

# Nostalgia in Imaginary Homeland

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**Abstract – The memories of homeland and the life in another district have upset the immigrants both regarding characterizing cultural identity and likewise to absorb into another space. Writers who have left their homeland for settlements abroad have voiced this new experience. The key concern fundamental this diasporic writing is the quest for home. Gotten between clashing societies, the foreigner writers regularly abide upon the themes of dislocation, survival and loss of identity. The sentiment of nostalgia is increased if the writer happens to be a hued migrant in a dominantly white society. Henceforth, the writers consistently have the double sentiment of the feeling of ponder and experience at seeing the new landscape and at the same time the nostalgia for the world deserted. Distance could be best comprehended regarding the identity emergency and the survival instinct of people and additionally the country overall. As a writer of Indian diaspora in America, Jhumpa Lahiri investigates the themes like dislocation, dislodging and identity. This Article is study based on understanding the Nostalgia in Imaginary Homeland in Jhumpa Lahiri's 'Namesake'.**

**Keywords: Memories of Homeland, Nostalgia. Namesake, Diaspora, Identity, Immigrant Writings, etc.**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

As a daughter of an Indian American family who came to America after 1965, Jhumpa Lahiri is continually living in the shadows of two cultures. Raised in a customary Indian American family, she shares her parents' sadness of loss and removal in an exile life. Her wrings are constantly worried about such issues like belonging, home and identity. She is as of now a well-known Indian American creator when she distributed her first novel *The Namesake*. In *The Namesake*, she expounds on the Indian American individuals' nostalgia for their home nation. The couple Ashima and Ashoke remake an imagined homeland through their interaction with Indian American community around them. The Indian American community helps protect Indian cultural legacy through special festivals and different gatherings in which the individuals in exile communicate in their very own language and play out their cultural rituals. Striding Indian and American two cultures, the Indian American community additionally has a hybrid identity. This hybridity is a tradeoff individuals need to make so as to make due in an alternate culture yet in the meantime it can likewise be an approach to oppose against the standard belief system. Along these lines, individuals in the community rise above their previous nostalgia and become progressively open, worldwide nomads on the planet.

Lahiri's diasporic foundation and her mix of ethnic and all inclusive themes in her novels have prompted incredible enthusiasm among the literary critics. Her

first book *Interpreter of Maladies* made incredible achievement and won her Pulitzer Prize, Best American Short Stories and O. Henry Prize. The *New Yorker* names her one of the 20 most significant youthful American writers of the new century. *The Namesake* was a *New York Times* smash hit and a *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize Finalist. Discharged in 2007, the book was adjusted into a significant film in the US, and made a business progress. There is incredible contention about how to name her and her functions. In the prologue to *Naming Jhumpa Lahiri: Canons and Controversies*, Lavina Dhingra, the editorial manager, referenced her numerous classes as Asian American writer, ethnic writer, diasporic writer and American writer and likewise avow her canonic situation by contrasting her and American literary bosses like VS Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Bharati Mukherjee and Maxine Hong Kingston. While remarking on *The Namesake*, Benjamin Austin notes components that fail to measure up with those in her short stories yet reasons that the creator stays "one of the present most encouraging youthful abilities". From the post-colonial edge, Shao-ming Kung explores the arrangement of hybrid cultural identities by South Asian immigrants and infers that Lahiri is a "seasoned translator" between cultures. Aparajita De centers on the fundamental character Gogol to investigate the development of transnational diasporic identity.

Nostalgia as an outflow of ethos, considered "twilight zone among history and memory" by Dennis Walder (2011), returns far—at any rate to

Homer's *Odyssey*. In any case, the word is of ongoing starting point, and was gotten from a Greek neologism, consolidating *nostos* (home) and *algos* (pain or yearning). The Swiss specialist, Johannes Hofer, in the seventeenth century originally distinguished this side effect among dislodged Swiss troopers. The troopers who missed their homes would in general lose their hunger, have a fever and feel discouraged. In the old great days, nostalgia was a curable disease. An arrival to homeland was considered as a best cure. Be that as it may, for nineteenth century sentimentalists, nostalgia was never again a physiological disease however an approach to express dissatisfaction with reality by being sentimental and getting away to nature. The twentieth century scholars like Freud, regarded nostalgia as a psychological issue similarly as despairing and attempted to take care of the issue by depending on psychotherapy.

Notwithstanding the decent variety of themes and worries to *The Namesakes*, no consideration is paid to moving toward the book from the parts of home, diaspora and nostalgia. Destined to Bengali parents in London and brought up in Rhode Island, Lahiri is British by birth, American by citizenship and Indian by starting point, so she is a representative of Indian diaspora. She feels a solid feeling of loss, dislodging and homing desire. At the point when she discussed India, she had a sort of concentrated connection for the nation, "Calcutta supported my psyche, my eyes as a writer, and my enthusiasm for seeing things uniquely in contrast to various perspectives." There's a legacy and custom there that we simply don't have here". She communicated this sort of nostalgia and aching for her hometown in her second book *The Namesake*.

The expanded relocation and diaspora in current society caused nostalgia to create from an individual illness to a social disease. In *The Future of Nostalgia*, Svetlana Boym brings up its disease and spread in present day world. She remarks that "The Twentieth century started with an advanced perfect world and finishes with nostalgia". She expands the implication of nostalgia by characterizing it as both a yearning for lost places and time also. In her book, she likewise makes two classes of nostalgias like helpful nostalgia and reflective nostalgia. For Boym, helpful nostalgia "stress *nostos* and endeavors a transhistorical remaking of lost home... reflective nostalgia harps on the indecisions of human aching and belonging and doesn't avoid the logical inconsistencies of modernity. Reflective nostalgia centers around yearning for home, so it contains enduring and pain, being sentimental, moderate and despairing. It is the thing that cultural critics like Ringer snared dismissed and called "a sort of useless act". In any case, helpful nostalgia spikes the individuals in exile to envision a perfect homeland in their homeland which is helpful for relieving their uneasiness in osmosis and development of another identity. So this paper will concentrate on helpful

nostalgia and investigate its positive capacity through a nearby perusing of *The Namesake*. Nostalgia bears some positive characteristics similarly as John Su in *Ethics and Nostalgia in The Contemporary Novel* notices "it encourages an investigation of moral standards notwithstanding disillusioning conditions". Nostalgia for the past is an indication that the present isn't satisfactory, so it is a worry for the present by glancing back at the past. Nostalgia is a scaffold between past, present and future.

## II. 'IMAGINARY HOMELAND'

Salman Rushdie in *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991* started with nostalgia for his homeland by reviewing an image of his old house in India. After nonattendance for such huge numbers of years, he returned to his homeland in India and found that everything had changed. Rushdie at that point inferred that the exile writers can just make his imaginary homeland in writing as opposed to delineates an authentic one in light of the fact that the homeland can't be recovered. Regardless of whether the writer can return to his old home, it is never again equivalent to it was.

*It might be that writers in my position, exiles or emigrants or ostracized, are chased by some feeling of loss, some desire to recover, to think back, even at the danger of being quieted into mainstays of salt. In any case, on the off chance that we do think back, we should likewise do as such in the information—which offered ascend to significant vulnerabilities—that our physical alienation from India unavoidably implies that we won't be equipped for recovering absolutely what was lost; that we will, in short, make fictions, not actual urban communities or towns but rather imperceptible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of psyche.*

As indicated by Rushdie, The imaginary homeland is perfect since people can't recover it. That is the manner by which it keeps its appeal and fantasy of return for people in exile. In *The Namesake*, Jhumpa Lahiri expounds on Indian diaspora in the US. Diaspora originally alluding to the Jewish scattering from their original homeland, presently shows any sort of exile from the home nation. It disturbs the fix idea of roots with ventures along different courses and reinvention of identities. *The Namesake* delineates an imaginary homeland made by Indian American couple Ashoke and Ashima after they moved to America from Calcutta following 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act. This imaginary homeland is a dynamic community of Indian Americans who keeps an interactive relationship with one another. The individuals in this community are altogether Bengalis experts who moved to America as educated people. As minorities in a white society, they feel a feeling of dislocation and displacement. Being lonely, they frequently partner with one another by holding parties, celebrating traditional holidays and voyaging together. The

community they structure has a relieving impact for the diasporic people when they endure profound alienation as an outsider in a bizarre land. Without the community's emotional bond and steady help, Ashoke and Ashima can't accomplish their middle class position so rapidly. In the start of the book, when Ashima brought forth their child, Gogol, the main people who came to visit her were a gathering of Bengali friends. "For as thankful as she (Ashima) feels for the organization of the Nandis and Dr. Gupta, these associates are substitute for the people who truly should encompass them". So here the Indian community fills in as a substitute family to the couple and offer love and favors to the infant Gogol.

The most horrendous thing for people in exile lies in the loss of their national culture. Frantz Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks*, mentions the case of a black man who needs to turn his face white. The black people have a sort of self-loathing and need to demolish their blackness by wearing a white mask. Fanon holds that this inferiority complex gets from two factors: financial neediness and disguise of this inferiority. He approaches the black people to find the significance and magnificence of their black identity. For Ashoke and Ashima, the Indian community has a significant influence in helping them find the genuine importance of their Indian identity and increment their certainty for being what their identity is. In the community parties, "they drink tea with sugar and vanished milk... They sit around and around on the floor, singing songs by Nazrul and Tagore, passing a thick yellow clothbound book of verses among them". The songs in their own dialects help them to remember their happy childhood and parents. The popular poems by Tagore increment their feeling of pride by contrasting their old civilization and American history which goes on for in excess of 300 years. The traditional food they host at the gathering makes a home climate. Their Indian Identity is additionally consolidated through the utilization of their home food. In this perspective, women hold a significant part in saving the ethnic food culture. At their American home, Ashima consistently prepares Indian food to her children and show them how to eat with their hands like a genuine Indian. They watch Indian religious holidays with national food. Being exiles, they know the sadness of losing their local language. Ashima regularly sends Gogol to go to Bengali classes so as to get familiar with their very own language. In the community parties, they utilize the local language to talk and sing so as to keep and transmit their etymological legacy to their future age. Fanon says that to communicate in a language is to "expect a culture, to help the heaviness of a civilization". So utilizing one's very own language in an outside nation exhibits their energy and a feeling of national pride. The India community additionally enables Indian Americans to raise their political awareness and develop uprightness to battle against racial partiality. "For a considerable length of time, they contend about the

legislative issues of America, a nation where none of them is qualified to cast a ballot". As a result of the racial preference, the Indian Americans are avoided from the Mainstream society for their political rights. So the talk and questions about legislative issues in the community gatherings can assist make with increasing their loss by allowing them to talk. The Indian American community likewise shows worry for the continuation of the community and frequently assemble to commend the significant moments of their future age like the birthday and graduation parties. At the point when Gogol is half year old, Ashima and Ashoke hold the rice service party for him with many friends. "There is no immersion for Bengali children, no formal naming according to God. Rather the principal formal function of their lives revolves around the utilization of solid food ... He Gogol is shot by his dad and his friends". When Ashoke and Ashima offer name to their child Gogol, they additionally keep the Indian tradition by giving him a pet name and a decent name. Every one of these subtleties show that the Indian people in The Namesake are nostalgic about their past and tradition.

### III. NOSTALGIA FOR AN IDENTITY

Nostalgia in this novel has the twofold vision of longing in reverse and looking forward. The characters feel homesick for their homeland with a reason for holding onto the present life and having a superior future. Jhumpa Lahiri longs for individual identity for herself just as her imaginary characters in this novel. As Indian Americans, the liminal space the characters involve between two cultures verifies that their identity isn't fixed and static yet hybrid and mobile. Homi Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* calls attention to that "The interstitial section between fixed recognizable pieces of proof opens up the probability of a cultural hybridity that engages contrasts without an accepted or forced hierarchy.

In the start of the entry, as a result of absence of fitting fixings, the homesick Ashima is endeavoring to make an "unassuming estimate of the snack sold for pennies on Calcutta walkway and on railroad stage through India" with a mix of both Indian and American fixings. Anata mannur in her paper contends that "with regards to considering south Asian diasporic bodies, food is rarely far... Discursively the term by which "Indianess" is imagined quite often prepares a culinary idiom; as a rule food is arranged in accounts about racial and ethnic identity as an intractable proportion of cultural authenticity. The blended food Ashima eats is the impression of her hybrid identity. In the community parties, the Indian Americans frequently eat curry, pizza or Chinese food. Their hybrid identity is additionally reflected in the naming framework. Both Ashoke and Ashima have two names, a pet name given by their Indian families and a decent name utilized in America. Gogol takes his name from the

Russian namesake Nikolai Gogol and he likewise has the English name Nikhil. Gogol's hybrid identity is additionally appeared in his few interracial issues in spite of the fact that they all end up with nothing. Both of his initial two lovers are American young ladies. In spite of the fact that his significant other Moushumi isn't an American, yet she is actually a worldwide resident who learns a third language—French and decides to remain in France. Ashoke, acquainted with wearing tailor-made jeans and shirts for his entire life, additionally figures out how to purchase instant. This exile circumstance is very much reflected in Edward Said. As a Palestinian, instructed and serving in the west, Said has been constrained to live more than one life all the while. Every one of his works are being educated with this sort of state of being exilic. He additionally communicated this sort of pain of living two lives in *Reflections on Exile*. "Exile is abnormally convincing to consider however horrendous to encounter. It is the horrendous crack between a human being and a local spot, between oneself and its actual home; its basic sadness can never be surmounted". However this liminal position and hybrid identity give the characters pain and enduring, savor and satisfaction also. It is likewise an invaluable situation wherein the diasporic people can oppose the mainstream culture. By assimilation into the white society, they get the cultural nature of mainstream society. As indicated by Homi Bhabha, this sort of mimicry can likewise fill in as a method for obstruction since it deconstructs the twofold resistances of oneself and other by making a hyphenated identity and obscuring zone. All cultures and identities depend on othering exclusionist practices. One culture relies upon rejection or constrained obliviousness of the other. All dominant culture builds up itself by oppressing the other culture like what the Germans do to the Jews. The hybrid identity makes a sort of hazy area where one and other can't separate themselves, so it fills in as a protection from the dominant ideology. Along these lines, they can keep the national culture and then make the best of the standard society. Ashima turns out to be progressively independent after many long stretches of living in the US. In the wake of being a housewife for so many years, she chooses to turn into an administrator in a public library. She likewise expands her very own portability by figuring out how to drive. After her husband kicks the bucket in the US, she is resolved to partition her time among India and America, carrying on with a mobile and free life. Both Gogol and Sonia go to Ivy League colleges and become middle class people in the US. After Gogol's marriage to Moushumi flops at last, he comes back to his parents' traditional Indian home and starts to peruse the book his dad gave him as a present when he was youthful. This shows he has encountered the change from rebellion against his national culture to accomplishing a harmony between the home and foreign culture. He has encountered an arrangement of relationship with his parents. Consequently, the entirety of the characters receive

the most rewards in a bizarre land by development of a hybrid identity.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The paper contends that restorative nostalgia can keep the diaspora's own ethnic heritage and in the meantime encourage the diaspora's assimilation into mainstream society by building an imaginary homeland to discharge the weight of assimilation and sooth the pain of rootlessness. Svetlana Boym in *The Future of Nostalgia* holds that nostalgia is a positive emotion since it is "not constantly about the past; it very well may be review and imminent". The reason for homesickness is to make a superior future by coming back to the past. Salman Rushdie in *Imaginary Homelands* says migrants "straddle two cultures ... fall between two stools". Restorative nostalgia encourages the characters in *The Namesake* to make an imagined homeland where they practice their cultural custom and remake their national identity. Their hybridity is a tradeoff they need to make so as to get by in an alternate culture however in the meantime it can likewise be an approach to oppose against the standard ideology. Along these lines, they rise above their previous nostalgia and become a progressively open, worldwide wanderer on the planet.

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