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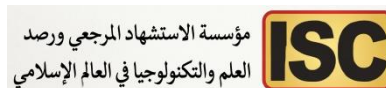
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## Deciphering the Unfamiliar: Generational Conflict and Cultural Transformation in the Novels of

Jhumpa Lahiri

Hussein Mnahi Munshid

Thi-Qar Governorate Education Directorate / Shatrah

Education Department

Open Educational College / Thi-Qar Study Centre / Al-Shatrah  
Branch

Email: [hussein\\_manahi@ijsu.edu.iq](mailto:hussein_manahi@ijsu.edu.iq)

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0009-8952-4030>

### Abstract:

This article aims to discuss the differences, traditions, and transformations described in Jhumpa Lahiri's immigrant-themed writings, which are based on the author's personal experience as an immigrant. The author examines immigrant identity, which is determined by the conflict between preserving traditions and adapting to the new environment. The problem posed in this article is how Jhumpa Lahiri describes the conflict between the need to preserve traditions and adapt to the conditions of the new environment in the stories and novels of immigrant families. An analysis of the text of Lahiri's works will allow exploring how the author constructs the immigrant consciousness about tradition and change through various narrative techniques. For this purpose, the books *The Namesake* (2003), *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999), and *Unaccustomed Earth* (2008) will be examined. Moreover, this study will highlight such aspects of these books as transformation, differences between generations, and the redefinition of the

concept of tradition. In addition, to understand the author's immigrant consciousness, post-colonial and diaspora studies will be applied in the analysis of Lahiri's writings. Consequently, this article demonstrates, based on the analysis of these books, that in the narratives about immigrant families, transformation is presented as a dialectical process in which the conflict between the two opposing forces of immigrant identity, namely, the desire to preserve traditions and adapt to the new environment, manifests. Consequently, by presenting such a concept of transformation, Lahiri problematizes this aspect of the immigrant experience and thereby emphasizes its specificity for each immigrant.

**Keywords:** immigrants, tradition, transformation, identity, diaspo

### Introduction

Jhumpa Lahiri was born in London and raised in Rhode Island, where her Bengali parents immigrated when she was three years old. Hence, the distance between Lahiri's biography and fiction is very small, as she grew up in two cultures. Perhaps this is why the literary public has accepted her so warmly and made her a spokeswoman for Indian Americans at the first

opportunity. Indeed, her first collection of stories, *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999), which earned her the Pulitzer Prize in 2000, made her a celebrity (Field, 2004).

However, her name became even more popular as the immigrant experience, which is the theme of Lahiri's works, began to be increasingly recognized as a significant phenomenon in American cultural history. Indian American families are the background for all stories in *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999) and *The Namesake* (2003); thus, Lahiri's books form a part of the immigrant narrative.

This paper aims to demonstrate how Lahiri, in her works *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999) and *The Namesake* (2003), portrays the conflict between immigrant parents and children and the struggle between two cultures. Lahiri's protagonists are immigrants who "have to reconcile their identities in the process of adapting to a new society" (Bhugra & Becker, 2005). Therefore, her stories are relatable as the conflict between the cultures is something that every person who immigrated and adapted to a new environment experienced.

Moreover, Lahiri's contribution has significantly impacted the immigrant narrative in American literature. Indeed, *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999), which demonstrated Indian Americans' contribution to American Life and culture, made Indian Americans part of the American mainstream culture. Lahiri's stories depict the immigrant experience, which is a recurring theme in literature of various cultures. Thus, Lahiri's contribution to American Literature is noteworthy as she managed to portray the immigrant experience in a way that was understandable to a universal audience (Brada-Williams, 2004). This paper analyses how Lahiri portrays the immigrant experience in her stories.

### **The Problem Statement**

Though Jhumpa Lahiri is undoubtedly one of the most prominent representatives of the immigrant experience, the previous literary criticism lacks research on the connection between adaptability, conflict, and multiple perspectives in her works. Specifically, the ways in which Lahiri portrays the conflict between maintaining cultural traditions and adapting to new cultural norms experienced by both first-generation immigrants and their children separately and together within the same family is worth exploring. Hence, this paper asks the following question: How does Lahiri depict the tension between maintaining cultural traditions and adapting to new cultural norms experienced by both first-generation immigrants and their children separately and together within the same family in *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999), *The Namesake* (2003), and *Unaccustomed Earth* (2008)? How does Lahiri's tension between tradition and transformation relate to the immigrant identity as an ongoing negotiation rather than an endowment or a narrative of assimilation within immigrant families? Therefore, this paper will examine how Lahiri depicts the tension between adapting to the culture of the country of immigration and maintaining cultural traditions within immigrant families through her stories in *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999), *The Namesake* (2003), and *Unaccustomed Earth* (2008). Additionally, this paper will explore the author's perspective on tradition and transformation and immigrant identity in general.

### Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is determined by the fact that it tries to unite the various strands of criticism on Lahiri's works, which have so far been going separately. Indeed, there has been much discussion of the themes of assimilation in *The Namesake* (2003), silence and miscommunication in *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999), hybridity and nostalgia in *Unaccustomed Earth* (2008) (Field, 2004).

Lahiri's works are better understood when viewed through the lens of post-colonialism and diaspora studies; hence, this paper will unite the critical heritage about Lahiri's works by using the concepts of (Bhabha, 1994) and (Said, 1993), further developed by (Glick Schiller, Basch, & Blanc-Szanton, 1992). This approach is helpful in examining the immigrant identity as it portrays the immigrant experience realistically, as the process of assimilation and adherence to one's cultural traditions is not mutually exclusive but occurs simultaneously on different levels. Finally, the relevance of this study is determined by the significance of the subject matter. The immigrant experience is universal in that it can be found in the background of almost every family, regardless of where and when it was formed. The tension between generations and cultures, which is so prominent in Lahiri's stories, is something that almost every person can identify with since everyone has had to face it at some point in their lives. Therefore, this study aims to contribute to the existing body of research on immigrants in both academic and popular culture (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2015).

### Objective

According to postcolonial and diaspora theories, the article will demonstrate that Lahiri portrays transformation as a dynamic interaction between two temporalities: past and present. The presentation of identity, assimilation, and emotional and cultural landscapes that have been in Lahiri's fiction was achieved through a textual and thematic analysis of the works *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999), *The Namesake* (2003), and *Unaccustomed Earth* (2008). Indeed, the article will explore how Lahiri wrote about generational tensions in immigrant families and portrayed the conflict between maintaining cultural traditions and the transformative impact of migration on subsequent generations.

### Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study will be formed by post-colonial and diaspora theories. Edward Said's post-colonial theory will help to highlight how the author's characters negotiate colonial oppression, diaspora, and stratification of cultures to create their own space and identity. Said's theory explains the difficulties of being and representation for the diasporic community (Turner, 2004).

The concept of Diaspora is useful for this study since it helps to recognize that there is an incessant need for transforming identity, and, as it is formulated by Lahiri, to understand that the second-generation immigrants are transforming their own identities, negotiating them, rather than inheriting (Brah, 1996). Brah's concept of diasporic consciousness, committed to multiple cultures, allows the reader to become aware of the ambiguity of commitment as well as its

consequences, which are especially evident when the characters try to adapt the old cultural traditions to the new environment (Brah, 1996).

For this study, the concept of transnationalism will be expanded by referring to the works of (Glick Schiller, Basch, & Blanc-Szanton, 1992) and (Vertovec, 2009). Transnationalism will serve as a conceptual tool to interpret the transnationality of the immigrant characters' identities who are placed in the context of global cultural exchange, communication, and adaptation processes. In other words, the immigrant characters' culture is understood in the broader context of the different cultural settings in which these characters live now. The second concept that will be used for the analysis of Lahiri's novels is the concept of generationality, which will be helpful to interpret the different strategies of first- and second-generation immigrants in their attempts to negotiate their identities (Vertovec, 2009).

The concept of transnationalism, which was developed by (Glick Schiller, Basch, & Blanc-Szanton, 1992), will be useful for this study to analyze the transnational elements of belonging in Lahiri's narratives. Transnationalism enables us to consider Lahiri's immigrant families in the context of cultural exchange, communication, and adaptation to different cultural environments. More specifically, the cultural identity of the immigrant family in Lahiri's novels is negotiated through interactions with the host society. The concept of generational identity is also relevant for the analysis of Lahiri's novels since it helps to understand the differences in cultural strategies used by first- and second-generation immigrants. It was stated by (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004) that transnational practices may lead to acculturation and transformation of cultures in immigrant families, and each generation of the family may negotiate its own relationship with the host country.

To summarize, the theory that will be used for the analysis of Lahiri's novels is the theory of transnationalism. To be more exact, the transnational theory helps to see her fiction as the continuous negotiation of identities between old and new cultures. In other words, Lahiri's novels show how the characters negotiate their sense of belonging, memory, and transformation in a multicultural environment (Vertovec, 2009).

## Previous Studies

A first scholarly reading of *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999) is united by the sense of failed connections. Indeed, ( Brada-Williams, 2004) points to the unity provided by the recurring motif of care and neglect, as well as communication and miscommunication that grounds most stories in the collection. The article by ( Brada-Williams, 2004) focuses on the immigrant as an outsider. The character of Boori Ma is presented as an unhappy and lonely immigrant. *This Blessed House* (1999) shares the preoccupation with the conflict between the immigrant character who cherishes Indian traditions and the one who aspires to Western values.

A second group of scholars reads the same theme of communication and miscommunication in *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999) through the prism of marriage and intergenerational relationships. (Kapoor, 2020) examines the theme of marriage in *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999), focusing on the immigrant couple's inability to communicate with each other. (Bhardwaj, Gupta, Haider, & Mishra, Ink

and Exile: A Multidisciplinary Exploration of Diaspora, 2024) take a similar approach to the theme of arranged marriage in Lahiri's stories, focusing on the ability of the bride and the bridegroom to build understanding and respect. (Ishtiaq, Yasmin, & Kamal, 2024) explore the theme of communication and miscommunication in Lahiri's When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine (1999), focusing on the disconnect between the child narrator and his politically active parents.

A third group of scholars reads Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999) through the prism of cultural negotiations. Scholars note that Lahiri's stories are characterized by cultural hybridity, though with varying success. (Shahmoradi & Zarrinjooee, 2024), relying on Stuart Hall and Michael Ryan, examine the theme of cultural displacement in Lahiri's fiction, noting that her characters engage in transcultural discourse and negotiate cultural differences (Pourgharib & Rezaeian, 2026) take a similar approach to the theme of hybridity in Lahiri's fiction, relying on Bhabha's concept of hybridity and the Third Space to discuss the ways in which her characters negotiate their cultural identities. (Munos, 2013), on the other hand, reads Lahiri's cultural hybridity through the prism of dualistic binaries. According to Munos, Lahiri's fiction reflects the immigrant's inability to reconcile the two cultures, which is why her characters' identities remain fragmented. The tension between the views represented by (Shahmoradi & Zarrinjooee, 2024) and (Pourgharib & Rezaeian, 2026) on the one hand, and (Munos, 2013) on the other, will be the focus of my analysis, which will attempt to demonstrate that Lahiri's fiction indeed reflects the immigrant's dualistic view of his or her identity.

To complete the analysis, I plan to rely on a variety of scholarly resources. First, to examine the themes of assimilation and cultural adaptation in Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999), I will use the concepts of segmented assimilation developed by (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). To examine the immigrant child's view of his or her parents, I will rely on the findings of (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2015). To discuss the immigrant's ability to overcome the burden of his or her cultural heritage, I will use (Nagel, 2003) analysis of Gogol's relationships with Ruth and Maxine in *The Namesake* (2003). To examine the immigrant parents' view of their child's cultural identity, I will rely on the findings of (Luthar & Latendresse, 2005) on parent-child interactions. To interpret Lahiri's fictional immigrants' psyche, I will use the findings of (Bhugra & Becker, 2005) on migrant health. To discuss Gogol's desire to shed his cultural heritage and the desire to return to it, I will rely on (Illouz, 2012) analysis of the immigrant's in-between man. To discuss the child's multilingual identity, I will use (Pavlenko, 2006) findings on code-switching and the immigrant child's identity. Finally, to discuss the immigrant's view of his or her cultural identity, I will rely on (Bhandari, 2021) analysis of language as a cultural marker and (Harehdasht, Ataee, & Hajjari, 2018) examination of the sense of cultural completeness.

The main purpose of this study is to identify the patterns of the alienated belonging of immigrant characters to the new culture in Lahiri's fiction. The analysis will be based on the stories included in the novel *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999). In particular, the themes of isolation, cultural clashes including food and language barriers, generational conflict, and identity negotiation will be explored using the concepts of transnationalism and segmented assimilation. The main hypothesis is that through the themes of in-between belonging of her characters, Lahiri

comments on the complexity of the immigrant experience and its uniqueness for each generation. To support this hypothesis, the conflict between the immigrant parents' desire to preserve their culture and the children's desire to become fully American will be analyzed using the concepts of cross-generational divide and segmented assimilation theory.

### **Delimitations:**

The study is limited to the author's fiction: *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999), *The Namesake* (2003), and *Unaccustomed Earth* (2008). Her subsequent writings, her essays, her Italian works, and the 2006 film adaptation of *The Namesake* (2003) are beyond the scope of this study, if they are mentioned at all.

It is limited to postcolonial, diaspora, and transnational approaches (theory by (Said, 1993), (Bhabha, 1994), (Brah, 1996), (Glick Schiller, Basch, & Blanc-Szanton, 1992) and (Vertovec, 2009)), excluding other approaches such as feminism, trauma, psychoanalysis, or Marxism.

It is limited to the motif of generational conflict/tradition and change, and the particular focus on the immigrant Indian-American (Bengali) family (in its various manifestations) as a subject of representation. Other important topics connected to Lahiri's writing are excluded, such as the aftermath of 9/11 and related racism against South Asians in general, or her prose aesthetics (with the limited and incidental references to Lahiri's other works).

The study is limited to the immigrant Indian (Bengali) American experience as depicted in Lahiri's works, and does not make comparisons to other immigrant writers or to other South Asian American authors, despite the thematic affinity. The theoretical framework underpinning the analysis (post-colonial and diaspora/transnational studies) applies to all immigrant writers.

As for methodology, it is limited to close readings of the excerpts from Lahiri's fiction; the study does not employ reader-response or empirical methodologies. Lahiri's biography is used in the study only insofar as it informs her art. Furthermore, it is limited temporally to Lahiri's creative period covered by the three books under analysis: 1999-2008. Lahiri's early career before *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999) and her later works (after *Unaccustomed Earth* (2008), including her recent turn to writing in Italian) are beyond the scope of this study.

### **Material and Method**

The materials used for this study include Lahiri's own works of fiction: *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999), *The Namesake* (2003), and *Unaccustomed Earth* (2008). The latter two are analyzed in detail; the first one is included as part of the chronological frame. In particular, the following stories are read closely: *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999), *A Real Durwan*, *Mrs. Sen's*, *Sexy*, *This Blessed House*, *A Temporary Matter*, *The Third and Final Continent*, *When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine*. The entire novel *The Namesake* (2003) is subjected to a close reading. Additionally, the study relies on postcolonial, diaspora/transnational theories and scholarly criticism of Lahiri's work.

The methods used for this study involve close reading of the texts analyzed. The analysis is qualitative but theory-driven, relying on post-colonial and diaspora/transnational theoretical

frameworks. The analysis focuses on identifying and interpreting patterns of intergenerational conflict/tradition and change. It does not test any particular hypothesis.

## Findings

An analysis of the plot of the works of Jhumpa Lahiri allows identifying four ideas that help explain how the conflict between the first and second generations, tradition, and transformation is displayed in the story.

Tradition is presented as something first-generation immigrants hold on to in order to retain their identity, which serves them as security and protection, though rarely followed and questioned. Indeed, Ashima in *The Namesake* (2003) cannot imagine living otherwise than following Bengali traditions; however, she admits that the only reason to do so is her loneliness in America. Secondly, Mrs. Sen feels that being a part of a particular culture is the only way to fill the empty space within herself, which is why she moved to America, as it was the only place around her that shared her culture – the Indian one. Hence, both characters cannot live in America without Bengali traditions, yet they recognize this and try to fill the empty space within themselves by holding on to what they love.

The second generation, embodied in Gogol, wants tradition to re-establish itself as the only way to belong – to plant roots firmly in the new continent. An analysis of the protagonist's desires and attitude towards cultural heritage discloses that the more he tries to get rid of Indian cultural elements and traditions, the more his Indian identity is imposed on him. In other words, the second generation is destined to perceive culture and cultural heritage as something they have to shed off to belong to their own culture, which, eventually, transforms their attitude and relations with their roots. Hence, it becomes evident that transformation occurs when the second-generation immigrants start perceiving their cultural identity on their own terms, as Gogol does when he rejects his father's principles on his deathbed. As a result, it turns out that the immigrant identity is multifaceted, as the second generation seeks to distance themselves from the first generation's cultural heritage, yet it remains a part of them.

The conflict between the first and second generations, as well as between different cultures, is revealed through ineffective communication between people of these categories. This technique allows the author to show how these characters manage to coexist, as demonstrated by the plot of *The Namesake* (2003). Thus, Mr. Kapasi and Mrs. Das represent the first-generation immigrant category in the story, yet they cannot correctly assess the situation and misinterpret each other. What is more, Shoba and Shukumar, the mother and father of Gogol, see themselves as a united family; however, they cannot live together as they try to cover up their child's death by claiming she is missing. They do so to avoid the tragic fate, as the community would treat them differently. The reason why such situations occur is tied to the same cause of conflict between different cultures, namely, people's inability to recognize and respect the needs and desires of others and to accept a different approach to life. Therefore, Lahiri resorts to illustrating the conflict between first- and second-generation immigrants, as well as different cultures, through ineffective communication between these people to show that these characters can hardly coexist due to their differences.

The institution of marriage, central to *The Namesake* (2003) and other stories by Jhumpa Lahiri, once again brings to the fore the themes of tradition, transformation, and conflict of cultures. It is interesting to note that marriage is generally presented as an unconditional institution that binds people together regardless of their cultural affiliation or differences. First of all, the union of Shoba and Shukumar, the narrator's and Mala's marriage, as well as the marriage of Twinkle and Sanjeev, reveals that these unions were built on a foundation of compromise. Although Shoba and Shukumar hardly love each other, they stay together for the sake of their daughter, while the narrator and Mala somehow manage to find a way to compromise without criticizing the other for their cultural affiliation, considering themselves united by Indian traditions. By contrast, Twinkle is constantly harassed by her husband, which shows that the institution of marriage in Lahiri's stories is presented as a source of violence in addition to conflict and differences. Thus, it becomes evident that every relationship is built on a firm compromise because there are always differences, be it cultural or otherwise, and these differences can hardly be eliminated. On the contrary, it is necessary to come to terms with them in order to achieve an internal balance. In addition, it is mentioned that arranged marriage used to be a common custom, which is presented in a positive light since it helped to resolve differences, as the union of the narrator and Mala proved. Therefore, Lahiri seems to promote the idea of finding a way to find peace within oneself; she resorts to the depiction of misunderstandings as the source of conflict between representatives of different cultures and ages, which, in fact, is the source of conflict between first- and second-generation immigrants. Hence, the author's idea is that two people can unite only if they give up on something, be it cultural differences or differences in the perception of one culture. In addition, people need to feel unique in terms of their cultural affiliation to be able to unite. Consequently, it emerges that differences are what make people come together since they create a sense of individuality, which no one else can replace.

Overall, an analysis of the plot of the stories by Jhumpa Lahiri allows for identifying the key ideas that seem to be central to the author. In particular, it is revealed that she presents tradition as an element that is indispensable for the first-generation immigrants, as it serves them as a source of identity, while the second generation tries to eliminate it from their lives. Secondly, Lahiri resorts to the depiction of misunderstandings as a way to show how people of different ages, first- and second-generation immigrants, cannot coexist due to their differences. Finally, the institution of marriage is presented as an unattainable goal that unites people regardless of their cultural affiliation or differences. Hence, the author seems to promote the idea of mutual understanding and acceptance regardless of the differences that make each person unique.

## Discussion

This discussion will present a countervailing view to the critical position advanced in the article *The Namesake* (2003) by Jhumpa Lahiri on generational conflict in Lahiri's work, which is viewed as developmental, first-generation cultural preservation leading to second-generation hybridity.

### **Diaspora as Perpetual Third Space, Not Progression Toward Synthesis**

The critical position under review reads generational conflict in Lahiri's fiction as developmental: first comes preservation of the heritage culture, then hybridity. The discussion will argue that in Lahiri's work, diaspora is presented as a perpetual occupation of Third Space. By this, the discussion will suggest that the characters of Lahiri's stories and novels, first- and second-generation immigrants, cannot occupy a position of either pure host or pure guest; they inhabit the Third Space as people who engage in continuous and often difficult negotiation to establish a place for themselves within a broader cultural context. What the critics might have seen as resolving the hybrid identity of the second generation is, in fact, another set of cultural material that these characters negotiate. In other words, second-generation immigrants have their own cultural tensions to negotiate, even if it is different from the ones experienced by the first-generation ones ( Brada-Williams, 2004). Indeed, it is stated that diaspora communities in literature and real life alike have been characterized as Third Space by Homi Bhabha (Kapoor, 2020).

### **Gogol: Naming as the Third Space Made Literal**

The discussion will utilize Gogol as an example of negotiating the Third Space, who was given the Russian writer's name Gogol by his father, Ashoke, and later renamed Nikhil. In fact, Gogol's name is the only reference to Third Space discourse in the entire novel. Neither the name Gogol nor the name Nikhil has any reference to the First and Second Spaces because the names are appropriations: Gogol is the name of a Russian writer that Ashoke's family adopted and Americanized to Nikhil (Bhabha, 1994). Gogol's name is doubly appropriated: it is Indian in origin but was appropriated by Ashoke and later Americanized by Gogol himself. Appropriation is one of the mechanisms of negotiating the Third Space. This is another way in which Lahiri's fiction explores the burden of diasporic belonging to the Third Space. Gogol's name reminds him that he has no authentic or pure cultural belonging, either in India or in the USA. Gogol is a Third Space dweller (Gogol/Nikhil) who was invented just as his name was invented. Therefore, Gogol's adulthood is not a self-discovery but a slow and steady acclimatisation to the burden of instability and authenticity, which is a far more nihilistic view than what many critics attribute to Gogol's coming to terms with himself and his heritage.

### **Kapasi and Das: From Otherness to Said's Contrapuntal Reading**

The discussion will turn to Kapasi and Mrs. Das to illustrate how the position of an interpreter within the framework of Edward Said's "contrapuntal reading" of Lahiri's fiction can be used to understand the position of first-generation immigrants (Said, 1993). The discussion will suggest reading Kapasi's relationship to Mrs. Das from the perspectives of both the interpreter and the interpreted, which is entirely consistent with Said's contrapuntal approach to reading post-colonial literature. In brief, Said's approach suggests that in order to comprehend post-colonial literature, we need to develop "a text in another text" (Said, 1993). Therefore, applying a contrapuntal reading to Kapasi and Mrs. Das would mean reading the story from the perspectives of both the interpreter and the interpreted simultaneously.

Therefore, when reading the story from Kapasi's vision, it is no longer he who is the subject of interpretation but Mrs. Das – in other words, we no longer hear Mrs. Das's thoughts as Mrs. Das

but always in relation to the doctor, since Kapasi interprets everything. He tells them in the context of what the doctor wants to hear. The same goes for Kapasi's thoughts about Mrs. Das and his private life (wife, son). They are all filtered through his interpretation of Mrs. Das, which is why her (in)famous confession touches him so deeply. Just as the doctor only sees Kapasi as an interpreter, so Mrs. Das only sees his Kapasi – interprets him, rather than the other way around.

## Conclusion

The conclusion asserts that Lahiri's fiction negates the critical interpretation of her work in terms of the first-generation immigrant preservation followed by the synthesis represented by the second generation, with the third generation finally acquiring its own unique features. Instead, by returning to Bhabha's Third Space, it argues that each generation inhabits the same unending cycle of negotiations as the previous one, only with different material underpinnings; Gogol's life does not represent a culmination of Ashima's narrative but rather a variation on the same theme.

In this reading, Lahiri's fiction, with its preoccupation with miscommunication (Kapasi and Mrs. Das, Shoba and Shukumar), is revealed as an exercise in exploring this endless negotiation of identities between generations in the immigrant household. Furthermore, by explicitly referencing Said's contrapuntal reading of Lahiri's work, the conclusion suggests that within this framework, Kapasi's grief is no less muted than Gogol's (Said, 1993). The conclusion highlights Said's interpretive value in reading the undying quality of traditional values in Lahiri's fiction not as a weakness but rather as a feature inherent in the immigrant experience.

Last but not least, it positions Lahiri's work, and particularly the conclusion of *The Namesake* (2003), as privileged ground for examining the specific ways in which hybridity is continuously remade in the immigrant experience (Bhabha, 1994). By this reading, while Gogol's return to familial traditions does not represent a regression, it nevertheless involves a set of renegotiations on his part, as well, which is the point of the critique of the synthesis-as-goal interpretation of Lahiri's fiction.

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The researcher declares that he has no known competing conflicts of interest or personal relationships that could have influenced the work presented in this work.

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