



ISSN Print: 2394-7500
ISSN Online: 2394-5869
Impact Factor: 5.2
IJAR 2016; 2(4): 744-745
www.allresearchjournal.com
Received: 23-02-2016
Accepted: 24-03-2016

A Rajalakshmi
Assistant Professor in English,
Mother Teresa Women's
University, Kodaikanal.

Dr. KM Sumathi
Assistant Professor in English,
M.V.M. Govt. Arts College
(W), Dindigul.

The Idea of modern woman in Bharati Mukherjee's wife

A Rajalakshmi, Dr. KM Sumathi

Abstract

Bharati Mukherjee illustrates a modern woman as a girl who rebellious, mutiny next to all prospect in her life daringly, adjusts herself to all traditions and atmospheres thereby existing and livelihood her life audaciously. Mukherjee swigs the best of Indian and Western culture, finds modern women to be mandatory clarification to gaze life with modishness. Her novel *Wife* stands out as a unique fictional work by virtue of its insightful probing into heroine's psyche and its indubitable technical excellence. This paper scrutinizes a multiplicity of tribulations that occur in ordinary woman's life, the quandary of bodily and psychologically beleaguered women and ultimately venture to specify the connotation of being a *modern woman* in order to surmount the obstruction in her life.

Keywords: modishness, tribulations, quandary, connotation, surmount.

1. Introduction

Wife is the plain tale of Amit and his wife Dimple, newly married Bengali immigrants to the USA. Her knowledge of the possibility of greater happiness with a different man ruins her attainable happiness with Amit within the marital relationship. Life with him, both India and America is naturally a big disappointment for her. In her moments of feverish introspection she thinks that life has been cruel to her. The tale enlarged as a story of a married girl uproots herself from her life in India and re-roots herself in search of a new life and the picture of America as well. It is a story of disruption and repositioning as the protagonist continually sheds lives to stir into the story, rousing further westward. She happened to set a high store on marriage:

"Marriage, she was sure, would free her, fill her with passion. Discreet and virgin, she waited for real life to begin. She hoped that marriage would offer her a different kind of life- an apartment in Chowringhee, her hair done by Chinese girls, trips to New Market for nylon saris"(p.3)

Marriage has not provided all the shimmering things she had imagined had not brought her cocktails under canopied skies. It is fascinating to note why Amit is what he is. Like anybody who has made pragmatism a way of life he is unsentimental, nippy and crucial in gestures, vigilant in approach and scrupulous in planning for future. But for his cautiously cultivated pragmatism he would not marry the flat-chested, short and wheatish Dimple who can converse only kaput English. Like any traditionally brought up Indian husband, he does not know how to pay a compliment to his wife. He would like her to reside at home and focus to the household chores rather than go out, work and earn. The culture he is born in requires of him to earn and grant for future whatever be the cost and he withdraws his love and other emotional attachments from his wife in recreation of the cultural aims.

1.1 Surrealistic Touch

Dimple's life is a long rendezvous with death. As her desire to die protuberance in intensity, she becomes more and more neurotic and vice versa. However, death should also be viewed here as the logical and final goal of the conservative instincts in order to do justice for its employment as a literary device. It can therefore be understood that her awareness of death is partly a thematic necessity and partly an aesthetic necessity.

Correspondence
A Rajalakshmi
Assistant Professor in English,
Mother Teresa Women's
University, Kodaikanal.

During her Calcutta days she has two significant encounters with death—one symbolic, another actual. The first, her sadistic killing of a mouse has a surrealist touch to it. The occurrence happens after Dimple has undergone a series of tedious experiences which comprise particularly her marriage to Amit. She ruthlessly trails the rodent and kills it with an uncalled for show of anger.

“I’ll get you!” she screamed. “There’s no way out of this, my friend”. She seemed confident now, a woman transformed. And in an outburst of hatred, her body shuddering, her wrist taut with fury, she smashed the top of small gray head”

And to her, the mouse looks pregnant which introduces the motif of pregnancy. Presumably Dimple herself is pregnant by this time. Symbolically, in her rejection of the pregnancy she rejects Amit. The New York life appears to prove particularly destructive to Dimple. At a further remove she begins to experience a split personality sees her body and soul apart, manifests extreme self-consciousness and acutely suffers from imaginary illnesses. Dimple can afford to be immediate and physical in her reaction with others. With Amit she cannot be so dramatic. She has to repress a good deal of anger which keeps simmering in her unconscious all the time. During her psychotic spell the hitherto unthought-of of defense strategies are pressed into service while her death-bound journey takes her closer and closer to the end-point. Now that the ego’s hold on her is considerably relaxed, a clear pathological picture emerges. In this light, her seduction of Milt, her landlady’s brother in her own bedroom, can be interpreted as a desperate attempt by her diseased psyche to preserve her and stop her further deterioration. She wishes him to do her. In other words, she wishes to die but by forming a reaction she kills Amit. Her killing of Amit with a kitchen knife is the most longed for, albeit unconsciously masochistic, event in her life. The incident occurs in a free-floating dream-like state and is rendered by the author in a virtually delirious style:

“She sneaked up on him and chose a spot, her favorite spot just under the hairline, where the mole was getting larger and browner, and she drew an imaginary line of kisses ... she touched the mole very lightly and let her finger’s draw a circle around the delectable spot, then she brought her right hand up and with the knife stabbed the magical circle once, twice, seven times, each time a little harder, until the milk in the bowl of cereal was a pretty pink and the flakes were mushy and would have embarrassed any advertiser, and then she saw the head fall off- but of course it was her imagination because she was not sure any more what she had seen on TV and what she had seen in the private screen of three A.M”(212-13)

Having thus killed Amit, Dimple has ultimately succeeded in achieving a modicum of satisfaction for masochistic drives. She has turned the whole society into a punishment agent. Society will never forgive her for killing a dutiful husband and there is also the law to contend with. It will treat Dimple as any ordinary criminal and may even award her the death sentence. And as thought that is not enough by a trick of fantasy she has in effect killed herself through this act.

2. Conclusion

Dimple has all along been firmly set on her way to death whether viewed in terms of the artistic requirements of the novel or her rather peculiar mental frame. A close attention to the inner dynamics of the novel would dispel any doubts in arriving at this conclusion. That death has been delayed so

long is a fact which comes as a big surprise to the readers. Dimple has been allowed to use all the devices available to an organism to preserve itself. It is only when further prolongation is not possible that death occurs in such concrete shape.

3. References

1. Nelson ES, Bharati Mukherjee. *Critical Perspectives*, New York: Garland, 1993.
2. Kumar N. *The Fiction of Bharati Mukherjee: A Cultural Perspective*, New Delhi, 2001.
3. Mukherjee Bharati. *Wife*, New Delhi: Penguin Books (India), 1990.
4. Alam Fakrul. *Bharati Mukherjee*. New York: Twayne, 1996.