

**Diasporic Facets in Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies***

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**Abstract**

This article is about culture clash and identity crisis in Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies*. She was born in London UK and during her young age she moved to Rhode Island with her Bengali parents. They have lived in US for more than thirty years. Lahiri observed that her parents retained her sense of touching exile and she herself grew up with incompatible expectations. Her abilities to convey the oldest cultural conflicts in the most sudden passion and to collect the different voices from different characters have the unique qualities and identities captured the attention of a wide audience. The ideas of culture clash, hegemony, identity crisis are Indian themes. The fact is that her parents are Indian immigrants. She has crossed many borders when she migrates. Though her parents are Indians, she is born in America. There she was settled and got America citizenship. It makes her both migrant and diasporic writer. In her works, she focused the concept of migration and the consequences of it. It reflects the painful life of migrants and how much they are missing their homeland/ Motherland.

**Keywords**

Diaspora, hegemony, culture clashes and identity crisis.

The word Diaspora means a huge group of people with similar tradition or heritage or Motherland who have since moved out to one place to another places all over the world. The studies of diaspora hardly fit into the limiting authority of definitions and theories. This concept diaspora is derived from the Greek word Diaspeirein. Here this word diaspora is divided into two-Dia/speirein. The word 'Dia' means about, across and the word the second word speirein means 'to scatter, disperse' which means 'to scatter across/about.'

Jhumpa Lahiri is an Indian-American author. She has written world famous short story collection. *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999) won Pulitzer Prize for fiction in the year 2000. Her first and best novel is *The Namesake* (2003) which is also available in movie form. She was born in London and her parents are from West Bengal. Her whole family moved to the United States when she was two years old. Lahiri thinks herself as an American.

Lahiri's debut short story collection is *Interpreter of Maladies* which is published in the year of 1999. In this collection she discussed the painful life of Indians, sensitive dilemmas and problems of immigrants such as marital affairs, miscarriages, difficulties, disconnection between first and next generation, food poison, lack of understanding and culture clashes.

Lahiri's *Interpretation of Maladies* is based on Diaspora concept which highlights the emotions, tight corners of immigrants and feelings of disperse of the third world experience from the West side people. It is very painful to stay but it is very difficult to come back to the homeland. Jhumpa Lahiri didn't face these types of agony. She led a peaceful life in America. At the young age she has moved there. But newly migrants faced these problems. Our country has fixed a particular landscape. So these collections of short stories are very much attached with Indians.

All the main characters in these stories are suffered by alienation. Das family visited India and they are from America. It is a journey of introspection, expurgation and purification. They are mechanical life for their individual goals. It seems lack of love and lack of relationship. There they met Kapasi and she explained the painful life of them. Here India (Homeland) and Kapasi are metaphorically compared with peace and a kind of solace to their pain.

The word 'Interpreter' is one who executes instructions or suggestions without any preparation and the word Malady means serious problem or disease. Here Kapasi acted as an interpreter of maladies especially emotional pain and burden.

This collection focused how Indians are struggled between the two cultures (India and America)? They don't know which to follow and how to follow? They are the medians. Mr & Mrs. Das were raised in America but their parents got retirement and settled in India.

Das often visited India. On that time he used to bring his children with him in order to see his parents and the Indian culture. They are from India but now they belong to America. They are Indians but they followed western culture which we have seen by their dress and manners. But Mr. Kapasi identified some common heritage which could not change by anyone at any place. But they are unfamiliar to the Indian places. They had a tourist guide book. They have visited Indian places with the help of that book. They were not that much interested as well as they were uncomfortable though it is his parental home but now they are foreigners.

This short story *Interpreter of Maladies* is about American born Indians, Mr. and Mrs. Das were had a trip to India with their three children. The protagonist Mr. Kapasi was an interpreter and tourist guide who took them to the Sun temple at Konark. But Mrs. Das hated American culture. She felt bored and lack of curiosity.

"Mrs. Das gave an impatient sigh, as if she had been traveling her whole life without a pause" (IOM 47).

Mrs. Das suffered malady by her unhappy marriage life which is deep-rooted. Her second son Bobby was not her husband's. She thought that Mr. Kapasi was the right interpreter for her malady and speaks out.

"Eight years of Mr. Kapasi, I've been in pain. I was hoping you could help me better, say the right thing. Suggest some kind of remedy" (IOM 65).

Mr. Kapasi considered it as his duty to assist Mrs. Das and so he asked, "Is it really pain you feel, Mrs. Das, or is it guilt?" (IOM 66). Jhumpa Lahiri's Diasporic characters in her collection of short stories who struggled very hard to occupy the place and to create new images and understanding cultural hybridity.

Mr. Das felt very proud of being an American. He often explained about his country's heritage to Kapasi. Their culture has revealed the bad side of their unhappy marriage life. The sacred thing marriage is broadly divided into two. They are love and marriage. For an example Kapasi's marriage was completely different from Das's. His parents only arranged their marriage. They were living happily. But Das's marriage was love com arranged. Their parents encouraged and allowed the new relationship. They loved at young age and then they got married. But they were failed in their marriage life. They were running terrible life.

Mrs. Das criticized about his sexual attitudes during their courtship. He compelled her to do each thing. It has created infidelity between Mr & Mrs. Das. It has showed the culture clashes of two countries.

Lahiri talks about the confusion of the two different cultural spaces lying across the continents with a master's touch. Though she gifted with a distinct universal ideas, she bring out the successful predicament of the Indians who trapped between two traditions, from her birth and then left behind, and the other encountered but not necessarily learned.

Another element of the culture clash discourse explained the space between first generation and the second generation. That is the culture clash between parents and children. This result about culture is an obsession with intergenerational conflict between immigrant parents and adults. According to Indians, wearing modern dresses, dating and living together were pulled down the heritage of the country. But the young generation of America was influenced by these practices.

Lahiri believed that Indian immigrants faced embarrassing experiences not only in America but in all other dominant nations. Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies* can be considered as a piece of diasporic writing. This is a short story which includes the stories about the lives of settler Indians who struggled to adjust between the traditions of Indian and that they left behind and the entirely different western world that they have to stumble upon every day.

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