

POST-COLONIAL AURA – A DIASPORA INDIAN DIASPORA WRITERS POST –COLONISATION

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Introduction

Post-colonial literature is the literature of the countries that were colonized mainly by European countries. Post-colonial literature often addresses the problems and consequences of the decolonization of a country, especially questions relating to the political and cultural independence of formerly subjugated people.

Diaspora has been a favorite topic in the transnational world of literature for innovative literary outputs in the recent years. People who have flown and tried to settle over the distant territories of the world for various reasons have always found in dual conditions in the process of settling down. They do not get away from secured assurance of home and they cannot allow their roots being blown over in fragments of uncertain insecurities in a foreign land. The intellectuals and authors have tried to represent these feelings in diverse ways, all over the world.

INDIAN DIASPORA WRITERS POST –COLONIZATION:

Writers of the Indian Diaspora have been in the center stage in the last decade chiefly because of the theoretical formulation being generated by their works, languages and cultures are transformed when they come in contact with the others. These writers are often pre-occupied with the elements of nostalgia as they seek to locate themselves in new cultures.

The writers of Indian Diaspora practice a variety of literary forms and present an extra-ordinary diversity of ethnic cities, languages and religious traditions. Emmanuel S. Nelson writes in the "Writers of the Indian Diaspora" Biobibliographical critical source book, that writers of the Indian Diaspora share a Diaspora consciousness generated by the complex network of historical connections, spiritual and unifying affinities, racial memories and that this shared sensibility is manifested in the cultural productions of the Indian Diaspora Communities around the world. The element of 'home sickness', 'longing' and a quest for identity or roots mark the Diaspora Fiction.

ATTRIBUTES OF DIASPORIC WRITINGS



- The primary characteristics of the Diaspora writers are the quest for identity, uprooting and re-rooting, insider and outsider syndrome, nostalgia or a nagging sense of guilt.
- Diaspora has been a new phenomenon now just as exile or expatriate in our globalizing world.
- Diaspora is deracinated population leaving cultural and ethnic origin in motherland other than where they currently reside.
- Their economic, social and political affiliations cross borders of Nations.
- Diaspora studies presume the existence of displaced groups of people who retain a collective sense of identity.
- As Terry Eagleton writes in "The idea of Culture" that the very word 'culture' contains a tension between making and being made most diaspora writers concentrate differences in exploring how new and old diaspora relate to their land of origin and the host land and the host culture. Often their major concerns in works are split and flow nature of individual identities.
- The Diaspora writers turn to their homelands for various reasons. For e.g. V.S. Naipaul who is in a perpetual quest for his roots turn to India for the same. Rushdie visits India to mythologize its history, Mistry visits and re-visits India for a kind of re-vitalization and to re-energize his aching soul. Bharthi Mukerjee's childhood memories harken her time and again.

IMPORTANCE OF INDIAN DIASPORIC WRITINGS

Indian Diaspora writings help in many ways and is a powerful network connecting the entire globe. It helps to Re-discover the commonality and inclusiveness of India. This literature works as a channel to strengthen the bonds between the different states of India and of India in relation with the other countries at large.

Diaspora opinions help to break through the past alienation and isolation which caused much injustice and abuse of human rights. It also serves as an outlet to the pent up passions, emotions and feelings providing a ventilator to grievances and grudges. In other words, Diaspora Literature as a cathartic indignation. The welfare and well-being of the overseas Indians, a sense of securities for them and India's greater concern is brought out through their writings.

STRUGGLE FOR IDENTITY IN JHUMPA LAHIRI'S NOVEL "THE NAMESAKE".

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:



Nilanjana Sudeshana Jhumpa Lahiri is an American author born on 11 of July in London 1967, the daughter of Bengali Indian immigrants from the state of West Bengal. Her family moved to the United States when she was two years, Lahiri considers herself an American, stating 'I wasn't born here, but I might as well as be here'. Lahiri has been named as a winner of the 1998 PEN Malama Award

for excellence in the short story category. She is also the recipient of the Pulitzer Award for Fiction.

'The Lowland', 'The namesake' 'Interpreter of maladies', 'In other words' are some of the Famous books written by Lahiri.

Jhumpa Lahiri is one of the most successful of the Indian writers who created the difference among all the women writers. She is a dazzling story teller with a distinctive voice. She is different from other Indian writers writing in English. Most of the first generations writers of Indian fiction are born and brought up in India. But Jhumpa Lahiri's connection with India is through her parents and grandparents. India would appear to her sometimes full of wonders and sometimes full of beggars.

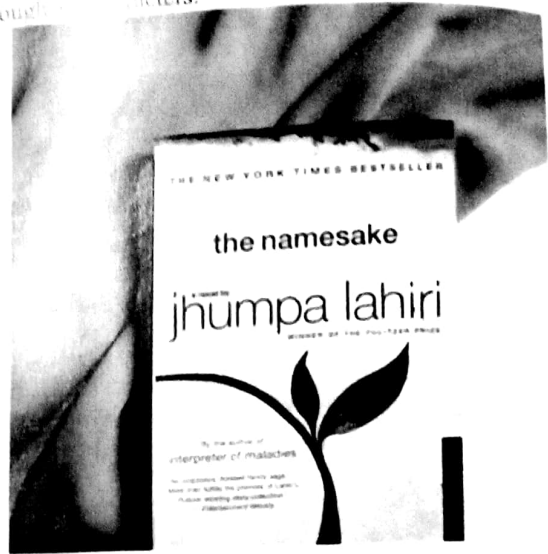
The writers who live outside comment confidently on economic, social, political scenario may appear very often exaggerating or understating. However Lahiri is honest and authentic to her experiences. For Lahiri 'every visit was an emotional see-saw across continent and cultures). Lahiri is an Indian by ancestry, British by Birth, American by immigration. She targets western audience by deliberately portraying the Indian American life.

It is very much appealing that Jhumpa Lahiri is the child of Indian immigrants when we think of literature of Indian Diaspora. Immigration became a blessing in disguise as that makes her Diaspora writer. She crosses borders when she migrates from England, her birth place to the USA and became an American citizen.

The recurrent theme in Lahiri's writings is the bitter-sweet experience of immigrant to America from India. Her characters are often caught in a cultural indeterminate state excited about their new home, but grieving their loss of their country of origin. Lahiri belongs to the second of Indian Diaspora whose on-going quest for identity never seems to end. Her characters also bespeak the glory of common life.

In the novel "Namesake" Lahiri's experiences as growing up as a child of immigrants resemble that of her protagonist Gogol Ganguly. She reflects on the Indian Diaspora and creates a narrative that reveals the inconsistency of the

concept of identity and cultural difference in the space of Diaspora. Lahiri has admitted 'I am lucky that I am between two worlds. I don't really know what a distinct south Asian identity means to me. I don't think about that when I write. I just try to bring my characters to life'. And that is exactly what she does through her characters.



The title of 'The Namesake' reflects the struggle of Gogol Ganguly goes through to identify with his unusual name the novel represents the experience of a very specific community which has no name. The novel centers on the couple and community of Bengali origin in the USA migrated for various reasons. Sociologically they are first and their children are second generation South-Asians immigrants or South Asian Americans

Narrating the story of Ashoka and Ashima Ganguly Lahiri focuses on the cultural dislocations of family immigrants in Calcutta who settle in Boston, to study, work and raise a family.

The great concern of the novel is that Gogol the representative of community without a name, is himself misnamed Gogol. He struggles with a name he is embarrassed by and a heritage either Indian or American, he is not sure either. Gogol wants to redefine himself as a born brought up of USA, rather than to be identified from his parents' Bengali immigrant culture.

In order to self-definition, he abandons the name Gogol and tries to become someone else. The question of identity is crucial when a person is culturally displaced and he cannot correlate with any of the two worlds in which he is living. While experiencing identity confusion from change of names Gogol is nonetheless able to define his identity. Since Gogol is born after his father survives in a horrifying train accident, his father sees Gogol as a pet name as a gesture of his rebirth. However, Gogol does not understand how meaningful his name is when he is young. Gradually he starts accepting the uncommonness of his name which creates problems with his identity when he grows up.

The main problem with Gogol is that he is hyphenated character living in two totally different worlds, the stress of which he can't cope up, he is lost and rifts away from his parents and culture. He does like to be known by a name which is neither an Indian nor American. The name becomes

a problem for Gogol because he feels uncomfortable with the Russian name. It makes him detach himself from his family members. Later on, Gogol develops resentment towards his name during adolescence and decides to use his legal name, Nikhil as an overcoat to escape from Indian culture. Although the name Nikhil brings more confidence Gogol is always present inside him. Soon he feels a sense of familiarity and dissatisfaction about avoiding his roots. "without people in the world to call him Gogol, no matter how long he himself lives, Gogol (angrily) will, once and for all, vanish from the lips of his old ones, and so cease to exist. Yet the thought of this event... terrify him provides no sense of victory, no solace. No solace at all" (Lahiri, 289). He sees himself as Nikhil. Striving to be a fully American yet he fails to eradicate Gogol. By the end he chooses to stick with Gogol, an Indian identity, since he realizes that everything he has gone through from the naming attempt at his birth to his realization behind Gogol. The meaningful fragment to define who he is.

Likewise, Ashima, Gogol's mother arrives with her husband Ashima having no idea of going to a place called Boston, far off from her parents. But she agrees for the marriage since her husband would be there. Ashima often feels upset and homesick and sulks alone in their apartment. She feels emotionally dislocated from the comfortable home of her father, full of loved ones and yearns to go back. Ashima and Ashu try to create Bengal clatching to their roots and culture in America, far from the land of their birth. They speak Bengali and eat only Bengali dishes with their hands and try to restore their traditions. The sense of alienation from the western culture and the land where they live creates a feeling of rootlessness among the children who can neither correlate with the place they are born, nor to the place to which they belong. Parents do their utmost to create Bengali ambience for Gogol and Sonia by arranging Bengali get-togethers. But as the two grow in hybrid culture, part Bengali, part American gingerly respond to their parents efforts to create an oasis of Bengali culture. On one hand, Ashima tells Gogol about the *durga puja*, and makes him memorize Tagore's verses, on the other hand she is conscious of her child being an American student, as she makes him watch Sesame Street and the electric company, to match with the English he uses at school. So Gogol is always sailing in two boats simultaneously.

Multiculturalism suggests the co-existence of a number of different cultures. It does not encourage different ethnic religions, lingual or racial constituents of a partially society or degrade and alienate each other, so that such society is damaged. The 'Namesake' is a perfect reference for Lahiri's story of the strangeness of the Indian immigrants experience in the United States. Gogol desires to blend in the American society and wants to live unnoticed. But he is not viewed as an American by the other Americans even though he is a native born citizen. He wants to pull a wall between his past and his present but finds it difficult. The adoption of Gogol clings a part to live only in the present, but the ghost of Gogol clings to him that he signs his old name unconsciously and does not respond immediately when he is addressed as Nikhil. Gogol tries to carry the burden of two names. He experiences a feeling of being in-between.

Jhumpa Lahiri tries to focus on the issue of identity what she had faced in her childhood. The problem of Gogol's name symbolizes the problems of identity. Nikhil replaces Gogol

when he enters Yale University as a freshman. Here nobody knows his earlier name. He feels relieved and confident. No one knows him as Gogol but Nikhil. Gogol is an outsider in an American society where he does not feel intimacy with Indians. So, who he is, becomes a great problem. Even after making erase his past his failure to assert his identity is seen in his relationship with women. He does not want Ruth or Maxine to meet his parents. Such efforts are made to escape his past identity and heritage.

CONCLUSION

The Namesake convincingly illustrates the lives of both first generation and second generation Indian migrants in the USA. Alienation is a part of experience of the Indian Diaspora and even if people are at home in any part of the world, it does not mean that they will not become victims of the sense alienation. The novel also shows how the immigrants cultural dilemmas in the foreign systems. She has tried to answer all these questions with poise and through the quest of identity of her characters. The second generation Diaspora finds their roots only after undergoing cultural imbalance. Diaspora is all about the creation of new identities, spaces for growth, resolutions of conflicts and the new culture. Lahiri shows that the immigrants in their enthusiasm to stick their own cultural belief, customs gradually imbibed the cultural base of the host country too. Their own children groom to be 'bilingual' and 'bicultural'. face cultural dilemmas and displacement more. But at last Lahiri also shows that all immigrants carve their roots in the course of time and it is not necessary that they should settle in the country of their origin.

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