



CULTURAL CONFLICT IN JHUMPA LAHIRI'S 'THE NAMESAKE'

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ABSTRACT

The research paper studies the cultural conflict in the characters presented in Jhumpa Lahiri's The Namesake. It draws attention towards the present era of transnational migration, the flow of the people among the different countries, convergence of the heterogeneous cultures, creolization of languages and hybridization of identities have broken the concept of fixity or absolute territoriality. The second generation immigrants find it hardly possible to stick to the identity of the parental land. The national identity of the first generation may be changed politically, but they are able to attach with their original homeland culturally, linguistically and ethnically.

Key words: Immigration, Exile and Expatriation are related to home, Identity, Nostalgia, Memory and Isolation.

INTRODUCTION

In this novel, Lahiri has investigated the psychic state of the original settlers, Ashima and Ashoke and the second general immigrants, Gogol, Sonia and Moushumi. The novel discriminatingly shows how the idea of country makes a climate to develop home and character of nearness. In this period of transmigration, "home" means its impermanence, uprooting, and dispossession. For some faultfinders, the thought of home is more passed on as a feeling of being between the two spots rather than rooted one. In the novel, Ashima's feeling of being at home is joined with the first country, i.e. India. Furthermore, the selves of Gogol, Sonia and Moushumi should be appended with the USA, their origin. The inquiries however emerge as – is this area for which they appear to nullify the Indian ideological qualities and standards? What's more, how far they find themselves able to make the genuine home?

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In an obscure city of Massachusetts, Ashima's throb for forsaking the nation of origin is underscored through envisioning the photo of the family in Calcutta. What's more, the sentiment sentimentality of past appears to relieve the throb and anguish of Ashima. When she speaks the truth to conceive an offspring a youngster, her Indian ethnicity helps her to remember the customary social code and traditions of the Indian Bengali society“...women go home to their parents to give birth, away from husbands and in-laws and household cares...” (The Namesake p.4). Again the singular climate in the clinic makes her recover the specific snippet of the local existence of the Calcutta. The reference of the 'breaks of memory' can apropos be specified in this connection. Ashima's tension over conceiving an offspring and raising up the kid in the outsider area is piercingly uncovered“... it was happening so far from home, unmonitored and unobserved by those she loved, had made it more miraculous still” (p.6). As to immigrants' circumstance abroad, researchers like Rayaprol quotes Gupta and Ferguson as takes after follows “... Remembered places have often served as symbolic anchors of community for dispersed people. This has long been true of immigrants, who use memory of place to construct imaginatively their new lived world” (Aparna Rayaprol, Negotiating Identities: Women in the Diaspora 1992: (p 10-11)

Essentially Ashima's memory of the children's song from the Bengali tunes, recognition of 'dida I'm nearing' for 'farewell' are personally connected with the Bengali social traditions which is not really evadable for the original workers like Ashima. Her memory of the past and creative energy of the present Calcuttan family life is exemplified inside of the woven artwork of the disengaged life in the USA. Her sentiment sentimentality catches the exact second of the far away Calcuttan life where “a servant is pouring after-dinner tea ... arranging Marie biscuits on a tray” (p.5).

In examination to Ashima's sentimentality, Gogol's aloof state of mind to Indian culture is basically analyzed in the novel. The absence of tie with the Indian family makes Gogol rarely perceive the photographs of the relatives of Ashima. Ashima attempts to transmit in Gogol the tradition of the Bengal by presenting him with the Bengali rhyme, names of Gods and Goddesses and predominant Bengali convention of calling each kid by two names.

By and large foreigners endeavor to etymologically tie themselves with their own country. The present novel likewise arranges this. The tie of the dialect extraordinarily the Bengali of the indigenous area is dared to make Ashima join with the Indian soil. The American English appears to be less critical to Ashima than the Bengali dialect in which she is usual with the Calcuttan life. Ashima's getting a handle on 'a tattered copy of desh magazine' in the remote healing centre shows her transitory help in the far away nation. Ashima sometimes feels uncomfortable with whatever other dialect yet the Bengali. The singularity of Ashima in

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America appears to embody the present and the future too. Ashima's anxiety over rising up the child without her family encompassing in this bizarre city, affects her to consider "... a person entering the world so alone, so deprived" (p.25).

The bipolarity of foreign the cultural exhibitions between the original and second generation Indian immigrants is seen in the present novel. Social execution by and large assumes an instrumental part to develop settler's personality. The supporting of the Bengali society through Nazrul and Tagore melodies, contention over the movies of Ritwik Ghatak versus Satyajit Roy, and in addition wrangle over the political gatherings of the West Bengal among the Bengali outsider group in the USA outline their vicinity with the Indian soil. Social execution by and large assumes an instrumental part to build migrant's character. In the abroad nations, local social exercises, for example, moves or tunes build social character of the settlers and attempt to arrange with different societies as well (Aparna Rayaprol, 1997). Contrarily, the second generation immigrants like Gogol gets included with the American music than the Indian established music: "... a cassette of classical Indian music he'd bought for Gogol months ago ... still sealed in its wrapper" (p.78). The most extreme exertion of Ashima and Ashoke to make him familiar with social exercises like Kathakali dance and Apu Trilogy plays.

Ashima's safeguarding of the fluctuated Bengali customs in the new land encapsulates the bond with local India. The party of Gogol's Annaprasan (rice function) according to the Bengali tradition gives Ashima an interim help in this outside environment. Then again, to perform this custom, unlucky deficiency of the relatives eclipses Ashima which signifies her aching to make the Bengali environment in the new obscure nation. Ashima, Ashoke and Bengali foreigners comply with the religious celebrations of Christmas and New Year festivity most likely to accommodate with the way of life.

Conversely, the willingness and zeal of the second generation Bengali settlers is seen in commending the American celebrations than worshiping of Indian Gods and Goddesses.

The disarray with respect to the names like Gogol, Sonali and Moushumi, the American conceived posterity of the Indian folks makes an issue characterizing their personalities. The name like Gogol, Nikhil, Sonali and Moushumi demonstrate Russian and Indian personalities individually than the Americans. The "self" of the male hero of the novel is inserted in the Americanization, not in Indianness. In any case, Gogol may be considered as "other" in this land, his origin. Ashima should be the "other" in the obscure American climate, as she generally watches the difference between the home and host societies.



Also, ethnic nourishment and outfit go about as the images of one's ethnic character. Ashoke-Ashima's inclination for the Indian Bengali nourishment like rice, dal, and samosa and so on symbolizes their mutual root. Then again, Gogol-Sonia's inclination for the American cooking like Shake' n Bake chicken or Hamburger Helper than the Indian sustenance is basically analyzed: "Gogol savors each mouthful, aware that for the next eight months nothing will taste quite the same" (p.81). Ashima's support of wearing customary sari than some other western dresses passes on the safeguarding of the old familial culture.

The dichotomy between Ashima's feeling of distance and singularity in the USA, regardless of the delayed staying and Gogol-Sonia's hesitance and repetitive visit in India, is pointed out in the novel. Consequently, Gogol's coming back from India to Boston symbolizes his getting away from the dejection of India which as a rule extends his hesitance to arrange with the Indian environment "... for Gogol, relief quickly replaces a lingering sadness" (p.87). In the new environment, Ashima's powerlessness to embrace with the social standards and frameworks and feeling of humiliation and anguish turns out in regards to bringing up child Gogol. Her longing to move back to India is implanted in this singular climate:

"I'm saying I don't want to raise Gogol alone in this country. It's not right. I want to go back" (p.33).

Likewise, Gogol-Sonia's unconcerned disposition to acknowledge the Bengali traditions and customs appears to sidestep his Indian personality. Their hyphenated position, Indian-American, inside of two distinctive ethnic personalities gives them no particular character for the conservation of the specific ideological estimation of any nation. The appearing to be way of their adherence to the American traditions makes them to bestow less criticalness of the Indian one. Another circumstance can be seen through Gogol-Sonia's changed conduct of trying to comply with the principles and regulations of the Indian religious service after their dad's passing:

"... It was a Bengali son's duty to shave his head in the wake of a parent's death" (p.179).

Consequently, the powerlessness of the second-generation settlers to make the genuine home of nature and bond in America or in India for the most part can be broke down because of the critical situation. Moushumi, the British conceived off-spring of the Bengali folks can be seen from the purpose of transnational. Her constant moving starting with one nation then onto the next rarely makes her to stick to any specific social ideological estimation of the nations like Britain, America and France. Subsequently, her belongingness is moving among diverse nations rather than an altered nation.

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Moushumi's inclination for the French Literature, nourishment and sentiment unity with the French companions more often than not means her compromise with the French environment rather than the Bengali. Keeping up the separation from the Bengali get together means her reserved quality in this obscure air: "always with a book in her hand at parties" (p.192). Her delicate married association with Gogol symbolizes her invalidation to stick to the sacred obligation of the marriage organization. Again her hesitant acknowledgment the surname "Ganguli" of the life partner in the codes and behaviours of the Bengali marriage establishment, pinpoints her readiness to appreciate freedom and autonomy by being not restricted under this specific or settled framework:

"When relatives from India continue to address letters and cards to 'Mrs. Moushumi Ganguli,' "she will shake her head and sigh" (p.227).

Her escape from the Bengali tradition and culture to stick to the French culture does not unequivocal her inclination at home with the later one. Moushumi's liquid personality has a place with the fluctuated ethnic characters like the Bengali, the British, the American and the French. Her constant moving starting with one nation then onto the next should re-make the home in France:

"Here Moushumi had reinvented herself, without misgivings, without guilt (p.233).

The drifting way of home and fluid identity are explained in her absence of feeling with the past bond with local Calcutta, which she used to sustain in Calcutta and the USA. It is by all accounts rises as remote, another area. Besides, she is dared to be joined with the USA through the rumination over the previous days crosswise over limit subsequent to coming back to Calcutta:

"... To the city that was once home and is now in its own way foreign" (p.278).

Henceforth, she would be sandwiched between the double societies and ways of life also. The depiction of Ashima by Jhumpa Lahiri helps us to remember the female hero Taralata, the Bengali foreigner in the USA. The city of San Francisco never rises as the sweet old home in Calcutta however is just the spot of habitation with no connection:

"I'm feeling just a little alien and uncomfortable, a tinge of not-belonging, in the midst of such welcoming comfort ..." (p.75).

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