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Ethnicity and multiculturalism in *Namesake* and *Interpreter of Maladies*

Anita Goswami ¹ and Vandna Kumari ^{2,*}

¹ Department of English, Humanities and Social Sciences, IEC University, Baddi, Solan, Himachal Pradesh, India.

² Department of English IEC University Baddi, Solan, Himachal Pradesh, India.

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Abstract

India is a land of multiculturalism and Ethnicity. Multiculturalism is the key feature of postcolonial literature. Indian writers of diaspora have immensely contributed to the growth of fiction in English. Postcolonial writers like Bharati Mukherjee's, SashiTharoor, and Rohinton Mistry, JhumpaLahiri and Harikunjru have all made their names while residing abroad. They searched the root of ethnicity and multiculturalism through their works to show uniformity. The aim of present paper is to find out the unity in diversity in immigrant people on the basis of ethnicity and multiculturalism in the novels of JhumpaLahiri.

Keywords: Multiculturalism; Uniformity; Ethnicity; Immigrant; Exile

1. Introduction

Ethnicity is a social stratification which integrates and disintegrates the society. Ethnicity is derived from Greek language means Ethos means Nation. Ethnicity can be seen at three levels, state level, national and international level. It changes with the passage of time and place, language, culture and religion-different from other group that is ethnicity. Ethnicity is a political concept more than social. We can change our ethnicity due to certain circumstances language shift, acculturation, and adaptation and religion conversion. Modern world creates ethnicity. Ethnicity gives cultural identity. Food, common dress sense, racial and religious habits form an ethnicity. Paul Brass has divided ethnic groups in three ways, behaviors, attributes and collective feeling. On the other hand, multiculturalism is also inseparable part of ethnicity.

Multiculturalism entails the acceptance of disparity found in cultural diversity and ethnic qualities regarding sustenance, dialect, dispositions, conventions or cultural legacies. Multiculturalism isn't about minorities yet is about the best possible managing the connection between different cultural networks. Multiculturalism empowers a cultural or religious network to allow the statement of various cultures without segregation. JhumpaLahiri has her particular perspectives on realism, ethnicity and culture. These sees, however not constantly clear, are seen dissipated in the cultural conduct of her characters. Indeed, even connections, both sexual and familial, in her fiction are adapted by the possibility of cultural trade hypothesis implying the cost and advantages to each concerned gathering. Utilizing this hypothesis, one can dissect to perceive how financial terms of expense and rewards can be connected to comprehend the give-and-take parts of relational relationship. JhumpaLahiri is seen suggesting in fluctuating degrees that the cultural, cultural, ethnic and familial communications of her characters are managed by this need to trade.

JhumpaLahiri investigates this unpredictable connection between the ethnicity and cultural hybridity of the characters and the items which encompass them. Nourishment and feasting are essential segments of ethnicity and culture. Cultural articulations in fiction and movies dive profound into this cultural practices to indicate how these examples could be considered as the characterizing parameters of one's cultural experience ShashikantMhalunkar (2013).

*Corresponding author: VANDNA KUMARI

Nourishment and eating involve noteworthy space in the fiction of Jhumpa Lahiri to indicate how these representations are markers of cultural particularity and now and again, the markers of cultural hybridity. This paper will additionally take a gander at these cultural and ethnic articles so as to make an appraisal of the relocation, ethnicity and cultural world perspectives of Jhumpa Lahiri. Lahiri's *The Namesake* manages increasingly complex ethnic and cultural problems as it portrays the life and problems of workers in the host country with a closer investigation of Indo-American cultural connections.

The epic show cases encounters and cultural difficulties of around thirty years of life of the Gangulis in the United States, managing two unique ages. It is on account of Gogol that the psycho-pathology of biculturalism gets showed unmistakably. Ashoke, who speaks to the original of transients and his better half, Ashima, have more found feeling of home and the way of life of country. Ashima, for example, tries to re-live Bengali culture when she peruses Bengali stories, sonnets and articles which she has carried with her. These magazines speak to the cultural things that the transients convey with them. She additionally sees the general society in the United States from the perspective of an Asian female subject in Diaspora. As a lady, who has brought forth a kid in an outside land, her views on psychological thought of network and support are connected to the startling knowledge of her conveyance.

She yearns to return to Calcutta and bring up her youngsters there primarily as she feels that she would get the help of her relatives in bringing them up. Progressively, she figures out how to move about in the business sectors of the outsider land, attempting to make herself agreeable in the host country. And, after it's all said and done, the sentiment of being distant from everyone else frequents her and the most ideal way that she can relate this experience is to consider an existence without a network as an all-inclusive pregnancy. Lahiri investigates through the analogies of pregnancy and distance the cultural part of relocation:

Being an outsider is a kind of deep rooted pregnancy. A perpetual pause, a consistent weight, a persistent inclination unwell, It is an on-going duty, an enclosure in what had once been common life, only to find that past life has vanished, supplanted by something progressively confused and requesting. Like pregnancy, being a non-native Ashima accepts, is something that evokes a similar interest from outsiders, a similar blend of pity and respect. (Lahiri: 2003: 49-50) Ashok and Ashima attempt to develop a hover of Bengali colleagues when they settle down in Pemberton. They endeavour to manufacture fellowship with different Bengalis for the main reason that they all originate from Calcutta. Lahiri calls attention to how in Diaspora common ethnicity can unite individuals to frame a network of ethnic system however they don't share proficient intrigue. Mita Biswas examines the cultural methodologies that Ashok and Ashima deploy to feel comfortable or to be in a gathering:

They commend these according to Bengali traditions, wearing their best customary clothing types, in this manner attempting to protect their way of life in another land. Truth is told, their convictions, conventions, traditions, practices, and values' alongside their 'assets and belongings' are conveyed by vagrants with them to new places.

They sit in circles on the floor, singing tunes by Nazrul and Tagore....Contend wildly over the movies of ,Ritwik Ghatak versus those of Satyajit Ray. The CPIM versus the Congress Party. North Calcutta versus South'. (Biswas: 2008:30)

Ashok and Ashima, who speak to the original foreigners, endeavour to clutch their ethnic and cultural past with an end goal to save a cultural legacy that is slipping quickly in an outsider land. Mita Biswas clarifies how these original foreigners attempt to develop a cultural convention in their youngsters. These endeavours, she watches, contact upon dialect, religion and writing:

So as to protect their way of life in the remote land, the original migrants train their youngsters in the Bengali dialect, writing and history and confession them to their religious traditions, customs, convictions, nourishment propensities, and cultural characteristics. Along with this, they additionally train them in the methods for the new land and cultural traditions. In the novel, Ashima encourages Gogol to remember a youngsters' ballad by Tagore and the names of gods enhancing the ten-headed Durga. (Biswas: 2008: 31)

Sustenance and religion are two huge markers of culture in *The Namesake* .Lahiri ventures the changing nourishment propensities for the Gangulis to follow relating cultural change. She additionally centers on the way religions and myths get hybridized with regards to the second era outsiders.

Lahiri narratives: They figure out how to broil turkeys at Thanksgiving, to nail a wreath to their entryway in December, to wrap woollens cuts around snowman, to shading bubbled eggs violet and pink at Easter For the purpose of Gogol and

Sonia they celebrate, with continuously expanding show, the introduction of Christ, an occasion the youngsters anticipate undeniably more than the love of Durga and Saraswati. (Lahiri: 2003:64)

Both the original transients, for example, Ashok and Ashima, and the second era foreigners, for example, Gogol, Moushumi and Sonia, add to the more drawn out cultural show that unfurls in the host country. Their separate generational contrasts in culture demonstrate the way that society and culture are in a condition of transition and these socio-cultural elements are best comprehended when they are analyzed with regards to the multicultural ethos of the United States.

The migrants depicted in *The Namesake*, in their own specific manners, include to the multicultural mosaic of the United States by hinting at obvious socio-cultural development, other than their psychological advancement toward digestion. Ashima, for example, starts as a culturally found Indian foreigner yet her long visit in the host country constrains her to consider her own cultural and religious convictions into inquiry and to change them trying to strike a harmony between two cultures. A similar individual takes an intense choice after Ashok demise and returns to Calcutta, to settle down in India. This choice underlines the point that one's not particle of culture is likewise gotten in the possibilities of life and it is continually reshaped in each changing situational outline ShashikantMhalunkar (2013).

Gogol also has a complex cultural adventure. He starts as an Indo-American subject who endeavours to delete the initial segment of his hyphenated character. To build up this cultural explanation, he grasps American young ladies and way of life alike. In any case, he also takes a sharp turn in his life and when his conjugal existence with Moushumi goes for a hurl, he comes back to the cultural practices and familial qualities which he had been maintaining a strategic distance from up until this point.

His adventure is a cultural endeavour as it takes the per users through various networks, for example, that of the Asian Americans, the understudies of American Universities, the network of craftsmen, white American people group and the Bengali Americans in Boston. He likewise travels through the networks which speak to various geographic designations, for example, those of Boston, Paris and Calcutta. His association to these networks is a transitory issue and it demonstrates how, as cultural character, one's affections for network additionally change crosswise over time ShashikantMhalunkar (2013).

JhumpaLahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies* was an international bestseller. The collection includes nine short stories. In each of the stories Lahiri investigated the troubled and controversial position of the dislocated people. Most of the characters in the stories are caught up in 017 Paradigm of Rootlessness in the Fiction of JhumpaLahiri www.the-criterion.com problematic situations in order to accommodate themselves in the new place. Some of them could assimilate easily but some were just caught up in between situations ending up with failure. *Interpreter of Maladies* represents Lahiri's bicultural and bilingual heritage. According to Angelo Monaco in Lahiri's work her characters are almost all translators, insofar as they must make sense of the foreign in order to survive. They shuttle between India and America and as translators attempt to voice feelings of dislocation and search for the happiness they have lost. In the story *Mrs. Sen's we came to know* about a young Indian housewife who after her arranged marriage migrates to North America. Her husband is a university professor. Mrs.

Sen is perfect example of the people who suffers the consequences of shifting into an unknown land. Mrs Sen resisted herself from assimilation to the new culture. She creates a small scale India in her American house. The foods, the kitchen equipments, her recipes, clothes, books and every other thing recall the life she had back in India. Even though she had left the place, these things bring back the memories. She constantly refers to India as her "home" even after she is settled down in an American household. Mrs Sen starts babysitting an American boy named Eliot whose mother is a working woman unlike herself. Despite of their differences in age, ethnicity both of them developed a kind of solidarity and mutual companionship. They share the same kind of loss and alienation. Eliot misses his mother's love and affection and grows a feeling for his babysitter. In the story we can see that how Mrs Sen is not interested in assimilating with the American culture. She refused to learn driving which is very important thing to know in place like America. But Mrs Sen thinks that India is much better than America because back at home they have a driver for their car and for her "Everything is there". By then Eliot understood that when Mrs. Sen said home, she meant India, not the apartment where she sat chopping vegetables. (Lahiri, 121) Two things, Eliot learned, made Mrs Sen happy. One was the arrival of a letter from her family. It was her custom to check the mailbox after driving practice. (Lahiri, 22) "My mother's dead. My father lives in the US". "But you are Indian, no?" "Yes. "You live in India" - "I don't live anywhere at the moment". - (Lahiri, 328) this dialogue between Kaushik and his neighbour depict the rootlessness Kaushik suffers from. He chose to wander around places and countries and never settles down. His state of mind could not make peace with any place which he can call home. Kaushik from his childhood living here and there which can be a reason he never settled down. Kaushik is different. His mother dies of breast cancer when he was child. His father remarries and started a new life. Kaushik

couldn't come to terms with his personal tragedy. He seems lacking the emotion of a human being. He deserts his family and becomes a nomad and finally died in a tsunami in Thailand. Compared to their parent's lives the second generation of Indian Americans suffers more from their displacement. They have no choice for their life. Their Indian parents can call India as their homeland and most of them moved back there.

2. Conclusion

Jhumpa Lahiri's works are the portrayal of Indian culture and society. In this specific context, it is said that Lahiri is here chronicling a general society during the change in time. As it had occurred in Indian scenario that Indians who were presented the culture that were outsider to them embraced and affected the new culture, a similar case occurs for Indians in different nations. The characters' immersion into the new environment leads to various confusing situations from which they may liberate themselves in three major ways: totally rejecting the new culture in favour of the old customs and values; completely embracing the new culture with its adjacent cultural forms and practices or oscillating in-between ethnic identities in a continuous process of transformation and search for a new identity. Each of the short stories under analysis highlights the characters' choice of either one or the other of the three different ways as far as their positioning in terms of ethnicity and ethnic grouping is concerned. Ethnicity is practically the cornerstone first binding the Bengali couples in many of these short stories, but the way they consolidate or crush down in time depends on the solidity of their ethnic bond and on its permeability to new cultural influences.

Compliance with ethical standards

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No conflict of interest.

Author's opinion

Diasporic writings explore the identities that are forged in the torment of several cultures, places, and races rather than just home and unknown land. Indeed, identity is not simply a matter of race but that identities are built through several: origin, race, gender, language, history. Diasporic writing, especially in the stage of globalization, is a perception raising sort where political issues of cultural nationality, multicultural fairness and worldwide inequality goes together with the themes of nostalgia, imaginative restoration of the homeland and identities.

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