

ISSN 2348 - 7674

Research Innovator

International Multidisciplinary Research Journal

Vol II Issue V : October - 2015

Editor-In-Chief
Prof. K.N. Shelke

www.research-chronicler.com

A detailed still-life composition featuring a quill pen as the central element. The quill is positioned diagonally, with its tip resting on a scroll of aged parchment. The scroll is secured with a red wax seal and a red ribbon. In the background, a lit candle in a brass holder casts a warm glow. In the foreground, a glass inkwell with a quill inside sits on a wooden surface, alongside a red wax seal and a small wooden object. The overall scene evokes a sense of traditional scholarship and research.

Research Innovator

ISSN 2395 – 4744 (Print); 2348 – 7674 (Online)

**A Peer-Reviewed Refereed and Indexed
Multidisciplinary International Research Journal**

Volume II Issue V: October – 2015

Editor-In-Chief

Prof. K.N. Shelke

Head, Department of English,
Barns College of Arts, Science & Commerce, New Panvel (M.S.) India

Editorial Board

Dr. A.P. Pandey, Mumbai, India
Dr. Patricia Castelli, Southfield, USA
Dr. S.D Sargar, Navi Mumbai, India
Christina Alegria, Long Beach, USA
Prin. H.V. Jadhav, Navi Mumbai, India
Dr. Adrienne Santina, McMinnville, USA
Prof. C.V. Borle, Mumbai, India
Dr. Nirbhay Mishra, Mathura, India

Advisory Board

Dr. S.T. Gadade

Principal, C.K. Thakur College,
New Panvel, India

Dr. R.M. Badode

Professor & Head,
Department of English,
University of Mumbai, India

Dr. G.T. Sangale

Principal, Veer Wajekar College,
Phunde, India

Research Innovator is peer-reviewed refereed and indexed multidisciplinary international research journal. It is published bi-monthly in both online and print form. The Research Innovator aims to provide a much-needed forum to the researchers who believe that research can transform the world in positive manner and make it habitable to all irrespective of their social, national, cultural, religious or racial background.

With this aim Research Innovator, Multidisciplinary International Research Journal (RIMIRJ) welcomes research articles from the areas like Literatures in English, Hindi and Marathi, literary translations in English from different languages of the world, arts, education, social sciences, cultural studies, pure and applied Sciences, and trade and commerce. The space will also be provided for book reviews, interviews, commentaries, poems and short fiction.

-:Subscription:-

| | Indian Individual / Institution | Foreign Individual / Institution |
|-------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Single Copy | ₹ 600 | \$40 |
| Annual | ₹ 3000 | \$200 |
| Three Years | ₹ 8000 | \$550 |

-:Contact:-

Prof. K.N. Shelke

Flat No. 01,
Nirman Sagar Coop. Housing Society,
Thana Naka, Panvel, Navi Mumbai. (MS), India. 410206. knshelke@yahoo.in

Cell: +91-7588058508

Research Innovator

A Peer-Reviewed Refereed and Indexed International Multidisciplinary Research Journal

Volume II Issue V: October – 2015

CONTENTS

| Sr. No. | Author | Title of the Paper | Page No. |
|---------|--|--|----------|
| 1 | Kingsley O. Ugwuanyi & Sosthenes N. Ekeh | Shifting the Borders: Genre-crossing in Modern Africa Drama | 1 |
| 2 | Prof. Mahmoud Qudah | The Acquisition of the Comparative and Superlative Adjectives by Jordanian EFL Students | 12 |
| 3 | Anas Babu T T & Dr. S. Karthik Kumar | The Victimized Marxism in Asimov's Foundation Novels | 21 |
| 4 | Ms. D. Anushiya Devi & Dr. L. Baskaran | Manju Kapur's Home: Tradition Battles With Transition | 25 |
| 5 | Dr. Archana Durgesh | <i>Adhe Adhure</i> : Savitri's Quest for a Complete Man | 30 |
| 6 | Dr. S. Karthik Kumar | Transcending Cultural Barriers: A Study of Pearl S. Buck's <i>East Wind: West Wind</i> | 36 |
| 7 | Dr. Rajib Bhaumik | Bharati Mukherjee's <i>Jasmine</i> : A Study of Disjunctions in a Synaptic Location of Adversative Unipolarity | 42 |
| 8 | Abdul Rasack P. & Dr. S. Karthik Kumar | Acquiring Listening and Speaking Skills through Songs in CLT Classrooms | 51 |
| 9 | Dr. B. N. Gaikwad & Sumeet R. Patil | The Reflections of Humiliation in the Autobiographies of Vasant Moon and Omprakash Valmiki | 55 |
| 10 | Dipika Mallick | Caste System: A Historical Perspective | 61 |
| 11 | S. Muhilan & Dr. J. Uma Samundeeswari | The Pain and Struggle of Migration in John Steinbeck's <i>Of Mice and Men</i> | 66 |
| 12 | Dr. Archana Durgesh & Ekta Sawhney | Coming Back from Death-Near Death Experiences | 71 |
| 13 | Mansi Chauhan | Home as the Location of History: Reading Kamila Shamsie's <i>Salt and Saffron</i> | 77 |

| | | | |
|---------------|--|---|------------|
| 14 | Dr. G. Vasuki & V. Vetrimni | Philosophy through Symbolism: A Study of Theodore Dreiser's <i>Sister Carrie</i> | 83 |
| 15 | Dr. Rajib Bhaumik | The Woman Protagonist in Bharati Mukherjee's <i>Wife</i> : a Study of Conflictual Ethics between Indianness and Transplantation | 90 |
| 16 | Dr. G. Vasuki & R. Velmurugan | Treatment of Slavery in Toni Morrison's Novel <i>Beloved</i> | 102 |
| 17 | Dr. Archana Durgesh | Shakuntala - Myth or Reality: Man Enjoys and Woman Suffers | 109 |
| 18 | Dr. Laxman R. Rathod | Interdisciplinary Approach Mechanism of Biopesticides: Solution of <i>Trichoderma</i> in Agriculture Crops | 119 |
| 19 | Mr. Arvindkumar Atmaram Kamble | Translation Theory: Componential Analysis of Mahesh Elkunchwar's Drama <i>Old Stone Mansion</i> | 126 |
| 20 | Dr. Bipinkumar R. Parmar | Mahesh Dattani's Plays: Reflections on Global Issues | 130 |
| 21 | Thokchom Ursa | Maternal Nutrition during Pregnancy among the Meitei Women and its Effect on Foetal Growth | 136 |
| 22 | Ksh. Surjit Singh & K.K. Singh Meitei | Some Methods of Construction of Incomplete Block Neighbor Design | 144 |
| Poetry | | | |
| 23 | W. Christopher Rajasekaran | My Son | 150 |

**The Woman Protagonist in Bharati Mukherjee's Wife: a Study of Conflictual Ethics
between Indianness and Transplantation****Dr. Rajib Bhaumik***Asst. Professor, Dept. of English, Alipurduar College, Alipurduar (W.B.) India***Abstract**

Bharati Mukherjee with her Indian heritage and her adoption of new identities as citizen of both Canada and the United States is in an important transit point of gender, race and culture in the post-colonial situation. In the dialectical translation of the cultural splitting and knitting Mukherjee sets out to write a discourse on dislocation through the prism of gender race and culture. With her predilection of conflictual assimilation and fusionism she subordinates the fixed notions of identity and psychic ambivalence. Bharati Mukherjee has been considered by a few critics like Brewster, earlier mentioned, as an escapist and has been accused of becoming Americanized by the Western neo-colonial machine. But Mukherjee's devotion to America is not that of one who has given up an old nation to embrace a new one. For Mukherjee, America is the global mosaic, a transit point of assimilation and re-location of culture and identity. Dimple, the woman protagonist in *Wife*, stands at the transit point of culture, confused between her Indianness and the transplantation; she is skeptical about traditional values and vapid social norms but she is unable to negotiate the need of the crude transnational norms which demand both exclusion and merger. Her inability to deal with the pangs of displacement results in violence, both psychic and physical. In India, unhappy wives commit suicide; Dimple asserts herself by committing murder, not suicide.

Key Words: identities, dialectical translation, discourse, dislocation, cultural splitting, assimilation, fusionism, identity, psychic ambivalence

There are mutative stages in the continuing evolution of Bharati Mukherjee as a writer. The changes which occurred were due to vital inputs from the fast changing global climate. No doubt, that we encounter an entirely changed writer in *Darkness* but this dynamics of growth is present in *The Tiger's Daughter* and *Wife* also. In both these novels the author's voice is omniscient. However, they are not written to imply, as Jasbir Jain says, 'total rejection or a ruthless questioning of tradition or a love-hate relationship with the native heritage.'¹

Rather, these early novels depict the psychic journey of the migratory self shared by many other Indians studying, living and working for long periods abroad in Europe or the United States.

Bharati Mukherjee with her Indian heritage and her adoption of new identities as citizen of both Canada and the United States is in an important transit point of gender, race and culture in the post-colonial situation. In the dialectical translation of the cultural splitting and knitting Mukherjee sets out to write a discourse on dislocation through the

prism of gender race and culture. With her predilection of conflictual assimilation and fusionism she subordinates the fixed notions of identity and psychic ambivalence.

Bharati Mukherjee has been considered by a few critics like Brewster, earlier mentioned, as an escapist and has been accused of becoming Americanized by the Western neo-colonial machine. But Mukherjee's devotion to America is not that of one who has given up an old nation to embrace a new one. For Mukherjee, America is the global mosaic, a transit point of assimilation and re-location of culture and identity. What Mukherjee could realize, as is expressed in the interviews, in her memoir, or as she seems to suggest in her novels, is that America as a nation is culturally constructed by the immigrants since inception and here in-betweenness and hyphenation is less effective as compared to assimilation.

Her characters behave erratically in the confusion of hyphenation and assimilation. But Mukherjee seems to gesture at an exclusive fluidity in immigrant's imagination which should be tilted to embrace fusionism and not mere hybridity, and this process of post-nation formation, dislocations are necessary pre-condition. She is not interested in a new American nationalism, instead creates a new discourse of diasporic condition as a mode of decentering. In Mukherjee's narratives, instability of "home" is a diasporic signifier. It cannot be a static point of unproblematic culture and identity one leaves and returns to at ease. She focuses on the complicated dialectics of dislocation and on the dispersed and dispossessed fate of the cultural, geographic and psychic nomads heading

towards productive ambivalence in a contrapuntal negotiation of identity. Said's comments on such shifting ground of "otherness" is significant. 'No one today is purely one thing' he says '(I)abels like Indian [...] or American are no more than starting points, which if followed into actual experience for only a moment are quickly left behind.'²

Transnationalism in Bharati Mukherjee's fictions depicts an essential relationship that exists between herself as a migrant subject, and the nationality or the location of her native culture and destination countries- first Canada, and finally America. This intersection of culture creates in due course the new location of culture and identity. Problem of identity is due to the forces of globalization which include transnational exodus of the immigrants and exiles. The result is either cultural mosaic or melting pot and in such global village the sense of a homogenous self-contained character is something that is hardly possible. In such postcolonial condition a person on the alien shore is composed of all sorts of conflicting essentials.

However, in Rushdie's texts, such mongrelization of identity has an explicit historical perspective. It is related to the condition of postcoloniality, a condition where pure space and essential identities have ceased to exist, and where the diasporic subject is inevitably contaminated by diverse cultural practices. For example, the postcolonial 'immigrant other' is a potent figure of 'in-betweenness' contaminated by history. Likewise the (un)homed 'immigrant other' is fragmented by time, which challenges and disturbs the Western

Enlightenment's belief in stable heroic and unified identities approaching relentlessly towards some identifiable Goal. The whole discursive process undergoes distinct phases of contamination and then mongrelization. Comparing the mongrel nature of post-mutation state he notes:

We are Hindus who have crossed the black water; we are Muslims who eat pork and as a result [...] We are now partly of the West our identity is at once plural and partial. Sometimes we feel we straddle two cultures; at other times, that we fall between two stools [...] Having been borne across the world, we are translated men.³

It is these mongrel identities and 'painfully divided selves,'⁴ operating within the matrix of an equally hybridized space and plural social practices that Mukherjee's novels have been set. In her novels Mukherjee explores the fragmented plural and partial nature of post colonial identities, the inter-subjective and inter-cultural experiences, hybridity and hyphenation. She deals with the fluid diasporic identities and the conscious negotiation and contestation before the cultural translation. Mukherjee interrogates the myth of fixed and unchanging identities in expatriation and forced exile and the dilemma in immigrant experience while negotiating multiple challenges on one's identity and dislocation that one suffers. Tara likewise, unveils many aspects of the immigrant experience of the novelist in America. The experience of her characters in their homeland and abroad echoes her own concerns, her beliefs and faith. Simultaneously they also reflect her

growing and transforming identity as an American.

Given Mukherjee's moral and metaphysical inclinations, it is all the more surprising that she should see herself as an immigrant American rather than an expatriate Indian. 'Language gives me my identity,' tells Mukherjee, 'I am the writer, I am because I write in North American English about immigrant in the new World.'⁵ Bhabha leaves a question to ponder over very seriously:

To be unhomed is not to be homeless, nor can the 'unhomed' be easily accommodated in that familiar division of social life into private and public spheres. The unhomed moment creeps up on you stealthily as your own shadow [...] The recesses of the domestic space become sites for history's most intricate invasions. In that displacement, the borders between home and world become confused; and, uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting.⁶

Mukherjee deals with the "unhomed" as a 'paradigmatic colonial and post-colonial condition.'⁷ This is a necessity and has a "resonance"⁸ far and wide. In her fictions the novelist seeks to negotiate the forces of 'cultural difference in a range of transhistorical'⁹ locations where the displaced have their own discourse and counter-narrative of survival. According to Mukherjee, there are two kinds of writers — those who confirm what the public wants to know, and the other kind who disturbs, interrogates the existing patterns. She clearly

sees herself as belonging to the second variety. She tells Vrinda Nabar:

Such writers are often misread. I sometimes think I've been too smart for my own good. I see a writer as always being in a minority of one, stating what is unsettling and disturbing. Knowledge and empathy have nothing to do with inherited race. A writer's identity is not exclusively biological: it is about the imagination claiming its territory and finding its own niche there.¹⁰

Indian critics have invariably viewed Mukherjee's non-native concerns unfavorably. She explained her position to Jerry Pinto:

I think my position has been misunderstood largely in India. I insist on being considered an American writer because I want America to realize that in the late 20th Century there can be no American centre and periphery [...] I am fighting the American establishment to be regarded as central. I want to destroy the whole notion that Asians, or people of a different colour are 'sojourners' whereas those who arrived in America from Germany or Sweden are 'settlers.' It's also a way of resisting exoticisation.¹¹

Bharati Mukherjee at an early stage of life came to encounter the various facets of life of Indian society where a bride commits suicide due to noncompliance of dowry demands. Atrocities inflicted on women molded her bent of mind: 'To be a woman, I had learned early enough, was to be

powerless victim whose only escape was through self-inflicted wounds.'¹² The constant hunger-strikes, violent labour disputes made life pathetic. The helplessness led to irascibility, which she encountered all around her:

My year in India had showed me that I did not need to discard Western education in order to retrieve the dim shape of my Indian one. It might have been less painful if I could have exchanged one locked trunk of ethics for another, but I had to admit that by the end of the year in India I no longer liked India in the unreal and exaggerated ways I had in Montreal.¹³

The illusion and mental construction of India began to wane bit by bit. The clumsy withdrawal of the mirage about Indianness made Mukherjee to resolve not to become a split personality. She doesn't have any native pool or prick of conscience in her assessment about her altered identity. India has thus become an 'other' and just one 'Asian country with too many agonies'¹⁴ to remember. She has built along with Clark their homeland 'out of expectation, not memory.'¹⁵ She says, 'As I prepare to leave Bombay for the slow flight westward, I realized that for me there would be no more easy consolation through India.'¹⁶ In this context, however, Mukherjee's attitude whether escapist or defeatist is subject to debate and further analysis in terms her texts. She says- 'It was hard to give up my faintly Chekhovian image of India. But if that was about to disappear, could I not invent a more exciting perhaps a more psychologically accurate a more precisely metaphoric India: many more Indias?'¹⁷

In *Wife* Mukherjee also has incorporated her own frustration as an Indian settler in Canada before assimilating into the American mainstream. Even though the setting of *Wife* is New York, in the mind of the author it is probably Toronto. In *Dimple*, Holzer says: 'Mukherjee articulates an instructive admonition about the relevance of psychological transformation, beyond the immigrant isolationist's struggle for survival, through adaptation to new surroundings and to the ways of the dominant American culture.'¹⁸

Dimple, the woman protagonist in *Wife*, stands at the transit point of culture, confused between her Indianness and the transplantation; she is skeptical about traditional values and vapid social norms but she is unable to negotiate the need of the crude transnational norms which demand both exclusion and merger. Her inability to deal with the pangs of displacement results in violence, both psychic and physical. In India, unhappy wives commit suicide; *Dimple* asserts herself by committing murder, not suicide.

Like any other woman in the Indian context, *Dimple* experiences the agony and anxiety of a long wait for the most suitable boy. The wasted years, 'lay like a chill weight in her body, giving her eyes a watchful squint and her spine a slight curve.'¹⁹ She worries about her 'sitar shaped body and rudimentary breasts.'²⁰ She tries all sorts of therapies only to end up in the hospital with chest pain. *Dimple's* excessive concern about her personal appearance is understandable because this counts in the matrimonial transaction. *Dimple* is in great anguish. She writes to *Problemwalla* c/o

Eves Beauty Basket, Bombay, about her flat chest.

I am a young woman of twenty with whitish complexion. In addition, I am well versed in Rabindra singing, free-style dancing to Tagore's music, sitar playing, knitting and fancy cooking. I weight 48 kilos and am considered slim. My hair is jet black, hip-length and agreeably wavy. [...] There is just one annoying flea in my ointment. The flea is my flat chest. As I am sure you realize, this defect will adversely affect my chances of securing an ideal husband and will sorely vex the prowess of even the shrewdest match-makers in this great nation. Therefore, I'm sure you will agree it's imperative that I do something about my problem and enhance my figure to the best of my ability. Please do not, I beg you, advocate chicken soup, homeopathic pills, exercise and massages. I have tried them already. [...] Need I say that I am desperate, almost suicidal? I see life slamming its door in my face. I want to live!²¹

This explains the desperate condition of *Dimple* and more so the pressures of the society on a young woman waiting to get married.

At last Mr. Dasgupta finds a suitable match for *Dimple*. Amit Basu, a Consultant Engineer, is the match for *Dimple*. He has already applied for immigration to Canada and U.S. and his job application is also pending in Kenya. *Dimple* is all ecstatic about her marriage and does a lot of shopping for the occasion. She comes to Amit's residence at Dr. Sarat Banerjee Road

after her marriage. Basus are good people but the house is not that spacious and attractive. From the very beginning Dimple does not feel easy there. She does not like Amit's mother and sister. Her mother-in-law dislikes her name 'Dimple' and wants to call her 'Nandini' instead which simply infuriates the bride. However, Dimple thinks that all these problems are temporary and with the confirmation for immigration they will eventually come to an end. She frequently talks with her husband about the anticipated and fantastic foreign trip though 'Thoughts of living in Africa or North America terrified her.'²²

Dimple Basu has always lived in a fantastic world, a world which is created by herself. But when she confronts the hard realities of life the feathers of her imagination are clipped. All her dreams crumble one by one and she is deeply upset. She thinks that waiting for marriage was better than getting married. She starts hating everything: 'She hated the gray cotton with red roses inside yellow circle that her mother-in-law had hung on sagging tapes against the metal bars of the window.'²³

Pregnancy is a boon for Indian women because they are supposed to maintain the continuity of the clan. They are the very source of creation. If a woman fails to reproduce a child she is condemned and becomes an object of hatred in society. But Dimple is singular in that 'she thought of ways to get rid of ... whatever it was that blocked her tubes and pipes.'²⁴ Her killing of the mice which looked pregnant also suggests that she does not feel at ease with her pregnancy. She becomes almost hysteric

in killing that tiny creature without any particular reason:

She pounded and pounded the baby clothes until a tiny gray creature ran out of the pile, leaving a faint trickle of blood on the linen. She chased it to the bathroom. She shut the door so it would not escape from her this time [...] 'I'll get you' she screamed. "There is no way out of this, my friend!"[...] And in an outburst of hatred, 'her body shuddering, her wrist taut with fury, she smashed the top of a small gray head.'²⁵

This act of killing is a manifestation of violence that is brewing inside her. Her repulsion with her own pregnancy is born out of her hatred for Amit who fails to feed her fantasy world. She develops morbid desires like noticing angry faces of men by purposely dropping on them bits of newspaper, hair balls, nail clippings, etc. Dimple who had shuddered at the pain of the crows shot by Amit, gives a hot chase to a rat and smashes the top of the small grey head with her 'body shuddering, her wrist taut with fury.'²⁶ These incidents reveal the streak of violence developing in her personality. By mid May, Dimple misses a period but she continues to eat green chillies so that her body will return to its natural cycle. She likes to vomit but not pregnancy. When no one is watching, she gives vicious squeezes to her stomach. She considers pregnancy as an invasion of her body. She starts falling apart. She seeks exile from her essential femininity.

She thinks that no one has consulted her before depositing the foetus in her body. Finally, in a crude way she skips her way to

abortion. This is another way of giving vent to her hatred of the Basus, possibly because the Basus look upon the unborn baby as communal property and are very solicitous of her health. For his part, Amit thinks that the unborn boy will become a doctor and mint money.

In this context, Dimple's killing the mouse is a symbolic act. It symbolises her hatred towards Amit and also her own pregnant self. The entire scene looks macabre:

But today she hated the invisible mice for disrupting her day-dreams – she could not dare borrow features from a rodent! — and she pushed aside the platter of rice, listening for soft scratchy sounds so that she could smash life out of the little gray heads. When the noises came again, this time from behind the peeling wooden doors leading to the bedroom, she stood up nervously and grabbed a broom as a weapon. In her hurry to snatch the broom, she stepped on the stainless steel platter of rice grains. The little toe on her left foot began to bleed. There was a tiny drop of blood, her blood she thought, astonished, on the coarse, reddish white grains of rice. It was an added reason for killing the mouse.²⁷

The entire scene indicates her hatred towards pregnancy which is a violation of her normal self. She looks at the unborn fetus as a part of Amit. The connection between Dimple and the mouse is that both are pregnant and before migrating to America she does 'not want to carry any relics from her old life.'²⁸ She thinks that old things will remind her of her repressive

feminine frustrations and irritations. She counts her pregnancy also among the relics of exasperating tradition and contemplates the ways of getting rid of it. At last she decides to end it by skipping ropes.

She had skipped rope until her legs grew numb and her stomach burned; then she had poured water from the heavy bucket over her head, shoulders, over the tight little curve of her stomach. She had poured until the last of the blood washed off her legs; then she had collapsed.²⁹

With the passage of time, Dimple starts getting dislocated after the realisation that she is deceived in marriage and a good-for-nothing husband like Amit will not cater for her dream-world. She cannot tolerate his snores any more and insomnia becomes her accustomed habit. She suddenly realizes that 'she hated the Sens' apartment, sofa-bed, the wall to wall rug.'³⁰ Now she gets disturbed at those habits of Amit which she ignored at Calcutta:

In Calcutta she had trained herself not to see his hand (always the left) as it stopped carefully at each button, then slid up and down a few times before hanging limply at his side. But in New York these little gestures had begun to irritate her.³¹

Amit's unemployment was the root cause of all troubles. He was not the man Dimple had wanted as husband: 'She wanted Amit to be infallible, intractable, godlike, but with the boyish charm; wanted him to find a job so that after a decent number of years he could take his savings and retire with her to a three-storey house in Ballygunge Park.'³²

She thinks that her marriage to Amit is a failure of her dreams:

She was bitter that marriage had betrayed her, had not provided all the glittery things she had imagined, had not brought her cocktails under canopied skies and three A.M. drives to dingy restaurants where they sold divine Kababs rolled in roti.³³

She loses her sleep and ultimately kills Amit without actually thinking about its consequences:

She sneaked up on him and chose a spot, her favourite spot just under the hairline, where the mole was getting larger and browner, and she drew an imaginary line of kisses because she did not want him to think she was the impulsive, foolish sort who acted like a maniac just because the husband was suffering from insomnia. She touched the mole very lightly and let her fingers draw a circle around the detectable 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. — and it stayed upright on the counter-top, still with its eyes averted from her face, and she said very loudly to the knife that was redder now than it had ever

been when she had chopped chicken and mutton with it in the same kitchen and on the same counter [...] Women on television got away with murder.³⁴

The above description shows that it is a case of cold blooded murder. By stabbing seven times, it seems Dimple frees herself from the marriage tie. This is the only act of assertion she can make. It may not be very appropriate to view that Dimple's gruesome act has nothing to do with cultural displacement. She is trapped in the transit of culture and her vital Indianness is put to diasporic trial. She is not a victim of 'expatriation' alone, but is instead, a victim of her own neurotic sensibility fed on popular advertisement fantasies.

Wife demonstrates what devastation a hostile culture can cause in a sensitive individual. Dimple suffers from the neurotic compulsion of indulging in abnormal acts in order to conceal her own sense of intrinsic weakness and failure. Her women characters are tantalized by the possibility of passion, which they mistake for love and self expression. America which appears to be a free land is in fact the enigma of existence of all Indian women. Here chances of survival depends on an immigrant's agility to embrace mutation before reaching out for an alternative space, translated transmitted and transmuted through violence and splitting.

Violence is the key word in Mukherjee's fiction, and the psychic violence that she thinks necessary for the transformation of character, is often emphasized by an accompanying physical conflict of some sort. For her 'murder evolves into an acceptable signifier for discarding nostalgia

and starting over: It is neither the end nor even merely the means to an end it is a beginning.³⁵ Dimple lacks adaptability, mutative readiness as well as cultural grit of resistance. She is inert and caught in a suffocating inertia, dislodged from all valid space of survival strategies. Mukherjee says:

The kinds of women who attract me, who intrigue me, are those who are adaptable, we've all been trained to please, trained to be adaptable as wives and that adaptability is working to the women's advantage when we come over as immigrant. For an Indian woman to learn to drive, put on pants, cash cheques, is a big leap. They are exhilarated by that change.³⁶

With such exhilaration come fears, doubts, mistakes and violence, both psychological and physical. More and more through Mukherjee's novels, as the anxiety and uncertainties get overhauled in the frequency of action and activity, what is glossed over in terms of psychological torment is compressed into desperate violent acts. This enhances the stress of the aggressive moments when decisions and choices are made, and Mukherjee considers it a necessary experience for the remaking and replacement of the self in the changed domain of new immigrant aesthetic. When asked 'Do you see immigrant as an experience of reincarnation?' Mukherjee has answered, 'Absolutely! I have been murdered and reborn many more times, until she needs to murder in order to be reborn.'³⁷

The new births that are engendered by some violent fracturing of norms are accompanied by great pain, but Dimple is helplessly caught in the gripping quest for a new

female American identity. That she finds another way out of her miserably married state is a comment on her new life as an immigrant woman in America, which moulds her personality into the shape of her future. It is possible, the murder itself may be ambiguous in many ways, but it is symbolic of Dimple's assertion of power at a critical juncture. It has freed her from becoming a prisoner of ghetto, unbearable to her free-thinking mind, and she descends into depression, madness and murder:

If "too American" signifies a politics and an ideology that affirms selfhood in particular, then it is quite certainly that Dimple is in the process of becoming. The violent transformations of her psyche are more dangerous because of these shrill protestations. There is simultaneous fracturing and evolving of identity going on here, in terms of both ethnicity and gender which is true of the experience of multiculturalism.³⁸

Jasbir Jain, however, does not agree that Wife deals with cultural conflict. Dimple has never been able to relate herself to her tradition, or to understand it. All her actions are geared towards the future and this bespeaks of the main problem, the utter rootlessness of her life. For Dimple, there seems to be no way out; the distance covered cannot be retraced. She is an immigrant, both in place and mind, hers is the 'foreignness of spirit.'³⁹ Bharati Mukherjee does say 'There isn't a role model for the Jasmines' or the Dimples. They have to invent roles, survive and revise as best as they can.'⁴⁰

While they survive and revise, they remain for a while suspended between two worlds, until they have to choose between them in order to find a space to inhabit. The New World, in which they must now 'intervene' and 'negotiate,' holds promise of a new selfhood as well as new battles against marginalization. Self-assertion, however, is a power that these women are only beginning to enjoy. The problem with the diasporic male is however different.

Amit's ideology and life-style confirm that he is a thorough-bred 'expatriate.' His mission in the United States is to earn money. He does not feel comfortable in the company of American guests in parties. So he often bounces back to the company of Meena and Jyoti Sen. But, Amit has a few strategies to survive in an alien culture. He has mastered the popular American catch phrases suggestive of challenge, crisis management and confrontation which help him to communicate with Americans very effectively. However, he does not show interest either in imbibing American culture or in contributing to American culture.

His dream is to return to India and settle down in a posh locality in Calcutta. Well steeped in 'expatriate' sensibility, he easily slips into the company of Indian 'expatriates' in Queens. From day one, Amit is worried about his job. He is quite oblivious of the culture in which he lives. His mindset has been well moulded by other 'expatriates' in Queens. Amit does not express any wonder or surprise at the enormity of America. He does not know how to interrogate or negotiate with American reality for cultural space.

Like any other Indian 'expatriate', he lives on the fringes of American society. Naturally, his experience in America is quite limited. It does not broaden his perspective and therefore it does not open up new avenues for him. He acts and reacts like an average 'expatriate.' He does not want to send Dimple for a job in Khanna's Emporium. As a male chauvinist, Amit snubs Dimple every time he gets an opportunity. Amit silences her whenever she expresses her curiosity about Americans. That is mainly responsible for turning Dimple inward.

Though Indian in origins, Ina, the prototypical American, does not typify blending or hybridity. Her Americanization is no longer a process but a practiced, negotiated and accepted fact. Her action is of pure balance between herself and America. Ina's theory replaces one with the other. According to Ina, total severance from the past is a precondition to assume an American identity. In the trans-cultural trajectory of the immigrants, the transformation is very often multidirectional. The immigrant's entry in to a foreign land is not to cause disruption; it is in another way to redefine one's nationness. She is terribly tossed in the conjunction of inclusion and exclusion, honour and humiliation. In a coercive condition of her being, her very existence is challenged. She does not know where she stands between respect and repudiation

And this process is not transgressive or corruptive; it implies post nation fluidity and change. As a new entrant from another culture, the conspicuous immigrant lands in to a conflictual space. This creates an

existential stress highlighting the fissures in the process of assimilation. The patriarchy that Ina and Dimple experience is not simply that of the industrialized first world, they must also grapple with the ways in which they have been named by their own specific

cultural context. Thus Mukherjee demonstrates the fact that women's subject positions are varied and multi-layered. So the Western feminist rhetoric cannot supply role models for 'Dimples' and 'Jasmines'.

References:

1. Jasbir Jain. "Foreignness of Spirit: The World of Bharati Mukherjee Novels," *Journal of Indian Writing in English*, 13, 2 (July 1985), p. 13.
2. Edward Said. *Culture and Imperialism*. op.cit., p.407.
3. Salman Rushdie. *Imaginary Homelands*. London: Vintage, 2010. pp.15-16.
4. Ibid., p.397.
5. Geoff Hancock. "An Interview with Bharati Mukherjee," *Canadian Fiction Magazine*, 59 (1987), 35
6. Homi K. Bhabha. *The Location of Culture*. op.cit., p.13.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Vrinda Nabar. "The Way I Write Has Changed Dramatically," *The Sunday Times*, 31 December 1995.
11. Jerry Pinto. "Bharati but American," *The Sunday Times*, 5 January 1997, p. II.
12. Ibid.,p.229.
13. Ibid.,p.284.
14. Ibid., p.285.
15. Ibid., p.303.
16. Ibid., p. 285.
17. Fakrul Alam. *Bharati Mukherjee: Criticism and Interpretation*. New York: Twayne's United States Author's Series,1996. p.285.
18. Kellie Holzer. "Bharati Mukherjee." *South Asian Novelists in English*. Ed. Jaina C. Sanga.: London: Greenwood, 2005.p.171.
19. Ibid.,p.3.
20. Ibid.,p.4 .
21. Ibid.,pp.10-11.
22. Ibid.,p.17.
23. Ibid.,p.20.
24. Ibid., p.31.
25. Ibid., p.35.
26. Ibid.,p. 35.
27. Ibid.,p. 34.

28. Ibid., p.42
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid., p. 88.
31. Ibid., p. 88.
32. Ibid., p. 89.
33. Ibid., p.102.
34. Ibid., pp. 212-213.
35. Brinda Bose. "A Question of Identity: Where Gender, Race, and America Meet in Bharati Mukherjee." Bharati Mukherjee: Critical Perspectives. Ed. Emmanuel S. Nelson. New York: Garland, 1993. p.53.
36. Michael Connell, Jessie Grearson and Tom Grimes. op.cit.,p. 19.
37. Ibid., p.18.
38. Brinda Bose. op.cit., p. 57.
39. Jasbir Jain. "Foreignness of Spirit: The World of Bharati Mukherjee's Novels." Journal of Indian Writing in English 13.2 (July 1985): 17.
40. Michael Connell, Jessie Grearson and Tom Grimes. op.cit., 2.

Dhanashree Publications

Flat No. 01, Nirman Sagar CHS,
Thana Naka, Panvel, Raigad - 410206



www.research-chronicler.com