

1818390031

BA English

ENG 205-Survey of South-Asian Literature

Answer NO-01

Jhumpa Lahiri represents human relationships in her stories.

Jhumpa Lahiri is a popular short story writer, novelist and an American author of Indian origin. She is known for her non-fiction writings as well. Her another name is 'Nilanjana Sudeshna Lahiri'. She was born 1967 in London, England, and raised in Rhode Island. When she was three her family moved to the United States of America (USA) and left England. She once said in an interview, "I wasn't born here but I might as well have been". She considered herself as an American. Her father name is Amar Lahiri. He worked as a librarian at the University of Rhode Island. The story of the novel 'Interpreter of Maladies' was written by Jhumpa Lahiri. What was concluded and modelled after her father Amar Lahiri as a leading character in "The third and final Continent" of the content. Her mother name is Tia Lahiri and she is a teacher. Who grew up her children according to the Bengali heritage by often visiting their relatives in 'Calcutta'. Jhumpa has a sister named Simanti Lahiri. She is a graduate of Barnard College, where she received a B.A. in English literature, and of Boston University, where she received an M.A. in English, M.A. in Creative Writing and M.A. in Comparative Studies in Literature and the Arts, and a Ph.D. in Renaissance Studies. She has taught creative writing at Boston University and the Rhode Island School of Design. Now she lives in Brooklyn, New York. 'Interpreter of Maladies' was her debut collection. For this she has won the 2000 Pulitzer Prize for fiction. What was translated into twenty-nine languages and became a bestseller both in the United States and abroad. Also she was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2002. Her first novel The Namesake what was publish in September 2003. Her second collection "Unaccustomed Earth" was published in 2008. What is became an immediate New York Times bestseller. In 2001 she married to Alberto Vourvoulias-Bush. Who is Journalist and was then deputy editor of 'TIME Latin America'. They got married at Singhi Palace, Gariahat, West Bengal. Before marriage they were in a two years relationship. They had two children: Octavio in 2002 and Noor in 2005. In 2012 they moved to Rome. The family currently lives in Brooklyn, New York. In 2017 in an interview Jhumpa Lahiri stated that her parents are not religious and even they did not preach her any religious education. However her parents taught her to respect and read great author's including Rabindra Nath Tagore. She said, "My parents are not religious people so they didn't give us a religious education but certainly taught us to respect the great minds and the great visionaries and Tagore is one of those, right? and the fact that he happens to be Bengali and won the Nobel prize, well, details.

Jhumpa Lahiri is a successful writer. One of the main reasons of her success as a writer is because she writes for herself. She doesn't have critics or peers in mind when writing; she just writes. As critic David Lynn points out, "Notice that these ambitions aren't to be fashionable or trendy. She seems to have no interest in emerging as the next Ann Beattie or Raymond Carver or Don DeLillo". As much as Jhumpa Lahiri doesn't think about becoming the next big thing, she already is. She is a bona fide star and fans and critics alike are eagerly awaiting what Jhumpa Lahiri dreams up next. It is difficult to compare Jhumpa Lahiri's work to many other Indian or Indian-American authors. Such as Shubodh Ghosh and Bharati Mukherjee. One finds that it is very difficult to describe their similarities due to Jhumpa

1818390031

BA English

ENG 205-Survey of South-Asian Literature

Lahiri's broad subject matter. The conflicts her characters face, such as struggles with interpersonal relationships and stress of daily existence, are universal themes to which almost anyone can relate. She is able to demonstrate her point in writing by merely mentioning the issue that a character is facing. This is a technique that is present in much of her writing. For instance, she does not make an explicit connection with religion in her short story "When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine." In the story, Mr. Pirzada, a Muslim man from Dacca(Dhaka), in what was then East Pakistan, comes to stay with ten year's old Lilia's family, who is Hindu. She mentions Lilia praying for Mr. Pirzada while eating each piece of candy that she receives from him but not in the context of any particular religion. In fact, Lilia is never taught to pray; instead she comes up with her own method of praying. Jhumpa Lahiri leaves the religious aspect of this story vague, granting the reader, if he wishes, an opportunity to place into the story his own idea of religion. This also gives the reader a sense of connection to be able to finish or contribute to a story they are reading. She is also able to draw her readers into the story not only through her detail but also by making them feel the emotional, physical, and mental needs of the characters. All nine of the stories in *Interpreter of Maladies* focus on the characters' inability to communicate with people who are important in their lives. She continues her story as the central issue. Another impressive aspect of her writing is her ability to write in the voices of both genders. On writing from the male perspective, Jhumpa Lahiri says, in an interview in the Houghton Mifflin Books online "Reader's Guide" for *The Namesake*, "It was an exhilarating and liberating thing to do. It's a challenge, as well. I always have to ask myself, would a man think this? do this?" This method of narration gives her the ability to balance the gender representation in her book.

Both "Interpreter of Maladies" and "The Namesake" contain themes of conflict in relationships between couples, families and friends. Through these relationships she explores ideas of isolation and identity, both personal and cultural. The characters in both works frequently encounter crises of identity, which are tied to their inability to reconcile their American identity with their Indian identity. Particularly in the short fiction of *Interpreter of Maladies*, Jhumpa Lahiri often leaves these crises unresolved. As a result, her work gives us a rather bleak outlook on the future of her characters. We might imagine that this reflects some of her concerns about their real-life analogues. She often correlates her characters' cultural isolation with extreme personal isolation, suggesting that the cultural isolation causes the personal. The instances in which this cultural isolation are resolved or avoided are generally accompanied by a similar resolution or avoidance of personal isolation. Her first book, *Interpreter of Maladies* consists of three stories previously published in the *New Yorker*, plus six previously unpublished works. The stories all draw upon different aspects of Jhumpa Lahiri's Indian background. Every one of the stories is affected in some way or another by India. Some of the stories take place in India; others involve the lives of Indian immigrants in the United States. The bulk of the stories, though, are about second generation Indian-Americans, like Jhumpa Lahiri herself.

Perhaps the most interesting twist on the relationships between the American-born Indian characters and India comes in the story after which this collection is titled. "Interpreter of Maladies" is about an American-born Indian couple, Mr. and Mrs. Das, who are on vacation

1818390031

BA English

ENG 205-Survey of South-Asian Literature

in India with their two children, Ronny and Bobby. None of the family seems to be the least bit interested in India, except for Mrs. Das, who strikes up a conversation with Mr. Kapasi, their tour guide. Much of the plot involves the sexual tension that builds between Mr. Kapasi and Mrs. Das. She learns that he speaks many languages, and works at a hospital as translator between doctors and patients who do not always speak the same language. Due to this job, Mrs. Das describes him as an "interpreter of maladies." When they reach their destination, Mrs. Das stays behind in the car briefly with Mr. Kapasi while her husband and children explore the historic site they are touring. It is at this moment that Mrs. Das reveals to Mr. Kapasi that one of her children is the result of an extramarital affair, a fact that she says she has never revealed to anyone before. When Mr. Kapasi offers up his "interpretation" of this as a factor in her family's "maladies," she gets angry at him and storms away from the car to rejoin her family. The common thread throughout the stories in this collection is the same sort of "malady" that the Das family suffers. Nearly all of the characters are defined by isolation of some form or another: husbands are isolated from wives; immigrants are isolated from their families and their homes; children are isolated from their parents; and people are isolated from the communities in which they live. In their isolation, these characters feel that they are missing something vital to their identities. It is this missing "something" that defines them. It seems that few characters in these stories have any idea of who they are or where they are going in life. Jhumpa Lahiri's characters defy simple explanations of what their problems are; frequently we are given only a brief glimpse into their lives, a look at one key moment that somehow defines their lack of self-understanding. In the collection's closing story, "The Third and Final Continent," we meet one of the few characters who are well-adjusted and happy. He is the narrator of the story, and remains unnamed throughout. He tells us of his immigration first to Great Britain and then to the United States, focusing on the six-week period from his arrival in America until the arrival of his wife, who he has married in an arranged ceremony in India. He has left her behind while her documents for her immigration to America are arranged, so that he may prepare a home for them to live in when she arrives. Although he remains in the United States, the narrator does not let himself lose his Indian identity in the effort to become American. Jhumpa Lahiri seems to be suggesting at the close of her book that this loss of Indian identity is at the root of the isolation so many of the other characters experience. The narrator expresses his intention not to let his own son experience this loss: "we drive to Cambridge to visit him, or bring him home for a weekend, so that he can eat rice with us with his hands, and speak in Bengali, things we sometimes worry he will no longer do after we die". This moment of concern by a first-generation immigrant for his son is unique in the collection. The only moment similar to this takes place in "When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine," when the narrator's father admonishes the American schools which do not teach his daughter anything about the current events of the Indian subcontinent, specifically the war between India and Pakistan taking place at the time the story is set. The parents in this story, however, do not appear concerned in the same way with their daughter's cultural habits. In fact, she seems very much the American child, going off to trick-or-treat with her friends on Halloween. Nonetheless, this story does share the similarity with "The Third and Final Continent" of the relative stability of its characters. Both families lack the conflict that plagues the characters in other stories and Jhumpa Lahiri seems to be

1818390031

BA English

ENG 205-Survey of South-Asian Literature

suggesting that this is due to the fact that these characters work to keep intact their connection with India. Though they have become American, they have not ceased to be Indian. There are many connections between Jhumpa Lahiri's work in *Interpreter of Maladies* and *The Namesake*. In *Interpreter of Maladies*, six of the stories revolve around South Asian immigrants in the United States. *The Namesake* revolves around an immigrant story line as well. Three of the stories in *Interpreter of Maladies* deal with Indian encounters with Americans, or two cultures colliding into one another. Addressing the themes of immigration, collision of cultures and the importance of names in *The Namesake*, Jhumpa Lahiri demonstrates how much of a struggle immigration can be. According to Dubey, "The immigrant experience is complicated as a sensitive immigrant finds himself or herself perpetually at a transit station fraught with memories of the original home which are struggling with the realities of the new world". This constant struggle is portrayed in *The Namesake*, as first-generation immigrants and their children struggle to find their places in society. As the Ganguli parents struggle with adapting to a different culture than they are used to, their children Gogol and Sonia struggle with trying to respect their roots while adapting to American society. At the beginning of *The Namesake*, the issue of names and identity is presented. As Ashima's water breaks, she calls out to Ashoke, her husband. However, she does not use his name because this would not be proper. We are shown how important privacy to Bengali families. Bengali children are given two names: one that is a pet name, used only by family and close friends and one that is used by the rest of society. At birth, Gogol is given a pet name as his official name because his official name, sent in a letter from his grandmother in India, gets lost in the mail. Upon entering kindergarten, Gogol is told by his family that he is to be called Nikhil, a good name, by teachers and the other children at school. Gogol rejects his proper name and wants to be called Gogol by society as well as his family. This decision made on the first day of kindergarten causes him years of distress as it was also his first attempt to reject a dual identity. The importance of a namesake and identity is brought up throughout the story and becomes a concept that is central to the novel. Throughout his life Gogol suffers from the uniqueness of his name. In Bengali families names are sacred, inviolable. They are not meant to be inherited or shared". However, Gogol spends his life living in the United States where children are often ashamed of their differences from others. During adolescence, Gogol desires to blend in and to live unnoticed. Other Americans never view him as an American, however, even though he is a native-born citizen. This presents a struggle between two cultures. The Ganguli's wish is to raise Gogol and his sister with Bengali culture and values. But Gogol and Sonia grow up relating mostly to their peers and the surrounding culture in the United States. It is only much later in their lives that they begin to truly value their Bengali heritage and that Gogol finds the importance in his name. When he leaves for college, Gogol rejects his identity completely and becomes Nikhil what was his long-lost proper name that he rejected as a child. He dreads his visits home and his return to a life where he is known as Gogol. Gogol is not just a name to him; it signifies all his discomfort to fit into two different cultures as he grew up. His father named him Gogol due to the circumstances of his survival of a train wreck during which he was reading the work of the Russian writer Nikolai Gogol. Being away from home at college makes it easy for Gogol to live as Nikhil in an American culture. He does so happily for many years, detaching himself

1818390031

BA English

ENG 205-Survey of South-Asian Literature

from his roots and his family as much as possible. Gogol finally learns that the answer is not to fully abandon or attempt to diminish either culture, but to mesh the two together. Gogol is not fully in tune with his identity until he realizes that it is embellished by both cultures. He does not have to be one or the other; he does not have to choose. He is made up of both, and instead of weakening his pride is strengthened by this. Though the novel wraps up with more downfalls occurring in Gogol's life, he is able to stand on his feet. He is no longer ashamed of himself or the way he has lived. He is proud of who he is and where he comes from. Most important, he is proud of his name and all that it means. Jhumpa Lahiri's career has just begun, one can only imagine what creative works she will stun the public with next. In 2006, her novel *The Namesake* will be adapted into a major motion picture with highly acclaimed Indian born director Mira Nair set to direct and produce the film. Nair has directed nearly twenty films and has been nominated for a Golden Globe and an Academy Award. Jhumpa Lahiri will be making a small appearance in the film, adding "actress" to her already impressive list of credentials.

The stories of Jhumpa Lahiri's first book whisper and scream traces of India through the details of the characters who become fictional testaments to the 'complex and conflicted world of Indian immigrants in the United States'. The title for the book came to Jhumpa Lahiri years before she actually began to formulate it when she ran into a 'friend who acted as a Russian liaison in a Boston doctor's office'. She says that the phrase 'Interpreter of Maladies' was the closest she has ever come to poetry. Her characters often exist simultaneously in two cultures: the American reality and the sphere of Indian Tradition.

Literature is part of the riches of human experience. It commemorates people's experience, their living, their pain and celebrates their humanity. The most accomplished women writers have assimilated the social factors operating at the time or risen above them and converted them with great economy to the subject matter of one fable or another. The work of these writers of the diaspora focuses on the 'imaginary homelands' which Salman Rushdie posits, migratory identities and hybridity. The primary concern of their work is the life of the immigrant. In a plethora of new voices, Jhumpa Lahiri is the latest Indian flavour with a deceptively understated unobtrusive prose. Unlike the rest, She is London born and Rhode Island raised which not only accounts for her style but also gives her close slant to Bharti Mukherjee in her preoccupation with Indians. Jhumpa Lahiri has a strong sense of her roots. She is aware of the struggles which take place when people try to replace a traditional way of life with a modern one in a country not one's own. As far as she is concerned, the more one tries to change, the more one remains the same. America comes in the way and old relationships and ways come under threat. It is so intimate a snapshot of immigrants struggling as she has said to keep their identities afloat with their feet planted in two separate boats – one belonging to their homeland and the other to the new land before them. Once Jhumpa Lahiri was asked, "Your stories primarily dwell on relationships." She replied, "Relationships do not preclude issues of morality. When I sit down to write, I do not think of writing about an idea or a message. I just try to write a story. And if there's obviously a message or moral, I think that's something good." Growing up in America under a mother who wanted to raise her children as Indians. It's no surprise that Jhumpa Lahiri places so

1818390031

BA English

ENG 205-Survey of South-Asian Literature

important an emphasis on 'stories for Indians in what is for them a strange land'. Publishing her first book 'Interpreter of Maladies' in 1999, Jhumpa Lahiri has quickly become an international best selling and award winning author. Jhumpa Lahiri herself has suffered from these forms of identity crisis and she makes it a point in her stories of character and their human relationships. Interestingly most characters of the stories suffer from loneliness, alienation an longing for a lost world as Jhumpa Lahiri did. Jhumpa Lahiri's background is also important for her writing. Because expatriate writers generally write about expatriate communities. An Indian critic Asha Choubey writes about Jhumpa Lahiri's background in this manner. The personal life of Jhumpa Lahiri is the very prototype of diasporic culture. Having spent thirty years in the United States, she still feels an outsider. Though she confesses that her days spent in India are a sort of parenthesis, that she is an Indian at heart cannot be denied. The stories collected in her debut anthology 'Interpreter of Maladies' deal with the question of Identity. Contemporary post-colonial theory shows that the migrants homeland lives within his or her second home. As they cannot go back, they suffer a kind of psychological trauma. The obsessive longing for the homeland is a kind of disease. Jhumpa Lahiri depicts these as maladies in her stories.

This is how Jhumpa Lahiri represents human relationships in her stories.