

Jasmine and the Mission to America: The Fires Lighting the Way

Nasheed Jafri

Research Scholar, Department of Studies in English
University of Mysore, Manasa Gangotri, Mysore India
nasheedjafri@yahoo.com

Abstract: *Bharati Mukherjee's Jasmine (1989) traces the endeavours of the protagonist who adapts and survives by changing her identity depending on the circumstances. Jasmine is indeed a determined young woman and the narrative leaves a lasting impression with its depiction of the achievement of her agency. After the brutal killing of her husband in her native Punjab, Jasmine makes a daring plan to go to America to fulfil a 'mission'.*

Critics of the work have ruminated on the portrayal of Jasmine's submissive life in India and the celebratory achievement of her agency in America.

However, this paper focuses on the very reason, the 'impulse', behind her decision to undertake that hazardous journey. Jasmine is motivated to go not to make a new life elsewhere but to perform sati.

This paper engages with, through a postcolonial feminist framework, the complex implications of the author's use of the trope of sati - widow immolation that persistently frames this part of Jasmine's life-changing journey in the narrative.

It seeks to question the use of sati as a trope in Jasmine with the view that the employment of cultural justifications in narratives such as these further straightjacket the victimhood and triumphs of the female characters in these depictions.

Keywords: *Bharati Mukherjee, sati, mission, Jasmine, trope, culturalist views, victimhood, third world*

1. INTRODUCTION

"Among feminist and post colonialist readers, practically everybody hates *Jasmine*" (Warhol-Down 1).

The literary world has received certain works both with euphoric plaudits as well as with stinging criticisms. *Jasmine* (1989), by Bharati Mukherjee is one such oeuvre. Indian-born Mukherjee was based in Canada for a decade and now lives in the United States. Warhol-Down acknowledges in her analysis of *Jasmine*, that "there can be no apology for the caricature of Indian women's experiences reflected in the representation of the heroine's early experiences," (3). However, she asserts in the conclusion that *Jasmine* highlights an "anti-individualist, multicultural subject position" (14).

Jasmine traces a young girl's journey from her village Hasnapur in India to Iowa in the United States. Her parents name her 'Jyoti' and her husband, 'Jasmine'. In America, her saviour, Lillian Gordon, whilst teaching her to be less conspicuous to dodge the law, christens her 'Jazzy'. Next, in New York, Taylor and his wife Wylie employ her as a live-in nanny where Taylor begins to call her 'Jase'; then when she flees to Ohio and becomes Bud's partner, she turns into 'Jane'.

A strong woman, Jasmine navigates in an apparently effortless manner between time, location, memory, desire and self-perception and re-creates herself without disintegrating. Through the horrendous ordeals that she undergoes – assassinations, clandestine immigration, rape, murder, and constant displacements, she retains her stability and emerges unbroken if not unscathed.

Despite its irregular chronology, Mukherjee's narrative strongly situates her protagonist into a 'before' and 'after' representation. It traces Jasmine's progress from an oppressed young woman in India to a liberated epistemological agent in America.

In the American part of her self-discovery (the location from which she tells her tale), Jasmine has greater opportunities to test the waters, as it were, of different locations and move on in the spirit of the pioneer in search of greener pastures. Often, it is immediate danger that forces her to flee. For instance, after she murders her rapist Half-Face in the deserted motel, and again when she spots Sukhwinder, her husband's assassin from Punjab stalking her in crowded New York.

In her growing years in India, she is shown attempting silent mutinies and retreating unsuccessfully every time. Rescued and re-moulded by her gentle and modern husband, she gains some form of freedom before tragedy strikes. After her husband's assassination, she decides to escape from India to honour him by fulfilling his last desire – to go to America. She does however modify one part of his last wish. She adds performing *sati* - self-immolation to this scheme. This is a brief, yet important element of her tale and is situated at a pivotal juncture of her story. It is the part that hinges the 'before' and the 'after' Jasmine.

Mukherjee's narrative suggests that Jasmine's desire to undertake a journey to America stems from a commitment to perform *sati*. *Sati* is the term used to define the ritual of suicide through self-immolation by a widow after the husband's demise. Dictionary.com defines it as, "a Hindu practice whereby a widow immolates herself on the funeral pyre of her husband: now abolished by law". The practice of *sati* and its abolition in 1829 by British Colonial rule has a complicated history.¹ S.R Rajan provides insightful views on the matter in his *Real and Imagined Women: Gender, Culture and Postcolonialism*. The government of India has officially banned the ritual.² An analysis of this act by Maja Daruwala presents certain legal aspects and points out certain flaws in its construction.³

This paper proposes to examine the role of the trope of *sati* employed by the author Bharati Mukherjee in *Jasmine*. This trope frames the journey – both the emotional and the physical, of the protagonist. In the course of the analysis of the work, this study presents some observations by postcolonial and feminist scholars. Through this framework, it also seeks to bring to the fore the paradoxes between Mukherjee's characterisation of her protagonist and the deployment of the trope of cultural motivations to propel her protagonist towards action.

Thus, the aim of this study is to highlight the permeation of cultural essentialism (however discreetly suggested in the narrative) in portrayals of third world subjects that certain cultural tropes encourage.

The study of the work is divided into four areas of deliberations and the conclusion:

- Different Perspectives
- Sati* as a Catalyst
- Spectre of Cultural Essentialism from the Smoke of the Pyre
- Importance of Mission
- Conclusion

In the opening pages, it is evident that the protagonist Jasmine, named Jyoti at birth, is a spirited child. She is ready to defy a holy man - a teller of fortunes, and fearlessly rebuffs his dire predictions. Even as a child, she registers an affinity with her own kind - women, in the form of the she-ghosts she believes watch over her and nurtures an embryonic feminist streak in her early years. As she grows older, she does not want to be a steno or a teller. She states emphatically, "I want to be a doctor and set up my own clinic in a big town" (Mukherjee 51). This young girl continues attempting her understated revolts. Again, she engages in a shy yet sly courtship to win young Prakash's attention and actively steers a marriage proposal in her direction. When her brothers play matchmakers, she knows "Effect must be calculated" (Mukherjee 70) as she gets ready for the 'chance' meeting with the prospective groom.

Once married, she furtively flirts with a sort of economic independence, as it were, by becoming a door-to-door salesperson. Her independently thought-out plans form an important part of the narrative during the different phases of her life in India. After her husband's death, she convinces her brothers to prepare forged documents for her to travel to America and go to "Tam-pah" (Mukherjee 114) to complete a 'mission'. Once in America, she re-invents herself, discovers her agency, and in the closing lines, moves towards a new future.

2. DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

Critics have held various standpoints in their assessment of Jasmine's empowerment, the portrayal of India and the use of the trope of the 'exotic' in the work.

Anu Aneja writes:

The issue is not that such stereotypical Jyotis are nowhere to be found, but that the exaggerated stereotyping begins by constructing but not holding on to a farcical image of oppressed Indian womanhood—an image which might have a special appeal for western liberal feminism, which looks for exactly such token images of oppressed sisters in need of rescue. (76)

The narrative follows Jasmine as she traverses the plains of Punjab, crosses the seas in a boat ferrying clandestine immigrants and finally lands in the land of opportunity, where, towards the end of the narrative, when faced with dilemmas – “I am caught between the promise of America and old-world dutifulness” (Mukherjee 240), she has the liberty to choose. The metamorphosis from an awkward peasant girl of rural India where [backward] practices like child-marriage prevail, to a live-in partner of an American banker carrying his child begotten through [sophisticated] means as artificial insemination is a binary presentation of her freedoms. The presence of the trope of culture edging the story forward is unmistakable.

Conversely, according to Rajan and Phukan, “the trope of the exotic allows for an examination of the disempowered subjects of the nation-state”, and writing about such subjects, they opine, “undoes the stamp of inferiority associated with Orientalist perspectives in the colonial paradigm—especially in the objectification of human beings and their experiences” (10). Nonetheless, a reading of Jasmine's agency in the work reveals that the usage of tropes based on binaries is detrimental to an honest dismissal of an Us/Them perspective of a character's empowerment and over-simplifies complex issues. In an essay that addresses cultural essentialism, Purewal observes how, “culturalist generalizations have sought to construct more comfortable universal categories of comprehensibility”, and goes on to add that, “the issue at hand is not about whether particular cultural practices exist or not, but rather out of which context their existence or status came to the fore” (143).

Critics like Anu Aneja observe that the narrative traces Jasmine's “betterment” in America after a life of oppression in India, and that it does so by ignoring “the complexity and specificity of the situation of third world women” (79). Scrutinized from this angle, a question intrudes a perusal of this story of a brave woman who strikes out on her own: is the narrative being presented on Jasmine's own terms? The nagging doubt persists that it is the voice of the author presenting a scenario from her own point of view. Gayatri Spivak cautions us about the forces of “Third World intellectuals who were producing a 'Third World',” (*Postcolonial Critic* 78). In the middle of the narrative, poised to decide between exiled living in Punjab and fleeing to Florida, *Jasmine* appears to be led by these forces, and these are indeed ones to be reckoned with, cloaked as they are within a first person narration by the protagonist who claims to be speaking for herself. Concerning Jasmine's celebrated agency achieved in her life in America, Ryan Paul Singh points out that the narrator of the story is Jane, the Americanized woman from India. He states how almost every avatar of Jyoti, from Jasmine to Jase, then Jane of Iowa, speaks through another man's vision or purpose for her. Singh notes that the Haynes family in New York creates a new Jasmine by “constructing her to fulfil their own desires (Singh 77), and that Taylor “molds her in his own image, and she dutifully responds with love” (78). Men do dictate her direction: her father through his patriarchal attitudes, her husband Prakash through his modern views, and even the rapist who compels her to abandon her 'mission' through his monstrosity.

3. SATI AS A CATALYST

The practice of *sati* figures several times in the narrative. Jasmine describes the self-immolation of a young girl she knew: “Vimla set herself on fire . . .”, then details the act, “When he 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’” (Mukherjee 15). Then, Jasmine describes her mother's widowhood: she wishes to commit *sati* immediately. “When Pitaji died, my mother tried to throw herself on his funeral pyre. When we wouldn't let

her, she shaved her head with a razor, wrapped her body in coarse cloth, and sat all day in a corner. Once a day I force-fed spoonfuls of rice gruel into her” (Mukherjee 61).

Finally, even Jasmine’s ‘mission’ that involved travelling half-way across the world courting danger is in fact motivated by a desire to commit *sati* on the campus grounds in Florida where her husband was to have studied. “I had planned it all so perfectly. To lay out the suit, to fill it with twigs and papers. To light it, then to lie upon it in the white cotton sari I had brought from home” (Mukherjee 118). It is disconcerting to see this coming from a girl who had thought lowly of her father’s obsession with his glorious past in Lahore before the partition. She had thought then, “He will never see Lahore again and I never have. Only a fool would let it rule his life” (Mukherjee 43). Jasmine had never wanted to become someone who nostalgically looks back or wallows in self-pity. What the narrative does though is present an abrupt metamorphosis of a wilful woman into a weebegone widow of a husband who had, in fact, wanted, “No room . . . for feudalism” (Mukherjee 76), and contrary to his modern visions, she now wants to burn herself upon his suit to join him in death through a feudal practice. There is almost bipolarity in this persona and not the one, (albeit multi-faceted) Jyoti/Jasmine the reader had become intimate with and perhaps secretly admired.

The protagonist of Mukherjee’s *Jasmine* has been constructed on the trope of culture and is defined by the oppression that she suffers from due to its control. Her liberty can only be accessed when she and her husband “. . . could get away from India” because then, “all fates would be cancelled” (Mukherjee 85). Reducing her plight through a mere ‘culture as culprit’ mantra shows signs of the ‘cultural essentialism’ several postcolonial critics warn us about. Uma Narayan emphasises that such types of representations of traditions of third world cultures reproduce what she calls “a colonialist stance”(Narayan 43).

Mukherjee’s excellent portrayal of Jasmine’s exoticization in the academic circle in the Haynes’ household and then in small-town America, her connecting of similarities between farmers in India and America and the descriptions of her protagonist’s negotiations for agency reveal the mastery of Mukherjee’s craft. And Jasmine does display tremendous strength as the hero of the novel. However, one cannot dismantle the rather rigid framework that defines her motive to leave India. While she apparently stands for motion, action and deliberate decisions, her authenticity is petrified in a plaster of that prevalent trope of *sati*. Additionally, it is clear that Jasmine’s brothers supported her plan providing her with the forged documents she needed to travel solo – something no chauvinistic, feudal male relative would even consider permissible. In addition, with no father around, any possible male coercion to perform *sati* is non-existent. Nevertheless, we are in a way cornered to empathise with her through her ‘mission’.

Thus, as Singh states, “Almost the entire novel, then, can be seen as an orientalizing enterprise enacted by the orientalized subject” (84). Singh’s observation becomes apposite when Jasmine tells her brothers emphatically that it was, “A matter of duty and honor” ((Mukherjee 97) to justify her fearlessness,

4. SPECTRE OF CULTURAL ESSENTIALISM FROM THE SMOKE OF THE PYRE

The question this study examines is – for a woman with missions, what made her flee her overbearing society only to willingly want to perform *sati* in America? There is a voluntary geographical displacement, and still she remains rooted to the mores of her former site and considers *sati* to honour her husband, a husband who was training her to get rid of the “feudal” Jyoti. During her days confined among widows Jasmine had wailed, “I felt dead in their company. . . I wanted to scream, ‘Feudalism! I am a widow in the war of feudalisms’” (Mukherjee 97). Even after Prakash’s death, she had wanted to live. So, why the choice to die via self-immolation?

Sangeeta Ray comments on the novel’s presentation of Jasmine’s India, one the West would find immediately recognizable. She writes that it portrays India as “a regressive world stricken by poverty, communal violence, and oppressive social practices . . . ; where women are ritually beaten by their husbands for expressing their opinion; and where young widows pour kerosene over their bodies and set fire to themselves” (227–28).

This remark by Ray underlines the present article’s line of thought. The narrative initially presents Jasmine as a defiant young child and a proactive young wife, then after her husband’s

assassination, it swerves in the opposite direction. Jasmine has internalized the oppressive practices of her native land to such an extent that despite no direct pressure to perform *sati*, she goes ahead and plans it 'independently'. Jasmine's mission now is to travel to America to set fire to herself on her husband's suit.

Nirmal Puwar makes a very pertinent observation about intellectuals and the academic field. She has stated:

The first time a student of social theory has to meet the figure of a South Asian woman in academic texts is usually through Emile Durkheim's work on suicide. In textbooks and lecture halls the notion of fatalistic suicide is illustrated with reference to the ghostly figure of *sati*, the image of a widow burning on a funeral pyre in India. (23)

She has further cautioned us how it disregards the mechanism of orientalism in this "specific anthropological gaze, which trollops and gallivants around the world, collecting facts and figures. . ." (Puwar 23-24).

Writers employ literary devices such as recurrent tropes to show how poetic justice is finally made available to their protagonist. Nevertheless, they can become emblematic tools to provoke sympathy for "the melodramatic missionary image of women from Other places as victims of archaic patriarchal practices who are desperately in need of help" (Puwar 26). The help in *Jasmine* comes in the form of America, here a macho, protective, masculine country that rescues her. The White man's land saves Jasmine.

5. IMPORTANCE OF MISSION

What is *Jasmine* all about then? A mission? It is a key word in the narrative: "I would carry out mataji's forgotten mission" (Mukherjee 70), affirms Jyoti when her mother wraps her in a bridal quilt saved for her daughter's trousseau. Jyoti will make sure she gets married to a suitable boy.

"... and Jasmine would complete the mission of Prakash", (Mukherjee 97) declares Jasmine, as a plan takes root in her mind after becoming widowed.

Just after setting foot on American soil, a relieved Jasmine tells herself "My mission, thank God, was nearly over" (Mukherjee 111).

Soon, Half-Face, the trafficker of illegal immigrants who ferried her across to Florida reveals his intention. She tries pleading with the would-be rapist, "It is mission to bring my husband's suit to America. I am taking it to his school and burning it where we were going to live" (Mukherjee 114).

After the rape, she contemplates killing herself with a knife, "the end of my mission" (117). She repeats 'mission' again with a neurotic obsession. "It was the murkiness of the mirror and a sudden sense of mission that stopped me. What if my mission was not yet over?" (Mukherjee 117). Then, almost immediately, "I could not let my personal honour disrupt my mission" (Mukherjee 118). Jasmine senses a physical defilement by Half-Face in two ways – one of her body and the other of the objects that were part of the planned ritual: the widow's white sari, Prakash's suit, her photographs and the statue of Ganapati. Then, she senses the spiritual defilement through Half-Face's mockery: he had insulted and belittled her purpose and her sentiments. "If only he had left my mission alone" (Mukherjee 121).

Jasmine endured humiliation throughout her solo journey, "... the numbed surrender to various men for the reward of an orange, a blanket, a slice of cheese" (Mukherjee 121). However, when the objects meant for the funeral pyre are touched, hence violated, by the rapist, and when he verbally 'defiles' her plans to burn them and taunts her, she cannot bear such dishonour anymore. The narrative emphasises the extent to which Jasmine gives importance to the act, thereby suggesting that *sati* was an extremely sacrosanct motivation in Jasmine's, an Indian woman's eyes.

Jyoti had missions, Jasmine had a mission, and she even refers to their adopted Vietnamese son as having a 'mission'. A perusal of her various 'missions' reveals how strong her determination was to progress in life. Thus, one cannot help but question in dismay 'Why, did she then plan to burn herself?' The graph that moved upwards tracing the growth of a defiant girl-child, child-bride and

wife of a modern-thinking husband, plummets and shows a 'devoted' woman choosing to perform *sati*. Aneja points out that this choice seeks a "justification within the framework of India's 'traditions'" (78). It is this "justification" of "traditions" that is used as a trope in the narrative that can be contested. Moreover, Jasmine's account of most women in her circle is thus: "They fell into wells, they got run over by trains, they burnt to death heating milk on kerosene stoves" (Mukherjee 41).

Thus, the authorial voice of Mukerjee that is actually one located in the West has re-instated this monolithic image of a third world woman in the characterisation of Jasmine and her subjectivity in India. Anu Aneja calls attention to "... the text's [Jasmine] inability to depoliticize itself of the hierarchical patterns of colonialistic enterprise" (Aneja 74). Drawing on her culture to explain and maintain her submission to traditions over-simplifies what are otherwise complex contexts and sources. These thereby replicate what Uma Narayan terms "a colonial western tendency", where as she has noted, "third- world contexts tend to be portrayed as places where 'time stands still' and where 'one culture rules all'" (Narayan 50).

6. CONCLUSION

By engaging in an examination of the use of the trope of *sati* in *Jasmine*, this study has sought to highlight the narrative's reticence to engage with the real 'Jasmine', one who earlier showed promise of being capable, walking aided only by her ubiquitous courage. The author delivers a protagonist, and then in a sort of volte-face abandons it to essentialist-based forces, here in the form of culture traps that lead her story forward. Her protagonist's 'mission' to travel to America derives its strength from, what this study terms - a '*sati* motive'.

The employment of the binary between traditional and modern strengthened by the trope of culture simplifies the complexities of the lives of women from the region. In "Cartographies of Struggle: Third World women and the Politics of Feminism", Mohanty argues for a better understanding of issues of women from the non-western world. Understanding Jasmine's life along the lines of, as Mohanty states, "white, Western (read progressive/modern)/ non-Western (read backward/traditional) hierarchy . . ." tends to "freeze third world women in time, space and history" (Mohanty 6).

This representation of Jasmine's decision as her own choice appears to reinforce the romantic image of the devoted wife. In the narrative's gentle shove, (along with an invitation to look upon Jasmine's naiveté with an understanding air), there appears to be a suggestion to read between the lines; to see, to use Spivak's words, "the 'courage' of the woman's free choice in the matter ("Can the Subaltern Speak?")300 and "the profound irony" is accepting this as Jasmine's "free will in self immolation" (Spivak 303). The Jasmine of the story as we know is a survivor and scorners of nostalgia, and the Jasmine directed by the narrative is someone else, pining to join her husband via an ultimate sacrifice.

The re-enforcement of Othering and exoticizing in such representations cannot be ignored. Given the importance and complexities of the sociological, political and historical implications that are tied to women's issues in third world cultures, generalized and essentialist representations offer very little in terms of a meaningful insight into the lives of the women. Re-presenting Jasmine's patriarchal background as oppressive *simply* through sourcing it to its Indian traditions renders the portrayal quite incomplete and essentialist.

Therefore, is Jasmine a trailblazer emerging from the blaze? In conclusion and in response to the question, the balance tilts strongly towards a 'no'. Jasmine dares make a grand, adventurous plan to leave everything behind and travel to America; however, the lights that are to guide her are the fires of her intended self-immolation. The implication appears thus: this foolhardy yet heroic woman can take upon challenges to re-construct herself, yet they are contained within the insidious terms of a certain ritual that she is to accept as her fate. Is her bravery more authentic because of this? Are not the readers being presented with, as Aneja notes, "a third world nation where a series of 'representational' images are forced into conveying a sense of the third world" (76)?

Jasmine recounts her story in the first person, and so the narrative beckons us to hear it as Jasmine's own voice. The question is - is it? This present study accentuates the reservations

behind accepting it as hers and suggests that this woman Jasmine, the subaltern that she is, is not silenced, but is strained to adapt a new accent. Lillian Gordon trains her to “walk and talk American” (134). Similarly when Jasmine decides she will flee rural Punjab, the narrative manipulates the trajectory towards an authenticity, – to make the protagonist think and act ‘third world’, in a skewed exchange of sorts. And the motive underpinning this forced directional change by the author appears like a need to authenticate Jasmine’s agency discovered in the West, by first proving her submission to a ritual based on traditional practices in the East.

Notes

- See Gayatri Spivak “Can the Subaltern Speak?” In her thought- provoking essay, Spivak discusses the abolition of *sati* by the British during colonial rule in India and presents some of the problematic aspects underlying the implementation of the ban. Spivak elaborates on its complex history and the racial and imperial implications behind it.
- See the official website of the Indian Government’s Ministry of Women and Child Development. It features *The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act*, and provides a detailed explanation of the Act.
- See an analysis of the Act in an article by an advocate of the Delhi High Court, Maja Daruwala. Daruwala contends that there are loopholes in the law that should be rectified.

REFERENCES

- Aneja, Anu. “*Jasmine*, the Sweet Scent of Exile.” *Pacific Coast Philology* 28.1 (1993): 72-80. *JSTOR*. Web. 31Jul. 2011.
- Daruwala, Maja. “Central Sati Act – an Analysis”. *People’s Union for Civil Liberties*. PUCL, July 1988. Web. 10 Feb 2015. < <http://www.pucl.org/from-archives/archives-index.htm>>.
- India. Government. Ministry of Women and Child Development. *The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act*. National Informatics Centre, 1987. Web. 15 Feb 2015. <<http://wcd.nic.in/commissionofsatiprevention.htm>>.
- Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. “Cartographies of Struggle: Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism. Introduction. *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*. Ed. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo and Lourdes Torres. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991. 1- 47. Print.
- Mukherjee, Bharati. *Jasmine*. New York: Grove Press, 1989. Print.
- Narayan, Uma. *Dislocating Cultures/ Identities, Traditions and Third World Feminism*. New York: Routledge, 1997. Print.
- Phukan, Atreyee and V.G Julie Rajan. “Re-Visiting the Postcolonial “Exotic”: Alterity, Difference, and Otherness.” Introduction. *South Asia and Its Others: Reading the “Exotic”*. Ed. Atreyee Phukan and V.G. Julie Rajan. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009. 1-10. Print.
- Purewal, Tej. “Re-producing South Asian Wom(b)en: Female Feticide and the Spectacle of Culture”. *South Asian Women in the Diaspora*. Ed. Nirmal Puwar and Parvati Raghuram. Oxford: Berg, 2003. 137-56. Print.
- Puwar, Nirmal. “Melodramatic Postures and Constructions”. *South Asian Women in the Diaspora*. Ed. Nirmal Puwar and Parvati Raghuram. Oxford: Berg, 2003. 21-41. Print.
- Rajan, S.R. *Real and Imagined Women: Gender, Culture and Postcolonialism*. London: Routledge, 1993. Print.
- Ray, Sangeeta. “The Nation in Performance: Bhabha, Mukherjee and Kurieshi”. Ed. Monica Fludernik. *Stuaffenburg: Springer*, 1998. 219-38. Print.
- “sati.” *Dictionary.com Unabridged*. Random House, Inc. 15 Feb. 2015. <[Dictionary.com http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/sati](http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/sati)>
- Singh, Ryan Paul. “I Want to be Surprised When I Hear Your Voice”: Who Speaks for *Jasmine*?” *Indian Writers: Transnationalisms and Diasporas*. Ed. Jaspal K. Singh and Rajendra Chetty. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2010. 69-86. Print.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *The Post-Colonial Critic*. New York: Routledge, 1990. Print.

---. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg. Urbana: Illinois UP, 1988. 271-313. Print.

Warhol-Down, Robyn. "Jasmine Reconsidered: Narrative Discourse and Multicultural Subjectivity." *Contemporary Women's Writing* 2.1 (2008): 1-16. *Oxfordjournals*. Web. 31 July 2011.

AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY



Nasheed Jafri is presently doing her PhD at her alma mater, the University of Mysore, India. The areas of her academic interests include Postcolonial studies, Feminist perspectives, Commonwealth literature and English Language Teaching (ELT).