

Cultural Diversity and Immigrant Identity in Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies*

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Abstract

This paper explores the basic themes of all literature is human being such as thoughts, feelings, beliefs and faith. Literature deals with number of sociological concept, movements aesthetically. 'Diaspora' is one of the sociological concepts that we find out reflection in today's literature. Diaspora literature deals with expatriate sensibility. The Diaspora theme focus on the lives of immigrants of their inner and external conflicts in an alien land. It is also highlights some of the issues like cultural clashes, quest of identity and multicultural. Diasporic literature occupies the main role in the literary field. Diaspora has expanded to several meanings refers to homelessness, voluntary or in voluntary migration and a sense of marginality. By this the term Diaspora raises the questions of acculturation, assimilation, the loss of identity.

Keywords: Jhumpa Lahiri, *Interpreter of Maladies*, Cultural diversity, Migration, Displacement, Lack of Communication, Alienation, Expatriation.

Jhumpa Lahiri born in London moved with her Bengali-Indian family to America. Then she settled in Rhode Island. As a child, Lahiri often visit Calcutta, India for visit relatives.

After completing graduate studies, including Ph.D, at Boston University, Lahiri took the literary world in 1999. Her first book of short stories *The Interpreter of Maladies*, won the Pulitzer prize in the year 2000. *The Interpreter of Maladies* was written and published in 1999. It is a Collection of nine short stories. *Interpreter of Maladies* takes its title from one of the stories in the collection. Lahiri's collection of stories explores the emotional "maladies" that affect people and their relationships through Indian Immigrants experiences.

The first story of the book *A Temporary Matter* is the story which heads us out in Lahiri's worlds of *Interpreter of Maladies*. This story shows the cold and harsh realities of the humanity. Here Shukumar and his wife Shoba commits to spend their life together but they are unable to find even a word with each other. It seems to be a common sort of martial life. This story reflects the sense of alienation and loneliness that the emigrants face in a foreign land. The marriage bond which is still considered a religious one in India is slithering down under the pressure of new needs under different background.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 20:2 February 2020

**Prof. Dr. S. Chelliah, Editor: Select Papers of the International Conference on
*Human Praxis and Modern Configuration through Literature***

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Cultural Diversity and Immigrant Identity in Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies* 331

When *Mr. Pirzada came to Dine* examines the differences between Pakistan and the United States through a way a family lives and dines with Mr. Pirzada. This story told from the perspective of a ten year old child Lilia. It is based upon the time of Indo-Pak conflict in 1971. It is a story of Mr. Pirzada who is professor from Bangladesh and doing research in America. He left his family during 1971 partition and worries of their safety. Mr. Pirzada always looked worried and restless. Throughout the story he feels to be left alone then in the end he rejoin with his family in Bangladesh.

The title *Interpreter of Maladies* itself precisely and tells the story about a family visit to India. Mr. Das family visits India with cultural loss for their tourism. Mr. Kapasi, the taxi driver cum guide of interpreter of maladies, took Mr. Das family to Konarak. Mr. Kapasi's other job is as a translator in a Doctor's surgery. There he explains people's illness to the Doctor who does not understand the language of these patients. A Compliment made guide and tourist share secrets as Mrs. Mina Das confesses about her second child Bobby. At this point the interpreter is silent and see the significance of the stranger. The character Kapasi demonstrates the human misunderstandings and not merely cultural divides can lead to misinterpretation. He is a man who give up his dreo am for his family and who yearns for some interest in his life.

A Real Durwan is the story of Boori Ma, a watch woman of the stairwell in the old building in Calcutta. She was deported from Calcutta after partition. In the story the residents praises Boori Ma for her hard work that she do for them. After a thievery suspicion incident the residents attacked Boori Ma. The people forget her honesty and her truthfulness.

Sexy is the story based on extra-marital relationship. This is a story of an American Indian girl Miranda who is unaware of the martial status and fall in love with married Bengali man Dev. Miranda is sexy by Dev. Love does not mean by sexy rather it means each other's thought. This statement was realized by Miranda when she come to know that sexy is the beauty and smartness and Dev is one for her.

Mrs. Sen's is the story of another emigrant in America whose husband is a professor of Mathematics in a University. Mrs. Sen take care an American boy of eleven years named Eliot whose mother goes to work. Eliot could not connect with her culture activities but he tried to determine his identity. His lack of understanding his mother and his own life is mirrored by Mrs. Sen's frustration in her new world. Eliot feels warmth in her voice and by her gait that he finds lacking in his mother. The greatest tragedy is he cannot relate and share his present sense of her dislocation

The Blessed House is the story of the young Indian couple Sanjeev and Twinkle who have started their life in USA. Sanjeev doubts that if he loves his spouse truly or not. Sanjeev, an executive in a firm has no time to share the emotions and sentiments with her. Twinkle is the student of literature who wanted to treasure the antic monuments whereas hated by Sanjeev. Through this *Blessed House* Lahiri explores the complications in the arranged marriage and the adjustment that has to be in the relationship.

The Treatment of Bibi Haldar is the story regarding a woman Bibi Haldar who has lived her entire life in desolation. It is a poignant story that focuses on the frustrated lady Bibi who suffered from baffling disease which made her family upset and she was left alone to suffer. She found she is going to be death sentenced but in the end she somehow hoe gets pregnant, delivers a baby boy and her ailment is healed.

The Third and the Final Continent is the last story in the collection. In this story the same immigrant themes in the initial stage, an adjustment then he lodges as a tenant with an old woman of more than 100 years Mrs. Croft. She lives alone in her house. Then the narrator left the home and moved to apartment when his wife came from India. Mrs. Croft was alone and her daughter Helen made weekend visit to her. All the time there was a feeling of being alienated. This story encloses moving pictures of life.

Lahiri's stories are endowed with a strong sense of identity to the narrator and their Diaspora experiences. This collections is largely celebrated for its exploration of human relations, communication barriers, isolation and dislocation in relationships.

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Work Cited

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