

Idea of Trishanku: Fractured Identity in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* (Diasporic literature)

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Abstract

The proposed research paper will discuss about the plight of diasporic persons' by using the term Trishanku proposed by Uma Parameswaran to indicate their condition in respective host country. The host country as the symbol of prosperity and opportunities but as the same time it becomes the space for in-betweenness, cultural dislocation, fractured identity, nostalgia, homesickness, inferiority, otherness, rootlessness . There are many Indian born writers who write about their own state of mind after leaving their homeland like Amitav Ghosh, V.S.Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Bharati Mukherjee, Meena Alexander, Bapsi Sidhwa, Kiran Desai and Jhumpa Lahiri. Jhumpa Lahiri is one of them who writes about his/her condition by using his/her mouthpiece in their works like in *The Namesake* she talks about the first generation diaspora and the second generation diaspora_ the state of being and becoming; in her own life she is also termed as second generation diasporic person like the character Gogol .

KEYWORD: Trishanku, Fractured Identity, Nostalgia, Multiculturalism, In –Betweenness, Rootlessness, Hybridity, Dislocation, Otherness.

The term Diaspora is derived from the Greek word 'diasperio' means 'to scatter about'. The Diaspora is first used for Jews in 586Bc. Diaspora is all about that persons' who are away from their homeland, still not fitted in their host country, feel the

Otherness, sense of belonging to their native land , or always in state of in- betweenness. Diaspora can be forced or voluntary, Jews are forced from their native land.

The very idea of Trishanku is proposed by Uma Parmeshwaran . Trishanku is mythological character from the Balkand of Ramayana. He is the person who either belongs to Sea, Earth or Sky. Basically he belongs to nowhere; he lives without any geographical markers. Like the persons' of Diaspora who are also living in – between states with their fractured identity.

Like Salam Rushdie said in his essay *Imaginary Homeland* about Diasporic person “They are indulged to deal in broken mirrors, some of wreckages have been lost”.

Jhumpa Lahiri is a second generation diasporic Indian American writer who was born to Bengali parents. Through her novel *The Namesake* (2003), she dealt with the problems of diasporic persons'. The title of the text itself shows the relics of Fractured identity, she talks about it through the mouthpiece of Gogol who faces many problems due to his name .In diaspora the first generation and second generation immigrants suffer at different level like Ashima/ Monu and Ashoke/ Mittu have feel Alienated due to language , cultural , nostalgic about their past and Space is their main problem, being a housewife Ashima suffers more than Ashoke like when she is pregnant, she considers herself Other due to her pregnancy period , but the problem of their children are others, they serve as a bridge between east and west , they are always in states of nowhere.

When Gogol born according to Bengali tradition the right to gave the name to newborn is to oldest member of family in which letter the good name arrives its got late and Ashoke gave the name Gogol(pet name) which is Russian name. In Bengali tradition every person has two names one for their dear ones and other for official use. When Gogol was in his kindergarten his parents wanted to change his pet name Gogol to good name Nikhil. Gogol as a child did not bother about his name and did not understand the reason behind having two names. He feels uneasy to change his name, so refuse to change it and remains as Gogol. He is least

bother about the cultural functions of Bengali tradition, on the other hand he is also suffering as being ABCD (American Born Confused Desi), the term was usually used for the second generations 'diasporic person by the first generations immigrants, the root of the word 'Desi', which means one's homeland and the state of Confusion is about Being and Becoming.

The immigrants and their children are completely opposite to each other. On the one hand the first generation of immigrants want that their child carry over their cultural baggage always. On the other hand the second generation who was born in host country wanted to themselves fit in new culture, the culture of host country like Gogol and Sonia much like Christmas than Durga puja. They are merely became the sandwich between two culture.

Like the writer herself says in an editorial in *Newsweek*, Lahiri claims that she has "felt intense pressure to be two things, loyal to the old world and fluent in the new" because their parents always try to teach them values of Indian culture and tradition but they did not understand it completely because they are not born there, they visit their only for sometimes, like the character Ashima Ganguli teaches their children the poems of Tagore, performs Durga puja but Gogol and Sonia like more Christmas than Durga puja. It simply shows the generation gap.

As Lahiri herself says of her interview about the concept of Home, "I was not grow up there; I was not a part of things: we often visited however we didn't have actually there. We were clutching at a world that was never fully with us, and it was incompletely with us." Like the writer the characters of her novel Gogol is also facing the same problems like when he calls his apartment as Home but her mother Ashima did not ready to accepted it by calling room as a home because for her Home is her native place even not the place which she has been living for twenty years in America.

When Gogol moves to Yale, he completely changed his name Gogol to Nikhil, through this metamorphosis he feels more American than before. He started adapt American life style; the change of name itself gave him courage to do everything which was not suppose to do by a Bengali boy. Through this action writer indirectly

wants to show the psychological dilemma, hyphenated state, identity crisis, multiculturalism in second generation diasporic person. Though Gogol changed his name but he always afraid of being caught by his friend about his previous name. He neither fully enjoys the identity of American nor Indian. He never completely cut off from his roots, for his parents he is always Gogol not Nikhil which reminds him about his past and creates the state of confusion rather he is an American or Indian or Russian because of his name. Gogol metaphorically serves as a mythological character Trishanku because he is always in Between state, basically belongs to nowhere. At the end of the novel he begins to understand the significance of his name after his father's death. It shows the hybridity, cultural dislocation Otherness and being insecure of his identity in host country.

Conclusion

Jhumpa Lahiri portrays the very idea of diaspora through the novel *The Namesake*. It shows the generation conflicts, fractured identity, idea of Trishanku through the character Gogol by presenting several incidents of his life like due to his name he is always in state of confusion which leads him to idea of fractured identity and reminds the state of Trishanku . He is always stuck in east and west and sets an example of being and becoming.

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