

**THE PROCESS OF ASSIMILATION OF TWO GENERATIONS IN JHUMPA
LAHIRI'S SHORT STORIES COLLECTION *INTERPRETER OF MALADIES***

A THESIS

*Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement
for the Degree of Sarjana Humaniora*



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APPROVAL PAGE

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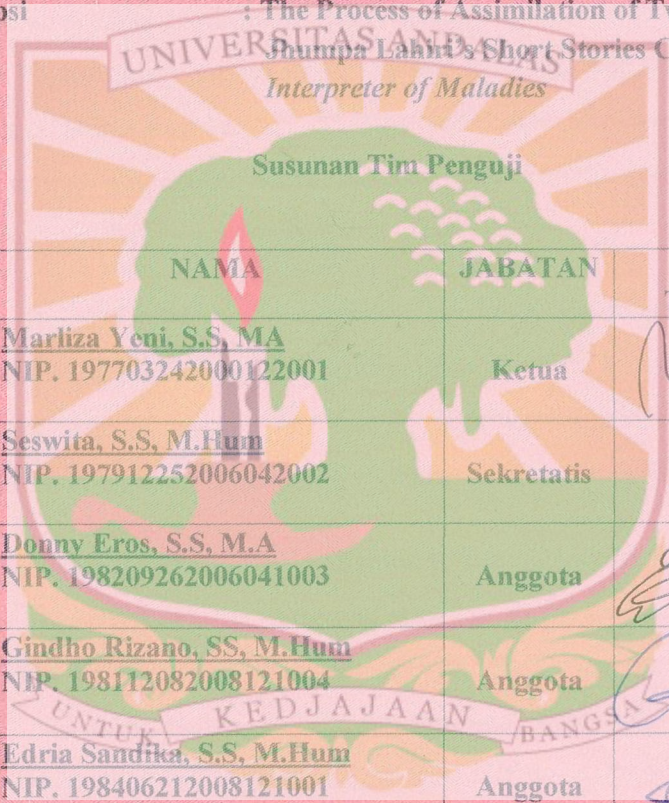


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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been submitted yet either in the same or different form. To my knowledge, there has not been any form or idea written or published by others except who are referred to this thesis and mentioned in the references.



Padang, June 2017

Amalia Tizzany Mudayana

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The Writer

ABSTRAK

Skripsi ini memaparkan tentang kehidupan generasi pertama dan kedua keturunan India yang hidup di negara barat dengan budaya yang sangat berbeda serta bagaimana warga keturunan India mengatasi masalah yang terjadi pada pencampuran budaya yang mempengaruhi kehidupan mereka. Objek penelitian adalah enam cerita pendek: *A Temporary Matter*, *When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine*, *Interpreter of Maladies*, *Mrs. Sen's*, *This Blessed House*, dan *The Third and Final Continent* yang diambil dari kompilasi cerita pendek karya penulis keturunan India, Jhumpa Lahiri, berjudul *Interpreter of Maladies*. Analisis ini menggunakan pendekatan pascakolonial yang menghubungkan topik dengan teori identitas budaya dari Stuart Hall dan teori keterasingan dari Ascroft, Griffiths, dan Tiffin. Melalui pendekatan pascakolonial dapat disimpulkan bahwa asimilasi budaya mempengaruhi imigran India yang hidup di Amerika. Setelah penelitian ini diselesaikan, penulis menemukan bahwa Jhumpa Lahiri memperlihatkan pandangan bahwa yang mampu bernegosiasi dengan budaya baru akan bisa hidup lebih baik dan bahagia.

Kata Kunci: *pascakolonial, asimilasi budaya, identitas, keterasingan.*

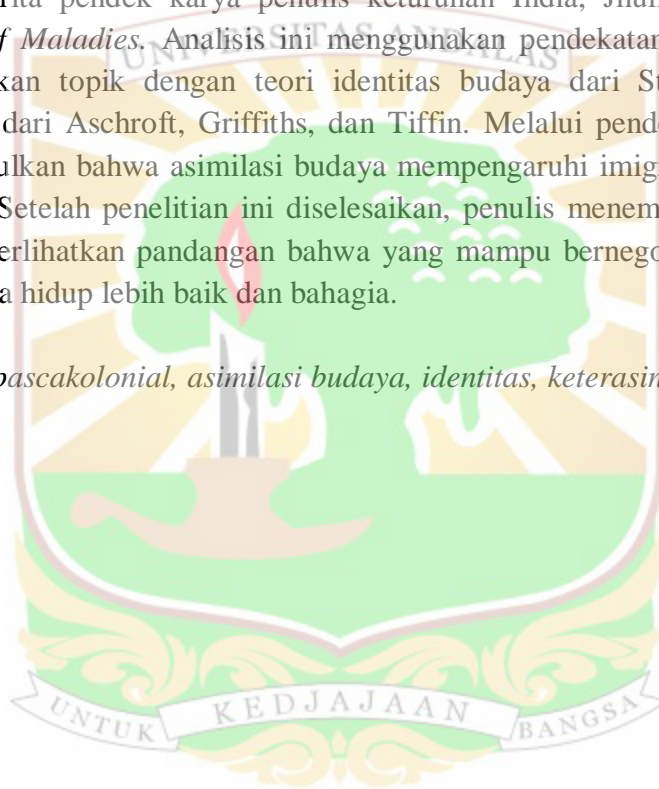


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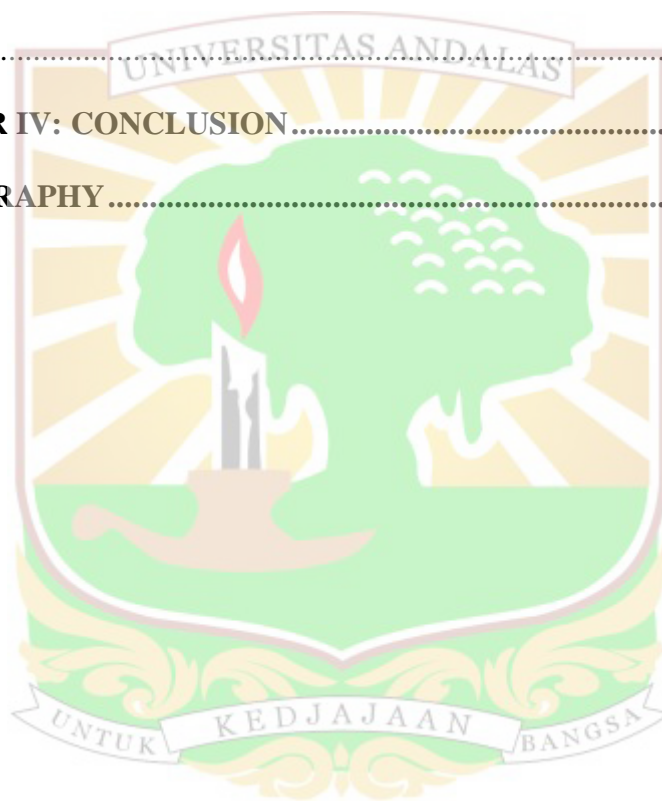
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Background of the Research

Migration has become one of the most important issues of the contemporary world. Consciously or unconsciously, they would definitely relate to the natives. It becomes a challenge for the Indian immigrants to face the differences with the natives, especially Americans. Jhumpa Lahiri, like many other postcolonial writers, describes the problem and cultural assimilation experience which are faced by Indian immigrants in the United States or the Western world. In Lahiri's stories, it can be seen that cultural assimilation happens to people who come or live in a new place. Those people go through the process of assimilation as the way to mingle with the people in the new place.

In this research, the writer is interested in analyzing *Interpreter of Maladies* by Jhumpa Lahiri. Jhumpa Lahiri is a second generation Indian-American immigrant female writer. She was born in London 1967 and raised in New York by her Bengali parents. Lahiri tries to tell her own experiences as a child of an Indian immigrant who lives in the United States. She grew up in the United States and this situation raises the dilemma because of living in two cultures. One online article states that Lahiri admits "I'm lucky that I'm between two worlds...I do not really know what a distinct South Asian identity means. I don't think about that when I write, I just try to bring a person to life" (Tsering).

Lahiri published her debut collection of short stories *Interpreter of Maladies* in 1999 and a novel *The Namesake* in 2003. She has received many awards and one of them is the most prestigious Pulitzer Prize for fiction. Her second short stories became the No. 1 in *New York Times* best seller entitled *Unaccustomed Earth* (2008). In 2013, she has published *The Lowland*. Her second novel was partially inspired by real world political events. Jhumpa Lahiri considered as a great female writer in the work based on those achievements.

Interpreter of Maladies is a collection of nine stories, there are “A Temporary Matter”, “When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine”, “Interpreter of Maladies”, “A Real Durwan”, “Sexy”, “Mrs. Sen’s”, “This Blessed House”, “The Treatment of Bibi Haldar”, and “The Third and Final Continent”. In this stories, Lahiri tries to describe the problems and experience faced by Indian immigrants in the United States or the Western World. Based on Lahiri’s short stories in *Interpreter of Maladies*, from nine short stories in the book, the writer finds the issue of cultural assimilation is presented particularly in six stories, which are “A Temporary Matter”, “When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine”, “Interpreter of Maladies”, “Mrs. Sen’s”, “This Blessed House”, and “The Third and Final Continent” because those stories show the interaction between two cultures that affect the cultural assimilation.

The book contains the stories of the first and second generation Indian immigrants, as well as a few stories involving the idea of otherness among communities in India. Most of the characters in the stories have identities like other contemporary postcolonial literary characters. No matter where the story takes place,

the characters struggle with the same feelings of alienation and struggle between the two worlds.

The writer describes the influences of cultural assimilation based on Lahiri's perspectives as a second generation of Indian and how the characters deal with the problem in those short stories. Furthermore, all short stories collection make the writer hypothesizes that they must adapt to the second culture to establish a good relationship with the people around and survive in a place where the culture is.

1.2. The Identification of Problem

Six short stories in *Interpreter of Maladies* shows the problems and difficulties faced by the first and second generation of Indian immigrants when living in the United States. Some characters accept the culture but the other half shows the inability to do so. The writer believes that as a person who lives with the mixing of cultures, Lahiri wants to shows her own perspective of being an immigrants.

1.3. The Scope of the Research

This research is basically a textual analysis, focuses on analyzing the six select short stories collection *Interpreter of Maladies*. More specifically, it presents the suffering, sacrifices, and struggle of assimilation and sees how Lahiri's perspective about living as an Indian in the United States. Besides, this research also covers the similarities and the difference between the first and second generation of Indian and Indian-American.

1.4. The Research Questions

There are questions which need to be answered in this research:

1. How does cultural assimilation give influences to the first and second generations?
2. What are Lahiri's perspectives about cultural assimilation that appears in her works?

1.5. The Objective of the Research

Based on the research questions that have been stated above, the aims of this study is to find the influences of cultural assimilation to the main character of the six select stories in *Interpreter of Maladies*. Not only to find the influences of assimilation, but this research also reveals Lahiri perspective as the second generation of Indian who lives with the mixing of cultures. She wants to give an illustration of being an immigrants.

1.6. The Review of Related Studies

Research has shown that the contradictory of characterisation exists in several works in literature. Dhivyapriya and Jagadeswari on "Cultural Dislocation and Culture Shock in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*" and Bharati Mukherjee's *Wife*", discuss about different novels from two Indian writers; Jhumpa Lahiri and Bharati Mukherjee. They critically discover about the contrary characterization between those two novels. At first, they talk about the interesting conflicts of Indian writing that covers every continent and part of the world. They give us several ideas on how the

Indian writers spell out their opinions and ideas into the novel. Although, Dhiyyapriya and Jagadeswarionly intoduced with the character of Gogol from Lahiri's novel *The Namesake* (2013:35-36). This research gives me a lot information about the Indian writers spell out their opinions and ideas into their works. From this research above, the writer can concluded that most of the conflicting analysis is still distracted by other things such as long explanation about Diaspora journey of the character and the crisis identity. This article helps the writer to gain more ideas because they show conflicts of Indian writers.

Prianka Sharma on her article "Bewildered Relations in Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies*", she focuses on the relationships among characters that analyze in each short story. She concludes that Lahiri is not only focused on a woman and man who struggle to build connection, but also the lost connection between people (2012:2-9). This article helps to conduct the research because provides the point of view in each story. From this article, the writer get a lot of information. The writer conclude that the main character in this stories are not able to shape their realities, it is not because they do not have the ability, but because they do not know how to place themselves in their world.

The other research is a research written by Annisa Munawara entitled "The Effect of Diaspora to The Second Generation Indian Immigrant as Reflected in Four Select Stories from Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies*: Postcolonial Studies", she claims as the second generations of Indian diaspora, they carry Indian identity. On the other hand, they also adopt or assimilate their second culture, America (2015).

From this research, the writer conclude that in the process of assimilation between the two cultures, the immigrants tend to be confused of their identity and might lose on the way; it makes them suffer from psychological conflicts. However, this thesis only discussed four of the nine short stories in *Interpreter of Maladies*.

In this research, the writer will discuss the suffering, sacrifices, and struggle of assimilation in the short stories collection *Interpreter of Maladies* and the writer will also show Jhumpa Lahiri's perspectives about cultural assimilation as the second generation.

1.7. Theoretical Framework

In this research, the writer discusses the problem of identity and alienation by applying postcolonial literary criticism. According to Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin in their book *Empire Write Back*, "postcolonial literary criticism deals with the effects of colonization on cultures and societies" (186) and "covers all the cultures affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day" (2). Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin explain above shows that postcolonial deals with the effect of colonization. This is not only covering the physical area in a country but also talk the culture, history, and every aspect of human life which have been influenced by colonization. Colonization is not only covering the phsycal area of a country but also touched the culture. According Tyson in *Critical Theory Today* states that the cultural colonization is the inculcation of the colonizer's idea and culture into every aspects of the colonized country, caused the ex-colonials suffer a psychoogical

inheritance of a negative self-image and alienation from their own indigenous cultures, which had been forbidden or devalued for so long that much pre-colonial culture has been lost (2008:419).

During the process of assimilation, a person will inoculate a new culture in their aspect of life; the loss of native culture is always to happen. A Hungarian scholar, M. Kozár also notes, “...assimilation is an integrative process within the family and between generations, and is not socially and culturally equitable, thus resulting in hybridity and the confusion of cultural identity. The assimilation of the first generation is never complete, they are in an in-between state where they have already left their culture behind but have not integrated the new culture yet. On the other hand, the second generation tends to aim at total assimilation, by breaking away from the roots and traditions” (in Pataki 2). Their reactions to hybridity and the cultural problems around adaptation, acceptance, cultural shock, and rejection.

One of the interesting characteristics in postcolonial criticism is dual identity issue. There would be a person with two identities; colonizers as well as colonized. Then, it is known as hybridity. The term hybridity has been crucial in Homi Bhabha’s view of the ambivalence of colonial discourse. It commonly discusses about cultural mixing or mingling between the colonized and colonizer. In hybridity, the original culture usually will not disappear easily, although the adapted culture will strongly influence. According to Homi Bhabha, concept of hybridity occurs as the ambiguity of identity that bring a person to a position of ‘in-between’ or in the middle. It means that hybridity is a process where two different cultures or traditions being mixed

which results in a hybrid subject. It can be considered as someone who stands ‘in-between’ because they stand between both the original and adapted culture.

The cultural identity often being the main issues in postcolonial literatures. Stuart Hall defines in his essay *Cultural Identity and Diaspora* that there are two definitions of cultural identity, first is “cultural identity is one, shared culture, a sort of collective ‘one true self’ hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed ‘selves’, which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common” (223). It means the cultural identity is stable, unchanging and collective, and not affected by the shifting of the stories. In the second, “cultural identity is a matter of ‘becoming’ as well as of ‘being’. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is nor something which already exists, transcending place, time, history, and culture” (1990:225). This quotation explain that cultural identity experiences the continious development of history.

Kathryn Woodward in her book *Identity and Difference* states that “...identity gives us a location in the world and presents the link between us and society in which we live...identity gives us an idea of who we are and how we relate to others and to the world in which we live...” (1997:1). The relationship of individual to society has always been problematic. Chris Barker also confirms in his book *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice* “identity is a social construction of culture” (2005: 170-171). Conceptually, identity and subjectivity are connected even inseparable. Subjectivity is related to one’s personal identity, where the feelings, emotions, desire, and willingness. Subjectivity also related to consciounes and unconscious person. Then

this identity becomes vulnerable to any changes that occur around them such as their dominance or minority which causes identity changes.

1.8. The Method of the Research

1.8.1. Collecting Data

In collecting data for this research, the data consist of the primary data and secondary data. The primary data, which is taken from the literary work itself, the short stories collection of Jhumpa Lahiri, *Interpreter of Maladies*, and the secondary data which are taken from literary theory and articles related to the study. The data is collected by using library research methods such as reading the books, articles, and journals and browsing the internet.

1.8.2. Analyzing Data

In analyzing the data, the the writer reads, understand, and analyze the primary data using the postcolonial point of view. The writer finds the relation between the issue and the theory and then describes about the process of assimilation in short stories collection *Interpreter of Maladies*.

1.8.3. Presenting Data

In presenting the result of analysis, the descriptive method will be applied since the research is a qualitative one. The written result of the research contains quotation from the data to illustrate and substantiate the presentations. By using descriptive analysis, the writer will report the analysis descriptively about the issue of assimilation using primary and secondary data.

CHAPTER II

THE PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

This chapter explores the intrinsic elements of the short stories collection *Interpreter of Maladies*, including the analysis of the characters, plot, setting, point of view, and the theme. This purpose of this chapter is quite helpful in acknowledge basic elements information about the stories.

2.1. Characters

Characters hold an important function to a story. Abrams said, characters are “the person represented in a dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by the reader as being endowed with particular moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities” (1981:32). There are several types of character in the story. Besides the character, it also differentiated between major and minor character, based on its role in the story. Major characters are the ones who face and overcome a number of serious problems in a story. Minor characters are faces few obstacles and often none at all.

2.1.1. A Temporary Matter

- **Shoba**

Shoba is a thirty three year old woman as a second generation. She is married to an Indian born, Shukumar. Shoba illuminates more strength than her husband. She is described as tall and broad shouldered. “She has a slender nose, the slightly masculine set of her jaw (18)”. She looks like a traditional Indian wife but her life and

behaviour changed since she loss her baby. Shoba tries to leave her husband, start to abandon her role as a wife after lossing her baby. She is caught up in her career; leaving home in the morning before her husband wakes up, she is more involved with her business project, regularly going to the gym, leaving home in the morning before her husband wakes, and returning home at dinner.

- **Shukumar**

Shukumar is a thirty five year old Indian born. Shukumar is six feet tall, with hands too big ever to rest comfortably in the pockets of his jeans (3). Like Shoba, he seems to be an American born child of Indian immigrants, but he has spent less time in India than Shoba has. Shukumar looks more passive than Shoba. He rarely initiates to interaction with Shoba. Both Shoba and Shukumar feel deeply depressed after Shoba's miscarriage.

- **Shoba's Mother**

Shoba's mother "came from Arizona and stayed with Shoba and Shukumar after her daughter returned from the hospital" (10). She is a religious and polite as an Indian woman. During her visit, she only speaks once to Shukumar when he mentions the baby's death.

2.1.2. When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine

- **Mr. Pirzada**

Mr. Pirzada is a Pakistani botanist studying in New England during the breakout of the Indo-Pakistani War in 1971. Mr. Pirzada is described as a compact

man, his belly slightly wide, his ears were insulated by tufts of graying hair that seemed to block out the unpleasant traffic of life, he had thickly lashed eyes (30). He constantly thinking and worries about being back in Pakistan during the country's civil war. He watches the news over dinner each night at Lilia's house, looking for news of his family because "he did not own a proper stove or a television set of his own" (26).

Mr. Pirzada is generous with Lilia, doting on her because he is not able to speak with his daughter. He clearly cares a great deal for little Lilia. He's more anxious about her than her parents and treats her like she's special. He is curious about American customs and Lilia tries to teach him about her culture.

- **Lilia**

Lilia is the narrator of *When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine*. When the story takes place, Lilia is ten years old during in 1971. She is American of Indian descent. She is a young and honest girl who has India lifestyle at home but only learns about American at school. She's the kind of kid can depend on to treat guest respectfully, as she does with Mr. Pirzada. Through the visit of Mr. Pirzada, she learns about the history of India's independence experienced by her parents. She worries about Mr. Pirzada's daughters. When Mr. Pirzada returns to Dacca, Lilia learns how she misses someone who lives across the world.

- **Lilia's Parents**

Lilia's parents originally from India, Calcutta. Lilia's mother proud of her daughter was born and grew up in America. She encourages American tradition to Lilia instead of the tradition of their homeland. However, Lilia's father encourages his daughter to learn about India, as it appears she is only taught American history in school. Her father wants Lilia's to know where she comes from.

2.1.3. Interpreter of Maladies

- **Raj, Mr. Das**

Mr. Das is an American of Indian descent. He was born and raised in America. He visits her parents every couple of years in India. He does not look like thirty years old but a father of three children, Ronny, Bobby, and Tina. Mr. Das is content with his life and children, blind to the unhappy of his wife. Raj is a passive, ineffective parent, unwilling to warning his children for misbehaving. Mr. Das and his family accompany tour guide to the Sun Temple of Konark.

- **Mina, Mrs. Das**

Mrs. Das is twenty years Indian American married woman. She is a kind of self-absorbed wife of Mr. Das whose disloyalty has isolated her from her husband and their children. Mrs. Das cares only about herself and her needs a true connection to the people around her. She describes like a short woman with small hands like paws, her frosty pink fingernails painted to match her lips and was slightly plump in

her figure (51). She admits to Mr. Kapasi that an affair produced her middle child, Bobby.

- **Mr. Kapasi**

Mr. Kapasi is smart and self-education man. He is a forty six man who working as a tour guide in Interpreter of Maladies and also works for a doctor and translating the symptoms of Gujarati patients. Mr. Kapasi lives in a loveless, arranged married and no longer sees himself as a potential object of interest for women. He entertains fantasies about Mrs. Das but finally horrified by her confession of herself absorbed.

- **Mr. and Mrs. Das Children**

The oldest child of Mr. and Mrs. Das are Ronny. He is precocious and sweet. Ronny does not listen to his parents, he prefer to do what he wants to. Bobby is the middle child of the Mr. and Mrs. Das. He is not actually Mr. Das's child. Bobby does not resemble Mr. Das physically or temperamentally. He is braver than his older brother. It makes Mrs. Das clearly favored. The last, Tina is the youngest children of Mr. and Mrs. Das. She strains for the attention of her mother, whines and misbehaves and she fails to get it.

2.1.4. Mrs. Sen's

- **Mrs. Sen**

Mrs. Sen is a thirty year old Indian woman. She was living in India, then move to America because her husband took a job as a professor in New England

town, she is a lonely woman who desperately misses Calcutta, her home. Life is very different for her in America. She refuses to learn drive because it scares her, but the refusal also limits her experiences in her new country. She misses her homeland and everything about it. She always compares all things between her homeland and her new home. Mrs. Sen has problems in adapting to American life.

- **Eliot**

Eliot is an eleven year old American boy. He lives with his single mother in a beach house. After school, Eliot always goes to the Mrs. Sen's house and spends his daytime until her mother picks him up at night. He becomes a friend of Mrs. Sen. Eliot is wiser than his age.

- **Mr. Sen**

Mrs. Sen husband, a professor who moves from Calcutta to teach in New England. Mr. Sen's figure is described as a short man with slightly protuberant eyes and glasses with black rectangular frames. He was too busy with his job sometimes and he does not really care with his wife. He urges his wife to learn how to drive so she can have more independence. He is not oblivious to her pain but neither does he coddle her.

2.1.5. This Blessed House

- **Sanjeev**

Sanjeev is a thirty three year old Indian immigrant to the United States, married to Twinkle. Sanjeev is a successful man with an engineering degree from the

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). He is efficient, tidy, and methodical in his habits. Sanjeev is a man who is conscious of appearances, which is also revealed when he worries about what people will think if they see the “Christian paraphernalia” in the house.

- **Twinkle**

Twinkle is an Indian immigrant who lives in the United States and recently married to Sanjeev. Twinkle’s parents live in California, but it is not stated whether she is a first or second generation immigrant. Sanjeev and Twinkle are newly married after only four month courtship. She describes like a very pretty young Indian woman, who likes to get dressed up and look good. She is childlike and full of wonder, delighted by every leftover religious item she finds in their new home. In fact, she is more interested in going on a treasure hunt for more Christian items than in doing the practical tasks that Sanjeev suggest is necessary to tidy up the place.

2.1.6. The Third and Final Continent

- **The narrator of *The Third and Final Continent***

He is the narrator life in London and his early days in America. From Calcutta, he studies abroad and settles in Cambridge, outside of Boston. He’s hardworking, brave, and practical. He is a kind man who ultimately builds a solid home with his wife. He chooses to live out his life in America as it becomes his true home. Through his repeated experience of encountering new worlds, he maintains a sense of wonder.

- **Mala**

Mala is the narrator's wife in *The Third and Final Continent*. She is very talented and educated. When she meets with her husband, she no longer cries but they are still stranger. But she tries very hard to be a responsible and good housewife. Through time and shared experience, she becomes accustomed to her new country and new life.

- **Mrs. Croft and Helen**

Mrs. Croft is the elderly woman who owns the house in Cambridge where the narrator and Mala stay. She is self-sufficient and likely quite stubborn. Mrs. Croft life is a mystery, what she had been doing for the 103 years prior to meeting the narrator. Helen is Mrs. Croft's daughter. She is more modern in dress and sensibility than her mother and also more practical a distant than the narrator.

2.2. Plot

Plot is one of the main elements of fiction. According to Mario Klarer in his book *An Introduction to Literary Studies*, plot is the logical interaction of the various thematic elements of a text which lead to a change of the original situation as presented at the outset of the narrative (1999:15). Plot is a planned, series of events having a beginning, middle, and end. It's also how the author arranges events to develop his/her idea.

2.2.1. A Temporary Matter

A Temporary Matter is a story about an Indian American married couple Shoba and Shukumar. A Temporary Matter is told from the third person perspective of Shukumar. This story begins with the main characters Shoba and Shukumar receiving a notice that electricity will be shut off an hour a day for five days. This problem will allow the electric company to repair the power lines that went down during the last snowstorm in March. Each night, the electricity will be turned off from eight to nine o'clock. Shoba insists that the electric company should work on the lines during the day. Shukumar takes slight offense at this idea. Since January, he has worked at home on his dissertation. He and his wife become strangers, experts in avoiding one another.

The conflict revolves around the death of a baby. In September, Shoba has experienced fetal death three weeks before their baby was due. Labor did not go well, their child had died. This incident makes Shoba's changed. She turns into the type of woman she would once claim she would never resemble. She leaves in the morning before her husband wakes and goes home at night when dinner time. She tries to abandon her husband. Shukumar becomes different as a husband, he rarely communicates with Shoba. At dinner, Shukumar cooks some food for his wife and they eat separately. Shukumar eats in his study room and Shoba eats in front of the TV. By observing this, Shukumar realizes that her wife has changed.

The resolution of the story comes when Shoba suggests Shukumar to play a game while waiting for the electricity to be on. The game is revealing each other secrets in the dark. Shukumar realizes that this revelation has been her planned ending for the game all along. On the fifth night, the two sit at the table together, and each of them cries because of what the other has revealed.

2.2.2. When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine

This story begins in autumn 1971, in Boston. The narrator is a girl named Lilia. She is a ten year olds girl of an Indian background. Lilia was born in Boston and her parents are originally from India, Calcutta. Lilia's mother is proud that their daughter was born in the United States and that she is an American. She has assured a safe life, access to education and endless opportunities. Her father is not pleased that she does not seem to learn about the world.

The complication of the story is when a man comes to dine at Lilia's house regularly. His name is Mr. Pirzada. He is a university teacher in Dacca and gets a fellowship to study foliage of New England. Mr. Pirzada is separated from his family, a wife and seven daughters. The conflict begins when Lilia thinks Mr. Pirzada is Indian. Firstly, she does not know he is Pakistan and she realize that Pakistan was not part of India. Her father tries to explain to her but it does not make sense because she thinks he and her parents spoke the same language, eat by hand. Everything is same what her parents and Mr. Pirzada do. As second generation who grew up in America,

she does not know all about her homeland where her parents belong to. She only knows America better than India.

The climax of this story is when Mr. Pirzada and Lilia's parents watch the news on TV and worry about the future there. India and Pakistan move closer to begin the war. He tries not to worry too much though, just until he hears his home country will soon go to war. Soon he decides to return to Dacca and he finds his family. He writes a letter, mentioning he survives with this family. Lilia misses him. She understands what it is to miss someone. He also thanks them for everything they have done for him.

2.2.3. Interpreter of Maladies

Interpreter of Maladies begins when The Das family is in India on vacation. Mr. Kapasi is a tour guide who is driving the Das family to the Sun Temple in India. During the trip, Mr. Das tells Mr. Kapasi about their family origins during the car ride. He tells that he and his wife born and grew up in America, Mr Das also reveals that their parents now live in India and the Das family visits them every few years.

Mr. Kapasi realizes that the Das family are Indian but not of India, he also see their dress and manner are fully American. Mr. Kapasi recognizes some common cultural heritage, the Das family are no more familiar with India than any other tourist. The complication of the story is when Mrs. Das knows Mr. Kapasi job as an interpreter in a doctor's office. Then she confesses to Mr. Kapasi that her younger son, Bobby, is the product of an affair she had eight years ago. She slept with Mr.

Das's friend who came to visit while she was a lonely housewife and she has never told anyone about it. She tells Mr. Kapasi because he is an interpreter of maladies and she believes he can help her. Mrs. Das reveals that she no longer loves her husband, whom she has known since she was a young child, and that she has destructive impulses toward her children and life. She asks Mr. Kapasi to suggest some remedy for her pain. Mr. Kapasi, insulted her, asked her whether it is not really just guilt she feels.

At the end of the story, when Mrs. Das rejoins them, Bobby is missing. They find him surrounded by monkeys that have become crazed from Mrs. Das puffed rice and hitting Bobby on the legs with a stick he had given them. Mr. Das accidentally takes a picture in his nervousness and Mrs. Das screams for Mr. Kapasi to do something. Mr. Kapasi chases off the monkeys and carries Bobby back to his parents and look on as they clean up their son.

2.2.4. Mrs. Sen's

In this story, a boy named Eliot, who was eleven years old after school should stay with Mrs. Sen from India. The rising action happens when Mrs. Sen continues getting upset when she is constantly thinking about her family in India. It is hard for her because she wants to be with them, but her life is now set in America. Mrs. Sen also cannot drive which prevents her from doing daily activities. Become a babysitter from Eliot, Mrs. Sen prepares food with special dishes and particular vegetables. Eliot rather enjoys Mrs. Sen's. Her apartment was warmer than his house.

Every day, Mrs. Sen calls the supermarket to see if they have a whole fish in stock and asks to reserve it for Mr. Sen to pick up. Next day, the shop owner informs Mrs. Sen by phone that they have good fish. She calls Mrs. Sen to ask him to pick some up, but he does not answer, so she attempts to drive to the market without her husband, and ends up in an automobile accident. From then on, Eliot stops staying with Mrs. Sen and returns home after school, alone.

2.2.5. This Blessed House

This Blessed House tells about a young Indian couple, Twinkle and Sanjeev, are exploring their new house in Hartford, which appears to have been owned by fervent Christians. The climax happens when they are finding gaudy Biblical paraphernalia hidden throughout the house while Twinkle is delighted by these objects and wants to display them everywhere. Sanjeev is uncomfortable with them and reminds her that they are Hindu, not Christian. This argument reveals other problems in their relationship.

They are preparing for a housewarming party at the end of October. Sanjeev worried about the impression, they might get from the interior decorating full of Christian figures. After some arguing, a compromise is reached. When the day of the party arrives, the guests are enamored with Twinkle. Sanjeev still has conflicting feelings about her; he is captivated by her beauty and energy, but irritated by her naive and impractical tendencies. The story ends with her and the other party guests discovering a large bust of Jesus Christ in the attic. Although the object disgusts him,

he obediently carries it downstairs. This action can either be interpreted as Sanjeev giving into Twinkle and accepting her eccentricities.

2.2.6. The Third and Final Continent

The Third and Final Continent is the story of a young immigrant adjusts to his new home and new bride. In 1964, an Indian man leaves his native country to sail to London, then finally to America. The rising action in this story happens when the narrator has been to three different continents and chooses to stay in the third, North America. He resolving to spend little money until his wife arrives. He decides to move somewhere a little more like home. He responds to an advertisement in the paper and ends up living with an elderly woman. The narrators do not feel that he owes the old woman anything and does not really go out of his way for her. Six weeks are spent with the narrator worrying about Mrs. Croft's health. He prepares for his wife's arrival from Calcutta, anticipating it as if simply another season. He sees an Indian woman walking in Cambridge, an overcoat fastened over a sari. A dog tugs at the free end of her sari and the narrator thinks of Mala and the protection she will need in her new home.

At first, Mala weeps for her family when she moves just five miles outside her ancestral home. But when she arrives in Cambridge, she comes with two sweaters for her husband. Although they do not quite fit, Mala is making an effort. She asks for money and spruces up the apartment and, importantly, adapts to her husband's adherence to American practices, foods, and customs. Mala is willing to put in an

effort. When the narrator takes his wife out for a day, he is at first dismayed at her dress. Rather than dressing casually, Mala puts on a beautiful sari, parts her hair in a special way, and applies jewelry fit for a night at a nice restaurant. The narrator feels a bit of unease in his relationship. It was an arranged marriage, and the two are strangers.

After living with his wife for some time, the narrator at first had barely known, he soon finds out that the elderly woman he had once lived with is now dead. This hurts him because this is the first person in America for whom he had felt any feelings. The resolution happens after the woman's death, he becomes more comfortable with his wife, not because the woman died but because of the time he is spending with his wife. Just like his relationship with an elderly woman, the more time he spends with a person the closer he becomes to them. After a time the narrator becomes in love with his wife and is constantly remembering the elderly woman with whom he had once lived.

2.3. Setting

Setting is the physical and social context in which the action of the story occurs. Abrams assumes that “the overall setting of narrative or dramatic work is general local, historical time and social circumstances in which its action occurs” (1999:284). It means that the location, historical period and the social surrounding are all considered when examining how setting contributes to a fiction. The setting can also evoke the atmosphere of the fiction.

The setting of six select short stories in *Interpreter of Maladies* revolves around America, more specially, New England. America presented as a safe place for a character to get assimilated, a new world to Indian immigrants. All Indian immigrants have two setting, one actual in America and another in their hometown Calcutta, through flashback techniques.

2.3.1. A Temporary Matter

The setting of A Temporary Matter is in Boston, on a “quite tree limited on street, within walking distance of a row of brick stores and a trolley stop, where Shoba and Shukumar had lived for three years” (1). Shoba and Shukumar lived happily but after loss their baby, they live together to look like a stranger. On March 19th, they received a notice informing that their electricity would be cut off at eight p.m for one hour for five days. During a power outage, they are playing a game that reveals each other secretly.

2.3.2. When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine

The story takes place in 1971, in a small American college town in New England where Lilia, ten year old, lives with her Indian born parents. Because her parents feel lonely in America, they call people with Indian names and invite them to their house. Mr. Pirzada is a Pakistani man who is studying botany in the United States while his family in Dacca. Lilia’s parents entertain Mr. Pirzada almost every night, sharing dinners and watch news of Indo-Pakistan War. He missed his family in

Dacca and worries about them yet in Lilia's house. Mr. Pirzada feels like in his home because of the hospitality of Lilia's family.

2.3.3. Interpreter of Maladies

The setting of *Interpreter of Maladies* is in India where the Das family will spend their holiday. They were on their way to the Sun Temple at Konarak. It was a dry, bright Saturday, in mid-July heat tempered by a steady ocean breeze ideal weather for sightseeing. The Das family does not know about India at all. They look like a tourist in their homeland.

2.3.4. Mrs. Sen's

The setting of *Mrs. Sen's* is Mr. and Mrs. Sen's house in New England. It is a university town. Mrs. Sen's apartment is warm. She feels lonely in her home when Mr. Sen busy at his work and leaves Mrs. Sen alone at home. Then, Elliot has been going to Mrs. Sen's house after school, she did not feel alone anymore.

2.3.5. This Blessed House

The setting of *This Blessed House* is set in present day. Sanjeev and Twinkle, move into a new house together after being married. After they move to a new home and find different pieces that relate to Christians, but they are Hindus. He does not see the importance of why his wife is keeping these pieces. Twinkle finds excitement in every piece she finds like a treasure hunt and realizes that they make the home more complete to her.

2.2.6. The Third and Final Continent

This story takes place in the 1960's with varying locations. The narrator is the second generation who migration from India to England and finally to America. These places play a role in understanding the title, which is important to understanding the theme of the work as a whole. The Third and Final Continent also closely mirrors with Lahiri's father life.

2.4. Point of View

Moreover, point of view in the story also affects the reader in reading fiction. Klarer claimed, "The term point of view, or narrative perspective, characterizes the way in which a text presents persons, events, and setting." (2004:20). Point of view provided by an author to the reader to understand what is going on in the story.

In six select short stories out of four stories has a third person point of view. There are *A Temporary Matter*, *Interpreter of Maladies*, *Mrs. Sen's*, *This Blessed House*. These stories are written in third person point of view by using pronounce "He and She" to refer the characters in the story. Through the narrator exposes the insight of each character in this story.

In third person point of view used, the reader can enter character's mind and upon reader's own interpretation. For example, in *Interpreter of Maladies*, the story told from Mr. Kapasi's perspective. The narrator presents the thoughts and feeling of Mr. Kapasi towards The Das's family "the first thing Mr. Kapasi had noticed when he saw Mr. and Mrs. Das, standing with their children under the portico roof the hotel,

was that they were very young, perhaps even thirty” (48). The narrator chooses Mr. Kapasi as a character to enlighten the content.

Another type of narrator in this collection is first person point of view. *When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine* and *The Third and Final Continent* are written in first person point of view. By using first person point of view, the narrators tell the stories based on their personal opinions. In *The Third and Final Continent*, the story is embedded in the voice of the unnamed character and all comments issue directly from the narrator. Throughout the story, the narrator mentioned various things he did not do in America that he did when he was living in India “..there is no need to cover your head... I don’t mind. It doesn’t matter here.” (192).

2.5. Theme

The last but not least is the theme. The theme is the controlling idea, message, and view of life or moral lesson found in the fiction. According to William Kenney, a theme is the meaning that released or discovered by the story (1983:91). All of the six short stories share one similar theme in general. The characters of those short stories form their habit. The main problem is they have to face the confusion of their cultural identity, as in *When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine*, *Mrs. Sen’s*, and *This Blessed House*, while *The Third and Final Continent* deals with the clash of cultures in different countries. In *A Temporary Matter*, *Interpreter of Maladies*, *This Blessed House*, and *The Third and Final Continent* tell a married couple, without communication a healthy relationship cannot maintained.

CHAPTER III

THE PROCESS OF ASSIMILATION OF TWO GENERATIONS IN JHUMPA LAHIRI'S SHORT STORIES COLLECTION *INTERPRETER OF MALADIES*

The six select short stories from *Interpreter of Maladies* are related to various aspects of Indian's life in one way or another. These stories tell us the first and second generations Indian are caught between the two cultures. These characters are caught between the original culture (Indian culture) and the adopted land's culture (American culture). Some characters accept culture but others have shown an inability to do so. According Hall, "cultural identity is matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being' (1990:225).

Detail of the analyses in this chapter are organized as follows; the writer divides the analysis into two subchapters. In the first subchapter, the writer describes the influences of cultural assimilation on the first and the second generation. This chapter presents how the two generations deal with the problems of cultural identity, alienation, and gender role in their life. All of the six select stories in this collection of *Interpreter of Maladies* describe different aspects of the character background of Indian imigrants living in the new life. In the second subchapter, the writer investigates Jhumpa Lahiri's perspective about the cultural assimilation, which consist of six select stories available on *Interpreter of Maladies*.

3.1. The Influences of Cultural Assimilation on Two Generations

3.1.1. A Temporary Matter

A Temporary Matter shows the life of the second generation couple, Shoba and Shukumar, settled in Boston. In this story, the writer finds the conflict of the personalities of Shoba and Shukumar between their natives India and their adopted homeland. As a newly married couple, they are unable to get accustomed to the new culture and still use their own culture. But after the death of their baby, Lahiri tries to portrays the rebellion that exists in Shoba and Shukumar, such as: first, they turned out to separate themselves from their religions and traditions, far from struggling to maintain their tradition. Instead, they do what they had to do without having to look at religion and culture. Second, Shoba and Shukumar destroying their identity as a harmonious and responsible family of India.

Mullati in *Families in India* says, “the Indian family is considered strong, stable, close, resilient, and enduring” (1995:11). From this quotation above, we know the criteria of common ideal family life in India. However, Shukumar and Shoba turned out to separate themselves from the traditions, far from struggling to maintain their tradition. Shoba changes her personalities from a proper housewife into an independent woman. It can be seen from her action to abandon her husband. Shoba starts to abandon her role as a wife by ignoring her husband, Shukumar. This change is viewed through Shukumar eyes, which usually sees his wife also prepare everything and now she changes to a woman who is no more interested in the household and also in him “...now she treated the house as if it were a hotel” (6).

Shoba does not serve her husband as well, she let him do it all by himself. According to *On Norms and Agency: Conversations about Gender Equality with Women and Men in 20 Countries*, a typical good wife is, “a good wife should make her husband proud of her. A good wife is is not necessarily a high income earner, but she has to have a stable and decent work” (2012:38). The writer argues that Lahiri wants to show that Indian woman represented by Shoba is a woman who does not fit the ideal type of good wife at all. She does not follow the tradition of marriage in India, she cannot take care of her husband.

The writer finds gender roles influence immigrants and second generation life in the United States. Shoba has quite lot of memories of India than her husband but that memories do not make Shoba maintains her cultural identity. Now she looks like common American woman. It is clear that Shoba as a wife is the primary breadwinner. She goes to work and even does part time at the gym. While her husband tries to finish his final chapter on his dissertation, staying late and does not leave the house all day or even to clean himself. In a terms of gender role, Shukumar becomes different as a husband. He rarely communicate with Shoba, he just waits for Shoba to speak first. These facts can be seen when Shoba leaves her gym shoes and satchel in the kitchen, Shukumar moves them out of his way without saying anything to her. According to Padmavathi in *Women Consciousness in Postcolonial Literature*, “women are solely responsible for cooking and doing household chores, as well as, becoming completely domesticated with the arrival of children. Men are according to such guidelines, responsible for working and providing their families with a monetary

income” (2008:21). But Lahiri reveals that Shoba and Shukumar are trapped between two cultures and try to cope with new cultures. The writer conclude that Lahiri shows cultural assimilation adopted by Shoba and Shukumar as the second generation. They slowly adopted American life style as the result of assimilation of the two cultures.

3.1.2. When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine

When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine concerns on the Indian family living in a small university of Boston and Mr. Pirzada, a man who comes to their house nightly for dinner for a period of a year. This story is told through the first-person perspective of a ten-year-old, Lilia. She stands between the tradition of her parents and American culture. As the first generation of America, it means that she clearly has multiple cultural influences ruins in her life and she becomes confused with her identity.

Lilia stands between two cultures, Indian and American. The facts that make her confused about her identity is when Lilia’s mother is proud that she was born and raised in America. Lilia’s mother more prefers her daughter to know American traditions rather than maintaining the traditions in India. It is contrast to Lilia’s father; her father encourages his daughter to learn about India, as it appears Lilia is only learning American history in school. He wants Lilia to know about the world of her parent upbringing. For Lilia, the only thing that she knows is her parents are from India. Sometimes she does not understand her parents’ complaint about the stuck of ingredients for Indian food or their lament that neighbours “never dropped by without an invitation” (26).

The younger character that appears in Lahiri story cannot see the differences through cultural similarities. Lilia cannot see the difference between Pakistan and India, through the way a family lives and dines with Mr. Pirzada. She does not find any difference between her parents and Mr. Pirzada. She thinks that Mr. Pirzada is an Indian like her parents. Lilia assumes that thoughts because Mr. Pirzada is apparently similar to her parents in looks and speaks the same language. However, when she refers to Mr. Pirzada as Indian, her father quickly corrects and informs her that “More importantly, Mr. Pirzada is no longer considered Indian... Not since partition. Our country was divided in 1947” (27). She feels to beware to know that Mr. Pirzada is not of their country but some other country though he looks similar as her parents. The writer argues that Lahiri shows Lilia’s innocent mind unable to understand how a culture can be found in two countries, India and Pakistan. Her parents are different from Mr. Pirzada in religion and nationality, but share physical and cultural similarities and makes Lilia confused about her father’s assertion. It obviously does not make sense to Lilia who finds no cultural gap between Mr. Pirzada and her Indian parents. She cannot make out how Mr. Pirzada and her parents come from two different countries when they seem to share the same cultural habits.

Even though Lilia’s family comes from India, they also participate in American cultural tradition such as celebrating Halloween, carving a pumpkin together and doing trick-or-treat. Lilia is a first generation American and that means she clearly has multiple cultural influences going on in her life. She clearly has an interest in cultures that are not American, it can be seen when she researches Pakistan

on school time and gets in trouble. Through the visits of Mr. Pirzada, Lilia learns about the plight of Pakistan, the history of India's violent independence experienced by her parents, the war between the formerly united countries and learns that other countries might be suffering while people in America do not even know about their problems. Despite being deeply committed to being an American child, Lilia struggles with maintaining her Indian heritage as well like her parents want her to.

3.1.3. Interpreter of Maladies

Interpreter of Maladies tells the story of an Indian-American couple, Raj and Mina Das who arrive in India along with the children for a holiday. Along with their three children, the couple hired a driver and tour guide, Mr. Kapasi for their tour. The theme of this story tells about cultural differences between Indian and American is an important component in this story.

During the process of assimilation, a person will inoculate a new culture in their aspect of life; the loss of native culture is always to happen. Lahiri shows how the second generation of Indian American cannot maintain their native culture. The Dases look like Indian but dressed as American, as stated in the story "the family looked Indian but dressed as foreigners did...the children in stiff, brightly colored clothing and caps with translucent visors" (49). The children are even entirely similar with other children in American. It shows that the Dases have absorbed the American culture in their life; they choose to wear westerns clothes.

The writer believes that Lahiri wants to show the cultural mixing between India and America that is reflected by the Dases. It happens when “Mr. Kapasi had pressed his palms together in greeting...Mr. Das squeezed hands like an American so that Mr. Kapasi felt it in his elbow” (49). As we know, there are differences ways to introduce ourselves in some countries. But in India, people greet each other with a namaste. The hands are brought together with palms touching gracefully in front of the chest and the head is bowed slightly as the person utters the word namaste. The mixing of the two cultures can also be seen in their language. The Dases tends to ignore their mother language. During the trip, Mr. Das uses English than Hindi language with Mr. Kapasi. As the result, when visiting India they are feel like alienated in their motherland.

The Dases has been affected by the new culture thus eliminated the traditional culture since they lived in the United States. Mr. and Mrs. Das appear more like siblings as seen from the way they communicate and with their children. Mr. Das mention the name of his wife by name while speaking to the little girl. The writer argues, in contrast to Mrs. Sen in *Mrs. Sen's* who have a role as a traditional Indian wife, take the responsibility of children, Mrs. Das out of a characteristic of a traditional Indian woman. Based on the quotation, when Tina wanted to go to the toilet, Mrs. Das did not hold Tina's hand. Mr. and Mrs. Das fail to take care of their children and they are not a typical good parent who knows how to raise their children.

Lahiri represents Mrs. Das as the second generation who feel isolated because of two cultures. Mrs. Das admits that she loves American culture, but in the end, she

feels dissatisfied with her life. Mrs. Das indicates that part of her American identity make her urges for an affair with her husband's friend and giving birth to Bobby. Her awareness of India keeps reminds her of the sacred marriage that makes her sick in isolated. Similarly, with Lilia in *When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine*, Mrs. Das is struggling to maintain her Indian heritage but the dilemma is the result of a confusion of two different cultures. She is also aware of the fact that social norms in India are different from the American.

The conclusion of this story is that the Das family especially Mrs. Das seems to represent the bad effects of assimilation. The writer believes that the second and the third generations who born and grew up in the United States have transformed and assimilated into the American culture.

3.1.4. Mrs. Sen's

Mrs. Sen is different character from the main character in *Interpreter of Maladies*. This short story tells the experiences of Mrs. Sen as the first generation of Indian life in the United States, but she feels alienated in her house because her husband spends a good deal of his time at his workplace. So she tries to spend her time doing household and babysitter for an eleven years old American boy, Elliot.

Mrs. Sen really struggles to adapt with her new place and its culture. Like many others first generation of Indian immigrant, Mrs. Sen is continuously longing for India and fear of longing her Indian heritage, custom, and culture. According to a Hungarian scholar, M. Kozár also notes, "...assimilation is an integrative process

within the family and between generations, and is not socially and culturally equable, thus resulting in hybridity and the confusion of cultural identity. The assimilation of the first generation is never complete, they are in an in-between state where they have already left their culture behind but have not integrated the new culture yet” (in Pataki 2). Mrs. Sen feels alienated because she just gets stuck in her apartment.

Lahiri describes the first point of alienated when Elliot’s mother ask Mrs. Sen to get driver license but “Mrs. Sen did not know how to drive” (123). She is unwilling to learn to drive in the United States. It makes Mrs. Sen had to get out of her comfort zone because when Mr. and Mrs. Sen in India they had a driver. But in India, there is no expectation that she learn to drive because India is where she belongs. The writer thinks that before arrives in the United States, Mrs. Sen had a happy life with her family and her neighbours. She talks with Elliot about her experience with other neighbours in Calcutta and all about India. Sometimes Mrs. Sen is missing her Calcutta family, her neighbours and above all the community feeling that does not exist in the American culture.

Mrs. Sen feels sad because she is separated from India. Based on quotation in this story,

“You say that now, but you will see when you are a man your life will be in places you cannot know now.... You will have a wife, and children of your own, and they will want to be driven to different places at the same tie. No matter how kind they are, one day they will complain about visiting your mother and you will get tired

of it too, Elliot. You will miss one day, and another, and then she will have to drag yourself onto a bus just to get herself a bag of lozenges.” (143).

Based on the quotation, Mrs. Sen experienced emotional dissatisfaction in her life. As a result, Mrs. Sen’s feels unhappy and incomplete life reflects her isolation.

Lahiri describes Mrs. Sen as a woman who is not easily affected by the new culture. The writer argues that Mrs. Sen is the reflection of the images of Indian women; who have a role as a traditional Indian wife, take the responsibility of children, cooking, and doing the household. As a result, Mrs. Sen keeps attaching to be Indian women even Elliot’s mother asked her to get a driver license. Driving is not required to Mrs. Sen because as a wife in India, she had to stay at home, cooking and being a good housekeeper.

As the first generation of India, Mrs. Sen always compares the culture, tradition, and custom to Elliot. On the other hand “by then Elliot understood that when Mrs. Sen said home, she meant India, not the apartment”(128). In her perspective, America is a merely her place of residence, India is still her home. Mrs. Sen shocked by the individualism inherent in American society. She is in love with India, tells the memories that she had in India and cannot get it in America.

Mrs. Sen does not try to become an American; she tries to make a mini India in her house, still wears the traditional sari and shoes are taken off while in her home. She is not influenced easily by American society. The writer believes that Mrs. Sen managed to be the first generation that hold their custom, tradition, and identity living in the United States. She is one of the examples, which are Lahiri described as

somebody who tests assimilation but ultimately does not assimilate, Mrs. Sen only tries to adapt to the new culture.

3.1.5. **This Blessed House**

This Blessed House focuses on the second generations' Indian marriage couple, Twinkle and Sanjeev. This story shows the adjustment of young immigrant Indians to a new culture and beliefs. They come from different cultural backgrounds with different experiences. The writer believes that Lahiri tries to represent the life of the second generation moves to America and start to become an Indian immigrant. There are several problems of identity that exist after Twinkle and Sanjeev moves to America, such as how they have to adjust to the American life but on the other side, they still maintain their identity as Indian.

Sanjeev also makes very good relationship with American. His position as vice president in a firm near Hartford, who has a secretary of his own and a dozen people working under his command is a proof of positive consciousness. He can be well accepted. In addition, his acquaintances include not only Indian people living in the United States but also the Americans. Sharda (1990) in Jain and Belsky mentions that many Indians in the US still observe traditional festivals and rituals, seek guidance from parents, including having arranged marriage. Though having been internationally interacting with global world, the old world is still given attention, including for Sanjeev, the second generation of Indian immigrants.

On the other side, Twinkle, Sanjeev's wife experiences different negotiation and adaptation process compared to Mala in *The Third and Final Continent*. As the second generation immigrant who is pursuing her master degree, Twinkle is described as a modern woman who more easily adapts to the new environment. In the matter of food and costumes, Twinkle has her own stream. When Mala in *The Third and Final Continent* and Mrs. Sen in *Mrs. Sen's* are good at cooking and knitting, Twinkle chooses to order food or cook practical recipes. Her habits of smoking and consuming wine are examples of her adaptation to the new world. In this case, modernity plays roles in transferring values in adaptation process. For Twinkle, new world is not a questionable matter. New world is regarded as the place which offers hopes and chance to raise her standard of living, hence there is no worry for Twinkle to involve in American life, including plunging herself into the most principles thing in her life, admiring the Christ statue she found in her new house. However, she is a Hinduism, she is interested in the statue. The situation of being Hindu but interested in Christ statue is part of dual nature in diasporic life.

Twinkle portrays the stages of "Americanization" because she changes her Indian name. Twinkle is not her name from birth. Her name is actually Tanima, but she prefers to be called "Twinkle", an English word borrowed from a nursery rhyme. The writer believes Twinkle chooses to express her identity in Western terms. Moreover, she also calls her husband Sanjeev's name with Sanj. This is evidence of her assimilation into the American culture and lifestyle.

However, Twinkle's negotiation process to the old world also runs smoothly. As an educated Indian woman, Twinkle, also agrees to have arranged marriage. The couple went back to India for wedding. The writer believes that Sanjeev and Twinkle maintain their relationship with Indian culture. Her negotiation process with her own husband Sanjeev becomes parts of her diasporic life. Sanjeev, who holds Indian tradition more than Twinkle reluctant to put Christ statue inside the room though Twinkle asks for. The religious belief difference is the cause of his reluctance though Twinkle convinces him that they are still Hindu. The negotiation process between Sanjeev and Twinkle represents negotiation between old and new world. Eventually the negotiation can reach the agreement successfully when both sides can mediate, compromise each other and lost their rigid principles. Sanjeev is succeeding in keeping his idealism to hide some statues, but on the other side he can compromise when Twinkle has willingness to display the statues in some certain rooms he determines.

This process of assimilation emerges as the efforts to survive in the new land. Sanjeev also tries to make negotiation in foods by having both foods from the two worlds. Serving both American and Indian food in his housewarming party is one of his forms of negotiation "there would be a case of champagne, and samosas from an Indian restaurant in Hartford, a big tray of rice with chicken and almonds and orange peels..."(168). The writer believes that Sanjeev and Twinkle maintain their relationship with Indian culture. At the same time, they are mostly dress and behave like an American, they do not hate or despite anything that has Indian sense. Even

Twinkle wears a *salwar-kameez*, a traditional Indian garment consisting of loose trousers with a long shirt or tunic in her housewarming party.

3.1.6. The Third and Final Continent

The final story of Lahiri's collection presents the realities of the long process of assimilation into American culture from an Indian perspective. *The Third and Final Continent* is a story of the narrator as the second generation who migration from India to England and finally to America. This story also closely mirrors with Lahiri's father life.

The narrator tries his best to adapt to American culture without leaving his own culture. The process of assimilation can be conducted through some ways, such as foods, costumes, traditions and others. He also learn that some American culture could also being accepted such as when "I learned that Americans drove on the right side of the road, not the left and that they called a lift an elevator and an engaged phone busy" (190). In food, he starts his negotiation process with his new world by having American food such as cereal and milk, while rediscovering his traditional culture by cooking egg curry and having Darjeeling tea. This process emerges as the efforts to survive in the new land. The writer believes that Lahiri shows the characteristic of the narrator is able to accept other cultures.

Lahiri creates an image of Indian women that are represented by Mala. Women's experience in diasporic life and adaptation process is different from men. When men usually face the new world as a new challenge for them and as a means

for better life, women may encounter it as the opposite. According to Clifford in *Cultural Anthropology* mentions that “..life for women in diasporic situation can be doubly painful, struggling with the material and spiritual insecurities of exile, with the demands of family and work, and with the claims of old and new patriarchies.”(1994:314). Compared with Mala, the wife of the narrator, she faces more obstruction in her adaptation process. As the 1969 first generation immigrant Indian woman who never traveled abroad, Mala is often found weeping at night remembering her parents, though it was still in India. The new world seems a questionable habitat which is far and to which she should rely her life on. Meanwhile, the old world, India, gives a big influence and comfort to her and thus it is too significant to leave. Hence, she keeps her identity as Indian woman by wearing sari and India accessories, rubbing coconut oil into her scalp at nights, cooking curry and oxtail soup, having Darjeeling tea, and bringing some pajamas. Her ability to cook, knit, embroider, and sketch landscape is a reason to put her as a typical of ideal Indian woman. Like in India tradition, men are considered superior and powerful; while women must subjugate and bow down to their fathers, husbands, and then to their son as well. Men are the breadwinners, while women being a good housekeeper at home (Jain and Belsky, 1997:875). In both India and America, Mala’s position is restricted at home, handling domestic affairs, while her husband provides economic security. This working division reflects the divided gender roles in the diasporic life of Indian women.

Mala and the narrator hold on their culture and want to maintain their culture although live in other countries. As the writer tells in *This Blessed House*, in *The Third and Final Continent* adopts American ways, and the narrator remain conscious of his connections to the traditional culture. The writer thinks that Lahiri wants to show how the narrator character strongly interprets his first culture as an immigrant and the emotions that he feels when he enters a new country. It also explains the inner conflict in which he is trying to overcome of being a modern Indian and a traditional Indian at the same time.



The table below shows the issues that occur in the two generations of cultural assimilation.

Short Stories	Characters	Issue	The Process of Assimilation
A Temporary Matter	Shoba and Shukumar	Cultural Identity	The life of the second generation couple in the US. A newly married couple, they are unable to get accustomed to the new culture and still use their own culture but after the death of their baby, Shoba and Shukumar adopt American culture in their life
When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine	Lilia	Cultural Identity	As the first American Indian descent, Lilia deeply commits to being an American child. She does not hate or leave her Indian background. She also struggles with maintaining her Indian heritage as well as her parents wants to
Interpreter of Maladies	The Das family	Cultural Identity and Alienation	As the second and the third generations who were born and grew up in the US, the Das family adopt and apply American culture in their life. They try to reject and leave the Indian traditions

Mrs. Sen's	Mrs. Sen	Cultural Identity and Alienation	Mrs. Sen is the first generation of Indian living in the US with her husband. She does not really repulse American culture but she still maintains her Indian identity fully. She prefers to show her Indian identity and wants people to see her purely as an Indian woman even though sometimes feels alienated
This Blessed House	Sanjeev and Twinkle	Cultural Identity	The second generation of Indian married couple moves to America, Sanjeev and Twinkle maintain their relationship with Indian culture. They do not hate or reject anything that has Indian sense. They also openly accept America culture
The Third and Final Continent	The narrator and Mala	Cultural Identity	The narrator and her wife, Mala tries to adopt American culture without leaving their own culture

Based on the problems above we can see the characters have a similar issue.

3.2. Jhumpa Lahiri's Perspective of Cultural Assimilation by Two Generations

Jhumpa Lahiri, like many other postcolonial writers, has described the problems and experience faced by Indian immigrants in the United States or the Western world. During the process of assimilation, the colonizer will inoculate their culture in the aspect of life; the loss of native culture especially for the second generation. Assimilation is the concept that immigrants adopt enough of the American culture while they may retain aspects or traditions of their cultural heritage.

The writer shows how Lahiri delivers her idea about cultural problems in short stories. The fact is Jhumpa Lahiri as a person who lives with the mixing of cultures, was born in England and then raised in America from parents who originated from India. Lahiri herself struggles to understand Indian culture, she uses her cultural background as an Indian American to create characters that express the alignment in her own life. Her short stories collection *Interpreter of Maladies* is a reflection of her own experiences as well as those of her parents and their Indian immigrant friend.

All Lahiri's stories revolves around people who are Indian in the United States or Americans of Indian descent. All of select stories, the writer argues Lahiri is very aware of the cultural differences between India and America. She does not criticize what she had experienced, or if possible Lahiri's perspective will not be seen clearly. The writer believes that from six select stories, Lahiri wants to give an overview of her experience as second generation Indian immigrants. Moreover, Lahiri describes the character as the representation of the first generation and second

generation who lives in America that successfully pursues their fulfillment and at the same also accomplish their traditional culture. Lahiri brings up interesting questions as to what can and cannot act as agents in the determination of identity. Many of her characters struggle against or conform to outside influences that have effects on self definition and outside the definition.

Lahiri's stories in this collection centre around the process a seeking for cultural identity. Every character in this stories suffers from some kind of identity loss or identity crisis. For Mrs. Sen, it is loss of social identity. Lilia in *When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine* is confused between two cultures. Lahiri wants to reveal and gives an overview that whether you are the first or second generations, you did not except to ignore your own culture. While Shoba and Shukumar action in *A Temporary Matter*, Mr. and Mrs. Das action in *Interpreter of Maladies*, and Twinkle and Sanjeev action in *This Blessed House*, actually they although by being Indian immigrant who lives in America, leaves all they traditions in India and transform to be a new person. They realize that identity is subject to change, it because the contact of the two cultures will make them need to develop themselves into a new identity. They adopt and apply the American culture in their life or trying to reject and leave the Indian culture. In the other hand, the writer believes that Lahiri describes Mrs. Sen action in *Mrs. Sen's* and the narrator and Mala action in *The Third and Final Continent* by being Indian immigrants who live in America keeps their own culture even trying to adapt American culture.

In the short stories collection *Interpreter of Maladies*, alienation is an issue told by Lahiri. She illustrates how Indian immigrant difficulties to life easily with the people in America and find themselves alienated. *Interpreter of Maladies* and *Mrs. Sen's* create a sense of compassionate understanding of Indian life. They suffer from alienation and they are being exile. Lahiri tries to defend the beliefs and culture values with the sense of alienation and their pride for the homeland.

There are some stories in *Interpreter of Maladies* show the role of husband and wife. Instead of presenting gender role as stated by tradition, Lahiri presents the roles of husband and wife are often challenged or reversed. Gender role is also challenged in the story *A Temporary Matter*. Shukumar, while being a student at home, he begins to take on the traditional role of a female in Indian society in his house. At the time, Shoba provides as the breadwinner in the relationship and portrays an insensitivity that traditionally indicates of men. In the title of stories *Interpreter of Maladies*, the character of Mrs. Das behaves in almost opposite manner from any traditional Indian woman. Mrs. Das cannot take care of her children, she's out of characteristic as an Indian woman. In the story *This Blessed House*, Lahiri also shows a reversal of gender role. Twinkle as a wife, who should do household and cook for the family but she prefers to read, talk on the phone with her friend, or purse her "treasure hunt" for Christian items. Then there are those who keep the tradition and find difficulties, notably Mrs. Sen and Mala in *The Third and Final Continent*.

The characters that Lahiri creates all have one thing in common, and that is their cultural background and the struggles that they endure that challenge their

beliefs which ultimately to see that culture contributes to the development of one's identity. Every immigrant experiences injustice, discrimination, prejudices and a threat to cultural identity in the second land. Therefore, they do not try to put favoritism in one culture and just live as what they fit. They adopt and apply the American culture in their lives without trying to reject it and leave behind the Indian traditions. This acceptance towards the hybridity is shown through how they behave. It confirms that they can maintain their original identity as an Indian, while at the same time absorb the new culture in order to become an India American.



CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

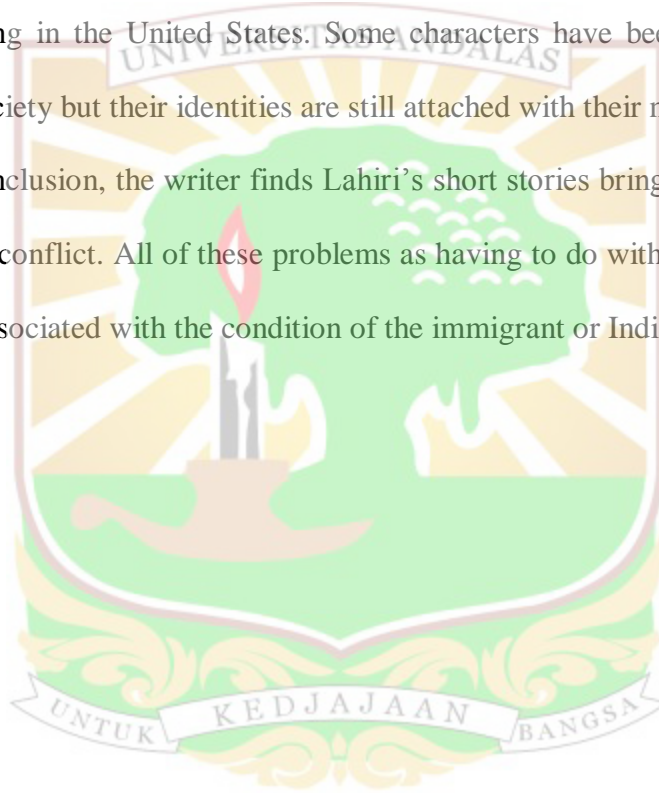
After analyzing all of short stories in *Interpreter of Maladies* by Jhumpa Lahiri, the writer finds the influences of cultural assimilation through the main character and shows Lahiri's perspectives about the cultural conflict between the two generations in her short stories collection.

Jhumpa Lahiri as the second generation who lives with the cultural mixing makes her very aware of the cultural differences between India and America. In her collection, Lahiri describes her characters as the first generation who lives in India and the first and second generations immigrants to the United States. Lahiri wants to show to the reader about her first short stories, which reveal the cultural identity, alienation, and gender role by characters.

The writer believes that experiences of the first generation immigrants are contrasted with the second generation. As the first generation, born in their homeland and migrant to the new place, as a result they never left behind and forget their culture, tradition, and custom. They migrate to new land causes the various problems such as conflict between two cultures, the challenge of cultural identity, sense of alienation and longing for a lost world. Being the first generation of Indian who lives in the United States, maintain their own culture and some have tried to adapt American culture. They try to get a new life but automatically carry Indian identity as their traditional culture.

The main characters in these stories are mostly the second generation of India. The second generation in this story is the characters who are in between two cultures. The analysis shows how the culture is a part of themselves, but on the other side in every culture can not accept them as a whole. As a result, it makes their culture and national are not fixed. On the other hand, they belong to Indian but on the other hand, they are living in the United States. Some characters have been absorbed into the American society but their identities are still attached with their native culture.

In conclusion, the writer finds Lahiri's short stories bring the issues related to the cultural conflict. All of these problems as having to do with human nature rather than being associated with the condition of the immigrant or Indian.



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