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GLIMPSES OF IMMIGRANT PSYCHE IN JHUMPA LAHIRI'S *THE NAMESAKE* AND MANJU KAPUR'S *THE IMMIGRANT*

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Abstract

The word “diaspora” is derived from the Greek verb sperio (to sow) and the preposition dia(over). When applied to humans, the ancient Greek thought of diaspora as migration and colonization. Robin Cohen classifies diaspora into four categories as, Victim Diaspora, Labour Diaspora, Imperial Diaspora, and Trade Diaspora. These two novels come under the trade diaspora and also be known as Professional Diaspora. The immigrant psyche of the protagonists in Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake* and Manju Kapur’s *The Immigrant* is reflected in both novels. The immigrants face various emotional turmoils until they assimilated into dominant culture. Homi. K. Bhabha’s theory has been used to analyze the characters of Gogol and Nina who are living in between the two cultures. The psychological disturbances arise due to contemplation of their immigrant life. The psychological approach of Sigmund Freud has been applied for analyzing the character’s psyche in these novels.

Keywords

Oppression, Immigrant, Estrangement, Cultural Clash, Identity.

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Manju Kapur was born in 1945 in Amristar. She graduated from the Miranda House University College for women in Delhi. She went on to take on MA Degree at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada and M.Phil at Delhi University. Manju Kapur lives in New Delhi, where she is a teacher of English Literature at her alma mater in Miranda House College. Manju Kapur was known for her Feministic approach. Her first work was *Difficult Daughter*, which felched her the common wealth prize for her first novel (Eurasia Section) and went on to become a bestseller in India. Her works are *Difficult Daughter* (1998), *A Married Woman* (2003), *Home* (2006), *The Immigrant* (2009) and *Custody* (2011).

Jhumpa Lahiri was born in London on 11th July 1967. She is the daughter of parents who emigrated from India. As a child, Lahiri moved to Rhode Island where her father worked as a Librarian and her mother as a teacher and there she spent her adolescence. Her real name is Nilanjana Sudeshna Lahiri. When she began Kindergarden, Lahiri's teacher decided to call her pet name, Jhumpa. Because it was easier to pronounce than her proper names. Lahiri received a B.A in English Literature at Barnard College in 1989. She attained M.A in English Literature, Creative Writing and Comparative Studies Literature and the Arts as wells as a Ph.D in Reaissance Studies from Boston University.

Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* deals with the cultural identity of the Protagonist Gogol throughout the novel. In this novel, Gogol is a second generation immigrant who suffers from lack of cultural identity throughout his life for nearly 32years from 1968 to 2000. The name Gogol neither is nor like an Indian and nor like an American, he belongs nowhere. The parents of Gogol,

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who migrated from Bengal try to follow the Bengali culture observing all the Indian Bengali festivals in America along with their other Bengali families. But the children of the Ganguli family follow Bengali culture invariably but they were alone following the American culture by observing American festivals, Christmas, Thanks Giving Day, and Easter.

The Namesake opens in one of the apartments in Boston. In U.S.A Mrs.Ashima Ganguli, the traditional wife of a professor is working in the MIT. Mrs.Ashima Ganguli is also a house –wife who is of simple nature expecting nothing from her husband. She struggles throughout due to language problem and cultural barriers. In America she gives birth to a boy baby and their child has to be named before he is discharge from the hospital for the birth certificate. The couple eagerly expects a letter from the child’s grandmother but they didn’t receive. So Ashoke remember the train accident in which he was saved by his favourite author Russian, Nikolai Gogol. So he kept the name Gogol to his son. Ashima teaches all her Indian culture and religion to Gogol, “She teaches him to memorize a four line children poem by Tagore and the names of the deities adorning the too-handed goddess Durga during puja: Saraswati with her swan and kartik with peacock to her left, Lakshmi with her owl and Ganesh with his mouse to her right. “(TN 54) He remains a hyphenated individual neither Indian nor American. He hates his name Gogol which is neither Indian nor American indicating his psychological state of uncertainty. He argues with his parents about his name.

It would be the name his parents picked out for him, be assured them, the good name they did chosen for him when he was five.

what’s done is done,” his father had said.” it will be a hassle Gogol has in effect, become your good name.”

“But its not even a Bengali name. (TN 99)

According to Homi.K.Bhabha, the noted theorist on post colonialism and diaspora criticism in his *The Location of Culture*, stressed the need to look for ambivalence in-between and third space, as he writes

The need to think beyond narrative of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural difference. These ‘in- between’ spaces provide the terrain for elaborator strategies of self – hood singular or communal the initial new signs of identity and innovative sites of collaboration and contestation, in the art of defining the idea of society itself. (R.K. Mishra 64)

Gogol legally changed his name as Nikhil Gogol Ganguli . So he feels that his name is half – Bengali and half –Russian. The immigrant as, thus confronted with a double consciousness, a dual awareness of being Indian in the U.S. Gogol is an intelligent American boy. And he now prefers to be called himself Nikhil which is tolerable and fashionable to him “.... Still, for the next three weeks, even through his new driver’s license days “Nikhil”(TN 103).He gets a job and starts working as a Architecture. He has an illicit relationship with Ruth and Maxine and he forgot his family values. He went on a vacation with Maxine’s family and not with his family. Gogol life at this stage shows the conflict between his Bengali roots and the Americans he has sprouted wings.

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In panel discussion one person called Gogol as ABCDs. But he has never heard the term ABCD. It is “American born confused deshi”. The other word of C is Conflicted and deshi means “Countryman” from India. The immigrant lives and confused existence as Indian –American, American-Indian overseas- born- Indian, American-born-Indian. Gogol ironically fails to put himself in the bracket to respond to the issues that are plaguing the discourse of identity. He feels like an outsider at such gathering and thinks that these issues have no meaning for him.

Later, according to his mother’s wish he gets married to a Bengali American girl Moushumi. After marriage she refused to write her name as Moushumi Ganguli. He finds that she had an affair with German professor, Dimtri and his marriage ends in divorce.

Gogol was torn in- between two worlds of Bengali and American culture. His mother going was to India for six months. His sister Sonia was about marry, Ben. And his wife also betrayed him so hereafter he will be alone in this world with nobody to care. He was psychologically depressed due to conflicting cultural values. Freud theory of Id, Ego and Super Ego can be related to Gogol’s character. Id has pleasure principles and lawless life. Gogol went to many night parties with his friends. He had worldly pleasures with Ruth, Maxine and many other girls. So he leads a lawless life during his young age. Ego is Aware of Reality. His father’s death makes Gogol Aware of Reality. The relationship with Maxine is not correct and that he cannot belongs to Maxine’s world in same way that she cannot change herself to belong to his way of life. Super Ego has Moral Restriction and Self Image as for both man and women must have moral restriction. When Gogol turns to lead a moral life, his wife becomes adulterous. Marriage is a holy relationship were the life partners must hold on to moral restriction and moral binding in their life. Self Image can be represents thus: Jhumpa Lahiri reflects her own life in her novel. She was born to immigrant Indian parents and she had suffered from two cultures. She has reflected her own experiences through her characters.

He started to read *The Overcoat* by Nikolai Gogol which his father presentation to him on his fourteenth birthday. *The Overcoat* itself is a symbol of the past. *The Overcoat* is the lives both Akaki Akakiyevich and Gogol Ganguli developes as a metaphor which has the power to conceal and conserve and also to bestow life. Towards the end of the novel Gogol is wondering “If he will ever have a child to name” (TN 289). At last, from these struggles Gogol got his self realization in his life later he got his cultural identity and he accept his name as Gogol because of his hyphenated cultural identity he can balance his mind to live a life in-between the two world Bengali and American.

In second novel *The Immigrant*, the Indian middle class family had a safe familiar territory. Manju Kapur expressed her story with tenderness and empathy without reducing any character to a caricature. The protagonists of the novel Nina and Ananda were suffered due to cultural displacement. Ananda changed his character according to Canadian culture. But Nina had passive distresses of Canadian culture and her main distress was food and clothing. According to her husband wishes, she changed her attire. But she doesn’t change her attitude in Canada. Later, she came to know the truth that her husband had illicit relationship after the marriage. Meanwhile her mother was dead. She was totally depressed of her mother’s death and her marital life. Finally

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their marital bond was broken and overcome the feeling of cultural displacement and started to assimilate. Then she joined in the University of New Brunswick as a teacher and she become a Economically Independent Woman in Canada.

The Immigrant opens with Nina who lives with her widowed mother in a shabby flat at Jangpura in New Delhi. She is a lecturer at Miranda House where she studied. She feels frustrated with the impoverished life she is leading. Nina's frustration arises more from her realization that the prospect of marriage and having a home of her own is growing bleaker with every passing year as she is on the verge of her thirtieth birthday. Later a visit to an astrologer sets her life on a different path through an arranged introduction with an NRI dentist. Nina was a perfect mix of East and West. Her devotion to her mother and willingness to her mother and willingness to consider an arranged marriage introduction proved an Indian values to her. While her tastes, reading, thoughts, manner of speech all revealed western influences. She always told her friend Zenobia, that is, "Marriage is a question of adjustment" (TI 75).

Ananda's parents were dead. He went to Halifax to study and he became a dentist. He was a NRI man in Canada. The immigrants or the expatriates, in most cases, are citizens of two countries. So they somehow veer between their social and cultural identities which are in an unstable and fluid. Despite living in a foreign land for a considerable amount of time, their identities are connected directly or indirectly with their old homelands. Manju Kapur said about NRIs, thus;

This was an idea I had for a long time-partly as a response to the numerous NRIs (Non-Resident Indian) that any Indian is witness to. They strike one as not quite Indian, yet not completely foreign, they inhabit an in-between space that they themselves are all too aware. (Chowdhury 33)

Nina and Ananda were married according to Indian custom of arrange marriage. Arranged relationships have long been a staple in Indian. After three months she went to Canada and Ananda received her. She came alone to Halifax airport. Her first cultural displacement was in airport they asked many questions to her and she was treated like a criminal, she thinks that place was a new world to her. She imagines that marriage will bring all the happiness in her life. But it was disappointment to her.

After Ananda went work she was alone in the silent room. She reads many books, clean the rooms and listen the music. But rarely she watched the T.V. programs. Sometimes she went shopping but she didn't buy anything. A considerable part of the narrative deals with Nina's feeling of loneliness in Halifax. Kapur generalizes the predicament of the girls, who embark on a new land.

Nina's reactions to being plucked out of crowded New Delhi and she deposited in the comparatively empty streets of a provincial city in Canada. Her adaptation is a slower more circumspect process than that of her husband. Having exchanged her busy professional life for the solitude of a wife. Nina was appalled by how rarely friends and relatives in Canada visits each other. For months, she refuses to dress in revealing western clothes. Wherever she goes she wore only salwar and sarees. But Ananda thinks that her wife should wear western clothes.

In the first generation of immigrants, migration creates alienation, nostalgia of the past and

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rootlessness at the place of migration as he or she is still clinging to the homeland, of which Makarand Paranjape makes apt observation in the following words, there is a clinging to the old identity and a resistance to making transition. Again it is the sense of loss or alienation from the homeland that Homi.K. Bhabha calls displacement or dislocation which creates a position of live 'in between' or 'living on the border' which Bhabha discusses in his theory. *The Location of Culture*. The displacement also gives rise to the concept of double consciousness and unhomeliness which are the major features of diasporic situation.

As an Immigrant fly across a ocean they shed their old clothing, because clothes make the man and new ones help ease the transition. Men's clothing has less international variation, their change is not so drastic. But those women who are not used to wearing western clothes find themselves in a dilemma. They have to sacrifice habit, style and self-perception. The choice is hard and in Nina's case it took months to wear down her resistance. The stiff blue material pinched her waist and hurt her crotch. She tried squatting in them and she was uncomfortable with her western dress. She couldn't live in such clothes for the rest of her life. Her attire was changed, but she doesn't change her attitude in Canada.

Ananda had asked Nina to call him as Andy. But she refused it. Because she thinks it was foreign, Christian, western and to use the world Andy and own home would be to carry alienation into bedroom. So after Immigrant life even name also changed. After she came to Canada she not able to do her ritual Hinduism also and Nina feels this was a host country to her.

Ananda went to California because he had medical problem related to intimate function and he was taking treatment in California for two weeks. Meanwhile Nina got part time job in library. Ananda mused, "It was marriage too that had given him Mandy, in his mind, his wife and his mistress were inextricably linked" (Kumar 179). He loved his wife but he didn't want to feel that was the only one in the world he could have sexual relationship. But Nina submits herself to her husband in the name of love. She got news that her mother was dead. So she went India and again she came back to Canada with loneliness. After she came and she saw a yellow hair in their bed. Then only she came to know her husband had illicit relationship with a white woman, Mandy.

She was already depressed, her mother's death and understood that for her martial life was breaking. Because of all these reason she had Psyche problem. According to Freud's theory, Id, Ego and super Ego were related to Nina's character.

In Id it had a Pleasure principle and Lawless. Her husband was a worldly pleasurable man and he had Lawless life. According to Pre-Freudian he called as "devil" in man. But now in the hand of Ananda, Nina was a toy to be used, abused and misused, then finally to be thrown from the human phase. In Ego it had Aware of reality. Nina came to know the aware of reality which was about her life and culture in Canada. But she can't able to change her Indian Culture to Canadian Culture. Super Ego it had Self Image, Moral restriction. The Self Image is about author. From the experience of the Manju Kapur's Immigrant life, she wrote this novel from her characters. In this novel Nina had moral restriction but Ananda not had any moral restriction in his life. She had moral binding but because of situation, her life was changed. Then later only she came out of the Cultural Displacement and got Self-Realization. Finally their marriage bond was broken and she leaves her husband. She got job in the New Brunswick, as a teacher.

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Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* and Manju Kapur's *The Immigrant* are the Diasporic novel. In these novels the protagonist Nina and Gogol had their cultural displacement and cultural identity in diasporic situation. Later from their self realization, they solved problems from their own struggling in diasporic life. They became an American citizen and beholds Indian culture and values. Finally they proves to be an ideal role model to all whose are immigrants struggling in two nation, cultures, tradition and moral value.

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