

DISLOCATION AND SELF IDENTITY IN JUMPA LAHIRI'S *THE NAMESAKE*

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Abstract:

The article focused on Diasporic writing with reference to Jhumpa Lahiri's 'The Namesake'. How Jhumpa Lahiri focuses on dislocation and self-identity and also focused on Multi-culturism in the novel *The Namesake*. The Diasporic writing is not new concept. It has been practicing by many writers. Diasporic have existed long before. They have fascinated readers because of the uniqueness it brings in all elements. The readers of Indian Diaspora writings will intelligence Indian elements in their US-setting because they will insert their cultures traditions or even values into the stories, making them colourful as their saris and ornaments. It is the multicultural features that readers recognize when reading diaspora writings. Diaspora writers disperse around the world and their literatures have increased in the bookshelves. The selection of books is varied and it is up to us to decide what book to choose and adjust it to our situations. In the US diasporic writers deal with displacement or isolation due to the people's nostalgia of their motherland or their search of identity.

Women writers like Meena Alexander, Bharati Mukherjee, Jhumpa Lahiri, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, etc., the Indian English literature has broadened its umbrella in Diasporic writing. Diasporans wander to an alien land to live joyfully and happily disunites their roots of native country. The diasporans beliefs are truly predictable by the Indo-American diasporans like Jhumpa Lahiri and Bharati Mukherjee in their novel by placing their important character on diverse contexts.

Key words: *Diaspora, alienation, Motherland, identity, displacement, Jhumpa, Lahiri.*

Jhumpa Lahiri was on July 11, 1967. She is an Indo American author well-known for her short stories, essays and novels in English. Her first compilation of short-story collection *Interpreter of Maladies* won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. She won The PEN/Hemingway Award for her first novel *The Namesake* (2003). Her next story collection is *Unaccustomed Earth*. Her second novel *The Lowland* was a finalist for the Man Booker Prize. Lahiri discover the Indian-immigrant experience in America. In 2011 Lahiri migrated to Rome, Italy and has since then published two books of essays and in 2018 published her first novel in Italian called *Dove mi trovo*. She has translated her own writings and those of other authors from Italian into English. Her Famous Novels are *The Namesake* (2003), *The Lowland* (2013).

Diasporic writing have concerned readers consciousness because of the uniqueness it brings whether through the themes the setting and most significantly the culture it carry or the diverse cultures it blends in one story. Diaspora comes from the Greek word which means scattering and it refers to the dispersion of a people from their motherland in the biblical term. It is initially used for the Jew living in exile experiment from their motherland. The term now is used to refer to those who are not living in their homelands for many reasons economy, politics or other reasons. Their being not in their motherlands has made them created a new narrative that we call diaspora literature. Indonesia, Canada and Europe Countries being multicultural countries face differences in almost every aspect of life. This however has not been understood by many if not ignored. As a citizen of these countries have faced difficulty in tolerant others who are not of same background.

The Namesake is the first novel by Jhumpa Lahiri. It was initially published in *The New Yorker*. It depicts many of the same emotional and cultural themes as Lahiri's short story collection *Interpreter of Maladies* Pulitzer Prize-winning work. The novel moves linking events in Calcutta, and New York City and Boston. And inspects the gradations involved with being caught between two contradictory cultures with distinct social, religious, and ideological disparity.

The novel begins in Massachusetts, Cambridge in 1968. Ashima is pregnant makes a nibble for herself in the kitchen of her apartment which she divides with her husband Ashoke. The two met in Calcutta where their wedding was arranged by their parents. Though Ashima was anxious to move across the world with a man she hardly knew she submissively did so satisfying her family's wishes. She gives birth to a boy in the hospital at Cambridge. Ashoke decides that the boy's name or pet name as Gogol after Nikolai Gogol the Russian writer. Ashoke and Ashima agree to register the boy's legal name as "Gogol". Gogol is Ashoke's much-loved writer in part because Ashoke was reading Gogol during the train disaster. A dropped page of that book caused the establishment to recognize Ashoke in the ruins and they saved his life.

The family waits for an official name for Gogol to come in the mail from Calcutta. But Ashima's grandmother, who has the traditional honour of naming the boy, her letter with Gogol's official name is misplaced in the mail. The family settles into life in Cambridge with Ashima learning to take Gogol something like on her responsibilities.

As identity becomes the core subject names become quite important. The significant function of a name varies from culture to culture. Bengali kids are given two names one that is a pet name used only by relatives and close friends and other that is good name used by rest of the people. This very feeling of double individuality has been very well depicts in the character of Gogol. His father gives him the name of the Russian writer Nikolai Gogol as first name. The name is elected with the understanding that it is merely a procedure and will in time become just a pet name. Gogoli is the name of his father's favourite Russian writer goes on the birth certificate and stays with him in his early school years. in Kindergarten, Gogol is told by his family that he is to be called as Nikhil good name by the head master, teachers and other children in the school.

Gogol discards his proper name and wants to be called Gogol by people as well as his family. This decision made on the first day of Kindergarten causes him years of distress as it was also his first attempt to refuse dual identity. He does not question who he is. He doesn't mind his name as Gogol. It seems perfectly normal to him." As he rises up he begins to enquiry that who he is. The fact that Gogol, as a child was aware of the importance of identity is revealed by the field visit of his class to the cemetery where other children located the critical of the members of their clan as exposed by the name mentioned in the epitaph, but to his dismay he could not find any 'Ganguli' latent there His first name 'Gogol' did not relate him to either the Indian society or the American and so it dampened his spirits.

He expended his teenage and young adult years annoying to discover his identity. previous to his exit for college Gogol formally changes his name to Nikhil which is representative of his awkward attempts to totally disown his real self and tries to change himself to a different persona. What is recognizable for most readers in America is deeply unfamiliar to Ashoke and Ashima who therefore provide a unique viewpoint on seemingly everyday things within American humanity. Husband and wife have differing reactions to the bombardment of new customs that greets them in America, and together they embody two sides of the settler experience. Ashoke is often smiling and attentive by the world around him in America and prospers first as a student and then as a professor. Though he remains attached to the family's Bengali traditions, he has always been tending to travel and is not vigorously nostalgic. Ashima on the other side misses her life in India powerfully and often finds life in Massachusetts to be cold and lonely. She finds it hard to understand the customs of those around her, and clings to her correspondence with her

family in India, as well as the family she has in America her husband and children. Ashima in many ways anchors the story as long as an emotional centre and working most enthusiastically to hold her family collectively and maintain their Bengali customs. The intense isolation she often feels demonstrates the difficulty that can be involved in fitting into incompletely new culture while hostile to retain one's own cultural inheritance.

Gogol, Sonia and Moushumi then symbolize the next generation of immigrants the first American-born age group for whom absorption the procedure of adapting to U.S.A culture comes much more obviously. The Ganguli kids grow up speaking English unlike their family and are much more interested in American food and pop culture since they went American schools their whole lives. For them it is India that seems overseas. When visits to family they are homesick for American food and bewildered by common Indian rituals. However their divided faithfulness often leads to an interior resist for a unified identity.

This change within one generation is a common theme in immigrant narrative and questions about the regular vanishing of the home society. Is absorption the best option? The worry between maintains history traditions and moving into an American panorama is one that motivates much of *The Namesake*.

Even if they are born American the members of the second generation remain in the group of foreigner or other to the mainstream of Americans who focus on the unknown background to which Gogol and Sonia they may or may not feel any relationship at all. Gogol stumble upon this feeling most intensely when a guest at a dinner party in New Hampshire assumes that he was born in India. If they are by force of circumstance foreigner in both of the cultures to which they owe adherence where if anywhere can the members of this creation find their home? The pursuit for a home like the pursuit for a true name is at the core of the decision made by Gogol and then by Moushumi later in the story.

As its title suggests at its core *The Namesake* tackles the question of forming one's own individuality and discover the power that a name can carry. Diaspora is a journey towards self-definition, self-recognition and self-realization. There is a constituent of ingenuity in Diaspora writings which paves the way for many losses. The Indian Diaspora writing contributes on a world wide scale the cultures of dissimilar societies. Diaspora literature thus constructs information which results in resolves many cultural and emotional problems. It helps to revive the harmony and unity of India.

The novel *The Namesake* is a complex to harden the unlike parts of the states in India and also in relative with the other parts of the world. The Indian beliefs have its conception that the world is a family to an extent. Thus with allusion to the context multiculturalism presents a combination of a variety of cultures setting up a world peace, synchronization and universal communal. Jumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* is an illustration of the today immigrant cultural family within a collective of international tourist. She accounts dislocation and communal uneasiness in a fresh manner. She poises the two cultures and creates inner disorder for many of her characters who struggle to balance the Western and Indian authority. Through *Namesake*, Jumpa Lahiri depicted the distress and pains in migrating to a different country she sends a clear message to people who are dreaming to stay in different countries for a superior life. Jumpa Lahiri comments that people without understanding the effects of relocation tends to look upon only on the comfortable side they not remember that dislocation demands a greater liveness in terms of environment and culture. On the other hand the dilemma of name cannot be solved by the name on documentation.

The difficulty faced by the human being regarding his individuality takes a process of indication and detection. When one is born in his state then the enquiry of identity does not arise much in fact not at all since the person has quite a recognizable society around him. He is look after around by people life him. He ultimately is not worried about his identity because he has the trust of being known by people in that society. However if he is born on a foreign land, the problem of identity starts to round up he feels life a total outsider on the new land. The dissimilarities of language, skin colour, and cultures form a

unique merge where he starts to seek for his own identity. Being a second generation settler the disaster of individuality perpetuate all through his life. The quests to discover his own self mark the diasporic awareness in Gogol's life. Thus Diaspora generate a place for enlargement, resolution of clashes and most significantly a new individuality. Every Diaspora movement holds a chronological significance as it brings within itself the core of the nation's history.

Jumpa Lahiri focused on displacement and self-identity. She argues that people doesn't know about what will happen when they shift to other countries. Simply for better life they dislocate when they can't adjust with new life. It's very difficult to them to survive. *The Namesake* is the best example of dislocation and self identity. Thought out the novel she argues about cultural conflicts and identity.

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