



Available online at www.jlls.org

JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTIC STUDIES

ISSN: 1305-578X

Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies, 17(3), 1954-1957; 2021

Multitudinous Aspects Of Diaspora In The Works Of Jhumpa Lahiri

U. Sree Aruna^a, Dr. M. Sagayasophia^b

^aAssistant Professor, Cauvery College for Women (Autonomous) & Part-time Ph.D Research scholar, Kalaingar Karunanidhi Government Arts College for Women (Autonomous), Pudukkottai- 622 001. Affiliated to Bharathidasan University.

^bAssistant Professor (SS) & Research Supervisor, PG & Research Department of English Kalaingar Karunanidhi Government Arts College for Women (Autonomous), Pudukkottai- 622 001. Affiliated to Bharathidasan University.

APA Citation:

Sree Aruna, U., & Sagayasophia, M. (2021). Multitudinous Aspects Of Diaspora In The Works Of Jhumpa Lahiri, *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 17(3), 1954-1957

Submission Date:08/10/2021

Acceptance Date:22/12/2021

Abstract

Cultural and emotional difficulties are referred to as diaspora. In the diasporic environment, nationality and nativity are at odds. Nationality is limited to the physical presence, whereas nativity is an intrinsic emotional link that produces a sense of belongingness. Immigrants' struggles to experience the warmth of their original place in a different country are documented in diasporic works. Adaptation in a foreign nation is heavily impacted by socio-cultural elements, which are the most important aspects in shaping an individual's immigrant life. Diasporic literature aims to portray the real-life experiences of those who have left their nation while simultaneously debunking the misconceptions that surround their existence. Despite the fact that India is a cosmopolitan country, Indian immigrants in other nations nevertheless face disenchantment and struggle to adapt to their new surroundings. The migration of Indians to other nations, particularly England and America, is influenced by British colonization in India. The majority of Indian diasporic texts deal with immigrants' social and psychological clashes in these two nations, with the repercussions being disproportionately negative for women due to their social rank. Jhumpa Lahiri wrote classic diasporic novels and novellas that transport readers across countries to imagine the life of a migrant from a developing to a prosperous country. Her depictions of female characters are incredibly genuine and emotionally felt as a woman writer. Interpreter of Maladies, her renowned short story collection, has nine short tales, each of which depicts the various facets of diaspora via the numerous personalities shown in the story. The purpose of this article is to decipher the many diasporic components found in Jhumpa Lahiri's short tales, as well as to investigate the influence of diasporic experiences throughout history.

Keywords: Culture, Indian Diaspora, Immigrants, Nativity, Women.

1. Introduction

Interpreter of Maladies, Jhumpa Lahiri's debut and Pulitzer Prize-winning short story collection, depicts the depth of diasporic emotions via the varied people shown in the stories. The title, which included a unique note, 'tales of Bengal, Boston, and beyond,' denoted the storylines of the stories being written in different countries. Diasporic writings, like other types of writing, are impacted by societal changes and other events. The author emphasized the post-colonial and post-modern

consequences on immigrants' life. Each tale is distinct in terms of narration and narrative locations, analyzing the diverse nature of diaspora and its influence on people from various backgrounds. Diaspora is a product of modernism in some form or another. It's also self-evident that the gap is wider among immigrants from underdeveloped countries. Jhumpa Lahiri, an American writer, portrayed the experiences of an Indian in America and vice versa. The culture shocks that the main protagonists of the stories went through were clearly depicted in the stories. Complicated relationships and familial estrangement were byproducts of diasporic aspects that appeared regularly in Jhumpa Lahiri's writing.

The first story of the collection titled, *A Temporary Matter* deals with the life of an Indian couple in a foreign land. The characters' dubious marital bonding and their attempts to keep it were shown by the author. The characters were quite modern, and they portrayed modern immigrant life. Shoba, the story's female heroine, has been described as a self-assured and self-reliant woman. In contrast to past generations of women, she was not reliant on her man to make decisions. "His own mother had fallen to pieces when his father died, abandoning the house he grew up in and moving back to Calcutta, leaving Shukumar to settle it all. He liked that Shoba was different" (6). This self-reliance, on the other hand, generated a sense of separation between them. The death of their newborn child shattered their bond, and their grief over the loss led to a form of diaspora in which they began to live apart from one another. Despite the fact that they were aware of the disruption in their bonding, they made no attempt to resolve it and instead chose to adapt to the quiet. Shukumar who stayed in house throughout the day, realized the changes more than Shoba who goes out for work. Shukumar's compliancy to the disillusionment of their love has been pointed out as, "He learned not to mind the silences" (1).

To portray the feelings of both of the story's main protagonists, the author employed a third-person narrative point of view. While most diasporic literature aim to capture female viewpoints in which characters face despair and painful isolation in a foreign land, Jhumpa Lahiri flipped the roles of the characters and showed the female character as more self-reliant than the man. The feature added to the story's postmodern feel while also emphasizing the idea that diaspora is not gender-biased. Shukumar, who was taken to India by his mother, desired to smell the Indian aroma that he was unable to detect in a strange place, and his desire to treasure Indian memories was noted as, "He wished now that he had his own childhood story of India"(1). In contrast to his desire for India, his relatives in India always expressed their obsession towards the life in abroad. "For some reason my relatives always wanted me to tell them the names of my friends in America. I don't know why the information was so interesting to them" (1). The exodus depicted in the narrative is more internal and delicate since it deals with familial relationships and love. The death of the kid, which had been viewed as a panacea for their lonely existence, widened the chasm and drove them apart. The author exemplified the contemporary immigrant lifestyle, which lacks solid bonds and affection. "But now she treated the house as if it were a hotel" (1). These remarks describe Shoba's perspective regarding her family life. In a nation like India, where a set of cultural standards for a family life has been created, she eventually chose to go on to a separate apartment living apart from her husband, which was an unthinkable possibility. Though self-reliance is an important aspect of modern thinking for women, it appeared to be a barrier to familial affection and friendly ties in the immigrant community.

The next story, *When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine* recorded the diasporic emotions of 1970s, the period in which modernism didn't hit hard in the lives of Indian immigrants. The author portrayed the feelings of Lilia, an Indian girl who was unable to separate herself from her motherland's history and key events. Despite the fact that she was thousands of kilometers away from India, she was anxious to learn about the country's big socio-political upheavals. The article focuses on India's post-independence period and the significant changes that occurred after freedom. India's partition was a momentous historical event that caused confusion and varied sentiments among the Indian people. In this narrative, the author depicted the partition and its aftermath through the eyes of an Indian immigrant family. The nation's secularism was harmed by the civil war that followed independence, and the partition forced the people to evacuate their homeland in search of a new home. Despite the fact that the Lilia family had no direct link to these post-colonial India developments, their love for

and empathy for the people of their motherland caused them to understand and sympathize with their plight.

Mr. Pirzada, the story's protagonist, was a ten-year-old girl who had a strong attachment to her house's everyday visitor. He was from Dacca, which was part of India before to partition. Lilia discovered him as a link between her local soil and a strange nation. Her lone item of Indian remembrance was a little memento box provided by her grandmother, and she kept the chocolates supplied by Pirzada carefully in the box as valuable presents. She commented on the safe box as, "It was my only memento of a grandmother I had never known and until Mr. Pirzada came to our lives, I could find nothing to put inside it" (1). These statements underscored Mr. Pirzada's importance in Lilia's daily existence in sustaining the original sensibility. When Pakistan was divided from India, Lilia found it difficult to accept their parents' declaration that, while he was a Bengali, his religious identity as a Muslim disqualified him from being an Indian. "Now that I had learned Mr. Pirzada was not an Indian, I began to study him with extra care, to try to figure out what made him different" (1).

Another diasporic element in the novel was the education that the immigrant pupils received. Despite the fact that Lilia was an Indian, she was forced to learn American history, which she had little interest in. Despite the fact that she was now an American citizen, she had always desired to study about her own country's history. She learned the history of America with a strong feeling of detachment, since her sense of belonging was miles away from her home. In terms of time, India being eleven hours ahead of America, Lilia made a strong mental note that, "Our meals, our actions, were only a shadow of what had already happened there, a lagging ghost of where Mr. Pirzada really belonged" (1). Pirzada went to return with his family, but Lilia's feelings for him remained constant, symbolizing her desire to reconnect with her homeland. Jhumpa Lahiri wonderfully depicted the immigration experience of a little girl to highlight another side of diaspora.

The Interpreter of Maladies, another story in the collection handled different aspects of diaspora. The setting of the plot was India and the author tried to present the perspective of cultural shocks experienced by an Indian tourist guide, Mr. Kapasi. Mr. Kapasi was unable to detect any evidence of Indianness in the visitors from America, despite the fact that they were of Indian descent. On the other hand, he was taken aback by their family structure and separation from one another, and his mind began to draw parallels between their family and his own bonding with his wife and children. "Mr. and Mrs. Das behaved like an older brother and sister, not parents. It seemed that they were in charge of the children only for the day: it was hard to believe they were regularly responsible for anything other than themselves" (1). Mr. Kapasi was unable to detect any evidence of Indianness in the visitors from America, despite the fact that they were of Indian descent. On the other hand, he was taken aback by their family structure and separation from one another, and his mind began to draw parallels between their family and his own bonding with his wife and children.

Jhumpa Lahiri's another short story, A Real Durwan takes up the different diasporic theme of time. The protagonist, Boori Ma, a sixty-four years old lady had been depicted as a person who was struggling to come out of her past and cope up with modern changing times. Throughout the story, she frequently collected her memories of her bygone prosperous days and neglected to accept the realities of the present. "Most of all, the residents liked that Boori Ma, who slept each night behind the collapsible gate, stood guard between them and the outside world" (1). These sentences represented Boori Ma's role as a bridge between the pre-colonial India and the post-colonial India. The story's topic corresponded to current efforts to adjust to changes in the digitalized environment, and these difficulties in adapting to modernity represent the digital diaspora of the modern world.

Mrs. Sen's was a story which realistically portrayed the female diasporic agony and efforts to regain the native culture in a different cultural environment. Through the experiences of Eliot, an American youngster, with Mrs. Sen., the author illustrated the feminine diasporic features. The concept of recording the mental hardships of an Indian immigrant woman from the perspective of a native character proved to be unique and successful. In the absence of her mother, Eliot was cared for by Mrs. Sen, who was enamored of the Indian way of life and parenting. With Mrs. Sen, he went on a

new emotional roller coaster and recognized her disenchantment. To portray the Indianness impacting Mrs. Sen's life and her love for her own nation, the author employed symbols such as a wooden blade, fish, and letters from India. The story also signified the myth and misconception of being an immigrant through the words of discontent uttered by Mrs. Sen "They think I live the life of a queen, Eliot... They think that I press buttons and the house is clean. They think I live in a palace". (1) Her relatives in India mistook her desire to return to her homeland for the belief that living in the United States was more rich and pleasant. Mrs. Sen's fixation with her homeland has been amplified by her frequent listening to audio tapes with the voices of her relatives.

2. Conclusion

In the story, *The Treatment of Bibi Haldar*, Jhumpa Lahiri handled the theme of alienation. Alienation is also a part of diasporic emotions. Bibi Haldar, the story's main character, had suffered from estrangement as a result of her medical difficulties. She had been yearning for real love and devotion because she had been overlooked by her family. Mental illnesses have a more powerful and severe impact than physical illnesses. The narrative accurately depicted a lady who is cut off from the reality of the world and yearns to live a regular life. The author closed the novel on a happy note, with Bibi receiving a kid and embarking on a new journey of optimism.

Jhumpa Lahiri's stories have been viewed as an examination of several facets of diaspora, ranging from the inner circle to the outside circle, or, to put it another way, from individual estrangement to immigrant illnesses in general. The feelings associated with the phrases home and house might be analogous to the contrast between nativity and nationality. Despite the fact that the immigrant life has its own area, nativity is the embodiment of a sense of belonging and friendly ties. In diasporic works, cultural differentiation is a key element that is frequently emphasized. Apart from exploring this element, Jhumpa Lahiri's short tales also focus on the dispersion of time and community.

References

- Lahiri, Jhumpa. *Interpreter of Maladies*. HarperCollins Publishers, 1999, UK.
- Shea, Taylor. "Interpreter of maladies: A rhetorical practice transmitting cultural knowledge." *Reason and Respect* 4.1 (2008).
- Jackson, Elizabeth. "Transcending the Politics of "Where You're From": Postcolonial Nationality and Cosmopolitanism in Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies*." *ariel: a review of International English literature* 43.1 (2012).
- Kasbekar, Sushama. "Alienation in Lahiri's *An Interpreter of Maladies*." *Research Scholar—An International Refereed e-Journal of Literary Explorations* 3.2 (2015): 73-78.
- Begum, Najma. "DIASPORIC WRITING OF JHUMPHA LAHARI WITH SPECIAL REFERENC TO INTERPRETER OF MALADIES." *Journal of English Language and Literature* 4.1 (2016): 82-84.