

Examining The Phenomenon Of Objectness To Thingness In Bharati Mukherjee's Jasmine

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Abstract

The epistemological and ontological construction of subjects and objects in the human world shapes various cultures. Every nation narrates its own culture that is constituted by multiple objects and human subjects. The movement of both subjects and objects from one domain to other initiates a new paradigm in literary and critical discourses. The philosophical, intellectual, and literary structure of the present study includes the dialectical relation between animate world and inanimate world. The animate world consisting human subjects is studied through the fundamental concept of self as the point of origin and the inanimate world of objects is analyzed through the fundamental concept of thing. The journey of 'becoming' a subject and an object encompasses the process of subjectification, subjectivization, objectification, and interpellation. The formation of a subject and an object, thus, takes them away from the sublime unity from which they arose. The development of self through factors that affects, conditions, and constructs it into a subject is reflected by the diachronic and synchronic study of Empiricism, Structuralism, Cognitivism, Rationalism, and Pragmatism. The study explores and exposes a running parallelism between the factors affecting self and thing which transform them both into interpellated, signified, pre-established, and fractured identities of subject and objects respectively. It examines this process through Thing Theory, developed by American theorist Bill Brown. The phenomenological bracketing of objects in ordinary conditions expose their power and potency over human subjects. At the same time objects seem to reflect different relation in the event of Diaspora. The present study examines through thing theory the refashioned and ambiguous relation between subjects and objects in the condition of cultural shift i.e. Diaspora. Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine* (1989) deals with the objectification of Jasmine, the protagonist of the novel, and her ultimate progression towards her thingness in diasporic conditions. The paper intends to examine the process of subjectivization and objectification of Jasmine is through seven key characteristics conceptualised by Martha Nussbaum that quintessentially verify the transformation of a human subject into an object..

Key words: Epistemological, Ontological, Subjectivization, Objectification, Empiricism, Structuralism, Cognitivism, Rationalism, Pragmatism.

Introduction

Human beings have invested a passage of time in bringing out a number of mystery wonders; inventions and discoveries. From early nomad savage to the evolved modern savage there has been a major upsurge in the significance of objects surrounding the natural world of human existence. From bullock cart to aeroplane, matchstick to lighter, computers to Macbook, objects fulfilling the needs of human beings have never seen a drop in demand, rather the significance of objects and things have taken control over the epistemic reality of mankind. From time immemorial, women in the world of human population have been seen as an object who or which is conditioned, controlled, and eventually established as an objective reality by the subjective world. Analogous to other material objects in the culture, woman too is seen to have been objectified in different realities. Before she has been objectified and commodified, a woman is a gendered subject whose subjectivity has experienced the processes of subjectivization and subjectification. Both empirical and cognitive factors are brought together to condition individuals' consciousness and subjectivity and they further transform them into a subject. Further, this subject is seen to have divided itself into two genders: male and female. Gender is one of the empirical factors that contribute in bringing the concepts of female subject and subjectivity. Symbolization, signification, and mediation structure human culture. As Sigmund Freud claims that "anatomy is destiny"

contending that gender is the chief determining factor of traits or personality in any human being to which many other psychologists and feminist contests.

Gender identity, here female subjectivity, has consistently challenged the idea of natural determinism, i.e. gender behavior is governed by nature, thus, divorcing biological reality from cultural identity. Female subjectivization comes at the center of the whole discourse questioning its motivations. Simone de Beauvoir in her book *The Second Sex* (1952) writes, "One is not born, but becomes a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society: it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine" (249). The cultural and social conducts and identities that are demarcated as feminine are perceived as the result of purely cultural and historical dynamics, rather than any natural predisposition. The biological and natural speculation by feminists simply analyze that cultural gendered characteristics that also define the consciousness and subjectivity are forced on nature and not derived from it. Gender works in an all-pervasive system of binary oppositions which conditions nature in its own way, colonizing every trait of social life overstating the tyranny of gender over social behavior.

Feminists like Judith Butler conclude that gender is performative. Through her book, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), she explains that gender is a synchronized coordinated set of gestures and acts that means performing and presenting oneself in approved and expected ways in order to show that the interior life of gendered human subject is structured around the sanctioned poles of gendered reality.

Butler dispenses any sense of spontaneity of the gendered performance and also is contemptuous regarding the heteronormative conformism. She reminds her readers that failing to behave or perform gender in the right way can bring "social isolation and mockery, violence, rape, and even death" (140). Thus, there is a commonsense gender self-presentation with a regulated system of performance developed through the constant repetition of behaviors which directly as well as indirectly directs the gendered subjectivity.

Gender Studies locates gender as one of the empirical factors which is also a stimulus for the working of the cognitive mind. A woman is a subject that has gone through numerous processes of subjectivization and subjectification. She has been programmed to feel, touch, talk, eat, and think differently as compared to a man. Her subjectivity is tailor-made and customized and most importantly in danger. As a subject, a woman is far away from a sovereign selfhood, a state of identifying and asserting her subjectivity.

As a subject, a woman's essence is lost through the different processes of subjectivization and subjectification which tends and mends her inner and outer reality. Any theory related with female subject and subjectivity has perhaps always been appropriated by the masculine world. Luce Irigaray, the Post-structuralist feminist philosopher, declares that subjectivity is denied to women. She extensively theorizes the manners in which female subjectivity is directed and distorted by culture, politics, and community and points out how body morphology is a cultural and political success. Through her works she aims to deconstruct this construction. In her book, *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1985) translated by Gillian C. Gill, she argues that "any theory of 'subject' has always been appropriated by the 'masculine'" (133). Now, as an object too, her soul and essence are completely robbed from her. She, as an object material is a commodity fashioned by the dominant subjective world of men.

The literary discourses concentrating upon the phenomenon of objectification of women analyze the ubiquitous nature of power i.e. power, being the facilitator of this binary equation, creates an objectifier (creator) and objectified (creation). To simplify, various disparate materials are combined to form an object which in response to its matureness is used in favour of its creator who holds the power. Thus, from conception to birth, an object conveys the code implanted in it by the objectifier/creator. This code is the knowledge that has been generated as an act of normalization which in return gives the right to the objectifier to use and abuse the object and as Foucault says, "Far from preventing knowledge, power produces it." (59) Objectifier becomes the power who can at any given point suppress or invigorate any object (knowledge/discourse). According to Foucault, power is placed, displaced, extended, or withdrawn by the production and registering of different truths which enables

one to execute power. In his Lecture Two: 14 January 1976 he substantiates the power of truth by saying, “We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth.” (93) This Foucauldian theory has been seen parallel to the feminist critique of body, sexuality and power. The cumulative analysis then will be to see a woman through the compound lens of a powerless object, as a misinformed truth/discourse, and a controlled thing.

Martha Nussbaum, an American classical and moral philosopher, redefined and developed the concept of ‘objectification’ which was originally initiated by Catherine Mackinnon and Andrea Dworkin. The term objectification is now a common one and its usage is highly criticised in television, media, advertisement, and any other representation that gives way to scepticism about the approach and intentions of one human subject to another. Most commonly it is used as a pejorative term that connotes a differentiated or othered way of thinking, talking, speaking etcetera with another being. In her article, “Objectification” (1995). Martha Nussbaum classifies seven characteristics that quintessentially verify the transformation of a person into an object. They are; Instrumentality Denial of autonomy, Inertness, Fungibility, Violability, Ownership and Denial of subjectivity.

In addition to Martha Nussbaum, another feminist critique, Rae Langton, has added three more characteristics to the list in her book *Sexual Solipsism: Philosophical Essays on Pornography and Objectification* (2009). In her contentious work she extends objectification to the pornographic representation of women in the world which first reduces their wholeness into ‘bodies’ which further reduce their identity as dummies adjusted according to the required ‘appearances’. The list is completed with the final appropriation of “silencing” which takes away any opportunity to assert a person’s will. (228) Keeping in mind these ten signposts of objectification of something that is in its ontological sense not an object one can try to verify and investigate the “objecthood” of women.

Women as subjects suffer from marginality and as objects they endure furious fetish by the hands of perverted patriarchy. The owner, ownership, and possession of any material object or commodity is directly associated with its regressive character.

The fetishization of the object woman dilutes or eliminates her independent essence i.e. her thingness and exhibits only the whole or integrated parts that serve to the satisfaction of collective and dominant consciousness of the patriarchy. As a pure object a woman is broken into a series by body parts and reunited into larger series of all woman-objects, where she is simply one object among others. Thus, a woman is an object of passion. The owners possess her whole body and also sometimes objectify her different parts of her body. The major goal is to explore women and womanhood through the compound lens of a powerless object and to discover the concealed thingness of a woman underneath the layers of misinformed and controlled truth.

In the domain where she takes birth, her home, a woman is immobilised and a helpless object with a dwindling self-expression and a victim to coarse capitalism. The gendered object in diasporic sensibility is even more vulnerable and undergoes several changes. The travel along with cultural shifts and shocks brings forth tremendous growth and transformation resulting in a renewed signification. If she is an object at home will she be an object in the host country too? This question stimulates an important discourse focussing on diasporic subjectivity and sensibility through the lens of gender and Thing Theory.

The intricacy of diasporic experience invites introspective lenses of culture, society, economy, and ethnicity, all of which continues to be largely patriarchal. The changes that one experiences because of Diaspora have evoked great discourses in both cultural and anthropological studies. The intersection of gender and Diaspora too welcomes the largely interrogated field of feminist study. Diaspora and migration studies fundamentally deal with the threats posed by an alien culture which triggers complete or partial metamorphosis of a cultural subject into a hyphenated one. Women on the forefront routes of uprooted identity also progresses through a shift in the identity conceived for them at home. The femaleness and the objectified reality signified, defined, or prescribed for women is vulnerable and variable in the new arena of host country. The key diasporic women writers of the new Indian Diaspora seek to blow the construct of objectification through their characters who break away from

their symbolic, economic, social, sexual, and cultural objectness and finds emancipation through embracing their thingness.

The Global Indian Diaspora with a group of women writers like Bharati Mukherjee, Suniti Namjoshi, Sujata Bhatt, Meena Alexander, Uma Parmeswaran, Jhumpa Lahiri, Chitra BannerjiDivakaruni etcetera emerge as significant voices representing images of Indian women in Diaspora. These writers provide an alternative perspective into female truths (maintained by the dogmatic subjectivities). Focusing on women in Indian Diaspora, it is observed that the objectness is damaged in technologically and ideologically advanced countries like US and UK and the objectified woman locates her inert thingness in the freer milieu.

The literature of Diaspora has presented an account of female objectification of the marginal-subaltern gender and broadly critiqued the voyeuristic and fetishized male gaze. The novel, *Jasmine* (1989), by Bharati Mukherjee incorporates both the fetish as well as its breakdown i.e. objectification and thingness of its protagonist Jasmine in America.

The travails of travel include nostalgic reminders of the past world left behind. Thus, diaspora for almost all immigrants, refugees, guest workers, migrants, or for illegal immigrants operates in quite similar ways. The fractured hyphenated ambiguities are coped by accepting the big changes and relishing the residual material memories which are still intact. Vijay Mishra does not focus on the 'foot-noted' and neglected imperial history rather he divulges into what diasporic writers like Bharati Mukherjee is projecting through her new Indian Diaspora, emphasising upon the nostalgic material memories like food, prayer rugs, holy books, promising aerograms, native news-papers, passports etcetera. All these objects function as material memories of home as they symbolise parent culture and highlight the dividing hyphen. Bharati Mukherjee through her novel, *Jasmine*, locates the dispersal of this hyphen through her protagonist, Jasmine, who breaks away from the overbearing hyphen which objectifies her as an eastern exotic object under both male and colonial gaze and discovers her thingness.

Focusing on *Jasmine*, the central character is born as Jyoti who juggles from identity to identity, places to places, which concerns her epistemic growth. Her status continuously shifts from an object to a thing through various episodes in the novel. She perpetually breaks down her objectified self (the part of her reality which is constructed by the dominant culture) and relentlessly and unyieldingly reconceives her self-sufficiency, her liberated self; her thingness. Both on physical and psychological levels, *Jasmine*, is also a novel of assimilation and emigration. The process of Americanization is traced through the experiences of a young Indian woman. Her triumphs and traumas in America help in reviving her thingness. The novel intricately travels through the first-person narrative of the protagonist who shifts and jumps from one doppelganger to another. The non-linear and abrupt narration intensifies the complexity in both the personal as well as geographical shift in the novel. It begins with Jyoti, the name she is born with, in a small village of Punjab, Hasnapur. Jyoti is the seventh out of the nine children her mother bore, also the fifth daughter, who came out to be the prettiest which concerns the family who is afraid of the pain of a dowry-less bride. Thus, from the moment a daughter is born the society is seen calculating the price of the commodity. Arjun Appadurai, the socio-cultural anthropologist, in his book, *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (1986), talks about how the exchange of commodities in terms of an economic value that transforms an object into commodity. Appadurai elaborates on the life of commodified objects and shows the fine line of economy and its role in the market (social, economic) which regulates both the objects and the subjects. Women as daughters are nothing more than a commodity ready for circulation in marriage from one house to another. Jyoti's mother's predicament verifies both Appadurai's concept of commodity circulation as well as two of Martha Nussbaum's key features of objectification: Fungibility and Ownership. Objects in culture travel from one place to another with reference to its usage and interchangeability and substitution by its owner. It is through the process of commoditization that women as objects gain the status of fungible objects who all the more are away from their thingness. The common definition of commodity incorporates the factor of use and exchange value and from cultural perspective the visible exchange and transaction of a bride is much similar to any economic exchange in the marketplace. The trade and tradition of bride with dowry in the Indian culture and community is analogous to the trade of slavery.

The study explains the fact that the trade and commerce of slavery finds much parallel to the life and journey of woman and here, Jasmine. With the exchange of a commodified object the buyer again converts it into a possession controlling and terminating the thingness that may or may not ever be exerted. Bill Brown in his magnum opus *A Sense of Things: The Object Matter of American Literature* (2003) reiterates Walter Benjamin's comprehension of collector or here the buyer's labour as "the Sisyphean task of divesting things of their commodity character by taking possession of them," an unending task because the taint of purchase itself can never be wholly erased. ... The collector reobjectifies the object and relocates it from the commodity scene (the shop, the auction, the market) into another space, a utopic or heterotopic space where value, far from being a mystery, is, to the collector, utterly transparent." (157-58) As indicated by Brown's description of continuation of possession, raw Jyoti at the age of fourteen is married to Prakash Vijn who 'renames' her as Jasmine in the process of acquisition. Jasmine, like a commodity is negotiated in the sensibilities of Indian culture and is also reindividualized from Jyoti to Jasmine to reconfigure in the new home after marriage.

Prakash becomes Professor Higgins who shapes Jasmine and inscribe new ideals and meanings to her existence. Therefore, undermining Jyoti's assessment of addressing and determining herself, Prakash divests her from her thingness which completely concurs with the feature-denial of autonomy. The denial and shedding of consciousness after one point of time becomes the normalised practice for women objects. Jasmine too embraces her objectification and happily enslaves for her husband and takes a big step for an intercontinental vagabondage that marks Jasmine's sati-motivated journey to America.

Jasmine at the bottom of her roots in India as well as at the far stretch of deterritorialized land of America is seen to be realized, sold, resold, exploited, and re-exploited time and again. This unsettled journey of Jasmine also marks her struggle to uncover her thingness from the normalized process of objectification in the masculine culture. Jasmine's rearranged/reorganized self begins with the first page of the novel that arrests the first objectifier, the astrologer who foretells her "widowhood and exile". This is the first instance where then Jyoti's thingness is attempted to be controlled. "No! I shouted. You're a crazy old man. You don't know what my future holds!" (1). As objects, women are mute, meek, and passive, their reality is interpellated by several ideological and repressive apparatuses. Women carry within themselves encoded and confirmed social, political, economic, and sexual role. Human subject himself/herself is a construct who is affected by several realities of the world which transformed him/her from the state of tabula rasa to an interpellated and unpeeled subject. Further dividing them in terms of gender, both male and female are objectified, yet female objectification has seen a colossal growth since a long time, for instance Aristotle in *Politics* (384-322 B.C.E.) declares, ". . . the male is by nature superior and the female inferior, the male ruler and the female subject ". Thus, taking into consideration this dichotomy of master and slave, women's journey as a slave to the objective reality can be affirmed. The fortune teller here affirms to the role of a dominant objectifier who seizes the right to contradict from Jyoti yet the object denies conformity and says, "I don't believe you" (4). Here one can examine at the very beginning the active self-governing character of the narrator before it becomes dormant supressing the thingness by Nussbaum's seventh feature: denial of subjectivity.

The most important incident of Jasmine's acquired thingness is when she is raped in America by a human smuggler who is named in the novel as Half-Face. The particular scene conspicuously speaks of infringement and trespassing of autonomy and ownership of one's self. Rape can be said as treating a person as a sexual object for gratifying his/her sexual urge or appetite and thereby mistaking them as 'Violable' as in capable of being violated, lacking any boundary and integrity. Her first day in America labels her as a murderer of not just Half-Face but also the Jasmine who was considered as an object.

Carter-Sanborn labels this metamorphosis a "dissociative state", it's like Jasmine tries to block the access to agency which holds or held the power to not only molest her but also mock at her subjectivity, her thingness, she says, "If he had only killed me. If he had only left my mission alone. He had me say it, he laughed at it" (121). In addition to this violation of self-autonomy and dehumanizing objectification Jasmine starts to locate her thingness more often. After recovering from a series of disappointing episodes in the host country she finally is rescued by a social worker Kate Gordon who arranges for her a position of au pair in an American family. "I hope \$95 a week is satisfactory," said Wylie. "I've checked around, and that's a little low, but there really

shouldn't be any other expense—" I had not imagined money, dollars, for sleeping with a child. "That is very good," I said" (167). Initially as the caretaker bought by the Hayes couple for their daughter, Duff, Jasmine, now Jase, gradually walk past the arena and rises from domestic servant to a surrogate mother to a surrogate spouse. Jasmine learnt quickly that America is a country without shame and she admits "For every Jasmine the reliable caregiver, there is a Jase the prowling adventurer" (176) The exiled immigrant Jasmine rejects the role assigned and meaning registered with au pair and jostles away the conformity and submission. She denies inertness and eliminate all the external agencies. As Bill Brown in his article, "Reification, Reanimation, And the American Uncanny" (2006) says "Things quicken" (175).

Jasmine's diaspora first as a smuggled exile and later as an au pair at an American family is an intriguing journey. She is seen striving to adjust in the American sensibility with her clothing and accent. Her acculturation is vigorous as she works as an object of help (au pair) yet she takes it as the opportunity to reinvent herself by breaking the jolted bolts of ideology from Punjab. This disintegration which she talks about is analogous to the breakdown of the encoded, inscribed, and signified meanings that are conditioned in a reified identity. Therefore, Jase unapologetically acknowledges her love for Taylor as well as accepts his. Yet the moment she finds herself discovered by Sukhwinder, the man who killed her husband, and is exposed to danger she immediately upholds herself not succumbing at anyone or anything. Redeeming her sovereignty, she retreats away from the Hayes family as she feels that it is she who is responsible for herself, "In my life, I have never dithered. God's plans have always seemed clearly laid out. I said to him, "I'm going to Iowa." (189)

Diaspora for women immigrants of the third world countries has predominantly been accommodating. The heteronormative and patriarchal underpinnings of Diaspora institutes the longing for the land that is left behind, the static root, and its nostalgia. In Jasmine, the protagonist advocates the notions of transformation and regeneration. Jasmine do not cling to the roots rather sows herself in the new land of opportunity. In Iowa Jasmine progresses; from an au pair to a live-in partner with a fifty-year-old crippled Iowan man, Bud Ripplemeyer. Her relationship Bud is seen through various approaches. erinKhueNinh in her article "Gold-Digger: Reading the Marital National Romance in Bharati Mukherjee's Jasmine" (2013) comprehensively deals with Jasmine's usurpation of the role of white wife and mother along with the notions of occidental and patriarchal gaze. Khue labels Jasmine as a "mail-order bride" (146) who is living with a white man for shelter and security. This whole discourse again leaks slippages where at some points Jasmine is seen objectifying Bud and at different points caught being objectified. According to Khue as Jane, Jasmine is a combination of agencies: caregiver/live-in nurse, sex worker, and mail-order bride. In her stay with Bud Jasmine is not just one but all of these, she instantly transforms her identity from a live-in nurse to an Asian sex worker in order to gratify the erotic needs of a man she no more sexually desires. Jasmine describes her passive sexual performance as a task she is expected to deliver. As an object she fulfils the need of her master who has summoned her services. At this point Rae Langton's "reduction to body" and "reduction to appearance" (228) fulfils the criteria of Jasmine's sexual objectification. This dehumanizing phrase centres on the cheapness and availability of the third world labour insinuating objectification of women like Jasmine in exile and their dormant thingness. Body of a woman object here plays an important role in both intellectual and feminist domain. Lynda Birke in an essay "Bodies and Biology" in the anthology *Feminist Theory and The Body: A Reader* (1999) edited by Janet Price explains that body is not a passive part ruled over by other subjects rather it is centre of human actions. Female body has been culturally, historically, and sexually being assumed for certain purposes which prescribe the status of an object in servitude for the male dominant society. Interestingly, Judith Butler in her introduction to *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (1993) discusses the materiality of body and its association with gender performances and enquires the phenomena of bodies, sex, and gender. Butler rejects and criticises the presence of power that operates the equation of bodies, sex, and gender. Thus, what Jasmine executes is nothing else than the normalized, ritualized socially sanctioned and constructed norm that all women objects follows.

Jasmine's Beauty, Truth, and Freedom are captured in the social, cultural, and sexual objectification negating and hiding her thingness that is never appreciated. Plato talks about the concepts of soul and body. According to him, the body has deceptive senses which keep people far from the real knowledge; it rather rivets the human

subjects in a world of material objects which is again far from Truth, Beauty, and Reality tempting them away from the essence that lie underneath the heap of materialism.

Jasmine's love and sexual activity is reduced only to the bodily functions closely similar to the parts of an object that works according to the purpose inscribed. Her true essence is impotent and lies latent beneath her objectification. She is not more than a sexual organ, an object based on one function – satisfaction. The object Jasmine regulates her functionality for her owner Bud Ripplemeyer and is isolated from her soul and essence but is one condensed body object. Thus, Jasmine is radically simplified as an animate sexual object which transforms passionate feelings into fetish and vice-versa.

Indian women-objects and their reality attempts at resisting the marginalised and subaltern positions to which they are cognised and consigned from the beginning on account of their gender when they move from the culturally stringent atmosphere of home to America which gives a new sense of being to her. But at the same time this marginalised object experiences exacerbated condition on account of ethnic variance and race in addition to gender. As an object in diaspora, Indian woman, Jasmine becomes an exotic or oriental object of the third-world who is presented on the platter for American families first as an au pair and then as the live-in nurse and lover. Edward Said in his book *Orientalism* (1978) declares that "The Orient is an integral part of European material civilization and culture"(10) which establishes the fact that oriental objects (animate or inanimate) have an exotic appeal before the occidental gaze exposing their coarse materiality and historical stereotyping and specificities. The interaction of human subjects (the patriarchy) and women objects design such a circuit of effective performance of function that its breakdown is almost unachievable yet when it occurs the interaction is eroded with the mounting thing woman. Unless an objectified woman like Jasmine transcends her signified false consciousness, she would keep on relocating from commodity to machine, from machine to slave, from slave to toy, from toy to gift, from gift to exotica, and from exotica to finally a relic. In the novel, Jasmine successfully retrieves her thingness by not giving in and breaking down the animal-human-machine, a cyborg like existence. Donna Haraway in her essay "A Cyborg Manifesto" (1985) although devises a solution for the current situation of gendered world. She advocates the amalgam of monstrosity with subjectivity and machinery as the tool for gaining dominance and producing a genderless utopia. Nonetheless, Jasmine by the end of the novel is neither a commodity nor a cyborg but an emancipated thing who gains ascendancy over her objectified body.

Jasmine's narration has been able to adjoin the catalogue of her multiple selves but in this very narration there is no continuity or permanence. From Jyoti to Jasmine, from Jasmine to Jase, and from Jase to Jane, the narrator does not synthesise one with other. The narrator is not a widow when she is an undetected murderer, she is not the murderer when she is an au pair, and she is not an au pair when she is a live-in partner. Her inert being is objectified time and again and she murders them each time. She abandons the agency which seeks to search purpose in her, rising above her reified self to wield her thingness.

The novel, *Jasmine*, presents a critical evaluation of an objectified woman who locates her thingness in diaspora. As an object she passes through several phases of objectification both at home and host country. She is used, circulated, and exchanged extensively. At home in a small village of Hasnapur, she is denied of autonomy and passes from owner to another (father, brother, husband). At the death of her husband she finds herself completely estranged and devoid of a master. The harmonious interplay between subject and object comes to rest and collapses after the demise of her husband. In her attempt to unite with her husband by fulfilling his dream, she smuggles herself to America and there begins her renewal and thingness.

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