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Transformation of Traditional Values and Diaspora Issues: A Critical Analysis on Jhumpa Lahiri's Selective Short Stories

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the works on the transformation of traditional and social values and diaspora issues of Jhumpa Lahiri, known for her poignant narratives exploring the immigrant experience and the complexities of identity, intricately weaves traditional values into her storytelling, often depicting their adaptation and transformation in the context of migration and globalization through a close examination of Jhumpa Lahiri's selective works such as "The Interpreter of Maladies", "The Namesake" and "Unaccustomed Earth". The transformation of traditional and social values is faced in the writings of Ms. Lahiri, one of the most famous writers of the diasporic issue. The current work discusses the subject in which her prime interest lies is culture, especially when it has to do with an alien world, is often a matter of interest, through which she is prone to reflect multilayered social walks of life. This is, as discussed, often trapped between two separate environments - one of them leave behind and another strive to transition, thus creating cultural conflict. In several of her novels, as analyzed here, this cross-cultural tension is still there, particularly in America, a country aiding the migrants to be adapted quickly to its tradition and community and feel it fitting to settle there, yet yearning for their motherland never goes out of their minds and hearts. The analysis of this cross-cultural issue has become the prime focus into the current work where Lahiri's nuanced exploration of gender matters in terms of the roles and family dynamics within traditional frameworks are discussed. Finally, this work offers a comprehensive examination of how Lahiri's works illuminate the fluidity and resilience of traditional values in the face of migration, globalization, and shifting social dynamics.

INTRODUCTION

To balance this world which is not a unified space, rather being undistributed, and unequal in terms of the flow of people (Wallerstein, 2000), migration takes place that also bears a prime cause of inequality itself which is portrayed by many prominent writers worldwide. Economic, social, or political, along with many other issues such as cultural clashes and diversities are driven by factors such as poverty, conflict, persecution, or environmental degradation through migration. Jhumpa Lahiri, as an Indian Bengali American author, frequently explores themes of cultural clash experienced by Indian individuals in the United States. Her characters typically belong to the Indian diaspora within American society, grappling with issues such as hybridity, identity crisis, nostalgia, and predominantly, a sense of rootlessness and the struggle to find a place to call home on this planet. Lahiri's characters are circled with these issues which grapple with feelings of alienation and loneliness, which also are intricately linked to the cultural conflicts they encounter in American society (Yahya & Mani, 2022). Scholarly examinations of Lahiri's work often center on themes of alienation and loneliness, contextualizing them within her Bengali background, identity, and experiences in Western society. Through this lens, her characters' struggles with alienation and loneliness are explored in the context of the cultural conflicts they encounter, shedding light on the complexities of their immigrant experiences and the challenges of navigating between multiple cultural identities. The cultural differences, isolation, and sufferings of the Indians in India and abroad are almost invariably pictured in her work which is a portrayal of her state of spatial changes in places around the world.

In the context of contemporary literature, Jhumpa Lahiri's works constitute profound explorations of cultural identity, belonging, and the interplay between tradition and modernity. The issue of cultural identity relates to questions of self and culture that Lahiri's stories often weave through the immigrant experience, weaving delicate threads of tradition inherited from ancestral roots with the complexity of the modern world. This means reflecting on the essence of culture itself and the implication that there is a reasonable motive for self-questioning (Jola, 2012). Her narratives resonate with the challenges faced by immigrants, reflecting the complexities of being caught between two worlds - the homeland and the adopted country (Kumari, 2021). Sometimes she may wonder why immigrants both want and don't want to 'integrate', depending on what integration actually means, without knowing that integration itself is not necessarily the main goal of the immigrant (Jasinskaja, 2003). Through evocative prose and poignant characterizations, Lahiri grapples with the transformation of traditional values amid the shifting sands of diasporic life. This critical analysis seeks to delve deeper into the profound ways in which Lahiri's writings illuminate the evolution and adaptation of traditional values in diasporic contexts, examining the tensions, reconciliation Solutions, and profound reflections that appear in his stories. By examining the key themes, characters, and storytelling techniques used by Lahiri, this study aims to unravel the layers of meaning embedded in his texts, shedding light on the dynamic interactions between tradition and change that resonate throughout his literary work.

Through a close examination of Jhumpa Lahiri's selected works such as "The Interpreter of Maladies", "The Namesake" and "Unaccustomed Earth", this analysis attempts to offer new insights into the transformative force of Lahiri's storytelling that illuminates how her stories serve as mirrors reflecting the complexities and obstacles as identified by Roger Brubaker (1992) of cultural negotiation and identity formation in an ever-changing world.

She has shown in her writing a transformation of transcultural values based on diasporic issues. Within her writings on cultural transformation, the current work relies on several theoretical notions including cultural diversity studies that distinguish individual and collective functionalities, the latter being further classified into communicative and transcultural identity. The process of identifying the transcultural identity through migration is far from homogeneous and complex as well, which might occur in a number of dimensions - economic, political, social, and religious (Khudayarov, 2023). While individual identity refers to neuro-mental, personal acts, communicative identity is a form of function through communication and social interaction between persons as carriers of social roles (Assmann, 2008). Blommaert refers to House and presents a division between "language of communication" and "language of identity", which assigns specific indicators to specific types of speech, although he asserts that the issue looks more complex than the division presented by House. It simply identifies the factors creating identity crises through the diasporic behavior of global citizens (Mabel, 2009).

Apart from Jhumpa Lahiri, works by Anita Desai, Kamala Markandaya, Bharati Mukherjee, Salman Rushdie, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Amitav Ghosh, and Amit Chaudhuri also offer rich explorations of diasporic and transcultural Indian characters, highlighting the challenges and complexities of their immigrant experiences. For example, "Bye Bye Blackbird" and "The Nowhere Man" provide early portrayals of Indian characters grappling with ethnic discrimination and isolation in 1960s Britain, deepening their sense of displacement. "Wife" and "Jasmine" by Bharati Mukherjee delve into the experiences of Indians in the United States, exploring the complexities of legal and illegal immigration before the era of globalization. Salman Rushdie's "The Satanic Verses" employs magic realism to depict migration experiences, offering a unique perspective on the phenomenon. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's "The Mistress of Spices" centers on the character Tilo, who embodies the struggles and agony of the migrant experience, particularly in relation to cultural identity. Amitav Ghosh's "The Shadow Lines" delves into the profound rootlessness experienced by characters born and raised in foreign lands, highlighting the complexities of their identities and sense of belonging. Amit Chaudhuri's "Afternoon Raag" offers insights into the lives of Indian students in Oxford, shedding light on the challenges and experiences of the diasporic community in academic settings. These works contribute to a nuanced understanding of diasporic experiences and the intricate intersections of identity, culture, and belonging in the context of migration. The optimistic side of migration has also been presented by these authors. There are

advantages of living as a traveler (Chen, 2013), the prospect of being able to observe different cultural modes from a double point of view. Even the characters of Lahiri depicted this difference when she tells us in her *Namakesake* that, "Nikhil is his overcoat which makes the ways in which he is different from other Americans invisible" (Caesar, 2010). It also helps diasporic Indians, especially the second generation, to confront the dual identity dilemma. In their psyche, such ambivalence induces existential torment.

Indian authors of the second generation, including MeeraSyal, ShashiTharoor, HariKunzru, Sunetra Gupta, and specifically Jhumpa Lahiri have wonderfully depicted the lives of immigrants of the first and second generations in the US. Especially Lahiri's works, such as "Interpreter of Maladies," are celebrated for their poignant portrayal of migration as well as the immigrant experience (Rai, 2023). This is possible when the primary focus of her writing is no longer major problems like religious injustice and ethnic prejudice. In the present world, what counts today are the simple things. Under modified contexts, little unappreciated items achieve immense importance. It is here where the diverse responses of Indian, Western, and diasporic characters to identical circumstances are only obviously bound to vary. It shows that all human beings' inner desires are the same.

In addition, Raja Rao, MulkrajAnand, R. K. Narayan, Kamala Markandaya, some great authors of Indian English literature, had a deep devotion to revealing the cruel facts of life to affect the necessary shift in society. Some of the topics closest to their cores were nationalism, Division Exploitation, Peasantry, Subjugated People, Rural-Urban Split, East-West Experience, Casteism, Communalism, and especially colonial experiences that already pictured before humankind as a traumatic character (Hall, 2010). All of them are well known for portraying contemporary Indian life meaningfully. The postmodern Indian English novelists have concentrated on an entirely different range of topics that are wide-ranging and expansive from the first generation of Indian English novelists as life in the age of globalization which is no illusion but real (Thomsen 2010) is engulfed in the evolving problems of globalization and ensuing transculturalism, multiculturalism, feminism, queer theory (González, 2017), diasporic sensitivity, glamour, consumerism, co-culturalism, commoditization, erosion of ethical values are some of main issues raised by contemporary novelists and short stories writers.

Portraying cultural conflicts has long been a favorite subject of literary authors such as V.S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Rohinton Mistry, Bharathi Mukherjee, Anita Desai and many others. The explanation is simple: in their own lives, most of them put themselves in opposite situations. They are born in one place and then move to another country or countries, when it comes to cultural and emotional experiences, very different from their place of origin. Mostly, we see that individuals try their best to adapt to new circumstances and conditions and do so effectively to some extent. However, their consciousness is still driven by

longing, heart-wrenching longing and love for their family, traditions, status and people, where they find themselves torn between two cultures.

Modern Indian literature in English reflects the multifaceted challenges arising from migration and diaspora, including issues like relocation, solitude, lack of roots, division, racial prejudice, exclusion, identity turmoil, clashes of culture, and more. Similarly, it echoes the yearning of the Jewish people for their homeland after being dispersed and exiled, as well as their cultural isolation in new societies (Cohen, 2024), the words diaspora, transculturalism, and transformation of traditional values were mostly used. However, during the 17th century, there was a notable increase in migration from India. V. S. Naipaul, in his early novels such as "The Mysterious Masseur" and "The Mimic Men," accurately depicted the nostalgia and yearnings of those individuals who, due to indentured labor, were displaced and later returned to their homelands. Many people were displaced while serving the British Empire across various parts of the globe during the 18th and 19th centuries. These displaced individuals harbored a strong desire for political freedom in their homelands. Furthermore, in the early 20th century, numerous religious groups, including Hindus, Muslims, and predominantly Punjabi Sikhs, migrated to Canada for employment opportunities, particularly as lumberjacks in sawmills. This era of post modernity has also familiarized itself with the notion of living in a state of spiritual orphanage and alienation within specific religious sects, characterized by feelings of anxiety and estrangement (Said, 2000). They had to work for poorer pay, and they endured bigotry and racial hate. They joined in the 'Gadar Party' by the agitation against such abuses by the Indian transculture in Canada, which a leading power in India is fighting for independence. This term was also used in the novel *Maluka* (1997) by Sadhu Singh Dhama. Unlike them, Lahiri's experiment and exploration of cultural translation, hybrid identity, and the concept of the third space in works like "Interpreter of Maladies" sheds light on the nuanced experiences of South Asian individuals and communities in the United States (Pourgharib & Asl, 2022).

Apart from the prose and stories, poetry is a significant contribution from the Indian diaspora and the transformation of traditional values in the world of literature. A. K. Ramanujan's poetry *Relations* (1971), *Second Sight* (1976), and *The Collected Poems* (1997) reveal his need for connectedness and the lack of interaction are two truths of his literary universe. Meena Alexander's dissertation deals with the discovery and re-composition of the past. Agha Shahid Ali, a Kashmiri refugee, explores themes of homeland, loss, and exile in his work "The Half-Inch Himalayas," which consists of four parts representing the spaces opened up by exile. In "The Nostalgist's Map of America," Ali portrays the exotic spaces inhabited by hyphenated personalities. G.S. Sharat Chandra offers an outsider's perspective on India's sense of imperialism in his work "April Nanjangud." Indian expatriate author Vikram Seth contributes poetry to his collections "The Golden Gate" and "All You Who Sleep Tonight." Writers such as Ravi Shankar, Vijay Seshadri, and Maua Khosala showcase their talents in their

respective works. Bharti Mukherjee challenges the tradition-bound culture of the East and instead looks towards the empowering and individualistic society of the West. "The Tiger's Daughter" narrates the story of a young woman's return to Calcutta after spending years abroad. The tale of a woman whose husband abandoned her and she was left on her own without a family and support system. *Darkness* depicts racially discriminated people in Canada. Her *Middleman and Another Stories* shows how immigrants faced negative experiences in the US and Canada. In "Jasmine," Bharati Mukherjee illustrates the potential for self-reinvention in the New World. Meena Alexander's prose delves into the experience of exile, with self-creation emerging as a prominent theme in her work. "Manhattan Music" portrays Draupadi's intervention to save Sandhya from suicide, suggesting that the true challenge of exile lies in navigating life rather than succumbing to death. Vikram Seth gained renown with "A Suitable Boy," following his non-fiction works "Two Lives" and the memoir "An Equal Music." Jhumpa Lahiri's writing emerged later in life, intricately linked to her experience as a migrant. "The Mistress of Spices" unveils the struggles of immigrants through a narrative of love and survival, with gender and migration serving as central themes. Writers like Indira Ganesan, Amulya Malladi, Sanjay Kumar Nigam, Hema Nair, and Vijay Lakshmi explore various aspects and dimensions of the expatriate experience in their works.

Thus it can be said that the works from many Indian writers offer rich explorations of cross-cultural issues, inviting readers to reflect on the complexities of identity, belonging, and the ever-changing interactions between different cultural contexts. The present work offers nuanced experiment on transcultural identity portrayed by Jhumpa Lahiri through her works, highlighting the complexity of the immigrant experience and the constant struggle to belong a world that is changing rapidly. Through her vivid storytelling and empathetic characterization, she invites readers to explore universal themes of love, loss, and the search for meaning against the backdrop of diverse cultural contexts. Exploring the issues beyond individual experiences to include broader themes of family, community, and societal expectations, and detailing cultural differences can enrich how relationships strain as characters grapple with different values, customs, and communication styles.

DISCUSSION

TRANSCULTURE ISSUE IN JHUMPA LAHIRI

Of Traditional Values

It's crucial to recognize that India's diasporic literary tradition dates back as far as the diaspora itself. Dean Mohamed, born in Patna, India, is credited with producing some of the earliest Indian writing in English with his work "The Travels of Dean Mahomet," published in 1794. Although the first Indian English novel, "Rajmohan's Wife" by Bankimchandra Chatterjee, didn't emerge until much later in 1864, this demonstrates that the contribution of the Indian Diaspora to Indian English Literature is longstanding. Additionally, it's noteworthy that descendants of Indian indentured laborers have consistently favored writing in

English in the 'girit colonies.' Notable authors such as Shiva Naipaul, V. S. Naipaul, Cyril Dabydeen, David Dabydeen, Sam Selvon, M.G. Vassanji, Subramanian, K.S. Maniam, ShaniMuthoo, and Marina Budos have made significant contributions to this literary realm.

The figures created by V. S. Naipaul, like Mohun Biswas in "A House for Mr. Biswas" or Ganesh Ramsumair in "The Mystic Masseur," represent individuals who, despite being far from India, their birthland, possess a deep understanding of their heritage due to their ancestral ties. For the world to know, they become symbols of the stranger, the unhoused. The characters of Naipaul are controlled not by physical relocation, but by an ancestral experience of dislocation. For them, India isn't merely a physical location; rather, it's a construct of imagination representing their homeland's evolution, as Salman Rushdie says. " - the past is a country, from which we have all emigrated, that its loss is part of our shared humanity," Rushdie (1991, p. 87).

The earlier generation of diasporic Indian authors, including Raja Rao, G. V. Desani, Santha Rama Rau, Dhalchandra Rajan, Nirad Chaudhari, and Ved Mehta, predominantly reflect on India in their literature, seldom depicting their experiences as expatriates away from their homeland. When they reside outside India, it's as if they rediscover their sense of Indianness. This distance affords them a detached perspective crucial for offering direct insights into their native land. Over time, the traditional diaspora of indentured workers has been supplanted by a modern diaspora of market-driven Foreign Indian English Authors. These contemporary writers portray their experiences abroad, often tinged with melancholy rather than mere nostalgia for their motherland. It's pertinent to categorize these contemporary diasporic Indian authors into two distinct groups. One group consists of individuals who have lived in India for a portion of their lives and carry with them the cultural baggage of their homeland while living abroad. The other group comprises those who have been residing outside India since childhood, only encountering their birthplace from an outsider's perspective. There exists a tangible displacement among international migrants, believed to establish new transnational spaces that extend rather than undermine the nation-state, as noted by Morawska (2001). Both categories of authors are engaged in addressing this issue, with the former often seeking space for their existence while the latter may feel rootless. Nonetheless, both classes have contributed significantly to English literature, delving into themes of migration, separation, assimilation, and acculturation through their portrayal of migrant characters. The depiction of displaced characters by diasporic Indian writers gains immense significance when viewed within the geopolitical context of the vast Indian subcontinent, which explains the international readership and enduring appeal of such works.

A novel aspect of exile in the post-independent India, emerged as citizens from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries began relocating voluntarily to developing nations, either to escape political or economic turmoil in their

homeland, pursue research opportunities, or work as professionals—a phenomenon often referred to as "brain-drain," as noted by Gayatri Chakravorty-Spivak. This trend of migration has persisted since then. It's crucial to recognize that regardless of the reasons behind their migration, refugees in their new lands often experience a profound sense of alienation and displacement. In foreign societies, they may exert considerable effort to assimilate or acculturate, yet they remain outsiders, not fully embraced or acknowledged by the community. This liminal existence engenders complex emotions of fear, uncertainty, longing, and ambition as they navigate the periphery of their adopted communities.

Following the tragic events of 9/11, South Asian communities, particularly Sikh and Muslim Diasporas, witnessed a disturbing rise in racial antagonism in America. This unsettling reality was vividly depicted by Chitra Banerjee-Divakaruni in her novel "The Queen Of Dreams" (2004), where a second-generation Sikh youth named Jaspal is subjected to violent assaults by American peers, despite tearfully asserting his American identity. This incident underscores the precarious nature of diaspora identity, raising questions about which country the diaspora truly belongs to: the one their ancestors left behind or the one they have embraced, albeit with limited acceptance. The reactions of American youth towards the Sikh diaspora and South Asians often give rise to additional concerns, as highlighted by Abdullah (2011). Whether driven by nationalist fervor resulting in mistaken identities or fueled by resentment towards diaspora groups perceived as encroaching on their country, these incidents further exacerbate tensions within multicultural societies.

Literary works such as Jhumpa Lahiri's "The Namesake," Meera Syal's "Anita and Me," and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's "The Queen of Dreams" delve into the complex issue of the intergenerational divide within the Indian diaspora. First-generation parents often expect their children to adhere strictly to the traditional Indian cultural values imposed on them at home, including food, clothing, customs, language, and beliefs. Jaywanti Dimiri aptly analyzes the dilemmas faced by the second generation of diaspora, particularly troubling for expatriate immigrants from the third world. Unlike their ancestors, who experienced expatriation as a tangible journey, this new generation is born and raised on foreign soil, detached from the burden of nostalgia and typical symptoms of fear, isolation, rootlessness, or homelessness associated with displacement. However, their predicament is arguably more challenging; despite assimilation and acculturation, they remain susceptible to victimization and ostracization, highlighting the complexities of their dual identity.

Traditional values are a recurring theme in Jhumpa Lahiri's work, often explored through the lens of immigrant families grappling with cultural identity, generational differences, and the tension between tradition and modernity. She frequently describes strong family and community relationships, emphasizing the importance of family ties and community support networks. In stories like "The Illness Interpreter" and "The Namesake," characters grow in their

relationships with parents, siblings, and extended family members, drawing strength from common traditions and cultural heritage. Additionally, his characters are often deeply connected to their cultural origins, whether Indian, Bengali, or otherwise. Traditional religious customs, rituals, and practices play an important role in shaping the characters' identities and sense of belonging. Lahiri explores how individuals struggle to preserve their cultural heritage while adapting to new environments in stories such as "Temporary Matter" and "Alien Earth".

Education and academic achievement are highly valued in many of the immigrant families depicted in Lahiri's story. Parents often emphasize the importance of education as a means to success and advancement for their children, reflecting traditional values of hard work, perseverance, and the pursuit of excellence. Lahiri examines traditional gender roles and expectations in immigrant families, especially in South Asian communities. Characters often face social pressures and cultural norms surrounding marriage, motherhood, and family obligations. The complexity of gender dynamics is evident in works such as "Mrs. Sen's" and "Sexy".

Of Diasporic Issues

Creating an 'imaginary homelands' through the homeland's fragmentary and incomplete memories is based on the experience of cultural dilemmas, feeling culturally alienated and challenged by the mockery of the cultural traditions and icons that baggage, and struggle to preserve the cultural identification. In multiple ways, the migrants often reflect opposition to the language of authority in the adopted society. However, due to their increased integration and improved settlement conditions, the offspring of refugees inhabit diverse spheres within their adopted communities. They often experience less pronounced feelings of uncertainty, rootlessness, and alienation compared to their parents and grandparents. Another aspect of diaspora life in global politics is that their treatment often hinges on the racial identity of the diaspora members in the host country. Individuals of Black and Asian descent born in predominantly white nations are often seen as citizens whose true allegiance lies elsewhere. Additionally, it's important to note that diaspora cultures don't remain isolated; instead, they engage with the host community and other cultural groups, actively shaping and replicating themselves. The evolution of diaspora identities and thought processes becomes inevitable as they navigate the overlapping spaces of two cultures, existing on the margins and possessing two intersecting spatial realms often referred to as hybrid or third spaces.

In today's global landscape, the pathways and perspectives on diaspora identities and the evolution of traditional values are intensifying amidst increased connectivity and cultural exchange. Many scholars argue that as immigrants navigate their relationships with their new surroundings, families, and histories, conventional notions of community, ethnicity, or race as markers of identity and belonging are no longer adequate. Moreover, as the drastic shift in the strategy, place, and culture of the diaspora and transformation of traditional values have been evident, the people and cultures of the diaspora and transformation of

traditional values should not be placed just concerning those homelands to which they all wish to return. These numerous problems sensitive to diaspora life, transformation of traditional values and its perceptions have been represented by creative writers all over the world from multiple angles and viewpoints, but the area involved by the Diasporas is so diverse that it is not feasible to club all the Diasporas together. Moreover, due to their age, individual perceptions, and their culture, their concerns and sensibilities vary to a great extent.

In their literary endeavors, numerous Indian diaspora authors, both in English and other languages, have depicted societal, regional, and culturally specific conflicts encountered in their new migrant settings, shedding light on the diverse facets of Indian culture. However, their central concerns regarding diasporic challenges and the evolution of traditional values often revolve around themes such as longing for home, marginalization, ethnic tensions, cultural and gender disparities, identity crises, generation gaps, shifts in subjectivity, and the emergence of new lifestyles through cross-cultural interactions. The disintegration of Indian diaspora and transformation of traditional values of family units that lead to anxiety, many of which are seen to go off course in Western countries' moral lawlessness and to be attracted to alien charm, gay, and bisexual partnerships.

Diasporic and transcultural themes in Indian literature have brought forth a myriad of concerns and dimensions regarding the experiences of immigrants. Fictional narratives like Bharati Mukherjee's "Jasmine" (1990), MeeraSyal's "Anita and Me" (1996), JhumpaL ahiri's "The Namesake" (2003), and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's "The Mistress of Spices" (1996) explore the lives of Indians living in England, America, and other destinations where they migrated, driven by aspirations for economic advancement, job opportunities due to insecurity in their homeland, or pursuit of education. These narratives depict lives marked by toil, stress, and existential anxieties, often leaving immigrants grappling with a sense of identity and a clandestine search for belonging. Additionally, some texts shed light on the plight of undocumented migrants compelled to undertake menial jobs for meager wages, living in constant fear of law enforcement and deportation (Batra, 2010). Furthermore, novels like "Jasmine" by Bharati Mukherjee and "The Mistress of Spices" by ChitraDivakaruni also highlight the harsh realities of sexual harassment endured by Indian women, both within domestic spheres and workplaces, stemming from various causes including mismatched marriages. However, certain female protagonists in these narratives are depicted employing diverse strategies to preserve their dignity and integrity, rebelling against oppressive relationships and seeking support from law enforcement and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

JhumpaLahiri adeptly captures the challenges faced by individuals navigating the intricate terrain of diasporic life, offering a window into the broader experiences of the Indian diaspora in America (Chandorkar, 2017). The disintegration of Indian diaspora family units due to arranged marriages for commercial reasons, the rising divorce rates within the Indian community, and

the metaphorical alienation experienced by male Indian immigrants in relation to their American or Canadian-born spouses, as suggested by William Safran (Safran, 1991), contribute to shifting power dynamics within households and give rise to cultural and racial tensions. However, writers like Chitra Banerjee-Divakaruni and Jhumpa Lahiri also portray characters who actively strive to maintain familial unity and adapt to the cultural and lifestyle demands of their children. Nevertheless, children raised amidst diverse cultural environments, commonly referred to as "third culture kids" (Ruth, 2017), such as Gogol in "The Namesake" and Meena in "Anita and Me," often find themselves caught between two cultures, grappling with questions of identity and belonging. They confront daily instances of racism while struggling to define their true sense of "home" - whether it be India or the country where they were born and raised.

Hari Kunzaru's novel "Transmission" (2004) delves into another contemporary facet of the professional Indian diaspora, particularly focusing on tech-skilled individuals whose aspirations for success in Silicon Valley are thwarted by the saturation of job opportunities. Frustrated and disillusioned, some resort to negative means of seeking retribution, leading to disastrous consequences for themselves and their families back home. However, Jhumpa Lahiri in "The Namesake" and her short story "The Last and Final Continent," as well as Kavita Daswani in "For Matrimonial Purposes" (2003), illuminate positive aspects of diaspora experiences, broadening perceptions and evolving the subjectivities of their characters. They underscore how cultural interactions not only foster connections with new communities but also enable individuals to serve as carriers of culture and thought between lands, shaping new hybrid identities and histories. Through her storytelling, Lahiri masterfully navigates these intricate cultural intersections, delving into the psychological struggles and sense of alienation experienced by her characters, thereby offering profound insights into the diasporic condition (Yahya & Mani, 2022).

Transculturalism and the Indian diaspora are intricately linked to personal and cultural identity. Writers often draw upon their own cultural and familial backgrounds, exploring the circumstances that brought them to their current locations and the significance of their heritage. Ved Mehta's autobiographical work, "The Ledge Between the Streams," provides a vivid portrayal of his personal and familial traditions, offering insights into life in Calcutta and evoking a sense of nostalgia for India. Similarly, Jhumpa Lahiri, as a prominent diaspora writer, grapples with the same internal conflict she portrays in her works. Despite being born in India (West Bengal) and spending much of her life in America, Lahiri remains deeply connected to her Indian roots, frequently exploring themes related to Indian culture and customs. While physically residing in America, her mind and soul often wander back to India, reflecting a poignant struggle with dual identity and belonging.

In her captivating debut collection of short stories, "Interpreter of Maladies," she skillfully explores the complexities of cross-cultural gaps. Set in new and foreign environments, her characters grapple with the challenge of adjusting while

facing identity crises. Drawing on semi-autobiographical elements and her Asian American background, Jhumpa Lahiri creates characters whose lives often mirror her own experiences.

In the opening story of her collection, "A Temporary Matter," set in Boston, Lahiri introduces the Indian couple Shukumar and Shoba. The temporary power outage in America serves as a metaphor for the deeper issues prevalent in both India and the couple's lives. When Shoba gives birth to a stillborn child while her husband is away for a conference, their relationship is strained.

Despite the commonality of divorce in American culture and their successful assimilation into American society, the lingering influence of their Indian upbringing prevented Shukumar and Shoba from even considering divorce. Instead, they grew accustomed to avoiding each other. During their candlelit dinner, the power outage served as a catalyst for a conversation between Shoba and Shukumar, prompting Shoba to reminisce about her hometown in India. When she says, "It is like India, sometimes the current disappears for hours at a stretch. I once had to attend an entire rice ceremony in the dark. The body just cried. It must have been so hot" (11). Again she says- "I remember during power failure at my grandmother's house, we all had to say nothing" (12).

In the dimness of the moment, Shoba feels compelled to disclose her decision, and just as the light unexpectedly returns, she admits to Shukumar that she is departing their home and has secured a new apartment. In response, Shukumar reveals that he had opted to withhold something from her: he had been present at their child's birth and had kissed the baby before its burial. "Our baby was a boy", he said, "His skin was more red than brown. He had black hair on his head. He weighed nearly five pounds. His fingers were curled shut, much like yours in the night." (22).

'...they wept together, for the things they now knew.' (Lahiri, 2000: 22)

At the story's conclusion, Shoba and Shukumar find themselves shedding tears together as they turn off the light, reflecting on their actions. The power outage serves as a symbolic element in their lives, mirroring the complexities of life in India. The temporary disruption not only represents the physical absence of light but also symbolizes the emotional connection between Shoba and Shukumar. While in American culture, they may have drifted apart, their Indian heritage ultimately brings them back together.

In Jhumpa Lahiri's second story, "When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine," we are introduced to the friendship between an Indian family and Mr. Pirzada, a Bangladeshi migrant. Narrated by ten-year-old Lilia, the story unfolds against the backdrop of historical events in the Indian subcontinent, such as the freedom movement and the civil war in East Pakistan. Despite their physical distance from their native lands, the family remains eager to stay informed about current events back home, reflecting a deep longing for their respective countries. Mr. Pirzada reminisces about his life in Dacca, highlighting a sense of loss and the irreplaceable significance of his past. The story also explores the partition

between India and Pakistan and the civil war in East Pakistan, Mr. Pirzada's home country. While animosity between Indians and Pakistanis is evident in their native lands, such divisions seem to dissolve in America, where a sense of commonality prevails. Mr. Pirzada, a Muslim, finds hospitality with an Indian Hindu family, underscoring the solidarity that can emerge among individuals from similar cultural backgrounds in a foreign land. Perhaps it is the shared sense of fear that unites citizens of identical cultures in a vastly different cultural and societal context.

The opening tale in the compilation, "Interpreter of Maladies," immerses readers in an Indian setting, following the journey of an Indian family residing in America on holiday in India, visiting the Konark Temple. Mr. Kapasi takes center stage as the protagonist, balancing roles as both a taxi driver and an interpreter in a clinic. Jhumpa Lahiri adeptly explores the complexities of human psychology and consciousness, vividly capturing characters' struggles with dilemmas, uncertainties, miseries, and distress. She reflects on various facets of individual lives in the story. Mr. and Mrs. Das, with their three daughters, Tina, Rony, and Bobby, are living a happy life. But are they happy indeed? It becomes very obvious, as the plot advances, that there is a major difference between Mr. and Mrs. Das.

Another remarkable feature that constantly strikes our minds is that they seem divided between two societies. As is evident from their Indian origins, the Das family, though physically clothed in an American manner, exhibits a blend of cultural influences. The treatment of their children reflects their assimilation into an American lifestyle, despite underlying struggles within their subconscious. Jhumpa Lahiri seemingly positions Mr. Kapasi as a representation of Indian culture within the narrative, contrasting with the Das family, who embody aspects of American life. Interestingly, Mr. Kapasi, the central character, forms a connection with Mrs. Das, highlighting nuances of cultural intersectionality. It is impossible to overlook the gap between them. Mr. Kapasi finds it quite strange and different from the Indian tradition when Mr. Das asks his daughter about Mrs. Das by addressing her first name- "Mr. Kapasi found it strange that Mr. Das should refer to his wife by her first name when speaking to the little girl" (Lahiri, 2003, p.45). Furthermore, when kids see the monkeys in the film, they become excited and scared being addressed their children as 'monkeys'. But Mr. Kapasi tells them- "we call them Hanuman. They are quite common in the area" (p.47). Here, Jhumpa Lahiri delves into the religious connotations surrounding monkeys in Indian, particularly Hinduism as a religious culture, where they are viewed as symbols of the deity Hanuman. Conversely, to an American or European audience, they are simply seen as ordinary monkeys. The children's observation about the driver being on the wrong side of the vehicle further underscores the contrast with American norms. Drivers sit on the right side of the car in India, as does Mr. Kapasi, although it's quite the reverse in America, and it becomes an odd phenomenon for kids who are just acquainted with the American way.

The relationship dynamics between Mr. and Mrs. Das starkly contrast with traditional Indian marital norms, revealing a departure from the typical expressions of love and affection seen in Indian couples. While Indian spouses may not overtly express their feelings, their bond is often deeply rooted in affection and commitment. However, Mr. and Mrs. Das behave more like older siblings rather than parents to their children, lacking an emotional connection that becomes apparent as the story unfolds. Mrs. Das harbors remorseful secrets, confiding in Mr. Kapasi about her past, including infidelity with one of Mr. Das's friends. This revelation shocks Mr. Kapasi, whose own marriage lacks such betrayals. His hope for a meaningful connection with Mrs. Das crumbles, symbolizing the vast cultural divide between Indian and American societies. Furthermore, the unconventional nature of Mr. and Mrs. Das's marriage, born out of love rather than tradition, further accentuates their departure from Indian societal norms. Mrs. Das's candid discussion of her extramarital affair adds another layer of complexity to their relationship, challenging Mr. Kapasi's perceptions and expectations. Ultimately, Jhumpa Lahiri uses the Konark Temple, Mr. Kapasi, and other characters to highlight the multifaceted aspects of Indian society, distinct from those of America, underscoring the profound cultural differences between the two communities.

In 'Sexy', Jhumpa Lahiri once more explores themes of infidelity and guilt through characters representing India and America. These characters, Miranda and Dev, serve as conduits for the cultural dynamics between the two societies. Miranda, a young American woman, becomes involved with Dev, a married Indian (Bengali) man. Their affair encapsulates the struggle to reconcile the values and expectations of their respective backgrounds, creating a delicate equilibrium between two contrasting worlds. Through Miranda and Dev, Lahiri examines the intricate interplay of cultural influences on personal relationships. The story delves into the complexities of fidelity and desire, as well as the moral dilemmas faced by individuals navigating the intersection of tradition and modernity. In a nutshell, 'Sexy' offers a nuanced exploration of the cultural tensions and emotional complexities inherent in cross-cultural relationships, as embodied by Miranda and Dev. Miranda assumes he is probably Spanish or Lebanese regardless of his facial appearance. His quality impresses her at a glance. She likes to share her time with Dev, whose wife went to India for a few days to see her loved ones. For Dev and Miranda, who spend the night together, it makes it easier to come closer. It seems very unusual as Dev speaks to his wife over the phone every day. Miranda doesn't know what she's doing when she hears about the husband of her friend Laxmi's cousin, who is very similarly entangled with Dev and Miranda's friendship with someone else. Laxmi reveals to Miranda that her cousin's uncle confessed his affair with an English woman to his wife, even after they had a child together. This revelation deeply affected Laxmi's cousin, leading to her illness, and Laxmi herself finds the situation intolerable and becomes angry.

'Sexy' intertwines two narratives that reveal striking parallels and connections. Indian men are depicted engaging in extramarital affairs without a sense of remorse or guilt toward their wives, exemplified by Dev's relationship with Miranda while his wife remains unaware. Miranda, an American, perceives her affair differently, seemingly unaffected by the moral implications that would burden an Indian woman in a similar situation. Despite Miranda's initial disregard for the consequences of her actions, Laxmi's account of her cousin's ordeal begins to affect her. Laxmi, living within American cultural norms, expresses a visceral reaction, suggesting that if she were in her cousin's position, she would resort to extreme measures. However, Miranda's realization of the futility of her affair comes through an unexpected source: Rohin, Laxmi's cousin's son. His innocent remark, labeling Miranda as 'sexy' and defining it as "loving someone you don't know," (p.107) serves as a wake-up call for her. It hits her heart directly, as Dev calls her 'sexy'. The boy further explains to her that his father did it exactly and makes her realize how someone he or she doesn't even know can be loved. She realizes that her relationship with Dev should not continue. Lahiri uses these intertwined narratives to explore the complexities of cultural differences and moral perceptions surrounding infidelity, leading Miranda to confront the emptiness of her actions and the consequences of her choices. Plus, it is clear that readers witness a cultural conflict. But here, in this novel, she reflects mainly on the interpersonal interaction and feelings of women in particular, while there is still a cultural tension there.

Again, "Mrs. Sen's" portrays the inner turmoil and sense of alienation experienced by a Bengali Indian woman living in America, where her spouse works as a professor. As a way to pass her lonely afternoons while her husband is at the university, Mrs. Sen takes on the role of babysitting Eliot, an eleven-year-old boy. Despite her efforts to assimilate into American culture and understand its traditions, Mrs. Sen struggles to bridge the gap between American and Indian society. Eliot, however, empathizes with Mrs. Sen's challenges and understands the difficulties she faces in her daily life. While Mrs. Sen attempts to recreate a sense of modern India within their small apartment, Eliot finds her efforts peculiar, recognizing that they are, in fact, in the United States. Mrs. Sen yearns for the companionship and connection she left behind in India, missing the lively interactions with neighbors and relatives that were once a part of her daily life. She had lots of friends in India to meet and talk to and to support when there was some kind of need. Yet things are different in America. Without some reason, there is no one to visit. You can see Mrs. Sen's agony as she says to Eliot – "At home, that's all you have to do. Not everyone has a phone. But only lift your voice a little or show some sort of sorrow or excitement, and the entire community and half of another have come to share the news and assist with preparations" (p.116). Even Eliot, after this comment, comes to know that she means India, not her apartment when she talks about home. He knows that she just lives for two things: letters from India and the entire sea of fresh seafood. These two are the items that offer Mrs. Sen the feeling of home. In an unknown place far from her native one, Fish becomes symbolic of her relationship with home.

Eliot, on the other hand, is well conscious of Indian society and gets acquainted with it through Sens's lifestyle. When he sees Mrs. Sen in a sari, putting vermilion in her head and in a full Indian look, it becomes very odd for him. In the dialogue between Mrs. Sen and Eliot, the distinct distinction between Indian and American culture becomes apparent in the conversation of Mrs. Sen and Eliot- "I must wear the powder every day," she explained when Eliot asked her what it was for, "for the rest of the days that I am married."

"Like a wedding ring, you mean?"

"Exactly, Eliot, like a wedding pin, exactly. Only in the dishwater, and no fear of wasting it (p.117)

In an unfamiliar world, Mrs. Sen also tries her best to adapt. It's not about her presence in her nostalgic environment. She attempts to make friends with the citizens of that community, in particular with Eliot's mother, who often considers her as the caretaker of Eliot's baby. It makes her situation pathetic that, considering her attempts, it does not belong to American culture.

She even learns to drive, which, unlike Indian culture, is common to Western culture. The desire that she feels for her home can't be ignored at all, no matter what it is –

"Mr. Sen says that once I receive my license, everything will improve. What do you think, Eliot? Will things improve?"

"You could go places," Eliot suggested. "You could go anywhere."

"Could I drive to Calcutta? How long would that take, Eliot? Ten thousand miles, at fifty miles per hour?" (p.119)

It can be then seen that, 'Mrs. Sen' embodies the struggles faced by many women who relocate to a foreign country with their spouses, leaving behind their familiar surroundings and support networks. These women often find themselves in a challenging position, having to readjust their lives without the presence of close friends and family members with whom they can share their joys, triumphs, and hardships.

Finally, Lahiri's experiences resonate with the emotional and cultural adjustments required as discussed when navigating a new environment, highlighting the complexities of adapting to life in a foreign land while preserving one's identity and sense of belonging.

CONCLUSION

This work has presented how Jhumpa Lahiri has used her uniquely creative approach to the idea of diaspora, the transformation of cultural values addressing the unfolding of a complex set of perspectives, a particular state of mind and identity that centers on relocation rather than dislocation. It begins with the first generation's migration experience and extends to the specific concerns of the second generation, revealing a deeper cultural significance. Robin Cohen suggests that the term encompasses more than just dislocation and dispersion; it isn't solely tied to catastrophic origins and their disruptive impacts (Cohen, 2008), rather its consciousness or sensibility is a form of awareness that is said to emerge in today's transnational communities. She as a Pulitzer Prize-winning author, had her poignant exploration of themes such as isolation,

solitude, and the transcultural challenges faced by immigrants in foreign lands which are also discussed in the current piece of work.

Through her writing, Lahiri tries to dig deep into the complexities of human connection and disconnection, offering readers profound insights into the immigrant experience. Her works often center on characters who grapple with a sense of displacement and estrangement, navigating the intricate dynamics of cultural identity in unfamiliar surroundings. Her narratives intricately weave together the personal struggles of her characters with broader societal issues, shedding light on the profound impact of migration on individual lives. The transculture of traditional values on which this paper is based on refers to the transformation and confrontation of traditional values, faith of religion, and social and cultural values. And, the stories and writings of Jhumpa Lahiri provide examples of effective cultural transformation and transformation of traditional values. Her characters explore various facets of life, from their migration from their homeland to their establishment in a foreign country, revealing diverse dimensions of the human experience. The stories reflect what Indian immigrants experience after leaving their own country. Lahiri emerges as one of the rare authors who comprehends the intricacies of the diaspora concept, including its contradictions, complexities, and varied experiences of alienation and assimilation. Her debut collection of short stories, "Interpreter of Maladies," which earned her the Pulitzer Prize, delves not only into the nuances, complexities, and ambiguities of the Bengali diaspora in the United States but also explores diaspora themes on a global scale and even within the confines of one's own home. Through "Interpreter of Maladies," Lahiri skillfully captures the profound sense of isolation and yearning felt by her characters, many of whom find themselves navigating the delicate balance between two distinct worlds. Through intimate portrayals of their everyday lives, Lahiri sensitively explores the emotional landscapes of her characters, revealing the complexities of their inner journeys. Through the lens of the Ganguli family in her debut novel "The Namesake", Lahiri examines the generational divide between immigrants and their children, as they grapple with the tension between embracing their heritage and assimilating into American society. Similarly, in "The Lowland," Lahiri explores the repercussions of separation and solitude through the story of two brothers, Subhash and Udayan, whose lives take divergent paths following their migration to the United States. As they navigate the complexities of family ties and personal ambition, Lahiri illuminates the profound sense of isolation experienced by her characters, even amid bustling urban landscapes. In several of her other writings like short stories and novels, Jhumpa Lahiri portrays the collision of deep-rooted ideals of Indian society, characterized by Hindu culture, with those of the Christian. Jhumpa Lahiri's fiction, as an Indian Bengali American author, is often concerned and discussed in terms of the cultural conflict faced by Indian citizens in the United States. Her characters are mainly Indian diaspora people suffering from identity crisis and loneliness. She extensively analyzes the themes of alienation and loneliness in the context of her background and her life in Western society (Yahya & Mani, 2022).

This is how, in Indian English Literature, the ethnic rivalry between the East and West which has been discussed in the current work is a recurring theme, and Jhumpa Lahiri mastered in it with a true sense of the topics of isolation, solitude, and transcultural problems faced in other cultures by immigrants. Throughout her body of work, as it is shown in the current work, Lahiri's writing is characterized by its lyrical prose and keen observations of human nature. By investigating into the universal themes of isolation, solitude, and transcultural adaptation, she offers readers a deeply empathetic exploration of the immigrant experience and the intricacies of human connection across borders. Through her rich and nuanced storytelling, Lahiri invites readers to contemplate the profound impact of migration on individual lives and the enduring quest for belonging in an ever-changing world.

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