprets it on the other hand, the one who decides whether the utterance is ironic or not. So, there is no guarantee that the interpreter will get the irony in the same way as it was intended, may be an inaccurate and even inappropriate way. (23)

In other words, irony is a complex intentional act on the part of both the interpreter and the ironist- one that has both semantic and evaluative dimensions between

intentions and interpretations, which are directed by conflictual textual or contextual evidences. Irony moves to be political in “the intention transmission of both information and evaluative attitude other than what is explicitly expressed” (11). Irony here becomes an important discursive strategy and its discursive features comes from the interpreter and the ironist as the agents who perform the act of attributing both meanings and motives and do so in particular situation and context for a particular purpose and with particular mean. So the function of ironic meaning gets its political edge even out of the ironist’s intentional and interpreter’s interpretation that is based on certain attitude toward both said and unsaid meaning. The said and unsaid meaning is directed by conflictual, textual or contextual evidence. Thus, such irony involves both semantic and an evaluative inference as Hutcheon says, “The semantic dimension of irony is influenced by receiver and by the surrounding tension-filled environments” (12). Social, historical and cultural aspects are very important in the attributing irony. It generates the idea that the interpreter’s interpretation and ironist attitude but a function of social and cultural context where both participants interact with each other and the irony gets its political function not only in the substitution of meaning but in its interpretation also. As Hutcheon says:

Irony happens in the space between the said and the unsaid; it needs both to happen. Ironic meaning is inclusive and relational: the said and the unsaid coexist in the interpreter and each has meaning in relation to the other because they literally interact to create the real meaning, and the unsaid is not simple inversion or opposite of said. It is the complex inclusion, relational and differential nature of ironic meaning making.

(13)

So, these features of irony shows that it explicitly sets up a relationship between ironist and audience that is political in nature where irony talks about hierarchy, domination and subordination. The politics of irony happens because such complex communicative process happens and irony itself comes into being in relation between meaning, between intentions and interpretation and in between people and utterance. (13).

Therefore the context is very important factor for the construction of irony. It not only always works between said and unsaid meanings, but also works between people, ironist, interpreter and targets, so it can be said that irony is a rational strategy. Besides this rational strategy irony can be defined to undercut or reinforce both conservative and radical position. When politics in conservative the irony becomes provocative and when it is used by oppositional it becomes subversive. It depends on who is using it is seen to be. The politics of irony at once forces a distinction between irony that “might function constructively to articulate new oppositional positions and irony that would work a more negative and negativizing way (16). If the person who is in power uses the irony generates irony’s conservative political function. In such case irony is used as a weapon for sustaining power. So conservative political irony is a single voice of the dominant authority of the position of power so this political function of irony becomes destructive because it forces the marginal to be complicit with the system.

Thus irony can be used in positive and constructive way. In that stage it can be used as a strongest tool or weapon to fight against the dominant authority by subverting the repression. That political function of irony is used by oppositional theorists like post colonialist, feminists and other marginal’s. As Culler says “The

force of oppressions is subverted by the boundless power of irony that no prison can contain (Qtd in Hutcheon 28).

In such a way “The irony can be used to reinforce authority, it can also be used to oppositional and subversive end-and it cant become suspect for that very reason” (29).

Irony not only works to point to the complicities of historical and social reality but also has power to change that reality. It is very difficult to understand the subversive political function of irony. Hutcheon say:

The subversive functioning of irony is often connected to the view that it is a self critical, self-knowing, self- reflexive mode that has the potential to offer a challenge to the hierarchy to the very “sites” of discourse, a hierarchy based in social relations of dominance and overturn, is said to have ‘Politically transformative power’. (30)

Thus, irony has a very good relationship with oppressed power, this relation gives power to irony to become an effective strength of oppositional because it uses their language as its said meaning. This type of subversive political function of irony is named ‘counter-discourse’ by Terdiman: “The marginalized can be heard by center, and yet keeps its critical distance and thus unbalance and undermine the authority” (qtd in Hutcheon 31).

When irony deconstructs the dominant discourses on the premise, that the single vision produces worse illusions than the double vision, it becomes a political tool. In this sense irony unmask the socially constructed self as arbitrary by demanding revision of values and conventions. Feminist theorists and other marginal use this irony. In the words of J. Butler, “ This is the irony feminist theorists see as working to deprive hegemonic culture and its critics of the claim to naturalized or

essentialist gender identities” (qtd. In Hutcheon 32). Females are said to be able to use irony as a particularly potent means of critique of or resistance to patriarchal social restrictions or even essentialist claims to truth. So, irony is seen as both empowering and impleasuring. And it is often the transideological nature of irony itself that is exploited in order to record into positive terms what patriarchal discourses reads as a negative (Hutcheon 32). Relating irony to our life as Conway and Seery explain: “Irony becomes political when it is reformed in the service of life ( qtd in D.C Muecke). So irony functions as a guide, and it is an excellent surgeon which reduces all socio-political weakness.

### III. Irony in Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine*

Bharati Mukherjee as a postcolonial and an immigrant writer writes this novel in order to give expression to those experiences related to the post colonialism. In *Jasmine*, writer uses irony in the context of traditional Indian values which replace the ironic unsaid of voice of the said. In novel the protagonist Jasmine moves from East to west and ironically becomes an American “gold-digger”. With the help of Jasmine, writer makes her aphasia to speak in order to problematize the scene of representation both in the third world and the first world. Thus, the novel presents the subaltern-protagonist as bringing to crisis for subalternity with an air of subversiveness in traditional Indian society as well as in metropolitan society.

Mukherjee in *Jasmine* ironizes regressive traditional Indian values which always dominate women. In traditional Hindu dharma women do not have their own existence, “the woman is still a vassal” (69), the wives do not call their husband with their proper name, the use “only pronouns” (69). The traditional norms and values always keep the women under the men. Writer presents her protagonist as an ironic figure when Jasmine “says the name without gagging and blushing in front of his friends” (70). In Indian society woman is never free, never has a thread of her own, and is not her own mistress. In her childhood, she is subject to her father, in marriage to her husband and after her husband’s death to her eldest son. Women worship their husband as God, they believe in “Pati Parameswaray ” statement. That is why women always serve the husbands. They never “eat before them” (189). In this way the women are suppressed by men, by traditional Hindu dharma. Thus, in the text writer presents irony on traditional Hindu norms and values which always try to dominate the women, the wives. The Feudal society denies higher education to girl, they have no preferences of their own, “village girls are like cattle; whichever way the male lead



them, that is the way they will go” (39). The woman does not have their own desires, aim. The women are tortured and assaulted violently. Jasmine says, “The man of our village weren’t saints. We had our incidents Rape, ruin, shame” (48). The rituals are not far from biasness. Thus, there is irony on the established rituals which imbalance between man and woman. When Jasmine becomes widow , Dida and other women of village put together a solution for widows that, “ Jasmine and her mother should stay together, two widows shopping and cooking for each other keeping the shrines of their husbands alive”(88). Thus, the rituals which are presented in the society are only to suppress and to dominate the women. Mukherjee presents the irony on those women, who not only suppressed and dominated to their own male counterparts alone, but they also fall victim by old conservative women too. Thus, these kind of women have inherited all the patriarchal ideologies and values.

Women do not have not their fixed identity; it is only transferred on the hand of one male to another, such as Jasmine, Jase, Jane etc. Mukherjee’s irony reveals in *Jasmine* that the feudal society provides good education to male whereas girls are confined within house hold works. In this way, writer’s sharp irony provides the narrator a critical distance which unbalances and undermines the patriarchal conventions by revealing how the discrimination even between son and daughter are common for the parents in a family rooted in the traditional Indian patriarchal values. Therefore, the male members, Arvind and Hari are always hoping for a good technical school for “diploma program” (40), so that they can find a good job, while the female is always involved themselves in the kitchen. The girls make engaged them to get firewood! Boil tea! Feed the chickens!” (40). The irony available in the narrative perspective of the girl narrator gives a much-needed a critical insight, which discerns that the female members “went off to boil sweet milky tea for men” (43). Thus,

women's domestic labors are neither paid nor evaluated. Their whole day's household work is ignored so that females remain insignificant all the time. The formation of sexual division of labor in Indian society leads subjugation to woman. The society ironically confined the women to four walls of domestic world whereas men enjoy freedom with wider realms of relationships. Prakash works in so many places to make his family run and collect money for further education in America. Jasmine says of her husband's daily routine.

Prakash left the apartment before five thirty in the morning six days a week and did not get home before eight or nine in the evening. He worked two jobs, one as a repairman and book keeper for Jagtiani and son Electrical Goods, and the other as a math tutor to dreamy boy of thirteen. Then he crammed for his diploma exams.(71-72).

Yet Prakash is a modern man. He takes Jasmine slightly different from other males in the society. The couple cherishes a dream of working together, and open their own store he instructs her to play with his mechanical instruments. Yet he every time teaches her but he keeps on telling again and again, "husband must protect the wife whenever he can" (82). With this statement he ironically presents his superiority over Jasmine. Thus, Prakash can remain no longer aloof from the patriarchy that is prevalent in society. He also shares the dominating characteristics like other males. He liberates Jasmine for his own concern and not for her. "I like having you near me when I work; we'll have to open our own store someday" (81).

The patriarchal notions are based on traditional Hindu religions which mark the high rank to the males and low position to females. The women are compared with "Sandals" (41) of men. So the women get very miserable/pitiable position in India, in village. The narrator girl ironically presents the patriarchal conventions of Indian

family with comparisons and contrast among the members especially between girl and boy. In traditional Indian family, Jasmine expresses the difficulty of being a girl in these terms:

I was born the year the harvest was so good that evening my father, the reluctant tiller of thirty acres, had grain to hoard for drought. If I had been a boy, my birth in a bountiful year marked me as a lucky, a child with a special destiny...God's cruel, my mother complained, to waste brains on a girl. A God's still crueler, she said, to make a fifth daughter beautiful instead of the first. By the time of my turn to marry came around, there would be no dowry money left me the groom I deserved (34-35).

Thus the village people think that the boy will look after the parents when they are old enough whereas thus girls are taken as Parayadhan. So the narrator depicts a very pitiable situation of the baby girl: "When the midwife carried me out, my sisters tell me, I had a ruby-red choker of bruise around my throat and sapphire fingerprints on my collarbone" (34).

Thus the cruelty of the feudal society is ironically excavated when the mother "wanted to spare me the pain of a dowry less bride. My mother wanted a happy life for me"(35). Having a daughter taken as a punishment for sins committed in other incarnations. The novel ironically presents the inhuman behaviors upon the women by the society. The society takes the women as a non-living thing, like a statue. In the time of marriage the behula's parents demand a heavy dowry from the girl's parents. Those girls who enter her groom's house with no dowry or less dowry, life is worse for them, the new families do not accept them: "All over our district bad luck dogged

dowry less wives, rebellious wives, barren wives. They fell into wells; they got run over by trains, they burned to death heating milk on kerosene stoves” (36).

The irony become subversive when those married with dowry may not turn out to be lucky because of their illiteracy and early marriage. The secret of the success of Indian marriage is, as Jasmine comments about the conjugal life of Professors Wadhera and Nirmala in *Flushing*, which Mukherjee presents as a replica of rural Hasnapur, “an ancient prescription for marital accord: silence, order, authority on the part of Professor Wadhera and submission beauty innocence on the part of Nirmala” (151). In Indian society people married their daughter at her early age. They believe that ‘kanyadan’ is ‘Mahadan’, that is why they married off their daughter before her periods and they can center to heaven’ (34). “The Mazbi’s maid daughter, who had married at Eleven already had a miscarriage” (70). Thus Mukherjee presents the irony upon the tradition values which dominates on the female. In Hindu dharma the life of widow is very heart touching and they have to suffer a lot. A widow is suspected to spend the rest of her life mourning her dead spouse and interceding for his soul, so the Hindu dharma behave very rudely to the widow, the widow should opt for sati otherwise for a highly restrictive and self- abnegating life. In *Jasmine* mataji, after being a widow, “shaved her head with a razor, wrappers her body in a coarse cloth and sat all day in a dark corner” (54), not only with mother but with Jasmine also the villagers made a solution, “Jasmine and her mother should stay together, two widows shopping and cooking for each other and keeping shrines of their husbands alive”(88). The same Hindu dharma do not confined the male in its norms and values. Widowers are free from all restrictions. The norms and values are only for women not for men. In *Jasmine* “a widower with three children, needed a new wife to look after children” (41), writer presents sharp irony on traditional Hindu dharma which imbalances and

undermines the patriarchal domination conventions by revealing how the discriminations even between widow and widower in feudal society. The widow's life is taken as a broken pitcher which has "no insides and outsides" (15). Those widows who do not perform sati, the resent social environment create such situations which compel them to perform sati. In Jasmine "Vimala lived in a two story brick house with real windows, her marriage was the fanciest the village had ever seen. Her father gave away a zippy red Maruti and a refrigerator in the dowry. When she was twenty one her husband died of typhoid, and at twenty-two she doused herself with kerosene and flung herself on a stove, shouting to the god of death, "Yama bring me to you" (12). Thus, the writer presents irony on that society which treats woman as a real subaltern, do not have even fix identity 'Jyoti, Jasmine' (70).

The political edge of irony in the story gets further sharpened when father, being outraged at the dominating nature over the daughter, explains that he is a modern and reasonable man and "let the girl decide, you want position of steno in the state bank" (44). His attitude shows his dominating patriarchal notion which suppressed the woman's desire. His patriarchal notion even gets further undercut when he gasps "The girl is mad! I'll write in the back of the dictionary. The girl is mad! (45). This shows how father as being male, is dominating the female's desire. The patriarchal society does not let the girl to choose their future aim. In same way, Jasmine's husband cannot tolerate her to be a woman independent as him. Jasmine tries to make her economically independent by selling detergent from door to door, she keeps her job and money secret to him but when he learns he shouts, "You secretive little monkey"(74). She is confused regarding the relationship she thinks, "Was he really possessive about my working?"(74). But later she realizes that whatever he is doing, it is not for her. Jasmine to be an independent woman, is not a

tolerable fact for him. She silently mutters, “May be he was possessive and jealous...” (75). The Jealousy stems from man’s negative attitude to women in the male-dominated society. Mukherjee ironically presents such notion that in society the male acted as they are in favor of women but actually they never put the female in the equal position. They do not give permission to women to earn their livelihood.

In novel *Jasmine*, the protagonist wants to be free from the traditional rules, dominated rules, so she wants to foreign land, but in reality she keeps on behaving as a traditional woman with Prakash. She tries to be a devoted wife. She agrees to stay inside the house when he will go out for work in America. Jasmine tells, “If you’re there, I’ll manage. When you are at work in America, I’ll stay inside”(73).

In *Jasmine* Mukherjee ironically compares Indian culture with American culture. In India widow has to commit sati or else lead a dog’s life, whereas in America women do not remain widow for long, as the narrator says, “with all the Old Iowans in Southern California, (Darrel’s sister) does not think she will be a widow for long” (9). Bharati Mukherjee ironically aromatizes the depth of the subaltern of Indian women by foregrounding, the contrast between poverty ridden rural India and prosperous urban America on the one hand and the big difference existing between the statuses of the women of the two countries on the other hand. Indian society is described with its lack of basic infrastructure like water, electricity and roads, which also can be finding in America. In India, in Hasnapur “muddy bucketful of water” and in America Jasmine stores “water in orange- Juice Jars, plastic milk bottles, tumblers, mixing bowls, any container she can find” (13). Thus, writer ironically comment on the drudgery of Indian woman in contrast to the mechanized life of abundance and comfort of their American counterparts, carrying water ironically reveals the truth

about the female identity in Indian context. It symbolizes women's subservient role in the patriarchal feudal society.

In *Jasmine* Mukherjee presents the dirty nature of masculinity that has reified the woman body as a sexed-commodity- a bitter reality ironically reflected in Jasmine:

He dragged me to the television and pressed my forehead against screen. Then he brought my head back and slammed it against the set, again and again. "Do not tell me you ever seen a television set. Don't lie to me about no husbands and no televisions and we'll get along real good. I got things I can do for you and you got something you can do for me, and I got lots of other things I can do to you, understand?"  
(100).

In the quote, the presented scene is the replication of the cruelty of the male dominations. Not only Indian society but metropolitan country also affected by such dominating notion over the immigrants. The passage bears out not only vengeful patriarchy but also inhumanity irrational behaviors over the alone woman. The ironic edge goes on sharpening as Half-Face says to the girl for his intention of seducing her. "You know what is coming, and there isn't anybody here to help you, so my advice is lie back and enjoy it. Hell, you will probably like it. I don't get many complaints"  
(102).

The given quote describes the loneliness situation of an immigrant girl, all are unknown to her, and thus she does not rescued by any one. Therefore, the writer presents irony upon the metropolitan state where there is no humanity. The phrase 'nobody here to help you' presents immigrants' situation in new place. In new place the migrants lose their purity:

Half-face stood, totally naked. He was monstrosly erected.....For the first time in my life I understood what evil was about. It was about not being human Half-Face was form an underworld of evil. It was very simple, very clear perception, a moment of truth, the kind of understanding that I have heard come at the moment of death. I had faced death and cheated it. (103)

The word ‘monstrosly’ and ‘an underworld evil’ ironically indicate the cruelty of patriarchy. The politics of irony is to function as, in Seery’s words, “a way of extending dialogue where there has been no firm basis” (qtd in Pom Bahadur gurung 51). Such a feminist irony lies on the elliptical narrative perspectives of the stories that shatter the establishments by means of ironic un hiding of the cruelties underlined in the conventions of the patriarchal societies. The subversion of the patriarchy in Mukherjee’s *Jasmine* is achieved through the revelation of ironically saturated consciousness of her female character that exposes how the male “break off the past, he gave me a new name Jasmine ... small and sweet and heady ... Jasmine ... quicken the whole world with perfume” (70). Such domination is exposed as the outcome of the patriarchal convention of taking woman as a flower- which spread smell all around. Mukherjee directs her irony to such a genre discrimination implied in rural India. The word ‘unhealthy’ and ‘backward’ presents village’s picture. In village men are “generally too greedy and too stupid to recognize their own best interests ... (70)”. The male members do not care for female’s interest, about getting pregnant. They say women “are still very young and foolish...there is nothing more inevitable than a fourteen-year old married woman becoming a mother” (71). In the traditional society woman’s are not only dominated by male but even women are also



want to live under control of the male, “women think they own the world because their husbands are too lazy to beat them” (41).

The females are compelled to accept the future which the males decide otherwise they are highly criticized by the male dominating world:

If you had married the widower in Ludhiana that was all arranged ... if you had checked the boy's horoscope and not married like a Christian in some government office ... If you had waited for a man I picked ... none of this would have happened ... You were in the sari shop to buy something you could not afford ... God was displeased. God sent that sardarji boy to do that terrible thing. (88-89)

Above quote presents even the patriarchal family members do not take side of their own family, daughter. If any bad thing happened to them, they blame the daughter for this, they claim that what ever written in fate that would happen. Here ‘Sardarji boy’ is compared with Fate, with God. Thus the village people are innocent and conservative as well as traditional. The villager believes in astrology and subscribe to the fate-as-victim belief. The astrologer forecasts the seven years old Jyoti's widow hood and exile (1). The irony become sharp at the point when the writers present Jyoti's rejection of fatalism comes not primarily because of it's inexactitude but due to it's dismissal of the human agency in controlling future events insinuating that she can not carve out her own destiny. However she is in India the astrological configurations seem to be validated. Such a world view serves to perpetuate a fatalistic view of life- what a looted cannot be blotted. The Mukherjee ironically presents the belief to the social pressures of fatalistic rural life:

I was the last to be born to that kind of submission, that expectation of ignorance when the old astrologer swatted me under that Bunyan tree,

we were both acting out a final phase of a social order that had gone untouched for the thousands of years (229).

Mukhejee makes the astrology a trope of the master narrative of the repressive social order. Unwilling to assent to fatalism, writer presents the narrator girl's political consciousness that ironically underline the traditional fatalistic views. The girl challenges the astrologer vigorously and when the astrologer tries to silence her by chucking on the head Jyoti is ironically invested with the feeling of the potency of goddess Kali:

My teeth cut into my tongue, twig sticking out of the bundle of firewood. I'd scavenged a star-shaped wound into my forehead ... I smelled the sweetness of winter wind flowers. Quails squirrels as tiny as mice wished over arms, dropping nuts. The trees were stopped and gnarled, as the ghosts of old woman had taken root. I always felt the she-ghosts were guarding me. I did not feel I was nothing ... "The bleeding star on my forehead is not a scar ... it is my third eye. In other stories that our mother recited the holiest of sages developed an extra eye right in the middle of their foreheads. Through that eye they peered out into the invisible worlds. Now, I'm a sage. (3-5)

In the very beginning of the novel Bharati Mukherjee makes clear her intention of casting her protagonist in the mould of goddess Kali. As her lolling tongue and lips are smeared with blood. Jyoti's cut tongue gives her a similar bloodied and fierce look as Kali. Same way, the star-shaped scar on Jyoti's forehead parallels Kali's third eye, the gift of a curse from Lord Shiva for having mocked him for his trinetra. However, Geoffrey Kain wrongly associates Jasmine's third eye with Lord Shiva's: "The reference to the third eye brings with it inevitable association with Shiva, God of

creation and destruction who by focusing the third eye on other gods and creatures, achieves periodic destructions of the universe, making way for subsequent periods of renewed life and development”(152). Jyoti becomes subversive when she kills the rapist half-face in true kali style in the motel “above him as he had last seen me, naked, but now with my mouth open, pouring blood, and my red tongue out”(106). Mukherjee, by designing kali, seeks to come to terms with violence. The old dharmic way of life patterned on the wishful thinking of a non-violent society and Mahatma Gandhi’s weapon of non-violence to fight colonialism turns out to be grossly irrelevant in the context of post colonial realities. Mukherjee seems to suggest that kali’s per formatively may be the one way in which post-colonial India should seek to come to terms with the built-in-shortcoming of its refined view of the world kali is mother of her. Hindu devotees because she gives birth to a wider vision of reality than the one embodied in the tradition Indian Hindu dharma . There is irony upon the Hindu dharma which is insufficient and restriction without a frame as it were. Kali frames that order, putting it in a compelling context standing outside the dharmic order, indeed threatening it, kali- Jasmine beckons the subaltern Indian to seek a vision to transcending their subalternity.

Thus, Mukherjee takes the subversive activities of Jasmine in order to construct sense of established order through disorder is also clear from her choice of America. To presents irony Jasmine is compared with kali, where she demonstrates her shakti the powerful, ferocious, feminine cosmic principle in violent contrast to sati, the ascetic good wife who surrenders her life to traditional dharmic way. Like kali whom even Shiva can’t control but only becalm, Jasmine never gives her lovers the upper hand. Jasmine’s sexual freedom functions as a measure of her rapid westernization on the one hand and her increasing detachment from the traditional

sexual mores on the other. By deserting Bud and opting to go away with Taylor, Jasmine is not merely choosing men: she is symbolically asserting her right to try and reposition the stars instead of ... her fate (as any American women would do in normal situations). In America she has learned that nothing lasts for ever, so she need not condemn herself to a life she does not particularly want. As the ending of the novel, as writer presents, Jasmine, Kali- like, is never going to be dominated by whoever is her consort. Bharati Mukherjee ends the book on a novel note, and re-emphasizes the complex and alternating nature of identity of a woman in exile. "Then there is nothing I can do. Time will tell if I am a tornado, rubble- maker, arising from nowhere and disappearing into a cloud. I am out of the door and in the pot hold and rutted driveway, scrambling ahead of Taylor, greedy with wants and reckless from home" (214).

Mukherjee presents Jasmine, who not only succeeds in re-positioning her stars but she also becomes more assertive in her fight of survival. Her survival strategy in America predicated itself on her goal of staving off the common predicament of women in capitalist patriarchy: the exploitation of their sexuality. The use of the trope of kali in the America part of the novel makes clear how the victimization of women in capitalist metropolis may be successfully avoided.

It will be however, wrong to take the text's dramatization of the subaltern protagonist's triumphant saga through the trope of kali alone. As Hoppe in "The technological Hybrid as post American: Cross cultural Genetic in *Jasmine*", observes "enter new and empowering possibilities, both within the aid of her culture's narratives and in other ways that are articulated through the twinned tropes of 'America' and high technology (143). One of the most decisive moments when the subaltern migrant demonstrates her inherent kali like subversiveness so unmistakably-

the Vendetta in the hotel room of her rape- is triggered by the modern shower glass, the flaggy surface of which blurs her indistinct reflection into an image of goddess kali. Thus, Jasmine's violent substitution of self turns out to be a more constitutive of her hybrid space. The transformation from the myopia of a backward Indian village girl into the far-sightedness of a metropolitan lady who finally engages herself in self aggrandizement comes through the cumulative insight obtaining in the coalescing of the myth of kali with the narrative of Americanization associated with western locales, mobility and frontier-hero lifestyles" (Favmonville 53). Jasmine's knack for integrating the Indian religious tradition with mythic American way of life alters the two cultural sites into a power field for her, thereby modifying both. The integration reinforces itself through the novel's support of a possible negotiation between destiny and opportunity, between a sexed subaltern and subversive woman and between non-violence and violence.

At last, Mukherjee's ironically integration of the Indian and American myth in Jasmine is what turn out to be in between site if transition – where in binary opposition, commingle through conflict. Jasmine's hybrid identity, which is a discursive product, allows itself to be remade and remodeled in such enunciator ways which enables her to interrogate, reconfigure and manipulate the received ideas of both native India and metropolis America.

#### IV. Conclusion

Bharati Mukherjee, a female writer, deals with the ironic representation of the protagonist Jasmine. The central character Jasmine seems to strain at subjectivity and control over her life as she travels east to west. Actually the movement from India to US, from New York to Iowa, Iowa to California becomes Symbolic of possibilities yet to be known, desired, and experienced. It is true that Jasmine's subjectivity, as she moves westwards, is always defined through her relationship with male figure who will either love her too much or too little. Jasmine is dominated by overbearing masculine figure in her childhood, which includes her father and her brothers. Jyoti is remolded into Jasmine by her husband. The man who rapes her in a sleazy motel room in Tampa also acts as a catalyst of the metamorphosis of "Jyoti as Sati" into that Jyoti who revolts and searches her way to independence . Sameway, Bud the crippled man she lives with and nurses, and whose child she bear, Provides the domestic security which kindles in Jane to restlessness of sprit (America). Bud thus provides the safe heaven, the infrastructure against which Jasmine will define her desires and her future. Finally, instead of forging and independent identity that would have allowed her to discover a unity within herself, Jasmine wants for Taylor, the man she has inadvertently fallen in love with to carry her off into the desert in the west. Defined against male figure Jasmine remains the object of male violence, desire and lust, and is unable at the end to break the circle that restrains her from coming into her own.

In *Jasmine* there is duality between the old Jasmine (representative of India and the past) and the new Jasmine (representative of the west and the future). So, when the older jasmine (or Jyoti) chooses to commit sati in her husband's honuor, that choice found its justification within the framework of India's "traditions" and Jyoti's

submission to those traditions at the cost of the self. And while Jasmine 's choice of Taylor over Bud may come as some what of a chilling surprise at the end, it is presented as the by product of a liberating western influence, and therefore once again subsumed under the cultural dichotomy and oppositional discourse of the text. In choosing Taylor over Bud at the end, Jasmine sacrifices an older life of conformability to the challenges of mutation, while the third world becomes the locus of an innocent unexamined goodness where people must live rather dull and complicant lives.

Thus, the present research on *Jasmine* underscores the hypothesis that Bharati Mukherjee's presentation on the third space and the hybrid position make the use of irony in postcolonial nature.

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