

**CRITICAL RESPONSES TO DIASPORIC  
LITERATURES IN ENGLISH**

**J. SAMUEL KIRUBAHAR  
R. SELVAM**



**Virudhunagar Hindu Nadars'  
Senthikumara Nadar College (Autonomous)  
Virudhunagar – 626 001  
Tamil Nadu, India**

Title of the Book	:	Critical Responses to Diasporic Literatures in English
Editors	:	J. Samuel Kirubahar R. Selvam
First impression	:	September, 2015
Pages	:	354
Price	:	Rs.850
ISBN	:	978-93-81723-46-3
Printed at	:	Laser Point, Madurai – 625 003

**Publisher**

**Virudhunagar Hindu Nadars' SenthikumaraNadar College  
(An Autonomous Institution Affiliated to Madurai Kamaraj  
University) (Re-accredited with 'A' Grade by NAAC)  
College Road, Virudhunagar – 626 001  
Tamil Nadu, India  
e-mail:support@vhnsnc.edu.in**

web:www.vhnsnc.edu.in

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner. Application for such permission should be addressed to the publisher.

***Disclaimer***

The authors are solely responsible for the contents of the papers edited in this book. The publisher or editors do not take any responsibility for the same in any manner. Errors, if any, are purely unintentional

41	A Strategic Assimilation of Class and Culture in Aravind Adiga's ' <i>The White Tiger</i> '	207
	J.Rachel Bhuvaneswari	
42	Jasmine: An Immigrant Experience	214
	K. Ramesh	
43	The Theme of Assimilation in Bharati Mukherjee's <i>Jasmine</i>	217
	V.P. Rathi	
44	An analyzing the immigrant experiences in Aravind Adiga's <i>The White Tiger</i>	222
	T.Rini Rachal	
45	Home and Homelessness in Amitav Ghosh's <i>The Shadow Lines</i> .	226
	J.Selva Malar	
46	Quest For Self Identity in Anita Nair's Novel " <i>Ladies Coupe</i> "	231
	Mrs.S.Selvapriya	
47	<i>A Matter of Time</i> : A Testimony for Inevitable Stretch of Culture	236
	G.Shanmuga Priya	
48	The Diasporic Experience in Nergis Dalal's <i>Skin Deep</i>	239
	V.Shanmugaraja	
49	Bharathi Mukherjee's ' <i>Wife</i> ': An Immigrant in a Continent of Immigrants	243
	Mrs.J.Sharmila	
	Ms.A.Jaseema Banu	
50	Diasporic Elements in Amit Chaudhuri's <i>Afternoon Raag</i>	245
	M. Sri Vidhya @ Thangalakshmi	
51	Aspiration: an Unfathomable and Irrepressive Coercion in Carrie For Survival as Evinced in Theodore Dreiser's <i>Sister Carrie</i>	250
	Ms.Sudha.S	
52	Home and Homelessness – in Rohinton Mistry's <i>A Fine Balance</i>	256
	Mrs.P.Sumathy	

## BHARATHI MUKHERJEE'S *WIFE*: AN IMMIGRANT IN A CONTINENT OF IMMIGRANTS

J.SHARMILA  
A..JASEEMA BANU

Bharathi Mukherjee's 'Wife' is a novel on immigration and also a study of cultural shock and alienation.

Bharathi Mukherjee, an Indian born American novelist was born on 27 July 1940 in Calcutta. She moved to Britain in 1947 with her wealthy family. In United States, She married Harvard clerk Blaise, a Canadian. She refused her identity as an Indian. Because her struggle with identity first as an exile from India, then an Indian expatriate in Canada and finally as an immigrant in the United States led her to be an immigrant in a Continent of immigrants.

Dimple is an escapist lost in her private world of fantasy. In the beginning, at home in Calcutta, Dimple is dreaming about marrying a neuro surgeon and her father is combing the matrimonial ads for an engineer. She is twenty and already afflicted with signs of passive anger. The tension between her actual powerlessness and forms of freedom suggested to her, have made her sick. After an excruciatingly painful waiting, she is finally married to Amit kumar Basu, a consulting engineer who is ideal in that he has already applied for emigration.

Amit is an earnest young man, even a considerate one by the standards of Indian masculinity, but Dimple has lived so long in a fantasy world of advertising and advice columns, that she is emotionally incapable of understanding another human being and she cannot understand Amit or try to.

Dimple's psychic defeat is implied in her name. The name 'Dimple' is quite scintillating and enticing but lexicographically it means 'any slight surface depression'. With this psychic defeat, She naturally reacts in a peevish way to all the things around her. She does not like her new name 'Nandhini' and the house she lives in. She does not even love Amit, her husband.

Dimple wants to break through the traditional taboos of a wife. She aspires for freedom and love in marriage. This aim brings her morbid longings, unreal imaginations, foul fantasies. Days roll on sapping her soul. In the meantime, she discovers that she is pregnant. It's more paranoiac. The height of her abnormality reaches when she skips her way to abortion.

Dimple justifies herself that she cannot afford to take any relics from her old life to America where she hopes to begin life afresh and become a more exciting person. But she is trapped between two cultures, and aspires to a third, imagined world. She has nothing to do with the

problems of immigrants. Violence is her fundamental experience of New York. Newspapers, Car radios and casual conversations announce murders in alleys and ice-cream parlours. In Dimple's belief, a man without a job was not a man at all. Her frustration with Amit rises manifold. Despair sets in her life. She thinks marriage has betrayed her, has not provided all the glittering things she has imagined.

"Her own body seemed curiously alien to her, filled with hate, malice, an insane desire to hurt, yet weightless, almost airborne". (117)

Amit is isolated from her since he fails to nourish her fantasies, turns away from her world of dreams and delusions, her neurotic pinings and her eccentricities. Amit simply does not fit into her own world. She wanted Amit to be infallible, intractable, god like, but with a boyish charm. Her dislike of Amit's ways of life makes her dislike the world around her. She is an alien to the world of Amit, an outsider to her husband. Despite this lack of communication between the husband and wife, there is no personal hatred or rancor. On the other hand, Amit has all love for Dimple. He has never thought of exploiting her but is always worried about her well being.

In the heart of heart, Dimple likes Milt Glasser. Consequently, she turns much worse off than ever, more lonely, more cut off from Amit and from Indians. Even the apartment objectifies the psychic decay and degeneration. She hurts Amit with the kitchen knife on the plea of protecting herself. She cogitates upon the nine ways of dying. It is becoming the voice of madness, and leads to her decision to kill Amit.

"She sneaked up on him and chose a spot, her favourite spot just under the hairline where the mole was getting larger and browner. She brought her right hand up and with the knife stabbed the magical circle once, twice, seven times"(213).

The murdering of Amit is an assertion of her American identity.

Dimple has been portrayed free and rebelling throughout the novel. She has no inhibition in expressing whatever she feels. On the contrary, it is Amit Basu, who is a victim in India as also in New York. His murder signifies how an innocent, duty conscious husband falls a prey to the neurotic madness framed by the western countries. At last all the fantasies in the continent of immigrants come to an end by the suicide of the immigrant, Dimple.

### WORKS CITED

M.K.Bhatnagar, Twentieth century literature in English, 1996, Atlantic Publishers and Distributors (Pg.177).

*This book is a collection of select critical essays which throw much attention on diasporic elements in literatures in English. It contains well researched articles which examine and re-examine the nature of diaspora and how it had been used in literature in English. The question of diaspora is deciphered by the scholars who took it as a challenge to question the perennial issues like alienation, exile and rootlessness. This book also provides a platform for fresh thinking and critical analysis.*

**Virudhunagar Hindu Nadars'  
Senthikumara Nadar College (Autonomous)  
Virudhunagar - 626 001  
Tamil Nadu, India**

ISBN 978-93-81723-46-3



9 789381 723463