

INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH

Insights, Interpretations and Illustrations

Edited by

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Dr Sadhana Agrawal & Dr Bijender Singh

First Published: 2022
Indian Writing in English: Insights, Interpretations and Illustrations
ISBN: 978-93-92459-04-7

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Published by

MALIK AND SONS
PUBLISHERS & DISTRIBUTORS

C-293A, Street No. 3, West Karawal Nagar, New Delhi - 110094
Mob.: 9953879692 E-mail: malikandsonspub@gmail.com
Typesetting at: R.S. Print, New Delhi
Printed at: Research Printing Press, New Delhi

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AMERICAN DREAM AND EXILE IN BHARATI
MUKHERJEE'S *JASMINE*

DR SURUCHI SHARMA

"I will wait supper for you. Indian wives never eat before their husbands."

– (Mukherjee, *Jasmine* 213)

Bharati Mukherjee is one of the pioneer Indian women writers in English. She has written her novels about the high aspirations of her female characters and their problems in the assimilation in the host culture. Mukherjee's novel *Jasmine* is also the story of the American dream and exile. M. Kiranmai and Dr M. Sri Lakshmi write about this novel, Mukherjee's *Jasmine* explores issues of history, identity, culture, gender, and immigration, particularly in regard to her work as a writer." (498). The main female protagonist of the novel is Jasmine and the novel has its setting in the background of village Hasnapur in Jalandhar, Punjab. Jasmine's parents lived in Lahore and they were a very well-to-do and respected family. They had to come to Hasnapur and they have to come to Hasnapur. Jasmine has two brothers Arvind Prar and Hari Prar. They go for an engineering diploma in Jalandhar in a technical school but both drop their studies but after the death of their father, they sell out their thirty-acre family ground and open up a scooter-repair shop. After that they dropped their idea of migrating to Bahrain or Qatar. Bharati Mukherjee writes how sometimes small hopes deprive people of big achievements in their life, "Like it or not, they were stuck in Hasnapur" (63). Jasmine has two sisters also but they are not given any significant space in the novel.

Jasmine meets an astrologer in the forest under a banyan tree. The astrologer tells her that she will become a widow at a young age and she will have to spend her time abroad. These are the opening lines of this

INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH

Insights, Interpretations and Illustrations

The appellation 'Indian Writing in English' foregrounds the idea of celebration of the Indian spirit in all the parameters of literature originally written in English. Despite the urge to shun conventional ways of tracing historical trajectory based on three formative phases — the 19th century colonial and reformist, the early 20th century nationalist, realist and progressive and the late 20th century modernist, postmodernist — the nuanced question of Independence has remained the abiding concern throughout. Pitted against the imperishable empire, writers of the colonial and nationalist phases endeavoured to uphold the spirit of Independence at the wake of the Orientalist/Anglicist debate by fostering continuity with the golden past while looking towards the liberal education and prestigious language of the West. The present anthology entitled *Indian Writing in English: Insights, Interpretations and Illustrations* is a comprehensive and erudite attempt at amalgamating a plethora of Indian Writings in English within its corpus. Sincere and dedicated efforts have been made to include 51 well-researched papers on 51 Indian writers without repetition within the purview of the book rendering it the status of the Bible of Indian Writing in English. The broad spectrum of the book is anticipated to enlighten the minds of the readers with a thorough vision on Indian Writing in English.



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C-293 A, Street No. 3, West Karawal Nagar
New Delhi-110094
Mobile No: 9873248544, 9312442975
Email: malikandsonspub@gmail.com

ISBN 978-93-92459-04-7



Price: ₹ 1800 | \$ 80