

VIVEKANANDA COLLEGE
THAKURPUKUR

COURSE TITLE - RAJMOHAN'S WIFE

PAPER - CC 3

SEMESTER - 2

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DEPARTMENT - ENGLISH





Rajmohan's Wife

Important points to ponder upon-

1. The novel was written to portray the intricate relationship between society and family life, focusing on women.
2. Though Bankim wanted to break free from the legacy of Sanskrit, yet the vivid descriptions of nature, night and the physical beauty of Matangini seem to be drawing directly from Sanskrit texts and also Vaishnava love poetry.
3. The novel deals very interestingly with the problem of conjugal fidelity. In spite of the rigidity of society in defining the position of women, (they had no right to cross the Lakshman Rekha of their domestic confinement), the novel is about how Matangini defies all strictures prompted not only by her innate righteousness or true sense of morality but also love. This brings in another dimension - it was a momentous decision on her part to breach her conjugal fidelity and take the perilous journey through the forest to warn Madhab, whom she loved, about the imminent dacoity. Madhab is also her sister, Hemangini's husband. The descriptions of her journey are directly influenced by Vaishnava poetry.
4. The elite society educated in English, were already exposed to Victorian novels. Bankim was highly influenced by the realism in these novels. "Rajmohan's Wife "t depict the real picture of contempor society and the prevalent power struc specially as we learn about the Kulin protha

specially as we learn about the Kulin protha or custom through the plight of Kanak, polygamy through Mathur and the rise to power of their ancestor, Bangshibadan Ghoshe, a theme dealt in Muchiram Goor, later.

Through Mathur and Madhab, Bankim also portrays the disparity between the benefits of English education and the half baked Mathur who depended on chicanery, fraud and torture for managing his zemindari.

5 . Influence of the Gothic novels - legal intrigue regarding the will, criminal conspiracy (Rajmohan's plotting with the dacoits, Mathur abducting Madhab and Matangini), dark dungeons, etc. In England too at this time there was a spate of novels known as sensation novels which dealt with bigamy, adultery, murder and blackmail.

6. The novel is more concerned with the plight of women in society - women are shown in a more positive light than men. Mutual bonding, subtle rivalry (Champak, Mathur's second wife considers Matangini to be her rival because of her beauty), friendship (Kanak and Matangini), domestic servants (Suki ' mother), protectress (Tara, Mathur's first wife) - the women are given much more attention in their depiction than men.

Neither villainy nor goodness is described with much care in the case of men. Tara, also earns admiration because of her initiative in revealing her husband's plot and thereby saving Mathur and Matangini. Suki's mother though has a role in the conspiracy.

7. Though Bankim is extremely trenchant in his criticism of the British , their influence on society and his search for an Indian ethos in his Bengali writings, in "Rajmohan's Wife ", we see the British as the fair disburser of judgement in the end. This also points out the question of

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7. Though Bankim is extremely trenchant in his criticism of the British , their influence on society and his search for an Indian ethos in his Bengali writings, in "Rajmohan's Wife ", we see the British as the fair disburser of judgement in the end. This also points out the question of readership , Bankim perhaps had the British reader in his mind.

8." Rajmohan's Wife "- the title is baffling. The appellation points out the position of women, their existence was absolutely overshadowed by the dominant patriarchal structures. A woman's identity was defined by her husband. Bankim is pointing out the irony of the misnomic tradition.

9. The novel thus applies the tools of Victorian realism to a traditional Indian Bengali society - gender problems, conjugality, society which was gradually being infiltrated with Western concepts (Madhab).

Despite her efforts to rise above the traditional concepts, Matangini is caught in immutability, it was not within her power to extricate herself from it. By freeing Matangini from the entanglement of family, conjugality, social norms, Bankim finds it difficult to place her in contemporary society. India was not yet ready to accommodate the self - exiled heroine and thus the novel ends abruptly with a note that



that Matangini.txt



that Matangini went back to her parent's home and died young.

