CHAPTER - V

VARIED PERSPECTIVES AND REPRESENTATIONS OF REALITY

The post-modern scenario in the English novel in India is a bright one. Compared to other genres, the novel has a larger readership and women writers, in particular, prefer the novel to other forms of writing. The independence movement has brought the Indian woman out of her sheltered protected existence. It propelled her onto the political and social scenario and she too began to experience the prevalent reformist zeal. This change in the Indian woman provides main stay for much of the fiction written by women in post independent India.

In the earlier fiction, written by male novelists, women were represented more as symbols and less as people. Positively or negatively, they were portrayed in a one-dimensional manner as virgin-heroine, the dutiful daughter or all sacrificing mother. But the post-independence fiction by women achieves a separate identity.

The first important woman novelist to enrich Indian fiction in English was Kamala Markandaya whose novels receive equal attention of both men and women unlike her successors Anita Desai and Bharathi Mukherjee. It is aimed at focusing on the select novels of these three novelists who bear a curious resemblance to one another in many ways.
but are yet different in certain respects. The triad chosen here comprises Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai and Bharati Mukherjee who are all women novelists dealing with the world of women. They belong to urban upper middle class, English-educated society. Their milieu is the world they are familiar with. They depict women with both their negative and positive attributes. Immigrant women in these novels are no longer treated as objects for they become the subject of these novels. As Shashi Deshpande observes, we see women in all colours: “the power of women, the deviousness of women. The helplessness of women. The courage of women” (34).

These novelists portray immigrant women who aspire, attempt and strive to be their true selves. Especially Kamala Markandaya is the pioneer who takes up the subject of East-West encounter and identity crisis.

When Anita Desai started writing, her forte was the exploration of sensibility. Her writing phase also deals with the alienated self and psyche of immigrants in their sphere. But Bharati Mukherjee's concern of writing was mainly on expatriate and immigrant experience. Unlike the novels of Desai and Kamala Markandaya, Mukherjee's novels deal with both the external world and the internal mind of the protagonists.
These writers do not progress any special affinity with feminist theories nor do they anywhere reveal a strong, anti-male stance. They are not seeking a world without men. Their delineation of cross cultural interaction in their own way is worth studying. It is also very captivating to know how they deal with the psyche of the immigrants. These writers do not consider the meeting of two cultures a petty phenomenon. It becomes a potential challenge for them. In fact, in this togetherness there is enough of creative tension. Indeed, what is most striking in their novels is the fact that cultural dualism forms the matrix of vision.

In novel after novel, Markandaya explores the impact of change in terms of human psychology. Her fiction captures the multiple dimensions of cultural encounter, conflict, assimilation, acculturation and deculturation. All the possibilities resulting from an interaction of two cultures are perceived with candour and intensity in her novels.

Kamala Markandaya’s Possession is a study of the process of the malevolent influence of one culture on another. It is the story of Caroline Bell, Valmiki and the Swamy because around this triangle other characters gain their relevance and through these three cornered relationships, the novelist forges her understanding into two different cultures and two different ways of life.
Valmiki, the rustic Indian artist, is the symbol of the new independent India, for the possession of whose soul the formidable Caroline Bell symbolizing the western civilization makes an all out effort. Alienated from the spiritual roots of his country and Swamy, Val’s artistic talents become dormant. In the beginning he is getting assimilated with the English culture. We can compare Val with Adit who in the first part of the novel *Bye-Bye, Blackbird* fully seems absorbed in the English culture. In *Possession* Anasuya sees Val transformed into a sophisticated and westernized person, mixing freely with the British guests in the cocktail party hosted by Caroline and feeling quite at ease in their company. So she thinks that there is a complete change in him.

The glitter-dust seemed to fall agreeably on Valmiki. Assiduously attended by slim young women in black, he was floating around the room like an exotic sunflower, smiling flushed with the champagne continuously at his lips, at ease and ably managing his attendants.

(PSN-109)

The same kind of assimilation that one finds in Val is seen in Dev who appreciates the British way of life.
Adit feels what way other new immigrant feels: "admiration and satisfaction. He has become a spineless imperialists lover" (BBB-19).

When Dev visits England to pursue higher studies he is shocked to find Adit swallowing ungrudgingly the humiliation thrown at him by the erstwhile masters. He does not assert his rights for the slave mentality of the colonized. Adit tells Dev that he hardly notices the draw backs of England and considers himself an admirer of its golden beauty: “I like the freedom a man has here: Economic freedom social freedom” (BBB-18).

Towards the end of the novel one finds that Valmiki is disappointed over Western life and wants to return to his homeland. His depressed mind gets activated on seeing the forged letters of the Swamy whom he considers as his guru and guide. In Bye-Bye, Blackbird, Adit, the self satisfied person gradually finds himself estranged from the new environment. Culture is threatened only when one confronts an alien society where he becomes aware of the disparity between his ‘native culture’ and the ‘host culture’.

Adit’s final visit to his in-laws disenchants him. The truth that he is an Indian can never breathe the English air freely dawn on him. He packs off everything and leaves England with his family at the end of the novel.
Kamala Markandaya's another novel The Nowhere Man (1972) like Anita Desai's Bye-Bye, Blackbird is the story of Indian immigrants. Srinivas and his family make an island India on the English soil. The Nowhere Man is invested with powerful insights into individual minds as well as into the attitudes and experiences of the Indian-immigrant collectively who build a little India around themselves wherever they may be.

The racial conflict in England has been dealt with by both Kamala Markandaya and Anita Desai effectively and with an authentic touch. The immigrant Srinivas' feelings are the feelings of thousands of Indians and other Asians living in England who are the victims of racial conflicts.

"The people will allow it", he said. "It was my mistake to imagine. They will not, except physically, which is indisputable, have me enter. I am to be driven outside, which is the way they want it." An outsider in England.

In actual fact I am of course, an Indian. (NWM-231-32)

Fred, Mike, Joe and Bill, the young men of England in The Nowhere Man feel that the black people are depriving them of their jobs. Fred is so much obsessed with the feeling of hatred that he challenges a
coal-black man sweeping the streets: "Here, you. You have got no right
to be in this country. You bugger off see" (NWM-164).

The immigrants suffering at the hands of the whites remain
perennial. The same scenario is seen in *Bye-Bye, Blackbird*.

When the immigrants were singing songs and dancing bhavgara in
a get-together at night, they were rebuked and scolded and were asked to
stop that nonsense by the whiteman upstairs. He shouts: "wrap it up, you
blighters, where did you think you are?" (BBB-23).

Christine Langford's remark about the Anglo-Indian colonel and his
wife shows her racial feelings. She calls his wife a sun-tanned memsahib.
Her use of the word 'Anglo-Indian' is also ironical.

At the market place Dev comes across a white young man who is
in charge of an Icon shop. When he asks the price of a golden Russian
icon, he refuses to tell him the exact price. When Dev further insists, he
says that the price is too high for him.

On another occasion Dev explodes:

That boy at the bus stop-he called us wogs ... I wouldn't
live in a country where I was insulted and unwanted...

You should go mad-mad, when even school boys can
call you names on the streets, when you find that the
London docks have three kinds of lavatories – Ladies,
Gents and Asiatics. (BBB-17)

In the light of the above mentioned context, it is obvious that both
The Nowhere Man and Bye-Bye, Blackbird are novels in which the Whites
and the Indian Immigrants are in conflictual positions.

Both Kamala Markandaya and Anita Desai are sensitive to these
issues. They very boldly expose the racial discrimination which abound in
the Western society. Dev feels very much upset and irritated over three
kinds of lavatory system even in the developed country. Anita Desai, an
expert in delineating the lacerated psyche portrays the ontological
insecurity, alienation and anguish of uprooted individuals in Bye-Bye,
Blackbird and Baumgartner’s Bombay. Adit, comfortably employed in
London, marries Sarah for something oriental in her attracts him. In order
to accommodate oneself in a new environment one has to reconstruct
one’s self. He has to tolerate and adapt. Dev is critical of the English
culture. He could not understand the western culture where every one is
a stranger and lives in hiding. He is finally drawn into the magic of the
land which has enchanted Adit. Even without getting transplanted
physically to another culture Sarah loses her identity in her own native soil. Her situation is more poignant than the uprooted aliens.

Adit, Dev and Sarah have a choice between their native soil and their chosen homes, where as Baumgartner is a homeless and a nationless man. He has nowhere to go to regain his lost identity. He is the same in his native soil and the alien one, an outsider, a nowhere man in every sense “In both lands, the unacceptable” (BB-20).

Baumgartner’s romantic imagination of India as the birth place of Gitanjali gets shattered the moment he lands in India. The Nazi betrays him in Germany and his Indian friends betray him in business. The series of calamities--losing his home, business and finally his mother makes him mute and accepting. “Defeat was heaped on him whether he deserved it or not” (BB-135).

A man thus drilled will definitely go rudderless. When his frantic attempts to get connected to his mother fail, he withdraws into his own world, disinterested in the way of the world in his own physical appearance, in anything except the company of his feline friends.
Baumgartner’s story is one of inherent alienations augmented by global war, colonial war and religious war. When the familiar emotional and geographical worlds are destroyed, one gets de-identified. He becomes merely an object hedged in by destructive forces. While Adit, Dev and Sarah belong to some one or some where despite the psychic problems and frustrations, Baumgartner remains a ‘firanghi’ though holding an Indian passport. The experience of exile which begins as a condition of living often becomes a condition of mind as in the case of Hugo. Cultural displacement makes them alienated and lonely in spite of their assays of adjustment.

Again Desai’s Baumgartner’s Bombay and The Nowhere Man of Kamala Markandaya present the same theme of how both the protagonists feel highly alienated and neglected in the foreign soil. In The Nowhere Man, with the death of Vasantha, Srinivas lives a lonely and dejected life until he meets Mrs. Pickering, an English divorcee. The love and attention of Mrs. Pickering helps Srinivas regain some of his former interest in life in the foreign soil. She nurses him in his illness with warmth and kindness. She stands by him to the very end as a loving and faithful companion when he is buffeted from all sides.

And Mrs. Pickering felt a yearning, which began in her arms and spread and filled her whole being, to be

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hospitable, to pile all the hospitality, she could find, all
that had been grudged and doled out and denied, onto
those denuded shoulders beside her. (NWM-243)

In Baumgartner's Bombay, one could find Baumgartner being a
fully secluded person and it is Lotte the German dancer who comes to
him to comfort him. He leans upon Lotte with brotherly affection to share
his isolations with her. She too is with him till his death as a loyal friend
and companion as that of Mrs. Pickering in The Nowhere Man.

Srinivas, the protagonist of The Nowhere Man leaves India on the
advice of his father to escape from the tyranny and oppression of British
rule in India, but ironically he comes to the place where the same
Britishers rule. Here in England he suffers worst at the hands of the
natives. He becomes the target of Fred Fletcher's frustration. Fred
resents the Blacks and holds them responsible for making amenities like
jobs and housing scarce for the British. He considers them parasites.
"... parasites who came in hordes occupied all the houses, filled up the
hospital beds and their offspring took all the places in school" (NWM-163).
He thinks that they have no right to live in his beloved country and Srinivas is singled out as a victim for fulfilling his purpose of ethnic ill-will and violence. Fred becomes furious and charges Srinivas thus:

"You-got no right to be living in this country" he said and thrust his face close to the brown man's. Beery fumes rose from his nostrils. Srinivas stepped back fastidiously. "Why not"? he asked.

"You telling me you are English?" asked Fred. "By adoptions", said Srinivas happily. (NWM-164-65)

A.V. Krishna Rao opines:

It is his belief in human kindness and goodness, coupled with his loyalty and love for his adopted homeland, that makes his ultimate disillusionment tragically painful and bitter. (208-25)

Hugo Baumgartner, a Jew by birth, lives in Berlin. He is asked to leave Berlin by his father's friend, though Hugo does not want to leave his country. He leaves with a recommendation letter to join the timber business in Calcutta. He is made to go, despite his desire to stay back. There is no hope of any decent survival in his own land and Hugo is forced to escape this sordid, gloomy life and is pushed towards India. He lands in India and lives there for more than fifty years with many ups and
downs in life, but invariably looking for roots. He feels the pangs of alienation and loneliness even among the crowds. He is too fair for India and was too dark for Germany. The life in India of fifty years was still alien world to him. Anita Desai plumbs the unexplored abyss of the estranged self:

In Germany he had been dark, his darkness had marked him the Jew, der Jude. In India he was fair, and that marked him the firanghi. In both lands, the unacceptable.

(BB-20)

There is a kind of racial discrimination that Hugo undergoes in India unlike in England where Srinivas suffers the worst. In a sense both Srinivas (NWM) and Hugo (BB) are nowhere men. Bharati Mukherjee takes a different stand in presenting cultural interaction in her novels. Being comparatively a younger generation novelist she goes deeply into the problem and as she confesses herself as an expatriate who had a lot of challenges and problems to face. Christine Gomez gives a still more perceptive definition of the term expatriation:

Expatriation is actually a complex state of mind and emotion which includes a wistful longing for the past, often symbolized by the ancestral home, the pain of exile and homelessness, the struggle to maintain the
difference between one self and the new, unfriendly surroundings an assumption of moral and cultural superiority over the host country and a refusal to accept the identity forced on one by the environment.(72)

Bharati Mukherjee admits of being subjected to racial discrimination in Canada. Canada's hostility to Indians and non-recognition of her writing in Canada or the twin recurring themes which appear with almost obsessive regularity in the early works of Mukherjee reveal the fact that she was subject to discrimination.

Bharathi Mukherjee, both in *Wife* and *Jasmine* deals with the problems of immigrants' mind, their estrangement and assimilation. *Wife* is a psychological study of Dimple, a young woman from Calcutta and of her problems in settling down in New York with her husband. Brought up to be passive and dependent as per Indian standards of womanhood she lacks the inner resources to cope up with the fear and challenging situations and ultimately descends into unexpected violence. Mukherjee's treatment of the theme has a slightly different line. Her focus is on the protagonists. In the above two novels she revises her attention on the heroines of the novels. There are cultural interactions that one finds in *Wife*. Kamala Markandaya and Desai deal with the racial discrimination
and the outside problems of the protagonists where as Bharati Mukherjee's concern is how the heroines suffer from a kind of ailment during the process of their assimilation. The way they associate their culture with the host culture in foreign land matters a lot.

Through her protagonist Jasmine, in *Jasmine*, Mukherjee traces the significant milestones of immigrants' final absorption in an adopted cultural milieu, her indefatigable determination to carve her way from a mosaic of disheartening events. Jasmine exhibits manliness of no mean proportions:

No one to call to, no one to disturb us. Just me and the man who had raped me, the man I had murdered. The room looked like a slaughter house. Blood had congealed on my hands, my chin, my breasts....for the second time in three months, I was in a room with a slain man, my body bloodied. I was walking death. Death incarnate. (Jas.-119)

Desai and Kamala Markandaya have not created protagonists like Dimple and Jasmine. In *Wife* the attention is focused on the psychic cost that had to be paid by middle class Indian woman deprived of her usual Indian preoccupations and pastimes, and unable or unwilling to join the
mainstream culture. She has been entertaining unrealistic romantic expectations of marriage:

Marriage would bring her freedom, cocktail parties on carpeted lawns, fund-raising dinners for noble charities.

Marriage would bring her love. (Wife—3)

She becomes disillusioned when marriage does not bring the happiness she expects. Even after coming to the USA, she feels the same. The isolation and emotional starvation starts the process of her psychological disintegration, which had been incipient even when she was in Calcutta. Her primary problem is that she has no will of her own, and her own culture treats her as a trivial object. On moving into the apartment of the Mukherjee who has gone to India, she yields to the urge to wear Marsha’s American clothes, thus unconsciously borrowing an identity that is alien to her. She does not want to go out to experience the world outside, but is held back by the inhibitions of her native culture.

Practically all the men want to return to India with the money earned in America. They are expatriates in America and do not display the exuberance of immigration. Practically none of the women has any vocation or pursuit which gives her an identity to get herself involved in the mainstream American culture. The American Television and other
books make her not to consider murder seriously. The latent propensity for violence in her is brought out and activated under the pressure of the new environment. She is a character of negative virtue. Kamala Das' words sound well here:

One can categorize women without much difficulty. The labourers who are without complexes, the professionals of the middle class and the upper middle class who do not get enough time to fret and fidget, and lastly the parasites who resemble microbes in pus, who feed upon others and do not ever contribute anything of their own to the community. These are the ones who loll in luxuries and yet complain.(66)

From the above cited words of Kamala Das one could infer the fact that Dimple is a representative of such microbes in pus. This sort of character is not found either in Desai's or in Markandaya's novel.

In following their cultural traditions Dimple is similar to Vasantha (NWM). When October approaches Dimple remembers of Durga Puja in India as that of Vasantha who is carrying a sandal wood box of Indian soil and an oil bottle filled with the Ganges water.
Kamala Markandaya’s *The Nowhere Man* (1972) and Bharati Mukherjee’s *Wife* (1976) delineate the protagonists of both the novels as uprooted from their moorings and expatriated to alien countries. As seen earlier, Srinivas is forced to leave India, where as Dimple comes to the USA after her marriage with her husband. The immigrant Indians adhere to their traditional culture and at times, it appears that they are more Indians in their cultural orientations and practices than native Indians in India. In fact they tend to be more orthodox abroad. Even those who could not care much for their culture in India become quite conscious of it in foreign lands.

In *Wife*, the protagonist wants an independent identity rather than to be known only as Amit Das Gupta’s wife. She aspires for freedom. Coming to America for Dimple is a dream that comes true. But she tells her friend Ina: “there are something I can’t do wearing pants is one of them. I could not walk down the street in your pants and sweaters” (*Wife*.P-154).

Vasantha (*NWM*) has an indomitable will and titanic spirit to preserve cultural moorings. In contrast, Dimple (*wife*) is unwilling to brave the new world outside, feels bored, dejected and dismally ignorant of actual patterns of social interaction in America and is ultimately driven into
an eutrophic state of inertia, nervous debility and mental decrepitude. Her displacement ends on a tragic note. She is the paradigm of the 20th century young woman who is deprived of guiding tradition and inherited value system. On the basis of the type of world which Mukherjee recreates in Wife, she can find a place in the list of Kirpal singh’s "writers in limbo". He explains his standpoint:

To be in limbo is to be trapped not only by the weight of personal circumstances but also by that of history culture, tradition. (71)

In Jasmine (1989) Mukherjee tries to unravel the complicated layers of cross cultural reality through a series of adventures that the heroine undertakes. It does not have any resemblance to any other novel by Markandaya or Anita Desai. As it is Mukherjee’s usual way of dealing with immigrant women she goes on explicating the adventurous life of Jasmine, the protagonist. Jasmine is also the account of an immigrant south Asian woman’s metamorphosis, self-invention, and self-empowerment. She is compelled to move to many places in the USA. Everywhere she has a new name and leads different sorts of life. She moves westward to a greater freedom and self actualization. Though not without pain and ambiguity, Jasmine’s experience forms, on the whole, a positive and optimistic pattern for south Asians in the New world. Jasmine
has indeed come a long way, not only from the Punjab to California, but also from believing that a wife’s virtue entails self-immolation to believing that a pregnant woman’s happiness justifies her deserting the crippled father of her unborn child for the arms of a lover.

In Possession (1963) Ellie becomes pregnant by Val and he has no sense of remorse that he has had an illegal relationship with someone. When Caroline comes to know of Val’s relations with Ellie, she tells Anasuya:

- Indian’s full of cruelty. He’s seen enough without going
green at the gills at the first whiff of it. It is different., not Hindu doing the same thing haphazard. (PSN-77)

Val is totally immersed in the western culture for sometime. Then he is awakened to the Indian culture, where as Jasmine is totally immersed but never awakened to Indian values. Val and Jasmine are different in many ways. Val has a mentor both in India and in England but Jasmine is not guided by any body. She directs herself and moves forward like a self willed vessel. Neither does Jasmine suffer like Desai’s protagonist Hugo. There is no phase for racism as for as Jasmine is concerned. Nowhere it is mentioned in the novel that she is subject to a lot of ordeals in her journey. Markandaya and Desai delineate the
characters who are in constant conflict. Bharati Mukherjee’s Jasmine has no such conflict throughout the novel. She is not moral in the conventional sense but her morality is her own way of looking at life. She is a path finder and pierces her way through the dense jungle problems. Every movement adds to her self-confidence and her experience guides her future course of action. She is fluid and adjusting and justifies her each and every role. Mukherjee’s following observations border on confessional note:

The kinds of women I write about…. Are those who are adaptable. We have all been raised to please, been trained to be adaptable as wives, and that adaptability is working to the women’s advantage when we come over as immigrants. (19)

Mukherjee firmly believes that the multi-cultural country America happily invites all immigrants, irrespective of colour, caste and race. Therefore, the heroine Jasmine, a lady of her own temperament, decides to settle in America and feels no discrimination. She thoroughly imbibes the new culture.

Cross cultural interaction is an unavoidable theme in the novels of Kamala Markandaya. Her treatment of this theme is not so similar to
Desai or Bharati Mukherjee. She is concerned with the pre-independent life of the individual in India. Kamala Markandaya’s hero Val having no desire to go to England is compelled and he is highly elated when he lands in. He finds the place fully new, and the new society in which he mingle does not seem new. He feels at home when he reaches England with Caroline Bell. His entire life style changes while he is there. He is not without the knowledge of his country and its culture. He is after all a goat-head, may be an illiterate who gets changed fully. But he loses his self and zeal for his art which is made alright when he gets the contact of the guru, through letters. One finds the malevolent influence of a civilized barbarian over the native genius of an artist as a probe into an alien onslaught on the auto-ethnic culture matrix. Valmiki’s affair with Ellie and Annabel is yet another influence of the Western culture on him.

In The Nowhere Man Srinivas gets assimilated to the foreign culture as he is vulnerable but constantly thinks of India and his rich culture of the birth place. Val comes back to India and knows the pain in shifting to other culture. Kamala Markandaya also in a way gets in the psyche of these immigrants.

Anita Desai on the other hand fully talks about the alienation in Bye-Bye, Blackbird and Baumgartner’s Bombay. She delves into the
mind of the immigrants and gives a graphic picture of the individuals. MK Naik observes thus: "the theme of East west confrontation is dwelt on the surface only" (111).

It is commonly observed that in the post-independence period the hangover regarding Imperial power and perfection persisted and hundreds of people were enamoured of the fairyland of orderly abundance. Affluent Indians escaped mostly to England from the communal, economic and ideological chaos which prevailed in their native land. *Bye-Bye, Blackbird* deals with Indian immigrants in England which provides a glimpse into the stages of psychological disturbances and also severe reactions.

As a contrast, the condition of the people coming from advanced countries has been explained in *Baumgartner's Bombay*. This novel considers an outsider's problem in the Indian milieu. Anita Desai very brilliantly portrays the problem of these two categories of immigrants in *Baumgartner's Bombay* and *Bye-Bye, Blackbird*. Adit never becomes a member of the mainstream culture like Baumgartner who could never be in the mainstream of the Bombayites. The problem with Baumgartner is that he finds everything around him familiar; still he fails to gather courage to enter this world of Bombay life. "He had never actually entered it;
damply, odorously, cacophonously palpable as it was, it had been elusive still” (BB – 214).

Desai delineates the story of a man who is not welcomed anywhere and is jostled as in a time capsule from one place to another as the portrayal of two cities. The novel leaves one breathless with the powerful images, Desai employs to create the right atmosphere. She is frank and forthright about the minus points of her novel in an interview with Andrew Robinson: “I am aware of too many shortcomings It seems to me like a sketch, not Really the full history of a man, not a full portrait” (1988).

Bye-Bye, Black Bird adds a richer, more meaningful and an essentially positive dimension to Desai’s universe and represents a superior expression of creative imagination as the novel is a moving document of one of the bleakest periods of history.

Bharati Mukherjee’s novels – Wife and Jasmine, focus mainly the immigrants problems in detail. A woman’s immigrant experience is bound to be different from that of a man’s. A woman’s journey is in search of love, happiness and independence. A woman is better suited for adapting herself to another culture, because she has undergone the process of ‘othering’ in her own culture. She is displaced at every stage of her life.
The immigrant women have lost touch with their homeland. Dimple suffers from a schizophrenic mind; she fully withdraws herself from reality and personal relationship. She resorts to violence due to schizophrenic mind. Violence is one of the factors which contribute to Dimple's non-assimilation in the host culture. She is also gripped by fear psychosis primarily because of American T.V. channels.

The same violence finds a place in Jasmine in different forms such as brutal killing of Masterji at the hands of Khalsa Lions, the killing of Prakash, rape of Jasmine, murder of Half Face, maiming of Bud and the suicide of Darrel. Violence has close connection with all the immigrants because transformation is a violent process in the lives of immigrants.

Jasmine represents all immigrant women who are free wheeling spirits ready to shape their own destiny. At the end of the novel one finds the fact that Jasmine is fully assimilated into the host culture.

It is a useful exercise to juxtapose Dimple, the protagonist of Mukherjee’s Wife and the protagonist of Jasmine in order to weigh their relative strength and weaknesses. Jasmine starts with a murder whereas Dimple rounds up her stay there with a murder. Both of them are excited of by the New world. Jasmine has reinvented herself and has forged a
new identity in the country of adoption. This kind of tendency in Jasmine is the one that contributes wholly to the optimistic end of the novel. An immigrant is one who is reborn in the adopted culture.

Jasmine’s acculturation and assimilation into American culture is certainly better than bunkering in nostalgia or remaining torn between two worlds, two cultures, two ways of life and two faiths for a life time.

Mukherjee started her creative work at a time when the Feminist movement was at its peak in the West and she was expected to articulate gender conflicts in an unequivocal way. Within the limited range of the present project, it can be observed that an ingrained Indianness weighs very highly on Mukherjee’s psyche and she avoids grappling with this controversial issue. The nuances of Indian cultural life provide a living ambience to Bharati Mukherjee. These are some times accepted and at times even revolted against but they are invariably her terms of reference to perceive and penetrate the western ethos.