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ABSTRACT:

Bharati Mukherjee may be a accepted writer born in India. She presently works as a academic at the University of CA. Her writing reflects the migrator experience particularly of the female protagonists. The characters try and look for their own identity amidst the alien culture. This paper associate degree attempt | tries} to throw light-weight on the novel "Wife" where the heroine Dimple Dasgupta endeavours to form an identity for her own.

KEY WORDS: Identity, stress, alienation, self-assertion.

INTRODUCTION:

Bharati Mukherjee was born in a wealthy Bengali family in metropolis, India. She received P h D. in English and Comparative literature from the University of Iowa. Her works embrace The Tiger's female offspring (1971), better half (1975), bush (1989), The Holder of the planet (1993) , Leave It to Maine (1997), fascinating Daughters (2002), The Tree Bride (2004) and Miss New India (2011).. Her writing tells about the lives of the Indian women. She focuses on the Indian immigrants in pursuit of self-realization.

The fiction, "Wife" is Mukherjee's second novel. As the title suggests, it is the story of the Dimple Dasgupta, wife of Amit kumar Basu who is a consultant engineer. Dimple is twenty years old, born in Calcutta pursuing her education in the University of Calcutta. Her desire is to marry a neurosurgeon or an architect. She perceives that marriage would bring her freedom and love. She is too upset and anxious about her life. Her mother advises her not to worry as it may bring wrinkles.

Dimple hallucinates at night that the toilet seat twitched like a coiled snake in the bathroom. Her mother attributes her hallucinations as a part to get married. "Tight, twisted shapes lunged at her from behind cupboards or tried to wrestle her into bed" (Wife 13). It displays the initial stages of her mental strain which is unintended by her mother. In her dreams, she becomes Sita, an ideal wife of Hindu legends who walked through fire at her husband's request. Her years of waiting are rewarded as her father finds her perfect match in the groom Amit kumar Basu who is an engineer.



Dimple moves to Amit's flat in Dr. Sarat Banerjee Road. They live with Amit's widowed mother and his younger brother Pintu. The apartment is not to her satisfaction as the staircase is not lighted and she has to carry pails of water as the bathroom tap is broken. She is disappointed that even the curtain in her room is not chosen by her.

Dimple is depressed when her mother in law chooses her a new name Nandini, as her name is not appropriate to their culture, "Mrs. Basu objected to name Dimple, which she considered too frivolous and unBengali" (Wife 15). She is unhappy that her name which primarily indicates her identity is challenged. She asks her husband how he would address her but he dismisses it as being something trivial:

"There's one small thing," he said. "My mother wants to call you Nandini. She doesn't like Dimple as a name."

"What will you call me?"

"Nandhini, Dimple ... what's in a name, for goodness sake?"

"Everything," Dimple said (Wife 18).

Dimple tries to get used to the name after few weeks. But she worries to her friend, Pixie that it is not easy and the name did not suit her.

She feels isolated in her own house and starts talking to herself in mirror, "Dimple Basu is an exciting name" (Wife, 21). However she assures that she is a happy woman. Amit proves to be a loving husband. She takes her out for dinner. They sit close to each other and hold their hand under the table. He tells her that the situation in Calcutta is temporary as he is waiting for his immigration to United States.

Dimple tries to impress her husband by wearing bright colour saris, having different hair styles and imitated his sister, Mrs. Ghose, as she laughed and left sentences incomplete. She endeavours her best to adapt to the familial circumstances to satisfy Amit but he only compliments her during the night time to gratify his sexual demands. She reads magazines and books during the siesta hours to improve her English. Amit gets angry when he finds that his wife is in bed busy reading and has not prepared the fresh lime and water. Her frustration being a wife is revealed as she says, "His disapproval was torture; all her life she had been trained to please. He expected her, like Sita, to jump into fire if necessary" (Wife 30).

Dimple becomes pregnant. But she is unhappy that Amit has not educated her to use loop or to take pills to avoid the baby, "Her helplessness enraged her" (Wife 33). He assures her that they deserve to have a baby. She considers the baby as a hindrance for the progress in her life to go to abroad. She does not want to carry the relics of her old life and wants everything to be new. She states, "Everything has to be brand-new. That's essential" (Wife 42). So in her mad rage she kills a mouse which looked being pregnant. Her rage turns into violence and she destroys the foetus by skipping rope. She suffers a miscarriage much to the disappointment of Amit and his family.

Dimple and Amit move to America. They stay in his friend Jyoti Sen's apartment till he finds a job. Dimple goes to shopping with Meena Sen, Jyoti's wife. Her experience with the shop man makes her understand that she may face cultural conflict where she searches for her own identity among the alien culture. As Sushma Tandon says, "The experience of adapting to a new society is a process unique for each person. The degree of adaptation of 'making it' is affected by individual needs and the possibility of participation in the new society" (Tandon 16).

Dimple tries to find an identity for herself. Jyoti Sen advises her not to restrict herself to Bengali

friends, "but also to befriend Punjabis, Gujratis and South Indians, all expatriates or else she'd miss a lot of the experience of being abroad" (Wife 68). Dimple is afraid to go out of the apartment except for the parties accompanied by Amit to the Indian neighbourhood. She is also restricted by Amit. He does not allow her to work for Vinod Khanna who offers her a job. He distrusts him saying "all the Punjabis are lecherous, dirty and uncultured" (Wife 138). When Amit is not home she prefers watching TV and reading magazines. They pictured the reality of the American life:

Everything she saw on T.V. was about love, even murder and death with love gone awry. But all she read in the newspapers was about death, the scary, ugly kind of death, random and poorly timed. Dimple much preferred to watch T.V than read. And she gave up trying to make friends with children (Wife 73).

Dimple is obsessed with the T.V programme which shows love, murder and death. At times she finds that her husband too becomes indistinguishable from the characters of T.V. She then slept long hours in the morning and afternoons and suffered from insomnia at night.

Dimple is bitter that her marriage has betrayed her not fulfilling her dreams. She directs her rage and despair against her husband who prevents her access to happy life of America as projected on the screen. In such a mindset, Dimple has an illicit relationship with Milt Glasser whom she considers to represent America. She conceals her guilty relationship from Amit and contrives to kill him.

Dimple wants to assert her power, to be freed from her husband. In an act of liberation, she stabs her husband with the kitchen knife for seven times. Bharati Mukherjee says, "There isn't role model for the Jasmynes' or the Dimples. They invent roles, survive and revise as best as they can" (Connel 23). Dimple's dream of freedom and expectation from America is not fulfilled. She dares to abort her first baby in search of her identity in the alien land. She is devastated when she is frustrated and cheated by both her husband and the foreign land. She thus resolves to murder her husband. She thus seeks violence to be self-assertive and to prove her identity.

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