



People's Democratic Republic of Algeria Mohamed  
Khider University of Biskra  
Faculty of Letter sand Languages  
**Department of English Language and Literature**

## **MASTER THESIS**

Letters and Foreign Languages  
English Studies  
**Literature and Civilization**

---

### **The portrayal of Insecurity and Security in Jumpa Lahiri’s “Interpreter of Maladies”**

---

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree of Master  
Degree in Literature and civilization

**Submitted and Defended by:**

Djaider Hadjer

**Supervisor:**

Mrs. Amri Chenini Boutheina

**Board of Examiners**

Mr. Boulegroun Adel	MAB University of Biskra	Chairperson
Mrs. Amri Chenini Boutheina	MAA University of Biskra	Supervisor
Ms.Taalah Asma	MAA University of Biskra	Examiner

**Academic Year: 2022-2023**

## **Dedication**

First, I dedicate this humble work to my father, for his unconditional love, support, best wishes and prayers. Without them, I would not have been able to deduct this research. To my adorable and beautiful mother words are not enough describe my gratitude and love that I hold for you. My amazing parents may Allah bless you with his mercy and blessing. For the people who lightened my way and encouraged me to do my best, for the people who did not give up when I did I thank you my parents.

To my brother khaled and sisters Nedjoua, Amal, Dalal, Sabrina..

I dedicate this research to my sister and my rock Yasmine thank you for everything

To my life long and best friends Noumidia, Sonia much appreciation and love for you

To Roudina, Assinat, Zahra Djenna and my adorable nephew Mohammed Baraa

I thank my generous supervisor for her kind words, motivation, and guidance through this journey.

## **Acknowledgments**

Heartfelt praises to Allah for guiding me and blessing with the ability through all stages of the study.

I am massively grateful to my honorable teacher and supervisor Mrs. Amri Chenini Boutheina. For her immense support, patience, and guidance. This work would not have been possible without her valuable input

I am thankful for the jury members for their acceptance to read and evaluate this humble work.

Also for taking time from their busy schedule to examine and comment on this work to improve it.

To the department of English language division for accepting this work and to my teachers and instructors in university my deep thanks for you all.

I thank everyone who helped me and guided to realize this dissertation

## Abstract

The research aimed to discuss the portrayal of security and insecurity in Jumpa Lahiri's "interpreter of maladies". The interpreter of maladies reflect experiences of individuals who emigrated from India to America. In this collection certain aspects were reflected among them diaspora and identity. The research focuses on analyzing four different stories "Mrs. Sen", "The Blessed House", "The Third and Final Continent", And "When Mr. Prizada Came To Dine". The study aims to explore the characters development throughout the stories. Moreover, the study seeks to examine the ways the characters resorted to cope and adapt living in America. The study is based on post-colonial reading to the collection of "The interpreter Of Maladies" using Homi Bhabha notions of postcolonial literature. The dissertation adopts a set of research approaches to achieve the intended research aims. Analytical and descriptive approaches are necessary to describe the life of the characters and examine the changes and their development. Furthermore, interpretative approach was crucial to interpret and conclude the findings of the research. Nevertheless, qualitative method is needed to study and examine related data that builds and constructs the research objectives. The research finds that assimilation is a difficult process for immigrants and each individual perceive it differently. Moreover, second generation immigrants adopt easily in western societies since most of them were raised there. However, most of first generation immigrants struggle to integrate themselves into western societies since they displaced into different country. Therefore, it can be said that integration and assimilation to another culture depends on the openness to change for each individual. Those who cannot assimilate they do so to preserve their heritage. Consequently, they stand out as the other rather than assimilate. Whereas, those who are open to change they adapt easily.

**Key word:** Assimilation, Culture, Immigrants, Insecurity, Identity. Security, Social integration, Traditions.

## Table of contents

Dedication.....	II
Acknowledgments.....	III
Abstract.....	IV
Table of contents.....	V
General Introduction.....	1
1) Background of the study.....	1
2) Statement of the problem.....	2
3) Research Aims .....	2
4) Research Questions: .....	3
5) Methodology.....	3
6) Structure of the dissertation.....	4
Chapter One: Theoretical Background.....	5
1.1. Introduction.....	5
1.2. A Portrait of the Colonization.....	5
1.3. Definition of the Term 'Postcolonial' .....	7
1.4. An Overview of Post-Colonial Literature .....	8
1.5. Diaspora Literature.....	10
1.5. 1. Definition of Diaspora.....	10
1.5. 2. Diaspora Literature.....	11
1.6. Homi Bahaba 's Contribution to Postcolonial Theory.....	11
1.6.1. Postcolonial Theory.....	11
1.6.2. Bhabha Contribution to Postcolonial Theory.....	12

1.6.2.2	The Concept of Mimicry.....	14
1.6.2.3	The concept of Unhomeliness .....	15
1.7.	Conclusion .....	15
Chapter Two: Insecurity In Jumpa Lahiri's work Interpreter of Maladies .....		16
2.1.	Introduction .....	16
2.2.	Mrs. Sen through the Lens of Homi Bhabha.....	16
2.2.1	Mimicry in Mrs. Sen's.....	16
2.2.2	Hybridity in Mrs. Sen's.....	19
2.2.3	Unhomeliness In Mrs. Sen's .....	22
2.3.	This Blessed House Through The Lens Of Homi Bhabha.....	23
2.3.1	Mimicry in This Blessed House.....	23
2.3.2	Hybridity In This Blessed House .....	25
2.4.	Insecurity in Jump Lahiri's Interpreter of Maladies .....	26
2.4.1.	Insecurity in Mrs. Sen's.....	26
2.4.2.	Insecurity in This Blessed House .....	28
2.5.	Conclusion.....	30
Chapter Three: Security in Jumpha Lahiri's Interpreter of Maladies .....		31
3.1.	Introduction .....	31
3.2.	The Third and Final Continent through the Lens of Homi Bhabha .....	31
3.2.1	Hybridity in The Third and Final Continent.....	32
3.2.2	Mimicry in The Third and Final Continent .....	35
3.3.	When Mr. Prizada Came to Dine Through the Lens of Bhabha .....	37
3.3.1	Hybridity in When Mr. Prizada Came to Dine .....	37
3.3.2	Mimicry in When Mr. Prizada Came to Dine.....	40

3.4. Security in the Third and Final Continent.....	42
3.5. Security in When Mr. Prizada Came to Dine.....	43
3.6. Conclusion .....	45
General conclusion.....	47
Works Cited .....	49
الملخص.....	54

## **General Introduction**

### **1) Background of the study**

Postcolonial literature is a general term that includes works written by authors from the former colonial countries. Along with the many minority Diasporas that reside in the west. The term "post colonialism" has also been applied to the reinterpretation of western contemporary literature from a number of innovative and diverse viewpoints. Post-colonial literature is distinguished by addressing nationalism and displaying pride in the subjugated nation. To claim it is characterized by patriotism. Post-colonial writing emphasizes and values the country's social, political, and cultural character. It is proposed that postcolonial literature addresses the consequences of colonialism. Postcolonial writers attempted to portray the social, political, cultural, and economic changes of newly liberated colonial countries. As a result, post-colonial writers concentrated on confirming their national identity and gaining independence from all forms of oppression. It is suggested that post-colonial literatures written in English reflect the impact of colonization.

Themes like resistance, cultural identity, and remembrance are frequent among postcolonial writers. They offer different interpretations of national history tales. Furthermore, they fight cultural marginalization. Three fundamental boundaries racial conflict, gender oppression, and class hierarchy are at the center of the political and scholarly discussion of "the other". Jhumpa Lahiri is Nilanjana Sudeshna Lahiri's pen name. She was born in London, UK on July 11, 1967. The American novelist and short-story writer Lahiri is of English descent. Her writings shed light on the immigrant experience especially that of East Indians. The first publication of Lahiri was a collection of short stories. Several short tales she wrote were published in periodicals like *The New Yorker*, *Harvard Review*, and *Story Quarterly* *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999). The nine stories, some of which were set in Calcutta and



others on the East Coast of the United States. These stories explore issues like the custom of arranged marriages, estrangement, dislocation, and cultural loss. These tales shed light on both Calcutta residents' daily lives and the experiences of Indian migrants. The 2000 PEN/Hemingway Award for Debut Novel and the 2000 Pulitzer Prize for literature were among the honors that the "Interpreter of Maladies" received.

## **2) Statement of the problem**

The interpreter of maladies is a collection of nine short stories. These stories reflect experiences of individuals who emigrated from India to the United States. Jhumpa Lahiri reflected certain aspects in her stories. Amongst those aspects is diaspora and identity. Mrs. Sen, the Blessed House, When Prizada Came to Dine, and Third and Final continent are among the short stories of "the interpreter of maladies". These stories reflect four different couples who settled in America. Under the lens of Homie Bhabha, this dissertation will examine challenges that immigrants face when they are estranged from their homeland's culture. It will investigate the themes of cultural hybridization, assimilation, and mimicry.

The research attempts to explore the characters development throughout the stories. Furthermore, Jhumpa Lahiri's depicted the lives of Indians after their immigration to the USA. Thus, the study seeks to find out the ways the characters resorted to cope with the live in America. Moreover, it investigates security and insecurity in the collection. Nevertheless, this research aims to explore reasons that enables immigrants to integrate to a new society and obstacles that hinder the process of cultural adaptation.

## **3) Research Aims**

The proposed research investigates the portrayal of immigrants. It seeks to identify the ways Jhumpa Lahiri used to depict her characters. Moreover, the study seeks to explore the difficulties those immigrants faced in the process of integration into the American society. Nevertheless, we intend to discover the methods used to depict securities and insecurities in

the “Interpreter of Maladies”. Furthermore, the study attempts to discover the techniques used to represent the concepts of hybridity, mimicry, unhomeliness through the characters. The interpreter of maladies follows the different attitudes of the character and their reactions to the new environment they settled in.

#### **4) Research Questions:**

The main question is: How Did Lahiri Portray Security and Insecurity in Her Work and How Did the Characters Attempt to Overcome Them?

In light of the above mentioned. The research attempts to answer the following sub questions:

- How did Jumpa Lahiri portray immigrants and their integration into new societies in Interpreter of maladies?
- How did they undergo the process of integration? Why did some of them smoothly integrate while others did not?

#### **5) Methodology**

The suggested research will employ a variety of research methods. The historical approach will be utilized to trace the roots of postcolonial literature in order to provide context for postcolonial literary theory. To present a description of the Interpreter of Maladies short stories,. Homi Bhabha's thoughts and their implementation in the four selected stories will be examined using analytical and interpretative methodologies. On the other hand, the interpretative technique will be used to deduce the function hybridity, mimicry, and unhomeliness played in the characters' insecurity and security. A comparative technique will also be applied to contrast the characters who built up security and those who were unable to adjust.

## **6) Structure of the dissertation**

The research consists of three sections. In the first chapter, we present the study's theoretical foundation. We establish an understandable perspective on post-colonial literature. In addition, we endeavor to define Homi Bhabha's notions of hybridity, mimicry, and foreignness. By Homi Bhabha's concepts, the depiction of security and insecurity in "the interpreter of maladies" is analyzed. In the second chapter, we analyze and interpret the manifestation of a sense of insecurity through mimicry, hybridity, and foreignness. In the third chapter, the focus is on analyzing how each short story character demonstrates security.

## **Chapter One: Theoretical Background**

### **1.1.Introduction**

After the independence of many countries, which were forcibly dominated and controlled, the people who were subjugated and oppressed for years found themselves facing predicaments. The life they know before the colonizer clashed with what they faced during the colonization, and left them struggling to grasp their reality after they became free. They were at loss as to who they were and how they were supposed to live. Postcolonial writers and critics alike endeavored to address issues that resulted from being subjugated to colonization for long periods, and they were left to make sense of what they became.

The first chapter of this dissertation tackles the theoretical part, which includes a layout of the conceptual vocabularies employed to examine Lahiri's work. Furthermore, the historical context will be included in this chapter as well as a brief yet precise explanation of Homi Bhabha's contribution to postcolonial studies.

### **1.2.A Portrait of the Colonization**

The process of colonization tore apart countries and nations; it influenced the language, history, customs, and traditions of the colonized on the deepest levels. The life they knew were altered through foreign forces that had ulterior sets of motives. Under false claims, the colonizer invaded and controlled rich lands that had generations of histories and cultures, things the colonizer took for granted since they perceived the colonized as uncivilized and barbaric. For that reason, said colonized were subjugated to a lifetime of cruelty and degradation; they lost their homes, their lands, and their identities. They became enemies with those they called brothers and allies. The colonizer divided strong countries so that controlling them would be easy; curbing the power of shattered nations and countries would be effortless since the colonizer would not be wasting unnecessary resources that could be used in other

important ways.

In his book, "The Colonizer and the Colonized", the colonizer, who could not fathom the reason behind such acts, remarks that certain aspects, such as generosity, frowns upon Albert Memmi. They viewed these acts as absurd and senseless since the colonized had no notion of the economy (128).

The colonized ruins himself, borrows and finally pays with someone else's money ! Does one speak, on the other hand, of the modesty of the colonized's life ? . . . It is no longer a proof of wisdom but of stupidity-as . . . The humanity of the colonized, rejected by the colonizer, becomes opaque. It is useless, he asserts, to try to forecast the colonized's actions ("They are unpredictable !" "With them, you never know!" ). (Memmi 128-129)

The colonizer's reduction of the colonized's character and humanity allowed them to justify their actions towards the uncivilized, ignorant nations. They justified their mission of civilizing the uncivilized. Memmi explains further that the colonizer does neither consider the colonized as individuals, nor their capability of having lives of their own. He provided an example of a colonized servant. He asserted that the colonizer views the colonized as a tool that facilitate their lives. To illustrate, if a servant does not attend her work, she would not be excused because she might have fallen ill or had a personal matter to attend to. Her employer would regard her absence with irresponsibility and irritation, for it almost as though he could fathom her having a life beyond her occupation (129).

Albert Memmi summarizes the colonizer's opinion of the colonized. The notions they believed were insensible and irresponsible, and their sense of superiority over traditions they could never understand. They dehumanized the colonized to condone and exploit what they identified as a lesser race.

David Huddart believes that colonization should not be regarded only as a form

of oppression and colonial authority. He maintained, "we should not see the colonial situation as one of straightforward oppression of the colonized by the colonizer. Alongside violence and domination, we might also see the last five hundred years as a period of complex and varied cultural contact and interaction"(Huddart 1).

### **1.3. Definition of the Term 'Postcolonial'**

The term 'Postcolonial' has been defined and applied in various cases. In their book, *The Empire Writes Back*, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin regard the term postcolonial as umbrella that encompasses all cultures and nations that were impacted by the imperial force of the colonizer until the present. The imperial power of the colonizer does not end with the colonization. It could continue long periods after (2). The term 'Post-colonial' embraced notions such as new experiences and resistance to the colonial forces. It emphasizes the assertion of cultures, the preservation of history, and the revival of all forms of art. Furthermore, under the umbrella that is the term, 'post-colonial' freedoms and human rights are sought to be claimed (Nayar 26-27).

The definition of Helen Gilbert include many of the facets that characterizes the term 'Post-colonial'.

The term indicates a degree of agency, or ... a programme of resistance, against cultural domination; ... signals the existence of a particular historical legacy ... a ... stage in a culture's transition into a modern nation-state; [or] to suggest a form of co-option into Western cultural economies ... 'postcolonial' has become a convenient ... term to describe any kind of resistance, particularly against class, race, and gender oppression.(qtd. in Nayar,8-9)

In other words, the term 'Post-colonial' evolved to include all types of resistance. Other marginalized and oppressed groups was included within its fold. It is worth to mention that many authors refused to be acknowledged as post-colonial writes. In her book, *The*

Cambridge Introduction to Postcolonial Literatures in English, Innes believed that the term postcolonial alludes that the British colonization was a positive for India when it was not. For Innes, the term negates the rich history of India before the colonization. In other words, the term sheds light on India as a British colony rather than concentrate on its history before that period. The diversities of cultures, languages, and lifestyles were ignored when in relation to the British Empire (2). That is to say, the author believed the term 'post-colonial' provides attention to their colonizer as a great power rather than the injustice the colonized had endured. Innes felt as though the history and diversity of India before and after its colonization were insignificant and unworthy. Well, at least not until it was savaged by the colonizer.

#### **1.4.An Overview of Post-Colonial Literature**

Literary works written in English by authors whose lands were ruled and controlled by the foreign authority were known as the "Common Wealth Literature" while works that were in native tongues and languages were perceived as insignificant (Christenberry et al. 7). Thomas Babington Macaulay declared in regards to the introduction of English to India's education under the rule of the British Empire:

The intrinsic superiority of the Western literature is indeed fully admitted by those members of the committee who support the oriental plan of education . . . It is, I believe, no exaggeration to say that all the historical information which has been collected in the Sanskrit language is less valuable than what may be found in the paltry abridgments used at preparatory schools in England. (qtd. in Gandhi, 30)

Commonwealth literature included African, South Asian, Caribbean, and others. This field excluded both Irish and American literature. Commonwealth literature concentrated on the common qualities of the former colonies rather than the diversities represented in their literature. To illustrate, these colonies were combined and reduced to the common past they

shared and the experience they lived through; this reduction attempted to make the British Empire while marginalizing literary works that spoke of identity, resistance, and survival. During the 1980s, the term 'post-colonial' replaced the previous one (Christenberry et al. 8).

The European attempt to appropriate postcolonial practice was met with resistance from writes who took offense because postcolonial literature was considered a colonial legacy; that is to say, any postcolonial text that was written in English was viewed as part of an extension to British Literature. Writes and critics alike revolted against the notions presented through the models of commonwealth literature and decided to follow "the national" or "the pan-African" (Ashcroft et al. 96).

Postcolonial literature is the product of the long and agonizing experience the colonized lived. It studies non-Western literary texts that were marginalized by the colonial authority; it also endeavors to find and revive the histories they lost during the process of colonization. Postcolonial literature attempt to understand and critique multiple events during the colonization and were done by the colonizer. He wrote regarding postcolonial literature that, "it is a literature of resistance, anger, protest, and hope. It seeks to understand history so as to plan for the future"(Nayar 1).

Post-colonial texts tackles many themes; one of the most significant themes post-colonial writes portrayed in their works is the struggle to reclaim the past (Klimkova 112).

Many of the more interesting post-colonial writers bear their past within them—as scars of humiliating wounds, as instigation for different practices, as potentially revised visions of the past tending toward a new future, as urgently reinterpretable and redeployable experiences, in which the formerly silent native speaks and acts on the territory taken back from the empire.(Said 31)

The relationship between postcolonial literature and history is solid since the urgency to explore historical events is what led to the emergence of said literature. The colonizer, who



thought of the colonized as savage and uncivilized, did not think twice about attempting to make history for the colonized, disregarding their traditions, customs, and what they believe (Klimkova 112). In other words, “the ruling elites of Europe ... to project their power backward in time, giving it a history and legitimacy that only tradition and longevity could impart” (Said 16). For that specific reason, postcolonial writes were adamant to investigate the history concluded from the colonizer's perspective (Klimkova 112).

## **1.5.Diaspora Literature**

### **1.5. 1. Definition of Diaspora**

The meaning of the word 'Diaspora' originated from the Greek meaning 'To disperse'. The term was used linguistically in reference to the dispersing 'Jew' whom were exiled from Palestine during the Babylonian invasion (Giri 5). The term was used in reference to the voluntarily or forcibly displaced individuals whose countries were under colonial rule; during colonization, many people had to leave their homelands for other places, whether they were exiled or simply to find security. The European settlements that were dispersed around the world required a labor force. The aftermath of that was the trade of individuals as slaves. America was a designation to many individuals who find themselves forcibly taken from their families; an economy based on slavery would be destroyed without labor forces. The latter was found cheap through exchanges conducted people whom took part with the network that is the trade (Ashcroft et al. 61).

Diaspora is tightly linked to migration; migration of people, their cultures, and customs resulted in what is known as Diaspora culture. It is worth noticing, however, the distinction between types of migration. The process of migration had been constant throughout history. People often migrated for various reasons, taking their languages, and cultures. The latter had evolved within the new geographical areas selected. Yet, this process does not define Diaspora because this type of migration resulted from voluntary causes, such as the migration of Europeans

during colonization. Thus, Diaspora is the result of immigration and exile (Nayar 231-232).

### **1.5.2. Diaspora Literature**

In the introduction of his book, *Immigration and Estrangement in Indian Diaspora literature: A Critical Study*, Giri defined Diaspora literature as a necessary tool for Diaspora writers who found themselves between two polar cultures. In other words, immigrants, who are torn between their homes and the new places they live in, uncover the struggle to assimilate into their new environments; their failure to embrace one culture while rejecting the other leaves them stuck in between, in a new space. Thus, Diaspora writes endeavor to write their experience as means to endure and cope with their torment (6). Diaspora literature is, ". . . produced by diasporas and characteristically represents their feelings and experiences . . . It depicts the diasporas psychological, social, economic, cultural state of being inscribed amply in the text they create" (Pokharel 94). The author maintains that Diaspora literature is therapeutic in a sense since writers who wanted to 'vent' wrote it. Thus, it is examined as a 'testimony of their unique existence' (Pokharel 94).

## **1.6.Homi Bahaba 's Contribution to Postcolonial Theory**

### **1.6.1. Postcolonial Theory**

Postcolonial criticism began with the struggle of many countries that were under colonial rule; nations from Africa, Asia, and Latin America are known as the "tricontinent" rather than "third world" (Rafey 738). Robert Young Believes the beginning of postcolonial theory is remarked with the 'Tricontinental' journal that was launched in 1966. He maintains that postcolonial theory was, "initiated the first global alliance of the peoples of the three continents against imperialism" (Young 5).

The discussions covered by the postcolonial theory are concentrated on various types of experiences shared by the colonized. It deals with multiple layers of issues such as migration, slavery, differences, representation, suppression, resistance, race, gender, place, and displacement.

It also counters imperial discourse such as history, philosophy...etc (Ashcroft et al. 2). Thus, post-colonial theory responds to the effects of the colonial legacy on the previously colonized nations.

### **1.6.2. Bhabha Contribution to Postcolonial Theory**

Homi Bahaba is a very significant figure in postcolonial studies and criticism. He is of Indian descent, and he was born in 1949 in Mumbai. In analyzing the impact of colonization on the colonized, Bahaba does not perceive the brutal acts done by the colonizer as an act that rests in the past. He traces back its histories and cultures, and shows how it still affects the colonized and their culture. The main drive behind Bhabha's work is to understand and identify the ways the colonized is tangled with the colonizer's culture. Bhabha's work is centered on the analysis of the colonized power and oppression. He scrutinizes gaps found in historical and literary material of the colonizer to mark periods when the colonizer was not at the peak of its dominance. That is to say, Bhabha's works revolve around the acts of the colonized against their oppressor. In other words, he focuses on the agency of the colonized: the moment they resisted the colonizer. This form of agency is different from revolutionary agency. What remarks his work as authentic is that he focuses on two significant aspects. The first is that he arranges concepts that help in reading colonial and postcolonial texts. The second is that these conceptual vocabularies detect that the West is bothered by its 'doubles' the East. According to Homi Bhabha's work, the existence of said 'doubles' incites the West to identify itself; the west is no longer considered a unique civilization, not when there are similar ones (Huddart 2).

Homi Bhabha's works provided a deep understanding of colonial and postcolonial texts. Said works maintains a set of concepts that are considered to be one of the cornerstones in postcolonial studies. Concepts such as:

hybridity, mimicry, difference, ambivalence. . . describe ways in which colonized peoples have resisted the power of the colonizer, a power that is never as secure as it seems to be. This emphasis illuminates our present situation, in a world marked

by a paradoxical combination of violently proclaimed cultural difference and the complexly interconnected networks of globalization. Instead of seeing colonialism as something locked in the past, Bhabha shows how its histories and cultures constantly intrude on the present, demanding that we transform our understanding of cross-cultural relations.(Huddart 1)

That is to say, Bhabha connects the colonial past and its effects on the present of the colonized through his conceptual vocabularies.

### **1.6.2.1 The Concept of Hybridity**

Hybridity is one of the most used terms in postcolonial studies. In the most basic understanding of its meaning, the term refers to a mixture. The origin of the term is traced back to biology. Yet, it was employed in other fields, such as linguistics and racial theory (Rahaman 3). Hybridity refers to the formation of new forms of culture which results from a 'colonial encounter' (Nayar 246). That is to say, hybridity refers to, ". . . the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization" (Ashcroft et al 108). In postcolonial studies, hybridity could be a form of revival or retrieval of the past which could be seen as a form of resistance to the legacy of the colonizer (Nayar 246).

Through the analysis of the relations between the colonizer and the colonized, Bhabha remarks on the interdependence between them. He notes that the process of constructing cultural statements occurs in a place that he named the 'third space of enunciation'. It is the same place where cultural identity is created. A place in which, Bhabha asserts that pure culture cannot be attained (Ashcroft et al. 108).

Hybridity is found in postcolonial societies through conscious moments when the colonizer enforces its imperial authority on foreign lands while forcing the people to assimilate into their cultural norms and customs. In other words, constant interaction between two different nations would lead to the hybridization of culture, language...etc. Hybridity is linked to immigration from

imperial societies; the process of hybridization could later on emerge in societies, which it contains individuals from previously colonized countries. For instance, indentured laborers from India might develop hybrid languages, customs, or cultures because they are subjugated to imperial influences (Ashcroft et al. 183).

### **1.6.2.2 The Concept of Mimicry**

The process of mimicry takes place when the colonized starts to copy the colonizer's language, culture, customs...etc. Yet when the colonized copy aspects of the colonizer's life, they change them to suit their lives.

When colonial discourse encourages the colonized subject to 'mimic' the colonizer, by adopting the colonizer's cultural habits, assumptions, institutions and values, the result is never a simple reproduction of those traits. Rather, the result is a 'blurred copy' of the colonizer that can be quite threatening. (Ashcroft et al. 124-125)

Homi Bhabha regards mimicry as an exaggerated way of copying culture, language, manners, and ideas. He notes that mimicry is the process of repetition with difference; this process does not proclaim the colonized as weak nor does it declare the colonizer as superior. Bhabha's work has a comic approach when used to analyze colonial discourse. In that sense, when the colonized mimic the colonizer, an impression of mockery is formed (Huddart 39). That is to say, ". . . mimicry is never very far from mockery, since it can appear to parody whatever it mimics. Mimicry therefore locates a crack in the certainty of colonial dominance, an uncertainty in its control of the behavior of the colonized" (Ashcroft et al. 125). In other words, the unexpected behavior of the colonized when they mimic the colonizer creates uncertainty because it marks them as agents since they were able to resist. That leaves the colonizer with a sense of anxiousness.

### **1.6.2.3 The concept of Unhomeliness**

Unhomeliness, according to Homi Bhabha, is a manifestation of a loss of identity. Unhomeliness refers to a migrant's sense of dislocation and unfamiliarity because of dispersion. Unhomeliness, according to Bhabha, is felt when "another world becomes visible," giving the diasporic subject "the shock of recognition" (qtd in. Omidvar). Unhomeliness, as defined by Bhabha, is "the state of extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiations" (qtd in. Omidvar). Consequently, according to Bhabha, the postcolonial subject is displaced, dislocated, and hybrid (Omidvar 03). Bhabha refers to this sense of unhomeliness as double consciousness, which some postcolonial theorists refer to as the feeling of being homeless and caught between two clashing cultures.

### **1.7. Conclusion**

Colonial domination left atrocities and devastation within the colonized's homes, lands, and minds. The process to recover after the independence was long due to years of brutality and simple interaction between the colonizer and the colonized. Said interaction led the colonized to adopt and change aspects of the colonizer's language, culture, and customs and adopt them for their own. That left them at an impasse and caused them to face difficulties after their independence. To illustrate, the colonized struggled with multiple issues, such as identity loss, multiculturalism, and many others. Postcolonial theorists and critics sought to study and respond to the colonial discourse. Their works tackled topics of otherness, resistance, traditions and reclaiming the past, place and displacement, and many others. The issues caused by the colonizer were numerous and significant. The only way to understand and scrutinize it is to address it through literary texts. Postcolonial authors endeavored to make sense of the impact of the colonial legacy and domination on the colonized. They also attempt to represent the past and the struggles of the present.

## **Chapter Two: Insecurity In Jumpa Lahiri's work Interpreter of Maladies**

### **2.1.Introduction**

Indian writers like many postcolonial authors, addressed issues they struggled with. Interpreter of Maladies tackles multiple postcolonial themes such as place, displacement, identity, culture loss...etc. In the present time, many postcolonial writers associate with immigrants and their experiences. That is to say, many immigrants resonate with postcolonial dilemmas; the process of integration into a completely different society takes a toll on the individual. The struggle to integrate into new environments is constant when they are not open-minded about the change that will eventually happen.

As a second-generation immigrant, Jumpa Lahiri relates to the constant struggle of being caught between cultures. In her works, she paints the difficulties immigrants face when as they step away from the comfort of what they considered their home. She employs postcolonial themes and motifs in her work, Interpreter of Maladies, to describe issues like displacement, alienation, cultural change, hybridity, and many others. More often than not, her works depict the process of assimilation in society, and the difficulties first immigrants' generation confront.

### **2.2.Mrs. Sen through the Lens of Homi Bhabha**

#### **2.2.1 Mimicry in Mrs. Sen's**

Bhabha maintains that minorities in societies attempt to copy the language, dress, and attitudes of others in the host society. The reason behind this act is that immigrants wish to have some of the advantages possessed by the majority of the inhabitants. Bhabha explains that if mimicry failed, it could result in mockery from the immigrants and homeland citizens (Omidvar 6). In other words, sometimes when immigrants attempt to adapt to environments, they imitate others to assimilate. They are often mocked when they fail to do so. The contrary

could also happen, according to Bhabha. Immigrants could intentionally mimic some customs to mock their homeland citizens.

In Lahiri's work, Mrs. Sen is a first-generation immigrant who left her beloved hometown when her husband got a job in America. Lahiri's work, *Mrs. Sen*, depicts the struggle of the main female character to adjust to America after she spent her entire life in India. It appears that Mr. Sen has no trouble assimilating into American society since he works as a professor in a university. That is quite clear from the beginning of the story. Mrs. Sen, however, endeavors to be like her husband and integrate into her new society. The process through which she attempts to assimilate into the American Society is rather hard. To facilitate that integration she mimics certain aspects in order to accommodate in her new society rather than to stand out as being other.

Mr. Sen, who had easily adapted to America, made every effort to blend in for he viewed the benefits America has granted him. He is an ambitious man who would rather stay in the US for good. He has a career, a house, and a wife. Thus, he has a very comfortable life, and his position in society, is notably promising. In a sense, Mr. Sen's adaptation to American customs and lifestyle was because of mimicry. Mr. Sen imitated Americans not only to adapt but also to possess some of the advantages Americans have. Mrs. Sen, who did not envision living anywhere but Calcutta, did not have the easiest time trying to adjust to America. To illustrate, Mrs. Sen was very proud of her heritage and culture. She wanted to blend in without erasing her Indian identity. Therefore, she continued to wear various Sari in America.

She wore a shimmering white sari patterned with orange paisleys, more suitable for an evening affair than for that quiet, faintly drizzling August afternoon. Her lips were coated in a complementary coral gloss, and a bit of the color had strayed beyond the borders. (Lahiri 108)

Mrs. Sen took pride in representing her own culture. She wanted to be viewed as an



Indian woman, for the link granted by her choice of clothing gave her a sense of comfort. Yet, when Mrs. Sen stood out because of her clothing, she attempted to do more effort to assimilate. Thus, she covered her Sari with a coat, "she wore navy blue sunglasses a little too big for her face. Her sari, a different pattern each day, fluttered below the hem of a checkered all-weather coat" (Lahiri 113).

Mrs. Sen attempted to preserve her own heritage and identity. Yet, she is aware of her need to assimilate into her new society. Therefore, she had to speak their language and act like them. Mrs. Sen had to speak English when she interacts with Eliot and other Americans. Yet, she always spoke in her native tongue with Mr. Sen. For instance, when Mrs. Sen received a letter from Calcutta, she excitedly call her husband and "Subsequently she spoke in her own language, rapid and riotous to Eliot's ears; it was clear that she was reading the contents of the letter, word by word" (116). Mrs. Sen does not leave the house often. Consequently, she does not interact with many people except Eliot and her husband. This hinders her assimilation into American society since she only uses the English language when she communicates with Eliot and sometimes with the vendors in the supermarket.

As it was mentioned above, Bhabha asserted that if mimicry failed it would cause mockery. This is apparent in the tone of the narrator when Mrs. Sen failed to pronounce the name 'Beethoven' (Omidvar 6). "She tuned the radio to a station that played symphonies. "Is it Beethoven?" she asked once, pronouncing the first part of the composer's name not "bay," but "bee," like the insect" (114). The narrator concentrated on the failed pronunciation of Mrs. Sen, and it marked her as other. Mrs. Sen also fails to speak correct and proper English whenever she is nervous or flustered. To illustrate, Eliot noticed that Mrs. Sen was extremely nervous while driving, " he saw how that same stream of cars made her knuckles pale, her wrists tremble, and her English falter" (115). Mrs. Sen did not make any sense as she spoke to Eliot in the car, "Everyone, this people, too much in their world" (115).

Mimicry in the short story of Mrs. Sen is also depicted through driving. To assimilate, Mrs. Sen had to learn how to drive. That is to say, she needed to drive since the majority, if not all adult Americans, drive. Yet, Mrs. Sen is not very fond of driving. She is aware that it is an important task for Americans. She is also aware that if she wanted to keep her job she would eventually have to learn. Mr. Sen firmly believed that if his wife learned how to drive, all will be well. Mrs. Sen was, however, skeptical. " Mr. Sen says that once I receive my license, everything will improve. What do you think, Eliot? Will things improve?" (114). Yet, the task was not easy for her. For example, Mrs. Sen could not focus properly on her driving lessons, "She was continuously distracted. She stopped the car without warning to listen to something on the radio or to stare at something, anything, in the road" (114). Mrs. Sen was very frustrated with driving, her constant fear and nervousness, "she wanted him sitting beside her because she was afraid. She dreaded the roar of the ignition and placed her hands over her ears to block out the sound as she pressed her slippered feet to the gas, revving the engine" (114). Mrs. Sen was afraid of driving. Thus, she constantly made excuses to not drive. Ultimately, she declared that she hated driving. " No more ... I hate it. I hate driving. I won't go on" (124). Mrs. Sen's last attempt to drive failed horribly with a car accident. Omidvar deduced that the failure of Mrs. Sen in driving represents her failure to assimilate into American society (6).

### **2.2.2 Hybridity in Mrs. Sen's**

According to HomiBhabha, Hybridity is one of the key components in post-colonial studies. Through this particular concept, he explores the communication between the colonizer and the colonized. Therefore, the term could refer to the mixture of various cultures. It could also refer to hybrid cultural identities. The identities of individuals who attempt to assimilate into other societies often alter because they are impacted by various cultures, their

own, and the host culture. The constant cultural exchange makes cultural identities flexible rather than stable. Bhabha maintains that hybridity is necessary for immigrants who want to assimilate into other societies. The process, however, would take time since immigrants are considered a minority (Omidvar 3). The Hungarian scholar, M. Kozár remarks, "...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" (qtd. in Mudayana 45-46). In other words, hybridity is generated from the attempt to assimilate by individuals who migrated. The clash between the host and the native culture of the immigrant, in this case, creates a hybrid identity.

In Lahiri's work, Mrs. Sen does not seem to have an identity of her own in America. At the beginning of the story, when Mrs. Sen was looking for a job she identified herself as a "Professor's wife, responsible and kind, I will care for your child in my home". This shows that Mrs. Sen did not view herself as an individual worthy of a job, which means that she lost her identity once she arrived in America. It seems as though Mrs. Sen's identity is an extension of her husband's. This could be seen when Mrs. Sen was involved in a car crash, "A policeman arrived and asked to see her license, but she did not have one to show him. "Mr. Sen teaches mathematics at the university was all she said by way of explanation" (127). Furthermore, Mrs. Sen belonged to a minority group by default, which made her a hybrid individual since she had her own language, custom, and culture while integrated into a completely different society.

Mrs. Sen treasures her home in India. She loves everything about it, its heritage, its customs, and its way of life. Her inability to find common ground between her culture and the American one is what makes her process of assimilation difficult. Her confrontation with the American culture daily should mark the starting point of the creation of Mrs. Sen's new identity. Yet, it appears as though Mrs. Sen does not wish to assimilate into American

society. For instance, Mrs. Sen lives in a house with an American style and structure. However, whenever she is in the house, she assumes her Indian identity. That is to say, Mrs. Sen's behavior did change in her household. She acted as though she was still in India: He especially enjoyed watching Mrs. Sen as she chopped things, seated on newspapers on the living room floor [...] At times she sat cross-legged, at times with legs splayed, surrounded by an array of colanders and shallow bowls of water in which she immersed her chopped ingredients. (Lahiri 109- 110).

Mrs. Sen's Indian identity flourishes at her house; for it is the only place, she could maintain a connection with her roots. Mrs. Sen cooks traditional Indian food in an attempt to preserve her Indian identity while attempting to adjust to the US. In fact, the narrator acknowledges that one of the only two things Mrs. Sen loves is, "fish from the seaside" (117). Her love of fish also strengthens her native identity, for it is a constant reminder of her childhood and the life she had in Calcutta. Besides, Mrs. Sen resumed her cooking activities with the same enthusiasm although it was only for her and her husband.

The blade Mrs. Sen uses to chop her ingredients symbolizes her resistance to adapting to America. That is to say, she refused to cook with any knife other than the one she brought from India, "Instead of a knife she used a blade that curved like the prow of a Viking ship, sailing to battle in distant seas" (109). The blade that Mrs. Sen refused to cook without has a sentimental value because, "she had brought the blade from India, where apparently there was at least one in every household" (110). According to Omidvar, the blade used by Mrs. Sen, "may stand for the gap between the two cultures," but the way the dish was eaten reflect the hybridity of the two cultures. That is to say, Indian food is usually eaten by hand while the individuals are sitting on the floor. Mrs. Sen and her husband, however, use plates and glasses while eating at the table (4).

### 2.2.3 Unhomeliness In Mrs. Sen's

Mrs. Sen is a first-generation immigrant who left her beloved Calcutta when her husband got a job in America. With her departure from India, Mrs. Sen exchanged happiness with melancholy because living in America is an exile for her rather than the Promised Land, which is full of opportunities. She is alienated. Thus, she could not find joy in her new environment. She is only happy when she is reminded of her beloved India, "two things, Eliot learned, made Mrs. Sen happy. One was the arrival of a letter from her family" (115). Mrs. Sen could not adjust because she could not overcome the fact that she never wished to leave India, "When I was your age I was without knowing that one day I would be so far" (117). Mrs. Sen did not imagine a life away from India. The dislocation to America was almost traumatic to her because her life was not like everyone in Calcutta thought made her feel worse.

When have I ever worn this one? And this? And this?" She tossed the saris one by one from the drawers [...] "Send pictures,' they write. 'Send pictures of your new life.' What picture can I send?" She sat, exhausted, on the edge of the bed, where there was now barely room for her. "They think I live the life of a queen, Eliot. (119)

Mrs. Sen appears as though she is chained by her past and memories of India. She constantly compares life in India and America, which hinders her adaptation to American society. For example, Mrs. Sen reminisces about her life when she tells Eliot about Indian weddings, "It is impossible to fall asleep those nights, listening to their chatter [...] here, in this place where Mr. Sen has brought me, I cannot sometimes sleep in so much silence" (110). Unlike many Americans who prefer salience and solitude, Mrs. Sen hates her empty silent house. The only joy she seems to get is when she is connected to her roots. Mrs. Sen also compared her past and present when she asked Eliot whether people would come to her if she

screamed. When Eliot's answer was negative, she said, "At home that is all you have to do [...]. But just raise your voice a bit, or express grief or joy of any kind, and one whole neighborhood and half of another has come to share the news" (111). It is apparent that home for Mrs. Sen is India. Her constant longing to go back there crippled her assimilation. Even though she tried to integrate into her new society, her inability to forgo the past made her transition difficult. Mrs. Sen's displeasure with America is visible when she was practicing her driving. "Could I drive all the way to Calcutta? How long would that take, Eliot? Ten thousand miles, at fifty miles per hour?" (114). Mrs. Sen was almost desperate to find her way back to India. It almost appears that if Eliot's answer was in the affirmative, she would battle her fear and learn to drive just to go back.

### **2.3.This Blessed House Through The Lens Of Homi Bhabha**

This section is concerned with analyzing the blessed house short story using Homi Bhabha's notions in post-colonial literature. This part studies Mimicry and hybridity notions through the characters of the story and analyzed using a post-colonial reading. The story revolves around an Indian couple's journey to integrate fully into American society.

#### **2.3.1 Mimicry in This Blessed House**

Mimicry is present in Jumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies*. Not all characters struggle with assimilation, for not all are first-generation immigrants. The female character in *This Blessed House* is a second-generation immigrant who integrated into American society since she was born and raised there. Abdullah and Fayadh assert that Lahiri's characters:

Indulge with the adapted land culture, traditions, language and lifestyle. Some individuals try to reinvent themselves through practicing social American norms such as the change of name in order to form a unique identity or to burn the past. (8)

*This Blessed House* portrays the life of an American-Indian couple who recently got married. The female character, Twinkle, can only be described as a modern woman whose

assimilation was rather smooth. Her attitude and behavior are that of an American woman, "Twinkle lit a cigarette and began to smoke it with relish" (131). Unlike traditional Indian women, smoking and drinking are a habit of Twinkle throughout the story. This particular habit is American. Thus, it is Twinkle's attempt to mimic American behavior to not be seen as other.

In order to stand out and have a unique Identity, the female character identified herself with an American nickname, for she was "nicknamed after a nursery rhyme" (134). Twinkle identified with her nickname rather than her Indian-given name. When Sanjeev introduced his wife as Tanima, Twinkle interjected saying, "Call me Twinkle" (142). The name Twinkle gave the female character a unique identity among her peers. She did not want to be another Indian woman. She wanted to be special. Therefore, she assumed and mimicked the American identity while disregarding her heritage.

It is common for immigrants to endeavor to preserve their cultural identity. That is to say, they try to protect the ties they have with their home. Food and cooking are ways to maintain those ties (Chatterji and Washbrook 403). Twinkle did not attempt to preserve her connection with her heritage by cooking Indian food. In fact, she found hated cooking Indian food which " she complained, was a bother; she detested chopping garlic, and peeling ginger, and could not operate a blender" (135). Twinkle did not find comfort in cooking. Unlike other Indian women who were passionate about food, she only prepared simple meals that does not take time, "she was not terribly ambitious in the kitchen. She bought pre-roasted chickens from the supermarket and served them with potato salad prepared who knew when" (135).

Twinkle and Sanjeev are Hindus, but the house they bought turned out to be previously owned by faithful Christians who adorned their house with Christian relics. The beauty of said relics amazed Twinkle, and she made it her mission to collect them and preserve them. This caused multiple arguments between the couple, for Sanjeev could not comprehend his wife's

fascination. He constantly reminded her that they were Hindu, "We're not Christian" (129). That did not persuade her mission, for she was adamant to keep the relics in their house. She simply said, "No, we're not Christian. We're good little Hindus." She planted a kiss on top of Christ's head, then placed the statue on top of the fireplace mantel [...]" (130). Twinkle valued Christianity over Hinduism because the principles of Western religion were embodied in all aspects of life in America. Consequently, Twinkle fought with her husband to keep those relics in their home disrespecting their religion and disregarding her husband's feelings on the matter.

### **2.3.2 Hybridity In This Blessed House**

In *This Blessed House*, the female character Twinkle represents second-generation immigrants who had the time to assimilate and adopt a hybrid identity that make them thrive in their new society. Bahareh Bahmanpour maintained that:

Twinkle, the female protagonist of "This Blessed House" represents second-generation female immigrants who, being submerged by the culture of the Other for rather a long time, have fashioned such hybrid diasporic identities which let them survive and succeed even far above their male counterparts – those male immigrants like Sanjeev. (5)

Unlike first-generation immigrants, the dislocation from Twinkle's native country does not affect her. Since she was born and raised in America, she had years to mold her hybrid identity and find her place in her society. In other words, Twinkle is a hybridization of the Indian and American cultures. Yet, the attitude and worldview she adopted are purely American. To illustrate, Twinkle is a twenty-seven-year-old woman who was abandoned by a man who aspired to be an actor. She believed that cooking Indian food is a tedious task, and she detested doing household chores. For example, Sanjeev was irritated when he found his wife in bed when he returned home, "he had wanted to say to her then, you could unpack some boxes. You could sweep the attic. You could retouch the paint on the



bathroom windowsill, [...] They didn't bother her, these scattered, unsettled matters" (133).

Twinkle, like many Americans, loved wearing high heels, which frustrated her husband who was of an average height, "it irritated him when Twinkle insisted on wearing high heels, as she had done the other night when they ate dinner in Manhattan" (132). Twinkle is fully assimilated into American society that she became an American with Indian heritage.

Twinkle had drunk four glasses of whiskey in a nameless bar in Alphabet City [...] She dragged him to a tiny bookshop on St. Mark's Place, where she browsed for nearly an hour, and when they left she insisted that they dance a tango on the sidewalk in front of strangers. (133)

Anju Rastogi believes that *This Blessed House* concentrated on the emotional and cultural clash between Sanjeev and Twinkle (3). Unlike Twinkle, who created her hybrid identity and thrived through it, Sanjeev is a first-generation rigid man who values his religions and customs. Therefore, the clash of cultures is generated by two distinct ones. In this sense, the relationship between a first-generation and second-generation immigrant is what causes that clash; Twinkle, who had been exposed to the American culture, embraced her hybrid identity when her husband, Sanjeev did not reach that stage of assimilation. Unlike first-generation immigrants who struggle to assimilate, Twinkle learned to accept the American culture long ago. When she found the relic of Christ and her husband declared they were not Christians. She says, "No, we're not Christian. We're good little Hindus." She planted a kiss on top of Christ's head" (130). This shows that even though Twinkle was brought up to be Hindu. Christianity shaped her life, which is a part of the hybrid identity adopted by Twinkle.

## **2.4. Insecurity in Jump Lahiri's Interpreter of Maladies**

### **2.4.1. Insecurity in Mrs. Sen's**

Mrs. Sen's experience as a first-generation immigrant was not particularly pleasant. Mrs. Sen was reared up to be a housewife who obeyed her husband and took care of

her house. Her Indian identity was interlinked with morals and values that were passed down to her by her mother. The Indian culture and heritage defined Mrs. Sen as an individual. Her social position was secured in India. She was a proud Indian woman whose happiness was intertwined with her homeland and family. Her displacement into America shook her to her core. Mrs. Sen could not be herself without risking rejection. She could not be Indian if she wished Americans would stop looking at her as other.

According to Mary Ann Edelstam, the story of Mrs. Sen portrays the struggle of an Indian woman who lost her social identity (13). The displacement to America stripped Mrs. Sen of the social status she was proud of. Her Indian identity was lost and replaced with her status as other. The loss of Mrs. Sen's social status caused her to feel insecure in her new environment. At the beginning of the story when Mrs. Sen was looking for a job, she identified herself as a professor's wife. When Eliot's mother visited Mrs. Sen's house to interview her, Mrs. Sen said, "Mr. Sen teaches mathematics at the university," Mrs. Sen had said by way of introduction" (108). The loss of her social identity made her insecure to introduce herself as an Indian individual. She assumed no one would hire her as a babysitter if she were seen as other, as inferior.

Mrs. Sen tried her best to assimilate into American society while preserving her heritage and ties to her hometown. Her failure in the assimilation process highlighted her as other. She failed to do a simple task such as driving, which was a necessary skill for her integration. Her incompetence in the task and, later on, her quitting driving represents her failure in assimilation. Mrs. Sen was unable to assume a new identity because, to her, that would mean abandoning her past and her Indian Identity. Even though she tried to fit in, she remained an exotic individual to others. That heightened her sense of insecurity, for she endeavored to blend in not stand out.

Alienation was an ardent companion of Mrs. Sen's, for she spent most of her time

in her house. The constant two people whom she interacted with regularly were her husband and the boy she babysat. Mrs. Sen waited for Eliot each afternoon at the bus stop, "Eliot always sensed that Mrs. Sen had been waiting for some time, as if eager to greet a person she hadn't seen in years" (113). Mrs. Sen's alienation did not help her squash her sense of insecurity. She could not feel secure in a society where is constantly judged and ridiculed. To illustrate, Eliot's mother had lied to Mrs. Sen when the latter offered her a snack simply because she did not wish to eat anything Mrs. prepared. At the end of the story when Mrs. Sen crashed the car while Eliot was in it, Mr. Sen offered to return the repay Eliot's mother, "his mother was satisfied with the arrangement, and in a sense, she confessed to Eliot as they drove home, she was relieved" (127-128). Mrs. Sen was also judged and discriminated against while on the bus after buying a fish, "On the way home an old woman on the bus kept watching them, her eyes shifting from Mrs. Sen to Eliot to the blood-lined bag between their feet"(124). This shows that after a single glance, the old woman thought that Mrs. Sen was a criminal who kidnapped Eliot since they looked nothing alike. The fish in the bag certainly did not help the situation. The old woman judged Mrs. Sen based on her exotic looks identifying her as other.

#### **2.4.2. Insecurity in This Blessed House**

This Blessed House portrays the relationship between a first-generation immigrant, Sanjeev, and a second-generation immigrant, Twinkle. Sanjeev was born and raised in India. He only displaced to the US when he was a college student. Thus, it could be said that he did not fully assimilate into American society when he married Twinkle, who was born and raised in America. Sanjeev is an Indian man who is strict about his Indian customs. When he married his wife, he expected her to share the same Indian values and mindset, but he was sadly mistaken. To illustrate, even though Twinkle was studying, he expected her to do the house chores. Yet, she often made excuses to not do them. Sanjeev was a neat person

while his wife did not care about order. Even though they are both Indian, they have different cultures. The clash of their cultures made Sanjeev insecure. Twinkle was fully assimilated into America. Her hybrid identity made her thrive and stand out. However, the difference in their values and opinions made Sanjeev regret he married her, "he thought with a flicker of regret of the snapshots his mother used to send him from Calcutta, of prospective brides who could sing and sew and season lentils without consulting a cookbook" (138).

Sanjeev is also struggling with religious insecurity. Throughout the story, Twinkle keeps finding Christian artifacts, which made her, call their house a blessed one. Sanjeev did not like that those artifacts were kept in his house. He kept saying, "We're not Christians" (129). Twinkle's excitement upon finding these relics and her devotion to keeping them displayed in the house made Sanjeev insecure because he feared he would lose his and his wife's religious identity. At one point, Twinkle declared that perhaps the previous owners were attempting to convert other people. To which Sanjeev answered, "Clearly the scheme has succeeded in your case" (130). Sanjeev could not accept those relics in his house because he respected his religion. Unlike his wife, he did not share the same amazement over finding them because Christianity is not a part of his identity. He was anxious about what other Hindus would think of them should they see the inside of their house. When they found the statue of the Virgin Mary, Sanjeev was adamant to throw it away because his neighbors would think them insane if they kept it on their lawn. Twinkle, however, disagreed, "Why, for having a statue of the Virgin Mary on our lawn? Every other person in this neighborhood has a statue of Mary on the lawn. We'll fit right in" (138). During the housewarming when Sanjeev's coworkers and acquaintances came to his house. He kept explaining to them that he and his wife were Hindus, "There are Christians in India ... but we're not" (142). Sanjeev was highly offended by this question for the presence of the Christian artifacts made his guests question his religious identity, which explains his immense hatred for the last artifact his wife

found, "He did hate it. He hated its immensity, and its flawless, polished surface, and its undeniable value. He hated that it was in his house and that he owned it" (147).

## **2.5. Conclusion**

In her work, *Interpreter of Maladies*, Jhumpa Lahiri depicts the struggle immigrants' face when they attempt to assimilate into different societies. In the short story, *Mrs. Sen's*, the female character was a first-generation immigrant who tried to integrate into America. In her attempt to preserve the ties that linked her to her beloved India, she subconsciously strengthened her image as other. Her failure to adopt a hybrid identity to fit in within American society heightened her sense of insecurity. To Americans, she was an exotic other. She simply could not conform within her new environment when she could not live by their rules, and accommodate to their dress code. Besides, her loss of social identity upon her displacement to America made her insecure in her position. She was self-conscious about the person she became in America. Thus, in her attempt to be accepted, she often linked her identity to her husband, who was a respected teacher at the university.

In her work, *This Blessed House*, Lahiri depicted another type of insecurity. The relationship of the newly married couple, Sanjeev and Twinkle, was tense due to the constant clash of their different cultures. Both of them were Indian. Yet, Sanjeev was a first-generation immigrant, while Twinkle was born and raised in the States. The difference in their values and opinions made Sanjeev insecure. Furthermore, one of the main stressors for their constant conflicts is the Western religion, Christianity. Throughout the story, Twinkle, who is Hindu, keeps finding Christian relics. Her excitement and obvious sentiments for said relics made Sanjeev insecure. He feared he and his wife would lose their religious identity. It is clear that Twinkle valued those artifacts simply because Christianity had impacted her life. Sanjeev, on the other hand, respected his religion and did not wish to lose it since it is a vital component of his identity.

## Chapter Three: Security in Jhumpha Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies*

### 3.1. Introduction

The process of assimilation is rather arduous for immigrants. Yet, the success of this particular process cannot be assessed according to time. Jhumpa Lahiri, who is a second-generation immigrant, discussed the struggles immigrants face as they attempt to assimilate. That is to say, Indians, who are stuck between two cultures, have to navigate and establish their lives. More often than not, they feel isolated because of their inability to adjust. In her work, *Interpreter of Maladies*, Lahiri addresses the privileges first and second-generation immigrants would have upon their integration into American society. In other words, many immigrants leave their countries in search of better life opportunities. Unlike, those, who are not ready for change, these immigrants are open-minded about the alterations in their lives. They expect said changes. Consequently, their integration would not be as difficult as those who still clung to their past and their memories.

### 3.2. The Third and Final Continent through the Lens of Homi Bhabha

*The Third and Final Continent* is the last story in the *Interpreter of Maladies*. According to Jhumpha Lahiri, this story is based on her father, who moved from Britain to Rhode and then to America to be to seek better job opportunities (Sahu192). The Third and Final Continent is about the assimilation of a first-generation couple into the American society. The narrator arrives to America before his wife, and adjusts to life easily. In other words, the narrator slightly struggles to adjust. It could be said that his prior living conditions in London facilitated his transition.

### 3.2.1 Hybridity in *The Third and Final Continent*

According to Ramona Bran, Migrants always had only two options while in foreign lands, they either resist the assimilation process and be alienated from society or embrace the new host country (25). The narrator of *The Third and Final Continent*, an unnamed Indian man, was adamant to assimilate in London when he left India in 1964. The narrator had lived in North London for four years. He and other Bengali men lived together in a house to afford rent.

WE lived three or four to a room, shared a single, icy toilet, and took turns cooking pots of egg curry, which we ate with our hands on a table covered with newspapers. Apart from our jobs we had few responsibilities. On weekends we lounged barefoot in drawstring pajamas, drinking tea and smoking Rothmans, or set out to watch cricket at Lord's. (Lahiri 161)

Even though the narrator had spent years in London, he and his roommates did not forget their Indian roots. They had to work and they had other responsibilities, Yet, they always found time to cook an Indian meal. Hybridization occurs when the narrator and the others eat with their hands on the table. According to Omidvar, the best way to eat Indian food is by hand and while sitting on the floor (4). In this passage, the narrator and the others did not eat on the floor. They chose to eat on the table, which was covered in newspapers. Furthermore, the house they lived in was different from their Indian households. Yet, they walked barefoot.

In 1969, the narrator was offered a job in America. At the same time, his brother arranged his marriage. Thus, before he left for America, he attended his wedding in India, and a week later, he left on his journey. The assimilation process for the narrator was not that difficult since he

lived in London for years. Indeed, there were differences between America and England. Yet, he was determined to know everything about America. For instance, before he left London, he bought a paperback volume under the name *The Student's Guide to North America*.

Upon his arrival, the narrator rented an accommodation that was not expensive. Yet, he could not handle the noise that prevented him from sleep, "the noise was constantly distracting, at times suffocating. I felt it deep in my ribs" (Lahiri162). Nonetheless, the narrator was aspiring to make his transition to America as easier as possible, "In a week I had adjusted, more or less" (163).

The narrator did not stay long in this accommodation, for he sought to find another place for himself before his wife arrived from India. The house of Mrs. Croft was the place the narrator chose to stay in for the duration. Mrs. Croft was an old who lived on her own. In need of additional income, she would often rent the room to students. As she and the narrator met, she ordered him to leave her the rent on the piano.

I extended the envelope toward her, but her fingers, folded together in her lap, did not budge, I bowed slightly and lowered the envelope, so that it hovered just above her hands. After a moment she accepted, and nodded her head. (170)

This passage shows that the narrator is a hybrid individual. To illustrate, when the narrator did not put the money on the ledge of the piano and approached Mrs. Croft with it, she refused to touch it until he bowed his head and lowered the money to her. The narrator bowed his head as a sign of respect as most Indian do while interacting with their elders. Besides, during his stay in Mrs. Croft's house, the narrator opted not to wear shoes inside his room, "I still felt strange wearing shoes indoors, and always removed them before entering my room" (171). Even though the narrator was living in an American old woman's house, he could not let this particular Indian custom.



As his wife arrived in America, the narrator moved out of Mrs. Croft's house and rented a house for them. The hybrid identity of the narrator appears as also as he meets his wife at the airport. The Indian part of him resurfaces for he spoke his language, "I asked her, speaking Bengali for the first time in America, if she was hungry" (177). Furthermore, as they were sharing a meal in their house, the narrator used his hand to eat for the first time, "We sat at a bare table, each of us staring at our plates. We ate with our hands, another thing I had not yet done in America" (177).

The narrator was well-adjusted to his life in America. Even though struggled he at the beginning, he was determined to assimilate, for he was adamant that he would establish a future for himself, "Unlike Mala, I was used to it all by then: used to cornflakes and milk, used to Helen's visits, used to sitting on the bench with Mrs. Croft. The only thing I was not used to was Mala" (176). His wife was a stranger to him. Yet, his sense of responsibility and honor prevented him from leaving her to fend for her own, for "Mala had traveled far from home, not knowing where she was going, or what she would find, for no reason other than to be my wife" (181). The narrator helped his wife adjust to America. He often took her outside, so that she would familiarize herself with her new surroundings.

As the years passed, the narrator remarks that he and his family's assimilation was a success, "We are American citizens now... Though we visit Calcutta every few years, and bring back more drawstring pajamas and Darjeeling tea, we have decided to grow old here" (182). The narrator and his are hybrid individuals. Even though they adopted the American identity, they remained loyal and faithful to their heritage and customs. The narrator disclose that he had a son who studies at Harvard. The narrator's son is also a hybrid individual, for his parents are careful when it comes to presenting his Indian identity, "we drive to Cambridge to visit him, or bring him home for a weekend, so that he can eat rice with his hands, and speak in Bengali, things we sometimes worry he will never do after we die" (182). Even though the

narrator and his family established their lives in America. They refused to abandon the tradition they were raised to.

### **3.2.2 Mimicry in The Third and Final Continent**

The narrator moves from India to London and then to America. The narrator is already assimilated to his life in London; yet, the process could not be described as easy.

I remembered my first days in London, learning how to take the Tube to Russell Square, riding an escalator for the first time, being unable to understand that when the man cried “piper” it meant “paper,” being unable to decipher, for a whole year, that the conductor said “mind the gap” as the train pulled away from each station. (181)

It seems that one of the difficulties the narrator faced in London was understanding the British accent. It took him about a year to grasp the meaning of some expressions used daily. The move to America was challenging because London is different from America. Nonetheless, the narrator aspired to build a life for himself and his wife in America. Hence, tried his best to learn everything he could about the country.

In *The Third and Final Continent*, mimicry appears in the way the narrator began to change his routine and his habits the moment he arrives to America. For instance, instead of the egg curry he used to eat with his roommates in London, he began eating cereal, "In a week I had adjusted, more or less. I ate cornflakes and milk, morning and night, and bought some bananas for variety, slicing them into the bowl with the edge of my spoon" (163). The narrator related his adjustment in America to changing his meal. This shows that he acknowledges the need to alter some things in his life to facilitate his integration.

The first morning when I came into the kitchen she had heated up the leftovers and sat a plate with a spoonful of salt on its edge on the table, assuming I

would eat rice for breakfast, as most Bengali husbands did. I told her cereal would do. (178)

The narrator adjusted to life in America in the weeks he was waiting for his wife. He developed the habit of eating cereal during that time. Hence, the morning after his wife's arrival, the narrator remarks that his wife heated leftovers for breakfast since all Bengali husbands favored that. The narrator, who is unlike the others, declined the meal and told his wife that cereal is enough for him. The narrator is open-minded about the necessity of change to integrate into America. Besides, the narrator already lived in a foreign land before coming to America. He knew that life can be challenging for those who struggled to adapt. Therefore, he urged his wife to embrace change and mimic others. For instance, Mala covered her hair with the end of her Sari. The narrator noted that, "There's no need to cover your head ... I don't mind. It doesn't matter here"(178). He stressed that he did not care if she decided not to cover her hair. In fact, no one in America did, thus she should not do so either. To help his wife adjust in America, he told her that he would take her out.

When she emerged I regretted the suggestion; she had put on a clean silk sari and extra bracelets, and coiled her hair with a flattering side part on top of her head. She was prepared as if for a party, or at very least for the cinema, but I had no such destination in mind. (178-179)

The narrator wished to ease his wife's transition into America by introducing her to a different lifestyle. However, he regretted his decision immediately after he noticed the choice of her outfit. He was displeased, for he wanted her to blend in imitating others. That would help her assimilate. Yet, the outfit she chose was rather extravagant, which would be suited for a party rather than a simple outing. As the years passed, the narrator remarked that, "Mala no longer drapes the end of her sari over her head, or weeps at night for her parents, but

occasionally she weeps for our son" (182). The narrator and his wife assimilated successfully into America. They were able to navigate the cultural values of India and the host country. They developed new identities without disregarding their old ones. They endeavored to preserve their Indian identities and urged their son to learn more about their heritage.

### **3.3. When Mr. Prizada Came to Dine Through the Lens of Bhabha**

When Mr. Prizada Came to Dine tells the story of an Indian family which assimilated in America. The story is about a Pakistani scholar who left his family to conduct academic research. During his stay, an American- Indian family invites him to have dinner because the narrator's parents often complained that, "neighbors never dropped by without an invitation" (30). While Mr. Prizada is in the US, a civil war breaks out in Pakistan. Since he has no television where he stayed, he often had dinner and watched the news with Lilia's family.

#### **3.3.1 Hybridity in When Mr. Prizada Came to Dine**

Lilia's parents are first-generation immigrants who assimilated in America. According to Pourgharib and PouryaAsl, Lilia's mother is "depicted as a hybrid woman who has managed to maintain the familial and friendship bond in a foreign soil" (8). The narrator's mother is an Indian woman, who is fully integrated into the American society. She adopted a hybrid identity, for she adjusted to America without eliminating her Indian identity. For instance, the narrator's mother has a job, "She ran a hand through her hair, bobbed to a suitable length for her part-time job as a bank teller" (Lahiri 31). This character did not only find a part-time job as a bank teller but also made the necessary arrangement to look like any other employee there. In other words, the narrator's mother cut her hair to hold her job or kept a specific hair style to conform to the environment in which she works.

The narrator's mother assumed her American identity in public, for she was a woman with a career. Yet, in her household, she was an Indian woman who enjoyed taking care of her

family. She only cooked Indian food, and she often made varieties, "From the kitchen my mother brought forth the succession of dishes: lentils with fried onions, green beans with coconut, fish cooked with raisins in a yogurt sauce..." (Lahiri 34). Lilia's mother preserved her Indian heritage through cooking. Yet, she cannot but feel proud that Lilia did not have the same life as them, " In her estimation, I knew, I was assured a safe life, an easy life, a fine education, every opportunity. or watch riots from my rooftop, or hide neighbors in water tanks to prevent them from being shot..." (32). Even though Lilia's mother values her Indian customs and traditions, which is apparent while in their house, she believes that her daughter is privileged to have the life she has.

In her hybridized family, Lilia exists between two cultures. The Indian culture in which is resumed at her house, and the 1970 American culture of Massachusetts. Lilia's American identity is dominant since she was a second-generation immigrant. In fact, she knows nothing about her parents except that they are Indian. Thus, when she makes the mistake concerning the nationality of Mr. Prizada, her father corrects her and tells her that Mr. Prizada is no longer considered an Indian man. The narrator appears perplexed by her father's words, for

It made no sense to me. Mr. Pirzada and my parents spoke the same language, laughed at the same jokes, looked more or less the same. They ate pickled mangoes with their meals, ate rice every night for supper with their hands. Like my parents, Mr. Pirzada took off his shoes before entering a room, chewed fennel seeds after meals as a digestive, drank no alcohol, for dessert dipped austere biscuits into successive cups of tea.(30)

Lilia could not comprehend the difference between her parents and Mr. Prizada. All she could see were the similarities. In fact, when the war between India and Pakistan was about to begin, Lilia viewed her parents and Mr. Prizada as one, "Most of all I remember the three of

them operating during that time as if they were a single person, sharing a single meal, a single body, a single silence, and a single fear" (44). It is apparent that Lilia cannot detect cultural differences between the three. Hence, she assumed Mr. Prizada was an Indian man. Lilia's father's explained that their country was divided in 1947, and the situation between the Muslims and the Hindus. In his attempt to make Lilia understand her Indian heritage, her father asserted that she should understand the history and the current events that were occurring in India.

Lilia's mother did not share the same as her husband. She claimed that her daughter did not need to learn about that since they are already living in America, "Lilia has plenty to learn at school ... We live here now, she was born here" (31). Pourgharib and PouryaAsl believe that Lilia's mother recognizes the need to learn about one's culture and tradition. In other words, she does not disregard the importance of that knowledge for her daughter. She, however, acknowledges that limiting her life to her Indian identity would ultimately create a docile female that would be alienated from society (9).

Indeed, the knowledge Lilia had about her Indian side. Yet, Anju Rastogi maintains that Lilia enjoys learning about her both Indian and American cultures. She also asserts that the narrator is aware of the privilege she has over her classmates who only acknowledged only what happened in America (3). As Lilia arrives at her class, she realizes that, "No one at school talked about the war followed so faithfully in my living room. We continued to study the American Revolution, and learned about the injustices of taxation without representation, and memorized passages from the Declaration of Independence" (37).

Lilia could not help but notice the life on and nobody in her school seemed aware of what was happening on the international level. She was aware that the school curriculum urged them to know more about American history rather than the happenings of the present.

Besides, Lilia was curious to know more about her Indian history. Therefore, as she was sent to the library to gather information for her report, she was bored and decided to check other books. Thus, she found a book about Pakistan and got in trouble for it, "I began turning the pages ... filled with photos of rivers and rice fields and men in military uniforms. There was a chapter about Dacca, and I began to read about its rainfall, and its jute production..." (37). It is evident that Lilia is interested in other cultures besides the American one. Hence, she bought a book without her teacher's permission and was rebuked for it.

### 3.3.2 Mimicry in *When Mr. Prizada Came to Dine*

The characters of this short story assimilated into American society. As a result, they indulge in various cultural aspects that Americans value and appreciate. In other words, Lilia and her family are Americanized through the language they use and the traditions and culture they embraced. Lilia's family lives according to the American lifestyle so that they would not be alienated for being other. Hence, they mimic certain aspects of everyday life to appear American.

Mimicry in *When Mr. Prizada Came to Dine* appears in the way the family conforms to the American society and upholds its traditions. For instance, Lilia and her family celebrate Halloween. The narrator and her parents, along with Mr. Prizada, prepared for the occasion by carving a pumpkin to decorate the doorstep of the house.

He [Mr. Prizada] made an initial incision and drew the knife around. When he had come full circle he lifted the cap by the stem ... Mr. Prizada leaned over the pumpkin for a moment to inspect and inhale its contents. My mother gave him a long metal spoon with which he gutted the interior until the last bits of string and seeds were gone. My father, meanwhile, separated the seeds from the pulp and set them out to dry on a cookie sheet. (39)

This passage indicates that the entire family is dedicated to the act of carving a pumpkin for this particular holiday. Even Mr. Prizada, who is a stranger to this American custom, participated in the act; he offered to be the one to carve the pumpkin. This demonstrates that all the characters indulge in American customs and mimic their traditions. Another American Lilia's parents picked up was marking the growth of their child on the wall. Like many other American parents, Lilia's father marks the height of his daughter on one of the walls in her bedroom. As Lilia was looking around her room, she noticed "the penciled inscriptions by the closet door where my father recorded my height on each of my birthdays" (36). Lilia's parents are fully integrated into the American society. Lilia, growing up in a culturally different environment, compels her parents to mimic simple traditions.

Another tradition Lilia's parents mimic is celebrating Christmas, "we went to Philadelphia to spend Christmas with friends of my parents" (44). According to Abdullah and Fayadh, Lilia's parents' integration did not only include tradition and language but also religion (9). Celebrating Christmas has nothing to do with Hinduism and everything with Christianity. This means that the narrator's parents assimilated into America, adopting all traditions, even the ones that are not compatible with their Indian identity.

Even though Lilia is Hindu. She does not have any idea of how to pray. Her parents never taught her how. Thus, when she realized that Mr. Prizada was worried about his family, whom she believed to be likely dead, she performed a non-religious ritual (Abdullah and Fayadh 9). Lilia mimicked a ritual that was not related to her Indian identity, "I took a square of white chocolate ... and unwrapped it, and then I did something I had never done before. I put the chocolate in my mouth ... I prayed that Mr. Prizada's family was safe and sound" (36).



### 3.4. Security in the Third and Final Continent

The last short story of the collection named *Interpreter of Maladies*, addressed the assimilation process of the narrator and his wife in America. The narrator, who spent four years in London, relocated to America after getting a job. Indeed, the narrator struggled to assimilate in London. For instance, the language was a barrier that he could not adapt to for a long time. Yet, he embraced his life in London until a better opportunity presented itself. The narrator was aware that integrating into the American society would be challenging, for "The pace of life in North America is different from Britain as you will soon discover" (161-162).

In the beginning, he struggled to adjust to the level of noise he could hear from the place he rented. Life in America felt foreign for him because there were differences in the smallest of things, "Even the simple chore of buying milk was new to me; in London, we'd had bottles delivered each morning to our door"(162). The narrator had to acquaint himself with mundane activities. He was aspiring to make a life for himself and his wife in America. That goal kept him motivated, and within only a week of his stay in America, the narrator claimed that he adjust.

Life was going as planned for the narrator after he stumbled on an ad in a newspaper. He found a room he could rent in a large house owned by an old woman who was over a hundred years old. At this point, the narrator felt that his life was secure. Through his stay in Mrs. Croft's, the narrator and the old woman, established a routine. Every time the narrator arrives at the house after work, he finds Mrs. Croft on the piano bench, and they exchange small talks about the flag on the moon.

The assimilation process for the narrator was going smoothly, even though he was still unfamiliar with many things in America. He was content with his life. He had a place to stay, and he had a job to support him and his wife. In the time the narrator was waiting for his

wife, he got used to life in America. The only one he could not get used to is his wife, for she was still a stranger. The narrator was indifferent to her arrival, "In those six weeks I regarded her arrival as I would the arrival of a coming month, or season—something inevitable, but meaningless at the time" (175). The narrator's opinion changed after witnessing a dog attacking the Sari of an Indian woman while she was with her child. The scene made the narrator remember how insecure he felt as he moved to London. It dawned on the narrator that Mala was his responsibility, "I realized that morning... It was my duty to take care of Mala, to welcome her and protect her. ... I would have to tell her which streets to avoid, which way the traffic came" (176).

The assimilation process for Mala was not that difficult, for she, like her husband, was open to change. Within a week of her arrival, Mala sought to make the house her husband rented a home. She asked the narrator for money for some necessities for the house. Even though the couple were strangers, the narrator helped Mala adjust to her new society. He took her out and showed her around so that she would not be lost if she needed to leave on her own. Although Mala longed for her family and wept for them occasionally, she was determined to build a life for her family. Thus, as the years passed, she felt secure in her life that she no longer had to weep for her family. With the help of her husband, Mala was able to assimilate into America and live there for long years without feeling insecure about either her life or status.

### **3.5. Security in When Mr. Prizada Came to Dine**

The Indian-American family of the narrator is fully integrated into America. In fact, the narrator, Lilia, was more American than Indian since her knowledge about her Indian identity is limited. The narrator lives between two cultures. She is aware that her parents are

Indian and that they are different from other Americans. The narrator remarks the difference between her family and that of her friend when she visits them during Halloween.

When I replaced the phone on the receiver it occurred to me that the television wasn't on at Dora's house at all. Her father was lying on the couch, reading a magazine, with a glass of wine on the coffee table, and there was saxophone music playing on the stereo. (43)

The narrator can see the difference between her family and other American families. Yet, she cannot remark cultural differences between her parents and Mr. Prizada. To her, they appear similar in every way. Thus, she was confused when her father points out the differences and urged her to learn more about India and its history, his wife interjected, for she was proud that her daughter has a life of privilege, unlike the life she and her husband had. Lilia knew of the life she would have had if she was born in India during that time, "I would never have to eat rationed food, or obey curfews, or watch riots from my rooftop, or hide neighbors in water tanks to prevent them from being shot, as she and my father had"(31-32). Lilia and her family had a secure life in America.

Integrating into the American society ensured that the narrator's family would have a safe and secure life. Lilia's parents struggled in India before they were displaced to America. They assimilated and adopted the American language, traditions, and customs to ensure that they would not be alienated for being other. They adjusted to America to guarantee a safe future for their selves and their future children. The characters of When Mr. Prizada came to Dine feel more secure in America than in their country due to the troubling times India faced.

### 3.6. Conclusion

For immigrants, full assimilation in the country they reside in is necessary. The course of said assimilation can be long and difficult for some immigrants. Those who resist integrating into foreign societies would struggle to blend in, and they would be ultimately alienated for not conforming to the places they live. Similarly, most of the characters in Jhumpa Lahiri's work *Interpreter of Maladies* struggle to assimilate outside their countries. Indeed, such is not the case for second-generation immigrants, for they were born and raised in America. Thus, they do not long for something they never knew or had. First-generation immigrants often struggle to assimilate. There is no time restriction on the assimilation process. It could take years or months, for it depends on the person and their ability to adapt.

In *The Third and Final continent*, the characters, who are first-generation immigrants, endeavor to integrate into America for better life opportunities. The narrator displaces to America before his wife. And before his move to America, the narrator lives in London for four years. Consequently, the integration from London to America does not seem that arduous. It helps that he is open-minded when it comes to change. He is not one of those characters who long for a past long gone. He is resolute about his plans. Therefore, he tried his hardest to assimilate into America.

Mala, like many first-generation immigrants, was insecure at the beginning of the story. She yearned for her home, and she wept for her parents. Yet, over time, she got used to the new lifestyle and became a part of America. In a way, her husband's assistance and welcome eased Mala into her new life, for in him; she found a friend and a protector that valued her. He was responsible for her and her happiness. In addition, Mala embraced change like her husband. She did not dwell on the past. She treasured her memories and moved on with her life. Hence, She and her husband were able to create a home in America, where they lived for thirty years.

The Indian-American family in *When Mr. Prizada Came to Dine* is secure because of their status in the American society. Lilia's parents, who had an uneasy life in India, regarded America as the land, which promised them new opportunities in life. It provided safety and security, something their country was incapable of giving. Thus, they valued and treasured their lives in America. Their assimilation in America granted them what they wished in life. Similarly, Lilia was brought up as an American. She participated in American traditions and learned about America in school. As it was the country, in which she will build her life. Unlike other Indian teenagers, Lilia had a safe life and a promising future. The displacement of her parents allowed her to enjoy her life within a protected environment

### **General conclusion**

Post-colonial literature represent a critique to works of literature written by post-colonial writers. In addition, it portrays to the minority of Diasporas that reside in the west. Jumpa Lahiri is an American novelist and short story writer. She reflected in her works immigrant experiences, especially that of east Indians. The interpreter of maladies is a collection of nine stories that was published in 1999. The stories reflect different issues and experiences of Indian immigrants in western society. This dissertation discussed four short stories from the collection. Using analytical, descriptive, and interpretative approaches, the research strived to detect the sense of insecurity detected in “Mrs. Sen” and “the blessed house” short stories. Furthermore, we used “the first and final continent” and “When Mr. Prizada came to dine” to examine the aspects that expressed security in these short stories.

The dissertation is divided into three segments. In The first chapter, we presented the theoretical framework of the study. We established a comprehensible view about post-colonial literature. Moreover, we attempted to identify Homi Bhabha’s concepts of hybridity, mimicry, and unhomeliness. The use of Homi Bhabha concepts was to analyze through his notions the portrayal of securities and insecurities in “the interpreter of maladies”. The second chapter we analyzed and interpreted the display of insecurity sense using mimicry, hybridity, and unhomeliness. The third chapter the focus was on examining how security was displayed through the characters of each short story.

The research results affirm that Mrs. Sen lost her social identity in the western environment. Nevertheless, she identified herself as the teacher’s wife rather than identifying herself with her birth name. This fostered and developed a sense of insecurity for Mrs. Sen it was portrayed by her failing attempts to imitate and adopt in America’s life style. On the other hand, in the blessed house there is a display of religious insecurity. The story follows a married couple that moved to America. As Hindu couple, belief is crucial aspect that reflects

their local identity. Yet, the wife showed leniency towards Christian relics that she found in their new house. Whereas, her husband felt insecure to his wife's respect for other religion. He is a first generation immigrant while his wife is second generation born and raised there.

The portrayal of sense of security in "When Mr. Prizada Came to Dine" is detected in many aspects. During wartime, the family was obliged to immigrate to America. Seeking a better future for themselves and stability was the goal. The family managed to assimilate and adapt into a western society. The family was able to achieve security in all aspects, as they had no issue with adopting in America's life style.

"The First and Final Continent" the story follows a couple from Indian origin as they got married and moved to the U.S. even though his wife struggled at the beginning to adapt in American society; but she eventually managed to secure herself in western atmosphere. Security was shown in her dressing style and imitation of western traditions. Her husband on the other hand, managed to integrate himself whether before or after marriage. This short story displays first generation and second-generation ability to assimilate eventually and realize aspects of security in a global setting. It can be deduced that both short stories reflected social, cultural, and financial securities, as they were able to integrate themselves in American life style.

### Works Cited

- Abdullah, O. M., & Fayadh, Z. H. (2020). Question of Identity: Mimicry and Decolonization in Jhumpa Lahiri's Selected Short Stories. *Al-Adab Journal*, (134), 13–28.  
<https://doi.org/10.31973/aj.v0i134.827>
- Abdullah, Omar Mohammed, and Zainab Hummadi Fayadh. "Question of Identity: Mimicry and Decolonization in Jhumpa Lahiri's Selected Short Stories." *Al-Adab Journal* – No. 134-1, 2020, [aladabj.uobaghdad.edu.iq/index.php/aladabjournal/article/view/827](http://aladabj.uobaghdad.edu.iq/index.php/aladabjournal/article/view/827).
- Ashcroft, Bill, et al. "Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts." *Routledge & CRC Press*, The Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2007, [www.routledge.com/Post-Colonial-Studies-The-Key-Concepts/Ashcroft-Griffiths-Tiffin/p/book/9780415661911](http://www.routledge.com/Post-Colonial-Studies-The-Key-Concepts/Ashcroft-Griffiths-Tiffin/p/book/9780415661911).
- Ashcroft, Bill, et al. *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2003.
- Ashcroft, Bill, Griffiths, Gareth & Tiffin, Helen Introduction, in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths & Helen Tiffin (Eds) 2002 *The Empire Writes Back: theory and practice in post-colonial literatures*. London: Rutledge
- Bahareh, Bahmanpour. (2010). Female Subjects and Negotiating Identities in Jhumpa Lahiri's Interpreter of Maladies. *Studies in Literature and Language*, 1(6), 43-51. Web. Accessed April, 27. 2023.
- Bran, Ramona Alice. *Immigration: 'A Lifelong Pregnancy'? An Analysis of Jhumpa Lahiri's Fiction*, 2014.
- Britannica, the Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Jhumpa Lahiri". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 16 Feb. 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jhumpa-Lahiri>. Accessed 9 March 2023.
- Chatterji, Joya, and David A. Washbrook. *Routledge Handbook of the South Asian Diaspora*.



Routledge, 2013, Google Books,

[www.google.com/books/edition/Routledge\\_Handbook\\_of\\_the\\_South\\_Asian\\_Di/-](http://www.google.com/books/edition/Routledge_Handbook_of_the_South_Asian_Di/-xCUAgAAQBAJ?kptab=editions&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjIr4Sv78n-AhXjVKQEHaweDcQQmBZ6BAgMEAc)

[xCUAgAAQBAJ?kptab=editions&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjIr4Sv78n-](http://www.google.com/books/edition/Routledge_Handbook_of_the_South_Asian_Di/-xCUAgAAQBAJ?kptab=editions&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjIr4Sv78n-AhXjVKQEHaweDcQQmBZ6BAgMEAc)

[AhXjVKQEHaweDcQQmBZ6BAgMEAc.](http://www.google.com/books/edition/Routledge_Handbook_of_the_South_Asian_Di/-xCUAgAAQBAJ?kptab=editions&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjIr4Sv78n-AhXjVKQEHaweDcQQmBZ6BAgMEAc)

Christenberry, H Faye, et al. *Literary Research and Postcolonial Literatures in English: Strategies and Sources*. Scarecrow Press, 2012.

Edelstam, Mary Ann. "Fluid Identities In Jhumpa Lahiri's Interpreter of Maladies ." pp. 1–30., [www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:517785/fulltext01.pdf](http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:517785/fulltext01.pdf).

Gandhi, Leela. *Postcolonial Theory A Critical Introduction*. Second ed., Allen & Unwin, 1998.

Giri, Dipak. "Introduction." *Immigration and Estrangement in Indian Diaspora Literature: A Critical Study* , First ed., AABS Publishing House, 2019.

Habib, Rafey. *A History of Literary Criticism and Theory: From Plato to the Present*. Blackwell Publ., 2009.

Hoque, Dr.Riazul. "Investigation of Postcolonial Themes and Issues: an Overview." *International Journal Of English and Studies (IJOES)*, vol. 04, no. 03, Mar. 2022, pp. 87–88., [www.ijoes.in](http://www.ijoes.in).

Huddart, David. Homi K. Bhabha. Routledge, 2007, Zlibrary, [lib-bpawp5a3dkytpum7r465z4y.1lib.at/book/551262/15558b](http://lib-bpawp5a3dkytpum7r465z4y.1lib.at/book/551262/15558b).

Innes, Catherine Lynette. *The Cambridge Introduction to Postcolonial Literatures in English*. Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Klimkova, Simona. (2018). Reclaiming the Past: Restoration of Personal and Communal History in *Petals of Blood*. *Prague Journal of English Studies*. 7. 111-122. 10.1515/pjes-2018-0007.

Lahiri, Jhumpa. *Interpreter of Maladies*. HarperCollins Publishers India, Zlibrary, lib-bpapwp5a3dkytpum7r465z4y.1lib.at/book/4102979/ae80e0, Accessed 8 Mar. 2023.

Malstead, Kavita. “[PDF] Negotiating Borders of the Indian Diasporic Identity: Semantic Scholar.” [PDF] *Negotiating Borders of the Indian Diasporic Identity | Semantic Scholar*, 1 Jan. 1970, [www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Negotiating-Borders-of-the-Indian-Diasporic-Malstead/fac59fc33e0d6e6cdd1d2c236a7cadd69aaf7af1](http://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Negotiating-Borders-of-the-Indian-Diasporic-Malstead/fac59fc33e0d6e6cdd1d2c236a7cadd69aaf7af1).

Memmi, Albert. *The Colonizer and the Colonized: Introd.by Jean-Paul Sartre*. Earthscan Publications Ltd, 2003.

Mrs. Sen's. *Interpreter of Maladies*, by Jhumpa Lahiri, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1999, pp. 107–128.

Mudayana, Amalia Tizzany. “The Process Of Assimilation Of Two Generations In Jhumpa Lahiri’s Short Stories Collection *Interpreter Of Maladies*.” 2017. Web. April, 26. 2023

Nayar, Pramod K. *Postcolonial Literature: An Introduction*. Pearson Longman, 2008.

Omidvar, Morteza. (2020). A Postcolonial Reading of Jhumpa Lahiri's "Mrs. Sen's" Through the Lens of Homi Bhabha. Web. April, 26. 2023

Omidvar, Morteza. (2020). A Postcolonial Reading of Jhumpa Lahiri's "Mrs. Sen's" Through the Lens of Homi Bhabha. Web. April, 26. 2023

Pokharel, Bhawana. “Diaspora and Diasporic Literature: Condition to Consciousness.” *The*

*Outlook: Journal of English Studies*, vol. 11, 2020, pp. 86–98., doi:  
<https://doi.org/10.3126/ojes.v11i0.36363>.

PouryaAsl, Moussa, and BehzadPourgharib. “Cultural Translation, Hybrid Identity, and Third Space in JhumpaLahiri’s Interpreter of Maladies.” *Pertanika Journals*, 3 Nov. 2022, pp. 1–16.

Quayson FBA, Ato. “What Is Postcolonial Literature?” The British Academy, 2 Jan. 2020, [www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/blog/what-is-postcolonial-literature/](http://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/blog/what-is-postcolonial-literature/).

Rastogi, Anju. “Cultural Hybridity in the Select Fictions of Jhumpa Lahiri.” *Novelty Journal* , vol. 2, no. 5, 2015, pp. 1–4.

Rastogi, Anju. “Cultural Hybridity in the Select Fictions of Jhumpa Lahiri.” *Novelty Journal* , vol. 2, no. 5, 2015, pp. 1–4.

Sahu, Padmini. *The Fictional World of JhumpaLahiri: A Study in Merging Identities* .BlueRose One, 2022.

Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1994. Print.

Said, E. W. (1986) "An Ideology of Difference." "*Race, Writing, and Difference*. Ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.

Sevilla, De Jesús Escobar. ““Hybridization and Self-Effacement in Jhumpa Lahiri’s Fiction’ .”Faculty of Humanities at the University of Almeria, 2017, pp. 01–79. Ual.es, [repositorio.ual.es/bitstream/handle/10835/5837/15604\\_Master%27s%20Thesis%20JES067%202017.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](http://repositorio.ual.es/bitstream/handle/10835/5837/15604_Master%27s%20Thesis%20JES067%202017.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y).

Shmoop Editorial Team. “Postcolonial Literature Characteristics.” Shmoop, Shmoop

University, 11 Nov. 2008, [www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literary-movements/postcolonial-](http://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literary-movements/postcolonial-literature/characteristics#:~:text=Postcolonial%20writers%20are%20really%20interested,cultural%2C%20political%20and%20social%20identity)

[literature/characteristics#:~:text=Postcolonial%20writers%20are%20really%20interested,cultural%2C%20political%20and%20social%20identity](http://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/characteristics#:~:text=Postcolonial%20writers%20are%20really%20interested,cultural%2C%20political%20and%20social%20identity).

The Third and Final Continent .” *Interpreter of Maladies*, by Jhumpa Lahiri, Mariner Books, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1999, pp. 161–183.

This Blessed House.” *Interpreter of Maladies* , by Jhumpa Lahiri, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1999, pp. 129–147.

Young, Robert J. C.. *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction*. United Kingdom, Wiley, 2016.

Yulistiyanti, Yulistiyanti&Widyaningrum, Agnes &Rahayu, Endang&Rustipa, Katharina. (2023). Hybridity in JhumpaLahiri's a Temporary Matter. *IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature*. 10. 1837-1848. 10.24256/ideas.v10i2.3145.

ZHANG Yue. “The Analysis of Diaspora Women’s Identity in *Interpreter of Maladies* from the Perspective of Postcolonial Feminism.” *Journal of Literature and Art Studies*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2022, doi:10.17265/2159-5836/2022.02.003.

### الملخص

هدف البحث إلى مناقشة تصوير الأمان وانعدامه في "مترجم الأمراض" لجمبا لا هيري. يعكس "مترجم الأمراض" تجارب الأفراد الذين هاجروا من الهند إلى أمريكا. في هذه المجموعة انعكست جوانب معينة من بينها الشتات والهوية. يركز البحث على تحليل أربع قصص مختلفة "السيدة. سين"، "البيت المبارك"، "القارة الثالثة والأخيرة"، و"عندما جاء السيد بريزادا لتناول العشاء". هدفت الدراسة إلى استكشاف تطور الشخصيات في جميع أنحاء القصص. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تسعى الدراسة إلى فحص الطرق التي لجأت إليها الشخصيات للتأقلم والتكيف مع الحياة في أمريكا. تستند الدراسة إلى استعمال نظرية دراسة نصوص ما بعد الاستعمار لمجموعة "مترجم الأمراض" باستخدام مفاهيم هومي بهابها لأدب ما بعد الاستعمار. اعتمدت الدراسة مجموعة من المناهج البحثية لتحقيق أهداف البحث المنشودة. تم استخدام المناهج التحليلية والوصفية لوصف حياة الشخصيات وفحص التغييرات وتطورها. علاوة على ذلك، كان النهج التفسيري حاسماً لتفسير واستنتاج نتائج البحث. ومع ذلك، كانت الأساليب النوعية ضرورية لدراسة وفحص البيانات ذات الصلة التي تشكل وتبني أهداف البحث. وجد البحث أن الاستيعاب والتأقلم عملية صعبة للمهاجرين وكل فرد يمر بها بشكل مختلف. علاوة على ذلك، يتأقلم الجيل الثاني من المهاجرين بسهولة في المجتمعات الغربية لأن معظمهم نشأوا هناك. ولكن، يكافح الجيل الأول من المهاجرين من أجل الاندماج في المجتمعات الغربية منذ نزوحهم إلى بلدان مختلفة. لذلك، يمكن القول إن الاندماج والتأقلم في ثقافة أخرى يعتمدان على الانفتاح للتغيير لكل فرد. أولئك الذين لا يستطيعون التعايش والتأقلم يفعلون ذلك للحفاظ على هويتهم وتراثهم. وبالتالي، فإنهم يظهرون كآخر بدلاً من أن يندمجوا. في حين أن أولئك المنفتحين على التغيير يتأقلمون بشكل أسهل.

**الكلمة المفتاحية:** المهاجرون الأمان، انعدام الأمان، الثقافة، الاندماج، الاندماج الاجتماعي، التقاليد، الهوية