

# THE POSTCOLONIAL IMMIGRANT IDENTITIES IN JHUMPA LAHIRI'S NOVEL, THE NAMESAKE

## Gökçen KARA

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi, Haliç Üniversitesi, Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi Fakültesi, Amerikan Kültür ve Edebiyatı Bölümü, gokcenkara(@)halic.edu.tr, ORCID: 0000-0002-6048-3644

Kara, Gökçen. "The Postcolonial Immigrant Identities in Jhumpa Lahiri's Novel, The Namesake". ulakbilge, 65 (2021 Ekim): s. 1213-1228. doi: 10.7816/ulakbilge-09-65-01

### Abstract

The post-colonial period is a time when colonial states secretly continued their colonial policies in different ways after World War II. The Namesake by Jhumpa Lahiri is a novel about the challenges and difficulties of a Bengali couple who travel to the United States to build a life. The novel deals with the concepts of cultural identity, rootlessness, tradition, and family expectations in a straightforward style. Memory, nostalgia, loss, and longing are some of the themes addressed in this novel. Ashoke and Ashima, first generation immigrants, come to the U.S. hoping for a better life, but the past haunts them like a shadow, reminding them of their origins. On the other hand, unlike them, the children of this family cannot form ties with India, but they are not accepted as citizens of America, to which they want to belong. In other words, the identity crisis in the novel manifests itself in different ways in the first and second generation immigrants. The purpose of this article is to examine the complicated cultural interactions and identity crises as presented in modern cultural discourse. This essay is an attempt to examine the attractions of the American way of life as well as the tug of war between two separate cultures through a comparative lens. In addition, this essay attempts to address the problems of identity and cultural conflict faced by first and second generation immigrants.

**Keywords:** identity, postcolonialism, immigration problem, generation gap, Namesake

*Article History:*

*Received: August 5, 2021*

*Revised: August 22, 2021*

*Accepted: September 27, 2021*

## Introduction

The transition to the postcolonial period after World War II created multicultural societies and plunged immigrants struggling to survive into deep cultural conflicts. During the decolonization period, the social, political, economic, and cultural structures in the world changed significantly. Many people from the former colonies emigrated to the Western nations and tried to integrate into the cultures of their new homelands but failed miserably and "began to face different problems as they were indifferent to the culture of other countries which led them to search for their identity." (Upare, 2014:1) The environments in which people did not feel they belong led to an identity crisis. As Bosma states: "Post-colonial immigrations and immigrant settlement processes present a fragmented picture. The multicultural environment at the center of the empire led to hybridization and fractures in immigrant identity." (2013:14) The purpose of this article is to examine Jhumpa Lahiri's novel *The Namesake* in terms of postcolonial identity construction. The focus is on the identity formation processes of third world people who immigrated to the United States of America during the postcolonial era.

The processes of globalization include massive migrations and relocations, thus challenging the traditional concept of nation-state and opening up borders and boundaries. Given the transnational movement of goods, information, and bodies, we need to reconsider the effects of relocation, displacement, and the transition between cultures and how these things affect the construction of identity. (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 1999; Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2002; Gilroy, 2000; Sahoo, 2006)

Migratory movements, diasporas, and cultural change affect identity formation. With multiculturalism, new concepts such as international migration, cosmopolitanism, and globalization have emerged. The differences that accompanied numerous illusions about the diversity of cultures have been abolished, making way for hybridity and assimilation. Although concepts such as race, ethnicity, or national identity have supposedly lost their meaning in the multicultural world, central authorities strive for social integrity in order to maintain order in their territory where minorities live. In other words, there is no intolerance of cultural, racial and religious minorities.

In *The Namesake*, Jhumpa Lahiri explores the concept of multiculturalism in an environment where people of different backgrounds come together to form the Western world, especially after World War II. With the Ganguli family, she seems to show that diversity and multiculturalism, on the other hand, are not welcomed. Due to a hierarchical and Eurocentric perspective based on the concept that non-Western identities are fractured and fragile, immigrant identities have been perceived as a source of crisis. This article therefore argues that the development of an alternative postcolonial identity is crucial, as Western cultures tend to exclude immigrants and prevent them from integrating into society. The characters in the novel have multiple identities. Each of them struggles to bridge the gap between their ethnic origins and their socioeconomic backgrounds in order to maintain social unity in contemporary society.

Immigrants leave their home countries in search of better education, employment, living conditions, or political stability in another country and eventually settle permanently in the territory of that country. Looking at the immigration process of Asian Americans, after the decolonization period, most people wanted to escape the turmoil, devastation, and lack of educational and social facilities in their home countries to take advantage of educational and economic opportunities in the postcolonial Western world. In the postcolonial era that began in the mid-20th century and continued into the second half of the century, many Asian families moved to the United States to study or work. Although it was difficult for them to adapt to the Western way of life, the opportunities offered to them in the West attracted them, and thus it cannot be denied that the immigrants considered Western countries as the center of dreams, freedom and wealth. On the other hand, these immigrant expectations could not go beyond the American dream. Immigrant people yearn for their home as a result of relocation and deterritorialization, even as they try to integrate into their new environment. In *The Namesake*, first generation immigrants long for their home while struggling to preserve the old cultural values. At the same time, they want to identify with the new society so as not to be labeled as "others".

When the topic of hybridity comes up in a literary conversation, Homi Bhabha is almost always cited. To explain the merging of cultures in a contact zone, he uses the terms "third space" and "interspace". The result of this cultural encounter is cultural hybridity, which leads to the "emergence of new transcultural forms within the contact zone." (Ashcroft et al., 1995:118) According to Bhabha, people in the diaspora at the intersection of new and old culture form a kind of consciousness called hybridity. The concept of hybridity

is important not only in the context of postcolonial theory, but also in the context of current research that examines the blending of cultural practices. Since hybrid characters exist at the intersection of two cultures, the norms of the original culture and the new culture affect them at all times. The existence of an ethnic family in a society that promotes individual freedom and independence serves as the fulcrum of *The Namesake*. Each character attempts to find a balance between the traditions and ideals of the West and India. To the extent that the parents succeed in achieving such a state of equilibrium through the management of cultural hybridity, it seems increasingly difficult for their children to recognize and respect their original culture and origins.

In *The Namesake*, Lahiri highlights the problems of immigrants in the United States by reflecting on their internal difficulties before and after immigration. In the novel, first-generation immigrants and their Western-born second-generation children, burdened with the psychological and emotional toll of colonization, not only struggle internally but also face the consequences of cultural conflict. Their journey of self-discovery could be seen as a process of creating an alternative postcolonial identity in the place where they want to build a better life. "Postcolonial identities are not static, they are constantly evolving and culturally transcending the boundaries of nations." (Tyson, 1999: 17) Ex-colonials, Tyson argues, are encouraged to embrace the components of mixed culture that is an inevitable reality of history.

According to Anthony Smith: "In the Western model of national identity nations were seen as culture communities, whose members were united [ . . . ] by common historical memories, myths, symbols and traditions." (1991: 21) For an immigrant who has already experienced Western colonization in his home country, it is simply not reasonable to be welcomed in Western cities. As a result, immigrants have created an ethnic "vision of the country" that gives more importance to the place of birth than to the place of origin. According to Stuart Hall: "Europe's cultural identity [ . . . ] has never entirely lost touch with its Christian roots. The encounter with the new worlds -with difference- actually reinforced this new identity. I promoted that 'growing sense of superiority', which Roberts calls a 'Eurocentric' view of the world." (1993:302-303)

According to Hall, Eurocentric identities have been accepted as superior identities. Hall (2017:107) further claims that "Ethnic identities often derive their power from a strong 'sense of place and of group origins.'" This brings us to Benedict Anderson's concept of "imagined communities". According to Anderson (2006:6), nation is "an imagined political community... it is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion." From these definitions, we can see those concepts such as nation, race, and ethnicity are shaped constructed. In other words, Eurocentrism and the supremacy of European races are literally a product of colonial ideology.

Postcolonial discourse has emphasized the flexibility of identity formation. This article will use Homi Bhabha's concepts of mimicry, hybridity, and third space to examine the fluidity of identity of immigrant people in *The Namesake*. In its broadest sense, the term 'mimicry' refers to the imitation of another person's behavior. According to Oxford English Dictionary: "Mimicry is the action or skill of imitating someone or something, especially in order to entertain or ridicule." Bhabha (1994: 96) defines mimicry as "a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which 'appropriates' the other as it visualizes power." Bhabha sees mimicry as a method of resistance to the discourse of colonization that can be used in the process of alternative postcolonial identity formation. The colonized "mimes the forms of authority at the point at which it deauthorizes them." (Bhabha 1994:101) This mimicry creates similarity and danger, which leads to self-doubt among the colonized, as their self-image, formed from their differences from the other, is called into question. In other words, the colonized may have a sense of meaninglessness and cultural emptiness, which can lead to either a strong commitment to cultural origins or blind imitation of Western culture. Immigrants should develop an alternative postcolonial identity to construct the other alternative, which is to strengthen their place in contemporary society while finding a sense of kinship with Westerners. First-generation immigrants have experienced severe oppression due to Westerners' hierarchical attitudes toward cultural differences. However, since they are already hybrid people in terms of race and culture, the second and third generations indicate the existence of an alternative identity to the dominant culture and society.

Hybridity should be emphasized in terms of "describ[ing] the articulation of cultural differences and identifications than can be represented in any hierarchical or binary structuring of social antagonism." (Bhabha, 1994:150) Having failed to transform their hybridity into an alternative identity, the seemingly failed immigrants are trapped in the meaninglessness of life and the cultural void that characterizes modern society. The article explores cultural, national, cosmopolitan, diasporic, hybrid, and contemporary identities in the context of alternative postcolonial identity formation. People with hybrid identities are the only ones who can express their unique characteristics, given the definition of culture as a group's collection of shared

goals and values. In reality, the colonized created an atmosphere in which people deconstructed prevailing notions of identity, overcame cultural and historical obstacles to accelerate the transformation from hybrid to alternative, and forged new paths to develop alternative identities. In attempting to subvert the colonial legacy through daily social interaction, hybrid immigrants have emerged as forms of dichotomy in the process of identity formation. According to Bhabha, hybridity is complementary to cultural diversity because it enables close relationships between different cultures and contributes positively to "mixing" and "articulation." People who have hybrid identities while pretending to be colonizers risk losing their sense of origin and roots. According to Woodward: (2002: 172) "hybridity may establish new and constraining binaries, which close off innovation and change." Western-born immigrants, in particular, may suffer from a sense of rootlessness or meaninglessness to such an extent that they either have a strong longing to return to their origins, as Gogol does in the end, or without questioning adopt a Western identity, as Sonia does.

According to Bhabha, migrants' experiences are closely related to the concept of the third space. The third space is the place where the hybridization process began, which eventually led to the development of hybrid identities. Cultural boundaries lose meaning in it, leading to the emergence of a new hybrid culture that focuses largely on differences. As a result, the new and the old, the traditional and the contemporary, the national and the international meet on a new ground that has significantly influenced their mutual connections and interactions. According to Bhabha, "third space is a way to conceptualizing an international culture based not on exoticism of multiculturalism and diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity." (1994: 38) It is the third space that creates a favorable environment for the hybridization process inherent in the migrants' struggles for survival. New identities emerge in the third space as a result of changes in the cultural and social context. When it comes to identity, the third space serves as a fixed station on an ambiguous journey that is sometimes contradictory and fluid.

Since modern cultures are characterized by a high degree of cultural diversity, the processes of identity formation are placed within the framework of cultural diversity. During colonialism, these distinctions posed no threat, as the colonized were marginalized and relegated to the fringes of society. But as colonized people begin to live together in their new "home", in the decolonization period, the diversity among them has created identity problems. In order to legitimize the colonization process, the colonial powers treated the colonized populations as subordinates. Interdependence, which denotes a mutually beneficial relationship between two or more societies, is replaced by a hierarchical system of race that reveals white privilege. Postcolonialism has enabled the colonized to resist new forms of colonial domination, as immigration has increased since the end of the World War II, but the colonizers have felt the need to discover new ways to rule. Immigrants and their children in western cities created diasporas. As Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2013: 62) states: "The descendants of the diaspora movements generated by colonialism have developed their own distinctive cultures which both preserve and often extend and develop their original cultures." Immigrants do not feel belonging either to their own culture or to their host culture. The aim of this article is to show the obstacles faced by immigrant characters and how they overcome these problems, which ultimately leads to the development of hybrid characters.

Hybrid identities are never total and complete in themselves, like orderly pathways built from crazy-paving. Instead, they remain perpetually in motion, pursuing errant and unpredictable routes, open to change and inscription. They are border subjectivities, no longer reliant on fixed notions of home and identity to anchor them to a singular sense of self. Rather, the loss of these fixed ideas has been transformed into a hopeful new paradigm where motion, multiplicity, errancy, unpredictability, hybridity and impurity are gleefully welcomed. (McLeod, 2010:254)

Bhabha's ideas shed light on how the immigrant experience can be understood and analyzed in postcolonial studies. One of the most difficult problems immigrants face is one that is inherent in their very nature as immigrants. The in-between situations of immigrants are usually based on oppositions and polarities in the dominant culture. The terms liminality and hybridity are used to draw attention to a flexible feature of identity that is an inherent part of multicultural practices.

The literary works of diaspora groups incorporate many cultural environments in which they find themselves. By revealing their experiences of various linguistic, geographic, and historical dislocations, modern diasporic writers challenge their readers to view culture not as a foundational model, but rather as the result of contact with other cultures as they have. The existence of transnational communities means that post-migration transnational spaces emerge that transcend the boundaries of national governments. Because the diaspora is so closely linked to cultural memory, diasporic literature expresses the history of a community.

Memory in this context serves as a nexus between personal recollection and historical narrative. Diaspora literature reflects a 'double vision' that reflects both a longing for the past and a desire for the future. Born in London in 1967, diasporic writer Lahiri declares herself as a 'combination' of cultural identities.

After graduating BA and MA in English, she studied MA in Creative Writing and Comparative Studies in Literature and the Arts at the College of Michigan. She earned a Ph.D. in Renaissance Studies and then worked for a time as a professor in Boston. She now lives in New York and considers herself a product of three countries: England, the United States, and the Indian subcontinent. When she was ten years old, she found that she had a split identity: one half of her family expected her to be 'Indian' in her appearance and demeanor, while the other half expected her to be 'American'.

*The Namesake* portrays the lives of immigrants as well as a common complexity shared by all displaced people, namely the search for their own personal identity. It is a dramatic account of the lives of two generations of Ganguli family members as they attempt to identify themselves and build a new identity in a foreign land. The novel clearly distinguishes between first and second generation immigrants. Ashok and Ashima, the first generation immigrants from India, have a major identity problem. They go through a series of changes and concessions socially and culturally over time in order to be accepted as contributing members of society. The cultural heritage they bring with them to their new country causes them to oscillate between two horizons and live a life imposed on them by circumstances. When it comes to food, clothing, and language, first-generation immigrants show a fading connection to their ancestral culture. The story follows the immigrants' struggles to maintain their native culture in the host country, despite being thousands of miles from their homeland. Throughout the story, first-generation Bengali immigrants try to maintain their original language, cook traditional dishes, and wear traditional clothing to preserve their Indian identity. They want their children to be initiated into Indian rituals, beliefs, traditions and religion. Therefore, they speak to them in Bengali and teach them Bengali history and literature at home. As a result of their memories, they create a fictional home. On the other hand, as a coping strategy, they have adopted important parts of the host culture to withstand the onslaught of cultural conflict.

The characters Gogol and Sonia, who are both second-generation immigrants, go through different kinds of identity crises. They are concerned about their lack of a sense of belonging and their mixed family history. They are trying to establish their cultural heritage in mainstream society, in contrast to their parents who feel a great love for their country. Gogol is the more sensitive of the two characters when it comes to his position in American culture. His parents' constant admonitions about his ancestors and his place in society have less effect on him.

Lahiri's novel *The Namesake*, in which she explores the themes of immigration, identity, and the clash of cultures, shows how difficult life can be to be a migrant in the postcolonial period. By depicting characters who undergo serious changes through contact with other cultures, religions, and languages, Lahiri shows that people with a migration background ultimately suffer from an identity crisis.

### **Identity Conflicts in *The Namesake***

The hegemonic discourse on migration, especially with regard to the migrant crisis, is obviously characterized by a Eurocentric view and a strong postcolonial stance. The European Union has been described as a postcolonial environment deeply intertwined with colonial legacies. It was argued that colonialism never really left Europe, but rather became an integral part of "European reality." Although the immigrants in the novel do not relate to Europe, the United States is also the focus of the Eurocentric perspective, namely Europe and white supremacy.

The identity crisis is the most prominent theme of multiculturalism and is central to most novels written by contemporary Indian diasporic authors. Jhumpa Lahiri, in *The Namesake* portrays two generations of Ganguli family, each with their own challenges and identity conflicts. Unlike the first generation, which is filled with nostalgia for the homeland, the second generation sees India as a country on the map to which they have no emotional attachment. They are reluctant to hold on to their parents' culture but more importantly, they try to adapt to American society. Although they accept themselves as Americans, they cannot find their identity. The second-generation immigrants grow up in an environment in which they do not belong anywhere. The first-generation immigrants' situation is nevertheless better than that of the second generation, which lacks a defined cultural home. As the story progresses, both generations evolve and eventually absorb remnants of both American society and Indian cultural background. In describing the characters' contact with another American culture, the term 'mimicry' coined by Bhabha is used to describe the characters' actions.

Mimicry expresses the situation of protagonist Gogol, who tries to act like an American in order to

continue his life in a society that is foreign to him. The event that throws him into identity confusion from the moment of his birth is the name problem. In Bengali culture, people are known by two names: a pet name for family and friends, and, a formal name used for legal and professional matters. This practice poses a problem for Gogol who was born in a country where there was no such tradition. Although Gogol is his pet name, it is the name by which everyone addresses him until he enrolls in college - including his friends and teachers. Gogol's first decision about his own identity is to choose a name for himself when he is a small child. Gogol has no contact with the outside world until he enters kindergarten, and the only culture he knows is the Indian culture his family tries to maintain. He is still a young child and knows himself as Gogol. This is because his family calls him by that name.

There is a reason Gogol doesn't want to go to kindergarten. His parents have told him that at school, instead of being called Gogol, he will be called by a new name, a good name, which his parents have finally decided on, just in time for him to begin his formal education. (Lahiri, 2011: 30)

He has gotten so used to the name Gogol that he does not even want to go to school because he knows he will get a new name. His parents inform Gogol, who hesitates to go to kindergarten, that he would get a new name, a "good name". Although Ashoke introduces Gogol to Mrs. Lapidus as Nikhil, Gogol later explains that his name is Gogol, and the teachers and the school principal, putting the boy's wishes above those of his parents, register him as Gogol and not Nikhil.

"There seems to be some confusion, Mr. Ganguli," she says. "According to these documents, your son's legal name is Gogol."

"That is correct. But please allow me to explain—"

"That you want us to call him Nikhil."

"That is correct."

Mrs. Lapidus nods. "The reason being?"

"That is our wish."

"I'm not sure I follow you, Mr. Ganguli. Do you mean that Nikhil is a middle name? Or a nickname? Many of the children go by nicknames here. On this form there is a space—"

"No, no, it's not a middle name,"

Ashoke says. He is beginning to lose patience. "He has no middle name. No nickname. The boy's good name, his school name, is Nikhil."

Mrs. Lapidus presses her lips together and smiles. "But clearly he doesn't respond."

"Please, Mrs. Lapidus," Ashoke says. "It is very common for a child to be confused at first. Please give it some time. I assure you he will grow accustomed."

He bends down and this time in Bengali, calmly and quietly, asks Gogol to please answer when Mrs. Lapidus asks a question. "Don't be scared, Gogol," he says, raising his son's chin with his finger. "You're a big boy now. No tears."

Though Mrs. Lapidus does not understand a word, she listens carefully, hears that name again. Gogol. Lightly, in pencil, she writes it down on the registration form. (Lahiri, 2011:31)

His parents feel worried about Gogol's refusal to use his American name Nikhil. Although they want their children to retain Indian traditions, they know that they cannot be happy as a minority in a racially biased and Eurocentric country. For this reason, they want to raise their children as Indians, but adopting American traditions. In other words, the second-generation immigrants in the novel exemplify Bhabha's concept of 'hybridity'. When it comes to Gogol's later American identity, Ashima makes an important contribution: "He doesn't want to wear the new clothes his mother bought him from Sears, hanging on a knob of his dressers, or carry his Charlie Brown lunch box or board the yellow school bus that stops at the end of Pemberton Road" (Lahiri, 2011: 56). Gogol, with his Charlie Brown lunch box, represents a more typical American than an Indian child. Ashima feels she has to conform to the American lifestyle. This is her strategy of 'mimicking' the American culture. Ashima's case is an example of how the mimicry is inevitable in the lives of immigrant people.

The identity of the first-generation immigrants in *The Namesake* is shaped by their names, which give them a sense of belonging to their Bengali origins. On the other hand, for second generation immigrants, their Bengali surnames and only reinforce their sense of alienation and frustration as they struggle to fit into

American culture. The sense of alienation and lack of identity that Gogol feels exemplifies the problems of second-generation immigrants. Gogol seeks an alternative postcolonial identity by trying to pretend to be American. Later in the novel, Gogol begins to hate his name, which is neither an American nor an Indian name. It bothers him to think that it is without dignity and seriousness and has nothing to do with himself. He regrets that he rejected the name 'Nikhil' on the first day of school. "At times his name, an entity shapeless and weightless, manages nevertheless to distress him physically, like the scratchy tag of a shirt he has been forced permanently to wear. At times he wishes he could disguise it." (Lahiri, 2011:39) The only teacher who knows the name of Gogol and does not find it strange is Gogol's English literature teacher, Mr. Lawson. When he sees Gogol's name on the list, he decides to include Nikolai Gogol's *Overcoat* in his lessons. Gogol constantly feels the need to explain that he does not look like Nikolai Gogol:

That's not really me. Gogol wants to excuse himself, to raise his hand and take a trip to the lavatory, but at the same time he wants to draw as little attention to himself as possible. And so he sits, avoiding eye contact with any of his classmates, and pages through the book. (Lahiri, 2011:47)

On a Saturday, his family leaves Gogol alone at home and goes to Connecticut. Instead of studying, he uses the time he is alone to go to a party with his friends. Gogol is confused when he introduces himself to his friend, whom he met at the party, as Nikhil. He feels guilty and happy at the same time. Thus, he experiences his first kiss under the name Nikhil. Gogol, who had the idea that he could change his name with an article he came across while flipping through the pages of magazines in his dentist's waiting room, told his family, and his family said he could do it if he really wanted to, and they let him. So, he goes to court and changes his name to Nikhil.

"What is the reason you wish to change your name, Mr. Ganguli?" the judge asks. The question catches him off-guard, and for several seconds he has no idea what to say. "Personal reasons," he says eventually. The judge looks at him, leaning forward, her chin cupped in her hand. "Would you care to be more specific?" At first he says nothing, unprepared to give any further explanation. He wonders whether to tell the judge the whole convoluted story, about his great-grandmother's letter that never made it to Cambridge, and about pet names and good names, about what had happened on the first day of kinder garten. But instead he takes a deep breath and tells the people in the courtroom what he has never dared admit to his parents. "I hate the name Gogol," he says. "I've always hated it." (Lahiri, 2011, 38)

Through the narration of this conversation between Gogol and the judge, Lahiri probably conveys the idea that immigrants born in a Western nation have to deal with their inferiority complex. This inferiority complex includes traits such as feeling inadequate, thinking oneself unproductive and worthless, and inferior. In order to get rid of this inferiority complex, they start to mimic dominant host culture. The concept of mimicry proposed by Bhabha applies not only to second-generation immigrants but also to first-generation immigrants. This means that even the first-generation immigrants felt obliged to adapt to the culture of the host country over time. This led them to begin imitating the West. When Sonia is born, Ganguli family takes another step away from their roots in Indian culture and tradition. For example, the naming of their daughter is no longer as controversial as in the case of Gogol. In fact, the Gangulis conclude that the difference between a good name and a pet name is meaningless. From this point of view, it can be said that they are slowly beginning to adapt to American traditions. The Ganguli family feels the need to fit into a more civilized society, to become more European, more American, in order to achieve their goals.

Although the Ganguli couple is very strict with their traditions, it can be said that over time they have tried to create postcolonial identities. Over time, they celebrated birthdays like American families. Being an immigrant in the postcolonial era was only possible by developing a new identity.

Gogol's fourteenth birthday. Like most events in his life, it is another excuse for his parents to throw a party for their Bengali friends. His own friends from school were invited the previous day, a tame affair, with pizzas that his father picked up on his way home from work, a baseball game watched together on television, some Ping-Pong in the den. For the first time in his life he has said no to the frosted cake, the box of harlequin ice cream, the hot dogs in buns, the balloons and streamers taped to the walls. The other celebration, the Bengali one, is held on the

closest Saturday to the actual date of his birth. As usual his mother cooks for days beforehand, cramming the refrigerator with stacks of foil-covered trays. She makes sure to prepare his favorite things: lamb curry with lots of potatoes, luchis, thick channa dal with swollen brown raisins, pineapple chutney, sandeshes molded out of saffron-tinted ricotta cheese. All this is less stressful to her than the task of feeding a handful of American children, half of whom always claim they are allergic to milk, all of whom refuse to eat the crusts of their bread. (Lahiri, 2011, 38)

Ashima is the embodiment of her Indian side compared to Ashoke, for she longs for her homeland more than anyone else in the family. This may be related to the fact that Ashima's parents and some other relatives admonished her before she left for the United States 'not to eat beef, wear skirts, cut her hair, or forget family the moment she landed there.' (Lahiri, 2011: 37) However, she makes an effort to adapt to the society in which she lives, first for the sake of her children and then to feel at home in this distant land. Moreover, this can be observed in her shopping scene:

In the supermarket they let Gogol fill the cart with items that he and Sonia, but not they, consume: individually wrapped slices of cheese, mayonnaise, tuna fish, hot dogs. For Gogol's lunches they stand at the deli to buy cold cuts, and in the mornings Ashima makes sandwiches with bologna or roast beef. At his insistence, she concedes and makes him an American dinner once a week as a treat, Shake 'n Bake chicken or Hamburger Helper prepared with ground lamb. (Lahiri, 2011: 65)

Although Ashima tries to preserve her Indian heritage by preparing Indian dishes at home, she also follows her children's wishes so that they can gain a foothold in the American life they aspire to. Ashima places so much emphasis on these changes that she begins to develop a new sense of belonging and identity. Aside from these changes, the Ganguli family also struggles with not fully adopting American culture and traditions. The family sends Gogol to Bengali lessons every Saturday to preserve their Indian heritage and traditions.

The Ganguli couple tries to follow the magazines and newspapers every month to keep up with what is happening in their country. The couple, who make sure to consult their Bengali friends on every decision, are especially careful when it comes to the local courts. One of the most important indicators of their commitment to culture is their local food. The Ganguli couple, who regularly cook local dishes at home, change their habits over time. As their children grow up, American and Indian dishes are cooked together at home. Ashima, who prepares a turkey at Christmas time, does so with her own local spices. "Hybridity is a problematic of colonial representation and individuation that reverses the effects of the colonialist disavowal, so that other "denied" knowledge enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority – its rule of recognition." (Bhabha, 1994:162) Homi Bhabha points out that while the word hybridity is sometimes associated with the negative connotation of a subject living between two cultures, in his view it actually symbolizes an affirmation of the colonial discourse within the dominant discourse. Homi Bhabha's concepts of immigrant identity formation, as well as Salman Rushdie's notion of "translated men," are particularly important for understanding the characters in the novel. Rushdie (2012:17) states:

The word "translation" comes etymologically from the Latin for "bearing across." Having been borne across the world, we are translated men. It's normally supposed that something always gets lost in translation; I cling, obstinately, to the notion that something can also be gained.

This acknowledgement throws light on the fact that all of Lahiri characters are constantly creating themselves; the first-generation characters often try to preserve their cultural traditions. The second generation, on the other hand, tries to reconcile one culture with another by translating themselves. The biggest challenge for migrants is the clash of two cultures. Their situation is so confusing that they are driven to create fictional homelands. They reimagine their homeland, and their identity remains unclear. According to Stuart Hall (1993:27), identity is a "production that is never complete but always in progress." Memory, in this context, serves as a nexus between personal memory and historical narrative, and sometimes the two are fractured. Ashima's identity crisis is much more severe. Gayatri Spivak notes that women are the most vulnerable victims of migration when she talks about women in the context of diaspora. She continues that women are "super dominated, super-exploited" (Spivak, 1996: 249) when they have to migrate to a completely new country. They cannot take advantage of migration, nor can they acclimate to their new environment. As



a result, the migrant woman is reduced to a state of nonexistence where she has no way to interact with others, and as a result, she becomes a victim of migrant activism. In her remarks, Spivak provides insight into the connection between Ashoke and Ashima, who was forced to travel because of her marriage to Ashoke. The following excerpt from the birth scene illustrates Ashima's loneliness and despair in a foreign land.

Now she is alone, cut off by curtains from the three other women in the room. One woman's name, she gathers from bits of conversation, is Beverly. Another is Lois. Carol lies to her left. "Goddamnit, goddamn you, this is hell," she hears one of them say. And then a man's voice: "I love you, sweetheart." Words Ashima has neither heard nor expects to hear from her own husband; this is not how they are. It is the first time in her life she has slept alone, surrounded by strangers; all her life she has slept either in a room with her parents, or with Ashoke at her side. She wishes the curtains were open, so that she could talk to the American women. Perhaps one of them has given birth before, can tell her what to expect. (Lahiri, 2011: 3)

The issue of identity crises is addressed at the very beginning of *The Namesake*. The story begins in 1968 with the birth scene of the main character Gogol, the first baby of the couple Ashoke and Ashima Ganguli. In Indian tradition, a woman about to give birth is sent to her family's home, where the birth takes place with the help and support of the other women in the family. But for the Ganguli family, the situation is different. Being far away from their families in America, their children are born in a different way than they are used to, and Ashima is sad that her child will grow up without a big family. Ashima's resulting anxiety, loneliness, and suffering in a foreign land she had never visited before support Spivak's thesis that a migrant must constantly adapt to her surroundings, both within the home and in connection with the outside world. Ashima recognizes the differences between Indian and American cultures, customs, and lifestyles at the very beginning of the novel. In this regard, the author conveys Ashima's predicament by contrasting and comparing the two cultures. The writer relates that:

Ashima thinks it's strange that her child will be born in a place most people enter either to suffer or to die. There is nothing to comfort her in the off-white tiles of the floor, the off-white panels of the ceiling, the white sheets tucked tightly into the bed. In India, she thinks to herself, women go home to their parents to give birth, away from husbands and in-laws and household cares, retreating briefly to childhood when the baby arrives. (Lahiri, 2011: 2)

The cultural differences between the two countries force Ashima to remember her childhood in Calcutta. Although she now lives in the United States, she continues to "calculate the time on her hands." As a result, she is unable to integrate herself into the American way of life and finds herself caught between her past and her present, which is one of the fundamental challenges associated with diasporic identities.

American seconds tick on top of her pulse point. For half a minute, a band of pain wraps around her stomach, radiating toward her back and shooting down her legs. And then, again, relief. She calculates the Indian time on her hands. The tip of her thumb strikes each rung of the brown ladders etched onto the backs of her fingers, then stops at the middle of the third: it is nine and a half hours ahead in Calcutta, already evening, half past eight. (Lahiri, 2011:2)

Moreover, Ashima Ganguli's life in the diaspora is marked by themes of cross-cultural adaptation, cultural conflict, hybridity, and negotiation. As a wife and mother living in the diaspora, Ashima Ganguli tries everything she can to protect Bengali customs. At the same time, Ashima Ganguli, who is a member of the Indian diaspora community, feels a sense of belonging through her affiliation with other Indians living in the United States. Throughout the book, Ashima strives to embrace American traditions and maintain a peaceful connection with them, though she has misgivings about whether she should engage with Westerners at all. Once she is ready to tear down the walls she has erected between herself and the Westerners, she is overwhelmed by her ambivalence and doubts about the impending cultural change. In addition to her ambivalence about adopting Western cultural ideals, she is also concerned about losing her own cultural identity, which is one of the most important issues in cultural studies, as the following quote shows:

The question of cultural identity lies at the heart of current debates in cultural studies and social theory. At issue is whether those identities which defined the social and cultural world of

modern societies for so long - distinctive identities of gender, sexuality, race, class and nationality - are in decline, giving rise to new forms of identification and fragmenting the modern individual as a unified subject. (Zubair, 201: 65)

*The Namesake* revolves around the theme of immigrant identity. Lahiri seems to question the concept of national identity by changing the cultural identities of her characters throughout the story. Lahiri expresses her thoughts about national identities in an interview:

I spend half the time in interviews trying to explain to people that I'm not from India. And I think there's a large population of readers out there who, when they see my book, see the jacket, see the design, see the motifs, see my name – assume certain things about me. They assume that I'm Indian. Or that I'm Indian in the way that they want to think of me as Indian, having been born and brought up there, and that I'm a foreigner in this country. (qtd. in Leyda 2011: 74)

Lahiri sees immigrants not as individuals born or living in a foreign culture, but as individuals whose identities are changed and recreated. The characters' identity formation is influenced by society and culture. These facets of the immigrant experience shape the personalities and contribute to their role definition. Ashima adopts and constructs an identity that enables her to maintain a balance between Indian and American cultures after her husband's death. Gogol's struggle for identity is reflected in his two different names -Gogol and Nikhil-as well as in his encounters with Indian and American culture and in his relationships with women. Gogol is a young man trying to create his own identity by rejecting the demeaning label of 'other'. In other words, he consciously maintains a distance from his immigrant past, which will haunt him later in life.

The author's own experiences as an immigrant and identity difficulties are very similar to those of the main characters in the story. Her ancestors are of Bengali origin, but she was born in the United Kingdom. Shortly after her birth, her parents moved to the United States. She was born and raised in New England and attended college there. Lahiri has stated in interviews that, like Gogol, she struggled with identity issues and social isolation as a teenager. Lahiri's parents, who changed cultures twice, also share Ashima and Ashoke's immigration experiences.

The question of identity is always a difficult one, but especially for those who are culturally displaced, as immigrants are, or those who grow up in two worlds simultaneously, as is the case for their children. The older I get, the more aware I am that I have somehow inherited a sense of exile from my parents, even though in many ways—superficial ones, largely—I am so much more American than they are. In fact, it is still very hard to think of myself as an American. For immigrants, the challenges of exile, the loneliness, the constant sense of alienation, the knowledge of and longing for a lost world, are more explicit and distressing than for their children. On the other hand, the problem for the children of immigrants, those with strong ties to their country of origin, is that they feel neither one thing nor the other. The feeling that there was no single place to which I fully belonged bothered me growing up. (Interpreter of *Maladies* by Jhumpa Lahiri, Houghton Mifflin Company)

Identity is associated with the need for recognition, belonging, and protection. Identities are created in the context of circumstances that are not deliberately chosen. In other words, identities are seen in the context of their cultural environment. Identities and names are inseparable. It goes without saying that the concept of culture is inseparable from the manifestation of one's personal identity. Every culture has different naming traditions. In Indian culture, it is customary for an elder to name the newborn. Ganguli couple has chosen Ashima's grandmother for this mission. They send a letter to her asking a name for the baby. However, the letter never arrives, and the grandmother dies shortly thereafter. In the meantime, Ashoke suggests the name Gogol. By juxtaposing Eastern and Western approaches to naming, Lahiri provides a new understanding of the social significance of naming.

The tendency to refer to Gogol as an Indian can be seen as an example of the "othering" of "Indian" immigrants in the United States, in which people are classified on the basis of their ancestral origins rather than their birthplace or citizenship. *The Namesake* is a novel that explores the cultural hybridity that has emerged as a result of globalization and the interconnectedness of today's world, while challenging conventional notions of what it means to be an immigrant. As an immigrant in a multicultural context, Lahiri is aware of the problems immigrants face in developing a transnational identity. She believes that the struggle

to construct one's transnational identity becomes a crucial issue for immigrants in such an environment.

On Gogol's fourteenth birthday, Ashoke tries to explain to him the meaning of his first name. To do so, he gives Gogol a copy of Nikolai Gogol's collected works to show his attachment to the book and the author.

His father has never given him birthday presents apart from whatever his mother buys, but this year, his father says, walking across the room to where Gogol is sitting, he has something special. The gift is covered in red-and-green-and-gold-striped paper left over from Christmas the year before, taped awkwardly at the seams. It is obviously a book, thick, hardcover, wrapped by his father's own hands. Gogol lifts the paper slowly, but in spite of this the tape leaves a scab. The Short Stories of Nikolai Gogol, the jacket says. Inside, the price has been snipped away on the diagonal. "I ordered it from the bookstore, just for you," his father says, his voice raised in order to be heard over the music. "It's difficult to find in hardcover these days. It's a British publication, a very small press. It took four months to arrive. I hope you like it." (Lahiri, 2011: 39)

Ashoke wanted to tell Gogol the story behind his name with this gift, but Gogol's careless attitude discouraged him. Gogol has only one truth: his desire to be an American. This desire goes so far as to alienate Gogol from the world in which he lives. Gogol feels this sense of alienation when they go on vacation to India. Gogol and Sonia are uncomfortable in their surroundings and feel that they do not belong in the country their parents call home. When Gogol and Sonia return to the United States, they try to forget their vacation in India as quickly as possible and resume their lives in the United States. During their time in India they felt completely alienated.

Driven by this question of identity, Gogol continues to despise his own name because of its absurdity and strangeness, and more importantly, he struggles with his own identity. Therefore, he wants to change his first name to "Nikhil" no matter what his parents think. Despite the fact that his parents are initially against it, Ashoke eventually gives in. As a result, Gogol officially changes his name to "Nikhil Ganguli" just before he begins his studies at Yale College. The change of name is an attempt to find his own identity and be identified as an American rather than a Indian. Gogol admires college life because it gives him the opportunity to live in a more American environment than in his home country. As he comes home less and less often, the emotional gap between him and his parents grows. Instead, he spends his time at college parties, socializing and forming relationships with women, and learning about the many aspects of college life. Eventually, Gogol receives his bachelor's degree in architecture from Columbia University and gets a job in an architectural firm.

In New York City, he meets Maxine Ratliff, a white girl, at a party and the two become friends. As a result, they become good friends and eventually start dating. However, Gogol's parents are not pleased with his relationship with Maxine. As Lahiri puts it, "His parents are diffident about Maxine, at first keeping their distance, not boisterous as they typically are around their Bengali friends... But Maxine is immune to their awkwardness, drawing them out, devoting her to them fully ..." (2011: 148) Indian traditions and American traditions differ greatly. For example, in the Indian family structure, children cannot be friends with their parents, there is a system where there is a hierarchical order within the family. In other words, the father, who is the head of the family, is at the top of the hierarchical order, the mother is next, and the children are at the lower. For Maxine's family, however, the situation is completely different. Family members are like friends. Maxine is used to being comfortable in her own family environment and behaves in a relaxed manner on the day she meets Gogol's family. "Though she'd been polite enough the one-time Gogol had brought Maxine to the house, Ashima doesn't want her for a daughter-in-law. She'd been startled that Maxine had addressed her as Ashima, and her husband as Ashoke." (Lahiri, 2011: 166)

The author probably shows the differences between Indian and American parenting style by portraying both Maxine's and Gogol's parents. While Maxine's parents can get along well with their children and have communication reminiscent of friendship, Gogol's parents erect impenetrable and unsettling walls between themselves and their children. "There is none of the exasperation he feels with his own parents. No sense of obligation. Unlike his parents, they pressure her to do nothing, and yet she lives faithfully, happily, at their side." (Lahiri 2011: 138) Gogol is also amazed that Maxine's parents allow their daughter and him to eat and drink what they want without submitting to any restrictions. "Gogol is unaccustomed to this sort of talk at mealtimes, to the indulgent ritual of the lingering meal, and the pleasant aftermath of bottles and crumbs and empty glasses that clutter the table." (Lahiri 2011: 134) This seems to show that some social factors in Gogol's family, as well as their local culture, are very different from those in Maxine's family. Unlike Western society,

the cultural norms that govern relationships between Indian families prevent people from behaving in a comfortable and free manner when spending time with their elders in their own families. Lahiri presents two different family structures. One belongs to Western culture where mutual understanding, deep relationships, and outspoken ideas dominate relationships with parents, and the other consists of a home environment where there are silent and repressed children.

One of the events that affect Gogol's identity is the sudden death of his father of a heart attack while he is working on a project in Ohio. It should come as no surprise that his father's death changes his state of mind and makes him more aware of his feelings for his parents. After Ashoke's funeral, Gogol starts his journey of self-discovery, accompanied by a strengthening of his commitment to his family. Gogol, in fact, wishes to reshape his Indian identity. Gogol distances himself from Maxine to spend more time with his mother and sister Sonia. The reason for this sudden change in Gogol is that he actually has a double identity. At various times in his life, one identity always outweighed the other. Although his American identity dominated his life before his father's death, this tragic death affects him deeply and his Indian identity, which he previously ignored, becomes strong after this event.

Ashima suggests that Gogol find a spouse, and she suggests Moushumi as a possible candidate. Moushumi, like Gogol, is a Bengali American and the two met as children. Despite his misgivings, he eventually agrees to meet her. When it comes to forming a cultural identity, Gogol recognizes that it is important to have similar ideals. Gogol believes that the common culture between him and Moushumi could help him overcome the difficulties he has been struggling with for a long time. Apart from the fact that they share the same culture, Gogol discovers other parallels between them. Gogol thinks that "they share the same colouring, the straight, thick eyebrows, the long, slender bodies, the high cheekbones and dark hair" (Lahiri, 2011:89). Eventually they marry. "they are fulfilling a collective, deep-seated desire." (Lahiri, 2011:224) Moushumi and Gogol belong to the second generation of Indian immigrants who settled in the United States and learned to live in two different cultures: American and Indian. As a member of the second generation, Moushumi has the same problem as Gogol, which is that she does not like her first name due to mispronunciation. In the end, Moushumi takes the name Mouse and Gogol takes the name Nikhil.

Moushumi argues that a name like hers is a curse, complains that no one can say it properly, that the kids at school pronounced it Moosoomi and shortened it to Moose. "I hated being the only Moushumi I knew," she says (Lahiri, 2011:239).

Moushumi is a doctoral student in French literature at New York College, where she is currently enrolled. She has a good education and is well-mannered. She has also spent a short time in Paris. She is not only Americanized, but also Europeanized, which makes her unique. Her presence has an immediate effect on Gogol. He tries to remember her from his youth and happens to recall a Christmas party that took place at her house. "He and Sonia had not wanted to go; Christmas was supposed to be spent with just family. But their parents had replied that in America, Bengali friends were the closest thing they had to family" (Lahiri 2011: 201). Sonia and Gogol are shocked by what they see.

Christmas was supposed to be spent with just family. But their parents had replied that in America, Bengali friends were the closest thing they had to family, and so they had gone to Bedford, where the Mazoomdars lived. Her mother, Rina Mashi, had served cold pound cake and warmed-up frozen doughnuts that deflated at the touch. Her brother, Samrat, now a senior in high school, had been a boy of four, obsessed with Spider-Man. Rina Mashi had gone to a great deal of trouble to organize an anonymous gift exchange. Each family was asked to bring as many gifts as there were members, so that there would be something for everyone to open. (Lahiri, 2011:78)

It seems that what Moushumi's parents are doing is nothing more than a basic desire to give their daughter a place in the community to which they are trying to adapt, which Bhabha characterizes as "the desire to emerge as 'authentic' through mimicry." (1994:126) Throughout the novel, Moushumi is also known for her domineering character and attitude toward her family. She is known to be studying chemistry, but she also has a double major in French literature. In an unusual decision, she turned her back on both American and Indian traditions and settled in Paris, where she met her future husband, a New York banker. She returned to her hometown and, with the support of her fiancé, applied to New York College. All the women who appeared in Gogol's life were free-spirited and self-confident. But what distinguished Moushumi from them was that

she had these qualities and was Indian.

Moushumi's decision to control her own cultural identity may well prove to be the normative behavior for the later generations of immigrant families in the United States. As their direct connection to certain roots diminishes and other cultural options are presented, these Americans will create their own personal bricolage of various cultural materials in order to form their identities. (Lahiri, 2011: 176)

Despite the fact that they come from similar backgrounds, inconsistencies arise between the two characters. The marriage fails after a year when Moushumi leaves Gogol for another man named Dimitri, who is an old friend of hers. Similar to Gogol, Moushumi constructs multiple layers of her own identity as she attempts to gain a foothold in American culture. In this way, she is able to help Gogol's development into a mature man and serve as a companion to him.

Ashima, Sonia and Moushumi, are important in observing the American experience as Third World immigrants. The novel focuses on Gogol's conflict with his name and thus his identity, and also on the dilemma of Gogol's parents, Ashoke and Ashima, in naming their children.

Each individual's identity is made up of a number of elements, and these are clearly not restricted to the particulars set down in official records. Of course, for the great majority these factors include allegiance to a religious tradition; to a nationality –sometimes two; a profession, an institution, or a particular social milieu. But the list is much longer than that; it is virtually unlimited. A person may feel a more or less strong attachment to a province, a village, a neighbourhood, a clan, a professional team or one connected with sport, a group of friends, a union, a company, a parish, a community of people with the same passions, the same sexual preferences, the same physical handicaps, or who have to deal with the same kind of pollution or other nuisance [...] All are components of personality –we might almost call them “genes of the soul” so long we remember that most of them are not innate. (Maalouf, 2007:10-11)

*The Namesake* is the story of an immigrant family. Ashoke Ganguli immigrated to the United States from India to pursue a doctorate. While pursuing his studies in America, he visited his homeland and then married Ashima Ganguli, who was chosen by his family and returned to America with him. Ashoke and Ashima continued their lives in America after their marriage. Although they stubbornly clung to their land and traditions, in time they realized that it was possible to adapt to the place where they lived without losing their own identity. The Ganguli couple, who try to visit their country as often as possible, go to Calcutta every three or four years and stay there for six or eight weeks. but they cannot prevent their relatives from becoming strangers over time. On their visit to India, first-generation immigrants feel much more comfortable than their children. Gogol and Sonia express their displeasure being in India. They know their relatives, but they do not feel as connected to them as their parents do.

What is home? The place I was born? Where I grew up? Where I live and work as an adult? Where I locate my community—my people? Who are “my people”? Is home a geographical space, a historical space, an emotional sensory space? Home is always so crucial to immigrants and migrants—I am convinced that this question—how one understands and defines home—is a profoundly political one . . . Political solidarity and a sense of family could be melded together imaginatively to create a strategic space I could call home. (Mohanty, 2007:351)

After his sister Sonia's engagement to her American fiancé Ben and his mother's departure for India, he feels isolated and alienated. When he goes upstairs to his room to get his camera, he finds a copy of the book *The Overcoat*, which his father gave him for his fourteenth birthday. He begins to study the book, trying to understand the meaning of the word "Gogol" in his father's life. As *The Namesake* draws to a close, Gogol recognizes that it is not our names, but our connection with the people who address us by name gives us belonging and meaning.

As the hours of the evening pass he will grow distracted, anxious to return to his room, to be alone, to read the book he had once forsaken, has abandoned until now. Until moments ago it was destined to disappear from his life altogether, but he has salvaged it by chance, as his father

was pulled from a crushed train forty years ago. ...In a few minutes he will go downstairs, join the party, his family. But for now his mother is distracted, laughing at a story a friend is telling her, unaware of her son's absence. For now, he starts to read. (Lahiri, 2011: 291)

*The Namesake* is about naming and the transformation of the protagonist from Gogol to Nikhil. In particular, Lahiri's emphasis on naming process illustrates the conflict between one's roots and the need for originality: renouncing one's given name means "going free," but it also means feeling "disconnected" from the people who knew one by that name. Gogol was unable to embrace his own multiculturalism because he was surrounded by discourses of ethnic purity throughout his life, including his parents, his college, and his society at large.

Every character in the novel struggles with their identity, which is complicated by being in between different cultures, traditions, and aspirations. But Gogol in particular feels these problems more than any other character in the book, as Lahiri makes clear through his constant struggle between his two cultures - Indian and American. The book, which is both an account of immigration and a personal search for identity, raises a number of important questions. They go through a great deal of emotional turmoil as they try to reconcile their cultural history with the American ideal.

Unlike traditional immigrant stories, which are about discrimination, racism, and economic survival, the characters in *The Namesake* live on welfare in the United States and reinvent their identity and culture by adapting to the culture of the country in which they find themselves. The characters in Lahiri's works draw attention to the fact that the concepts of colonialism and postcolonialism are not only historical realities but are still active processes today. The story follows the life of the protagonist Gogol from childhood to maturity, showing how his identity is fragmented during his immigration experience in the United States.

### Conclusion

*The Namesake* is the story of a Bengali couple who travel to the United States to start a new life in a country very different from their homeland. The tone of the story is set right in the first chapter when it is stated that the social conventions and customs that were part of their cultural heritage in India are in direct contrast to the customs and rituals practiced in the other place. The protagonists of the novel are plagued by a mixture of cultural conflict and identity problem. These confrontations occur more between Ashoke and Ashima. Having lived most of their lives in India, they are more attracted to their ancestral homeland than to their new adopted country. All of these characters are neither fully Indian nor fully American; rather, they are somewhere on the borderline between these two cultures. The immigrant characters in this novel are constantly subjected to the process of imitation, adaptation, and change. They struggle to find a balance between Indian culture and modern ways of life in a foreign place. This is the dilemma of diaspora communities. Something must be destroyed in order to begin a new existence in another universe. Although the Gangulis have created a new world, they have lost the flavor and fragrance of their old culture.

Asian Indians face a variety of difficulties, both personal and professional. For them, it is crucial to keep the family together as a whole. It can be difficult for an Indian mother to give birth to a child who has both an Indian and an American cultural identity. In today's society, the children of immigrants are among the most disadvantaged. They are American-born Indians who have lived in the United States from an early age, but they have also been raised to be good Indians who know and participate in a variety of traditional activities. For children born in the United States, that background did not exist: they were born into a world where they did not belong. To some degree, people continue to live their lives under a dual identity and without a distinct identity in any other form. Asian Indians have always faced prejudice and discrimination. Although racial discrimination against residents of Third World countries was prohibited by law in 1965, they were still treated unequally by American authorities, both socially and in terms of citizenship. For them, the misrepresentations and prejudices that surrounded them became an enormous burden as they tried to integrate into the dominant society. It is undeniable that immigrants face a double burden of difficulties. Being separated from their homeland, culture or customs, they find it difficult to live in a society that is full of racist attitudes towards people of other races. They have their own sense of self, but this is where the greatest difficulty lies. Their ethnic origin and identity has been overlooked and ignored in the United States of America, which boasts of being the land of freedom. As a result, people have two different identities: one in which they remember their history and another in which they live in the present. Despite their best efforts to integrate into the prevailing culture and become part of that society, they are not easily accepted. They are discriminated against on a personal and social level and are also subject to institutional prejudice.

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# JHUMPA LAHIRI'NİN ADAŞ İSİMLİ ROMANINDA SÖMÜRGE SONRASI GÖÇMEN KİMLİĞİ

Gökçen KARA

## Öz

Sömürge sonrası dönem, sömürge devletlerinin İkinci Dünya Savaşı'ndan sonra sömürge politikalarını gizlice farklı şekillerde sürdürdükleri bir dönemdir. Jhumpa Lahiri'nin Adaş isimli romanı, tanıdıkları her şeyden uzakta bir hayat kurmak için Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'ne yerleşen Bengalli bir çiftin yaşam zorluklarını ele almaktadır. Romanda kültürel kimlik, köksüzlük, gelenek ve aile beklentileri kavramları ele alınmaktadır. Ayrıca hafıza, nostalji, kayıp ve özlem bu romanda ele alınan temalardan bazılarıdır. Ashoke ve Ashima, birinci kuşak göçmenler, daha iyi bir yaşam umuduyla ABD'ye göç ederler, ancak geçmişleri onların peşini bırakmaz ve onlara kökenlerini hatırlatır. Öte yandan, onlardan farklı olarak bu ailenin çocukları Hindistan ile bağ kuramazlar, ancak ait olmak istedikleri Amerika'da bir vatandaş olarak da kabul görmezler. Yani romandaki kimlik bunalımı birinci ve ikinci kuşak göçmenlerde farklı şekillerde kendini göstermektedir. Bu makalenin amacı, modern kültürel söylemde sunulan karmaşık kültürel etkileşimleri ve kimlik krizlerini incelemektir. Bu makale, Amerikan yaşam tarzının sözde çekiciliğini ve iki ayrı kültür arasındaki çekişmeyi karşılaştırmalı bir mercekle incelemeye çalışmaktadır. Ayrıca bu makale, birinci ve ikinci kuşak göçmenlerin karşılaştığı kimlik ve kültürel çatışma sorunlarını ele almaya çalışmaktadır.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** kimlik, sömürgecilik sonrası, göçmenlik sorunu, kuşak çatışması, Adaş