

The Psychological Motif in the Context of Bharati Mukherjee: Dimple and Jasmine

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Abstract

Human beings are born bare by nature with no pleasure, grievance, knowledge, information, awareness. They mould their personality and behaviour by society or by self effort so as to suit themselves for any situation or exposure with safe and healthy conduct. Human beings own behaviour play an important role in deciding how a person acts in a particular situation. Our psychology is the driving force which guides us to behave that results into good or bad outcome.

Keywords – Psychology; Behaviour; Change; Madness; Liberation; Transition.

Introduction

Bharati Mukherjee, a famous feminist, non-fiction Indian born American writer has portrayed various themes like expatriation, immigration, transformation, self-identity. But these themes reflect the behaviorism of her protagonists. Psychology is the generator of our behavior. Bharati Mukherjee's heroines are the portrait of third world women who are eager to fight, never think to stop. These heroines are liberated "having control over their own lives". (Sushma Tandon p 146).

This paper is an attempt to study the psychological journey of these characters, Dimple & Jasmine. Mukherjee's two novels 'Wife' & 'Jasmine' are a reflection of the journey of two women who cover the journey of America with two different reasons. Jasmine's journey of New World as 'Malshri Lal' says her journey is a "regeneration through violence". Dimple follows violence for her frantic nature. These two characters' traits are in sync with "The Transtheoretical Model "which claims for making behavioral changes, individuals pass through each stage to the discernible being changed.

Precontemplation → Contemplation → Behaviour → Preparation → Action
→ Maintenance.

Transtheoretical model emphasizes on the decision making of the individual. Precontemplation is the stage of TTM model in which individual intends no behaviour change within the duration. Diclemente declares four 'R's for precontemplation for changing the behaviour. Individual shows reluctance for changing the behaviour. If the individual is suppressed for making the change behaviour, he or she is ready to show violence, that is the state of rebellion. The person becomes ready for resignation. In the last stage, individual uses the power of rationality.

Reluctance—Rebellion – Resignation – Rationalization

People assert reason as to why their behaviour is wrong but they are not willing to make a change. In the stage of contemplation individual intends to make behavioral changes yet remains undecided to change. Author's selection and adaptation of name Dimple from Oxford University is unique. It expresses the psychology of the protagonist. "Any slight surface Depression". Dimple's Choice of neurosurgeon for wedding is implied for psychological concern. Her marriage is not wanting of life partner but her own psychological trauma that propels her to think that marriage is only a bonding that can give her freedom, fortune and perfect happiness.

"Marriage would bring her freedom, cocktail parties on carpeted lawn, fund raising dinners for noble charities. Marriage would bring her love".

Dimple envisages "thought of premarital life" as a dress rehearsal. Marriage is only an approach which can satiate her high imagination of comfort. Dimple's Psychic vision is conspicuous with her nine acts of dying herself. She sets fire to synthetic saree, puts her head in oven, falls on bread knife. Her psychology incites for violence which is reflected when she thinks "Japanese Samurai Revivals" (154) a warrior class of Japan. She loses her balance of thinking, compares her husband with fusion of different zygotes "Chimera". Her own imagination merges the world of reality and T.V. "between what she had seen on T.V. and what she imagined" (157). Her madness goes to the extent when she thinks of untimely death of her husband on the platform. How can she think so squalid for living husband?

"What happened to the bits of bone and organs that were charred but not totally consumed ?" (168). Her momentary vision which flicks quickly sometimes she enjoys her sensation of vomiting afterwards she wants to get rid of pregnancy. "Whatever it was blocked her tube". Her experience of anger is abnormal. Seven rounds around the fire are known pious rituals by Hindus but seven trials to commit suicide becomes crime. Being in the state of starvation was also one of the trial.

“After the fifth spoonful she realized she was not hungry, was, on the contrary, feeling ill (128)”.

Dimple's act of self-abortion is contemplative. This cruel act of killing humanity raises many questions for her psychology. Her shattered psychology is responsible for such hideous work. Dimple remains cocksure and dispassionate for her own act while it should have led to a consternation. Rossane class also declares as a serious mistake as we take Dimple's character as an emblem of Indian culture. Pregnancy is regarded as an indelible value of women hood. Simultaneously we cannot deny that Dimple is simply an individual and her emotionless act should not be compared with the built in values of Indian culture. The writer herself reveals about Dimple's ill mental state. Dimple's fervor of migration to USA is also a reflection of her own psychology. To live in her own country is symbolically factor of domesticity. In Pixie's grand party Ratna Das, a middle aged modern wife does not give importance to stay in America, this is the suitable place only for spending vacations. She does not want to become a settler. Pixie has the same value for America “I would not want to feel foreigner all my life “. (p46) But no matter all issue can distract Dimple's psychological resolution. She finds “real happiness was just in the movies or in a west”. (p47) Jyoti Sen, a classmate of Amit reaches at the Kennedy airport, receives them. Amit indulges busy enquiring about job opportunities but Dimple remains lost in her own world. Sometimes she feels thrilled and scared also to see such bigger city than Calcutta. Her own psychology does not get destination after having migrated in America. She observes suspiciously inside Sens' house.” king Ram and his court in splendid array”(p53) The Sens want to maintain their Indian identity; they are not accustomed to meet western society. Jyoti Sen trains Amit the way how he can survive in America, a country for money making. People have to bear humiliation and exploitation and they are helpless to assert reasons to it .“ Work twice as hard , keep your mouth shut and you'll be a millionaire in a fifteen years”. (p56) Dimple's psychology does not let her to adjust with the American society

. She is surprised to see how a vegetable vendor can buy pink roast beef. It is very difficult for an innocent Indian wife in a country where murder is no more flapping the bugs. She was caught in the cross fire of an American communalism. She felt she'd come very close to getting killed on her third morning in America. (p60)

In 'jasmine', Mukherjee highlights the different phases of psychological transition. In the childhood of Jyoti, the prediction gave her strikes psychological yet she passed calmly. The astrologer labelled "Widowhood and Exile". "You are old crazy man, you do not know what my future hold!" (jasmine). Jasmine protests against the fortune teller and explains her star shaped scar as "Third Eye". Her psychology motivates her to protest against prevalent conviction she declares "Village girls are like cattle which way you lead them that is the way they will go" (p 216).

As TTM model suggests for decision making. She is not ready to accept blind imposition, denies marrying with a widower suggested by her own grandfather. Jyoti becomes jasmine after marrying with Prakash. She becomes a sweet Indian wife who regards her husband 's wishes with those of hers. Prakash expresses: "You are small and sweet and heady, my jasmine you'll quicken the whole world with your perfume". (P 77).

Dimple and Jasmine are inverse to each other. Jasmine`s contemplation is higher than Dimple. Jasmine shows anger for contaminated psychology of society. Her husband Prakash is killed mercilessly by the Khalsa Lions. Jyoti shattered with grief. She determined to complete her husband`s mission. Her psychology incites her not to change her resolution of revenge. She steps in Florida. Her first act is to kill the rapist Half face with a knife. Jasmine defies the devil to destroy.

"No one to call, no one to disturb us. Just me and the man who had raped me the man I had murdered. The room looked like a slaughter house, blood had congealed on my hands, my chin, my breast..... I was in a room with slain man, my body blooded. (p119)

Both acts of murders (by Dimple and Jasmine) are considered as a kind of self assertion. Again she makes fresh herself and is ready to fight. Incidentally, she meets Lillian Gordon, a kind Quaker lady who pities her situation renames her Jazzy. She gets her ready for America.

Gordon advises her to proceed to New York for new opportunities of job. She also provides Jasmine an introductory letter to her daughter who will support her in New York, her meet with Devinder Vadhera discloses many secrets. She comes to know that Vadhera was not a real professor. He is a sorter of human hair. She considers about the rationality of act.

‘He needed to work here, but he did not have to like it. He had sealed his heart. When he`d left home. His real life was an unlivable land across oceans. He was a ghost, hanging on’.
(p153)

Jasmine disdains her stay in flushing queens. She addresses Vadhera`s house as a Punjabi immigrant ghetto. Here her own psychology detains her not to change her behaviour as an Indian. ‘I want to disdain myself from everything Indian, everything Jyoti – like ‘.
(p145)

She is willing to forget her past remembering. Like Dimple, she is also not willing to confine herself. Her spirit is a freedom lover. She moves to Manhatton where Taylor and Wylie engage her as a care giver to their adapted daughter, Duff. She is renamed Jase ‘. This is the period of happiness of her life. ‘Duff was my child; Taylor and Wylie were my parents, my teachers, my family ‘. (p165)

She longs that she is not willing to establish home anywhere expect with Taylor. But she is forced to run away from New York to see assassin of her husband Sukhwinder. She is valiant. She does not escape from life but escaping for life. Her own psychology gets her learn to fight not to surrender herself before crisis. She changes her behaviour to be positive. Jasmine has learnt to live for herself. She has achieved her identity.

Conclusion

Thus the psychological problems and behavioral changes play an important role in the lives of protagonists as Dimple and Jasmine. As human beings, our behavioral changes reflect our personality. Self- efficacy reflects the degree of confidence for behavioral changes. Mukherjee highlights many social & psychological problems through characters. Their journey of alien countries are symbolic. The motifs of Journey are not only for seeking pleasure, to create pains of nostalgia, to search their identity but to highlight psychological concerns of women also.

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