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Master's Dissertation

Displacement and Belonging in Jhumpa Lahiri's Short Stories : Mrs.Sen and Third and Final

Submitted by :Ahlem *SIAD*

Supervised by:
Mrs.Nassira *MALEK*

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the themes of displacement and belonging in contemporary South Asian diasporic literature through a comparative analysis of two short stories by Jhumpa Lahiri from her Pulitzer Prize winning collection *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999), *Mrs.Sen's* and *The Third and Final Continent*.The study intends to explore how Lahiri uses her unique narrative techniques to depict the experience of displacement and the search of belonging, and to show that displacement leads to fundamentally different reactions based on an individual's relationship to cultural memory and adaptation.the study uses a thematic comparative analysis approach through a postcolonial lens to examine both stories across important themes of spatial displacempent, cultural alienation, material culture, memory, nostalgia, and belonging. it draws on postcolonial and cultural theoritical frameworks developed by scholars such as Bhabha, Said, Brah, and Boym.In addition, the study finds that Lahiri's narrative techniques her use of contrasting narrative perspectives,minimalist style, and short story form, are important tools in representing these contrasting experiences. The analysis reveals that although both protagonists experience profound cultural displacement, their responses are fundamentally different. *Mrs. Sen* embodies restorative nostalgia terribly trying to reconstruct her Indian life in America and eventually fails to achieve any meaningful sense of belonging. In contrast, the narrator of *Third and Final Continent*.

Mrs.Sen is a prime example of restorative nostalgia she makes an incredible effort to recreate her Indian life in America but eventually falls to achieve a true sense of belonging,

The study voncludes that displacement is not a uniform experience but a complex and multidimensional condition shaped by the individual's relationship on Lahiri's fiction and advance understanding of how contemporary diasporic writers use narrative techniques to represent the complexities of displacement and belonging.

Keywords :Displacement,belonging,cultural hybridity,diaspora,Nostalgia,Identity,postcolonial literature

ملخص

تتناول هذه الاطروحة موضوعي التهجير و الانتماء في الادب الشتاتي الجنوب الاسيوي المعاصر,وذلك من خلال دراسة مقارنة لقصتين قصيرتين للكاتبة جومبا لاهيري مستخرجتين من مجموعتها الحائزة على جائزة بوليتزر *مترجم الامراض* ***(1999)*** وهما السيدة سين و "القارة الثالثة والاخيرة"

تهدف الدراسة الى استقصاء كيفية توظيف لاهيري للتقنيات السردية في تصوير تجربة التهجير و البحث على الانتماء واثبات ان التهجير يفضي الى استجابات مختلفة جوهريا تبعا لعلاقة الفرد بالذاكرة الثقافية والتكيف.

تعتمد الدراسة منهج التحليل الموضوعي المقارن من خلال منظور ما بعد الاستعمار مستندة الى الاطر النظرية التي طورها كل من بهابها وسعيد وهول وبراه و بويم. لفحص القصتين عبر محاولة رئيسية تشمل التهجير المكاني والاغتراب الثقافي واللغوي والثقافة المادية والذاكرة والحنين والانتماء.

كشف التحليل انه بينما يعاني كلا البطلين من تهجير ثقافي عميق تختلف استجابتهما اختلافا جوهريا . تجسد السيدة سين الحنين الاستعادي اذ تحاول يائسة اعادة بناء حياتها الهندية في امريكا وتفشل في نهاية المطاف في تحقيق اي احساس مؤقت لكنه حقيقي بالانتماء. اما راوي "القارة الثالثة والاخيرة" فيجسد الحنين التاملي اذ يتقبل الخسارة ويتكيف تدريجيا ليصل الى احساس مؤقت لكنه حقيقي بالانتماء عبر ثلاث قارات. علاوة على ذلك تعكس تقنيات السرد المتباينة عند لاهيري هذه الاستجابات المختلفة للتهجير.

تلخص الدراسة الى ان التهجير ليس تجربة موحدة بل حالة معقدة ومتعددة الابعاد تتشكل وفق علاقة الفرد بالذاكرة الثقافية والهوية والتكيف . وتساهم هذه النتائج في اثراء الدراسات القائمة حول ادب لاهيري وتعميق فهمنا لكيفية توظيف الكتاب الشتاتيين المعاصرين للتقنيات السردية في تمثيل تعقيدات التهجير والانتماء.

الكلمات المفتاحية : التهجير,الانتماء ,الهجينة الثقافية ,الشتات, الحنين, الادب ما بعد الاستعمار ,التقنيات السردية ,جومبا لاهيري.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to the soul of my beloved father , who is no longer here but remains forever in my heart.

Your love and guidance continue to light my path ,

رحمك
الل

To my dear Mother,the greatest support after Allah ,

for her endless patience,and unconditional love.

To my family, brothers and sisters and my friend naima, for always standing by my side offering

Support,strengh and encouragement.

And to my self

For being pateint,and for not giving up despite all the difficulties.

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Introduction

The experience of displacement and belonging, which are major human challenges in the modern world, have been addressed more and more in contemporary literature.In a period of migration, millions of people are displaced from their native countries due to globalization and postcolonial mobility, moving between cultures and looking for a sense of identity and home in strange places.as argued by Ashcroft et Al. (2002), postcolonial literature has become a powerful tool for examining these experiences, offering literary voicee to the complexities of cultural displacement and identity negotiation. The themes of displacement and belonging have become defining concerns of contemporary diasporic writing within this larger literary and cultural context, especially in the work of South Asian diasporic writers whose fiction captures the conflicts between cultural continuity and assimilation pressures into western societies. One of the most important voices in this literary tradition is Bengali American author Jhumpa Lahiri, whose first collection inerpreter of maladies won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 2000. Her stories offers a complex and powerful analysis of the diasporic context in modern America. Since the publication of Interpreter of Maladies (1999), there has been a significant increase in academic in Lahiri's novels. Her work has been analyzed by critics from a variety of perspectives, with particular attention paid to issues of gender, cultural identity, diaspora. Nelson (2007) has studied the unique narrative voice that distinguishes her literature, while Brada Williams (2004) has evaluated her collection as a cycle of short stories that portrays the fractured nature of diasporic living. The south Asian diasporic experience is characterized by a basic tension between cultural continuity and assimilation, according to moregeneral scholars like Mishra (2007) and Hall (1990). Lahiri's literature effectively captures this dynamic. For the analysis of diasporic literature, postcolonial theorists like Bhabha (1994) and Edward Said (2000) have offered frameworks

for comprehending cultural identity and displacement that have been especially useful. However, despite this expanding body of knowledge a thematic comparative analysis of Lahiri's stories using a cohesive postcolonial theortical framework has received very little attention.

Relatively few studies have conducted a thematic comparative analysis of *Mrs.Sen's* and *The Third and Final Continent* within a unified postcolonial framework, despite the fact that Lahiri's fiction and the larger themes of displacement and belonging in postcolonial literature have received significant academic study.Further more, the ways in which Lahri's narrative voice, especially her divergent use of narrative perspective, serve as tools for depicting fundamentally diverse reactions to displacement and belonging , they have not been fully explored by previous scholars. By using thematic comparative analytical technique that links careful readings of both stories to postcolonial themes of displacement, nostalgia and belonging, this study seeks to close this gap.

The purpose of this study is to examine how Jhumpa Lahiri uses her unique story telling strategies to depict the sense of dislocation and the quest for belonging in *Mrs.Sen's* and *the Third and Final Continent* the study specifically aims to accomplish the following goals : first, to examine how displacement is portrayed in both stories across important themes such as material culture, cultural alienation, spatial confinement, and nostalgia. Second, to compare the two protagonists reactions to cultural loss and displacement, and third, to show how Lahiri's narrative voices, such as narrative perspective, minimalist style, and short story form, serve as devices for illustrating these divergent experiences of belonging and displacement.

In order to achieve these objectives, this study adresses the following research question :

how does Jhumpa Lahiri represent the experience of displacement and belonging in *Mrs.Sen* and *The third and Final continent* ? and how do characters negotiate identity and belonging ?

This study uses a postcolonial lens and a thematic comparative analysis approach. Using postcolonial and cultural theortical framewroks created by researchers such as Bhabha (1994), Said (2000), Hall (1990), Brah (1996), and Boym (2001), the study finds and examines major themes in both stories and contrasts how each protagonist experiences them in a different way. This comparative study shows that displacement is not a standard experience but rather a complicated and multifaceted state that results in fundamentally varied reactions based on an individual's relationship to cultural memory and adaptation.

This study adds to the corpus of knowledge on displacement and belonging in modern diasporic literature as well as Lahiri's fiction. By using a comparative thematic approach, it shows how Lahiri's two stories depict displacement as a complicated situation that results in essentially different reactions, enhancing our comprehension of how modern diasporic writers depict the human effects of cultural displacement. Additionally, the study adds to an expanding corpus of research that explores the connection between literary form and the portayal of diasporic experience by linking postcolonial ideas of nostalgia, memory, and belonging to close readings of Lahiri's storytelling strategies.

This dissertation is devided into two main chapters. The theoritical foundation is established in chapter one, which also explores the literary and narrative background of modern diasporic fiction, as well as important ideas such as displacement, cultural hybridity, the third space, liminality, exile, migration, diaspora, belonging, memory, and nostalgia. Using these theortical frameworks, chapter two conducts a comparative theme analysis of *Mrs.Sen* and *Third and Final Continent* analyzing how Lahiri uses thematic concerns and

opposing narrative strategies to depict displacement and belonging. The dissertation ends with a general conclusion that highlights the key discoveries and considers their relevance for a more comprehensive understanding of displacement and belonging in modern diasporic literatu

Chapter one : Theoretical framework

The experience of displacement and belonging has become more common in contemporary literature as defining issues of the contemporary world. Millions of people are uprooted from their homes in a time of migration, globalization, and postcolonial mobility. They must negotiate between cultures and look for a feeling of home and identity in strange places.within the context, the current chapter provides the theoretical framework that will direct the next chapter's examination of Jhumpa Lahiri's work. The chapter explores important ideas such as displacement,cultural hybridity, the third space, liminality,exile, migration, diaspora, belonging, memory, and nostalgia, as well as the literary and narrative settings of contemporary diasporic fiction, drawing on postcolonial and cultural studies. When taken as a whole, these frameworks offer the analytical devices that will be used to analyze Lahiri's depiction of displacement and belonging.

Section 1 :Displacement from place to Identity

1.1 The dynamics of Displacement and Identity

1.1.1 Displacement

The experience of displacement is one of the main concerns of contemporary literature , especially postcolonial and diasporic writing, as Boehmer (2005) observes modern

postcolonial writers explore themes of migration,exile,and the need for belonging, providing literary voice to the experiences of people moving between many culture areas .

Displacement refers to the condition of being uprooted from one's original place of belonging ,it is a basic concept in postcolonial studies that refers to the physical and psychological instability experienced by individuals due to migration,colonization, or forced movement , it requires a dislocation of identity, memory , and cultural persistence in addition to the loss of stable home . According to Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin in their reprinted edition of key concepts in post colonial studies (2002, originally 1998), displacement is closely associated with the experience of alienation and the struggle to regain a sense of belonging in a new and frequently unfamiliar environment .Displacement is closely Linked to identity crisis and place

Even when living abroad, displaced people frequently have deep emotional connections to their original country, as argued by Edward Said (2000), he emphasizes that a person's continued attachment to the home country complicates their sense of belonging and strong emotions of detachment and alienation, drawing a connection between displacement and the state of exile.

Displacement is defined for the sake of this study as a state in which people are emotionally and physically separated from their sense of home. Particularly in postcolonial circumstances of migration and exile, it is seen as a complicated experience marked by alienation, nostalgia, and cultural detachment that profoundly influence identity formation (Said, 2000).

1.1.1.2 Types of Displacement

Displacement is viewed in literary and postcolonial studies as a complex idea that goes beyond simple mobility. Physical, psychological, and cultural or linguistic displacement are among the various types of displacement that scholars typically recognize, and they frequently overlap in literary representations, especially in post colonial and diasporic literature (Ashcroft et al., 2002) emphsizes that you dont have to cross border to be displaced,He views Displacement not only as a physical moving but a complex psychological and cultural state.

1.1.2. Physical and Spatial Displacement

When people relocate geographically from their place of origin to another location due to circumstances like colonialism, slavery, voluntary migration, or economic need, this is referred to as physical displacement.Edward Said (2000) emphasizes the state of being emotionally connected to one's hometown yet physically detached from it, linking physical displacement with exile. Physical displacement frequently mirrors historical and postcolonial realities in diasporic contexts, such as voluntary diaspora and forced migration, which have a significant impact on characters' sense of identity and belonging (Gilroy, 1993) according to him physical displacement is an active space where identity is shaped through mobility rather than stability.

1.1.3 Psychological and Emotional Displacement

The inner feeling of emotional dislocation and alienation that comes with leaving behind established social and cultural contexts is referred to as psychological displacement. This state is conceptualized by Homi K. Bhabha (1994) as "unhomeliness," which refers to the sense of alienation even in places that seem familiar. In a similar, Stuart Hall (1990) claims that diasporic identities are constantly negotiated and divided, resulting in a continuing sense

of instability and alienation. Characters who experience psychological displacement in postcolonial literature often feel detached from both their host society and their homecountry.

1.1.4 Cultural and Linguistic Alienation

People who are separated from their native languages, cultural customs, and values experience cultural and linguistic displacement. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) argues that language serves as a crucial site of identification and belonging and emphasizes how colonial languages contribute to cultural estrangement,according to him cultural displacement showed when mothertongue loses her value when the dominant one is the language of colonialism here the individual live between two cultures without belonging to any of them

Ashcroft (2002) caim that a key component of post colonial experience is cultural displacement, which arises from the exclusion of the indigenous cultures and the dominance of colonial languages, leading to a mixed but frequenty fragmented sense of identity .

1.1.5 Displacement and The negotiation of Identity .

Displacement does not only involve geographical relocation, it profoundly reshapes identity. In postcolonial contexts, identity is no longer perceived as fixed or stable but as fragmented and continuously negotiated. According to Stuart Hall (1990), identity is a process of "becoming" rather than fixed identity , especially in the context of diasporic experiences. People who are displaced frequently find themselves in a space of cultural in betweenness, Dealing with several connections without truly fitting into any. According to Homi K. Bhabha (1994), this scenario results in hybridity, a state where identity arises from the interaction of cultures rather than from a single source.

1.1.6 Cultural Hybridity And The Third Space

Cultural hybridity refers to the blending ,mixing,and negotiating of cultural identities that takes place when several cultures interact, in situation of migration,diaspora. Hybridity views identity as fluid, dynamic, and constantly changing ,as compared to viewing cultures as pure or rigid .

The third space is developed by postcolonial theorist Homi K.Bhabha (The Location of Culture, 1994) it describes the uncertain, transitional area where cultural identities and meanings are contested , it is neither totally 'here' nor fully 'there', but rather something new that arises from the interaction of two cultures. Third space as Bhabha suggests , is the place where the migrant is allowed to negotiate his identity instead of neglect it, Displaced people are able to create new identities in this negotiated area that challenge binary categories of home and isolation (Bhabha, 1994).

Hybridity is a 'melted' cultural space that combines history , culture,and linguistic dynamics to form a new kind of cultural identity (Bhabha, 1994).

1.1.7 The concept of Liminality : The State of ''in-betweenness''

The notion of Liminality conceptually reflects the state of cultural in betweenness .This word Liminal is derived from the Latin 'Limen', which means ''threshold'' . this idea is originally introduced by Arnold Van Gennep (1909) and later expanded by Victor Turner (1969), Liminality represents a period of transition during which a person is ''betwixt and between'' create social positions .In the context of displacement , this represents a psychological threshold where the migrant has left their home country but has not yet fully assimilated into the host society . Homi K.Bhabha (1994) for postcolonial subjects as he suggests , this liminal space becomes a 'third space' a place of hybridity where new identities are negotiated through interaction, Bhabha argues that no culture is pure , when migrants moves to a new location they dont just switch they create a ''third space'' , it helps people

negotiate their own meaning and avoid being placed in a particular category.in short If Liminality is the sensation of being on a bridge ,the third space is the new home you create in the center of that bridge .

1.1.8 Contexts of movement: Exile , Migration , and Diaspora.

According to Said (2000), exile creates a lasting sense of loss and isolation by producing a deep devisions between the individual and their homeland.. He views exile as a persistent psychological state characterized by longing and alienation rather than just a physical relocation. Said argues that while exile has occasionally been idealized as a source of intellectual insight and creativity, these accomplishments do not erase the underlying melancholy that comes with being away from one's home country. As a result, a constant sense of loss continues to shape exile.

Said further argues that exile creates a unique way of seeing the world that he refers to as ‘‘contrapuntal consciousness’’ the exiled subjects is forced to view the world through two lenses, experiencing the host nation’s current reality while still being filled by memories of their previous homeland (Said, 2000, p.186).

Although extremly difficult , this dual view gives the exile a critical insight that individuals who have never been displaced cannot . in Said’s theory , it is crucial to differentiate exile from the more general notion of diaspora. Exile is frequently a more solitary state , with the individual cut off not just from their homeland but also from the very community that shares their roots , whereas diaspora indicates a social experience supported by shared cultural memory and community relationships (said, 2000).

The term ‘Diaspora’ originally used to characterize the jewish people’s forced dislocation ,now it has developed into a more general thoritical idea that may be used to any community that has been uprooted from its homeland and moved over many areas. (Cohen, 1997)

Diasporic identity is a dynamic process that is constantly changing sue to historical displacement , cross cultural interactions,and ongoing negotiations between the host society and the culture of origin Hall (1990).

Diasporic identity is not In contrast to exile, migration may not always indicate a total break with one's roots. The term migration refers to people who moved across borders for social, educational, or economic reasons .

Even while migration may be voluntary, people must adjust to new social norms, languages, and settings, which causes cultural and emotional disorder Migration usually results in identity negotiation processes in postcolonial situations, when migrants try to balance aspects of their home culture with those of their new one. As a result, migration is both a physical relocation and a life changing event that change a person's sense of self and place in the world.

Migration , as argued by Castles and Miller (2009) ,it is a structural feature of the modern global order driven by political instability, or economic disparity rather than a transient or marginal phenomena.they argue in the age of migration that modern migration movements result in complex social changes that go beyond simple physical displacement to involve significant changes in identity and belonging, according to this migrants frequently construct transnational identities,which are defined by ongoing attachments,to the host culture and the nation of origin,leading to a hybrid and perhaps fractured forms of belonging. However, because migrants may experience different levels of integration,marginalization, or cultural dislocation,this process is often characterized by conflicts between inclusion and exclusion.

In this point, displacement is considered as a continuous shift of self identity and social standing within globalized contexts rather than only as physical migration (Castles and Miller, 2009).

However, scholars have been questioning this clear distinction more and more , claiming that it is rarely easy to distinguish between forced and voluntary movement .As Papastergiadis (2000) believes that migration is never only a simple physical move but rather a significant cultural and phsychological shift that impacts a person's sense of identity , self and belonging. The migrants lives between two places ,not fully part of the new country and not fully connected to their home country , they grow and improve but with feeling mental pressure at the same time .

According to Safran (1991) By highlighting shared experience and transnational belonging, the idea of diaspora expands the debate about displacement beyond migration and exile. The term "diaspora" describes the separation of people or groups from their native country while retaining emotional and cultural ties to it. Despite living far away, diasporic communities frequently maintain a sense of attachment to their country and share a collective memory of it, Diaspora emphasizes how identity is formed across several places rather than under a single national framework in postcolonial studies.

As Hall (1990) argues that diasporic identities are constantly created and changed by historical and cultural processes. Thus, by generating hybrid and international forms of identity, diaspora challenges conventional ideas of home and belonging. For Hall diaspora creates figures that are both inside and outside of both cultures at the same time , inhabiting what he refers to as a position of 'endless desire' for a home land that lives more in imagination and memory than in actuality . A fundamental aspect of the diasporic state is this sense of permanent loss and desire .

Similarly, Avtar Brah (1996) introduces the significance difference between the idea of ‘home’ and ‘diaspora space’ . he argues that for diasporic individuals , home functions on two levels .both as the actual , everyday experience of one’s existing residence and as a fantastical location of longing in one’s imagination.. what Brah refers to as a ‘‘homing desire’’a craving for belonging that does not always translate into a desire to physically return to a place of origin is created by this conflict between the adopted country’s reality and the imagined homeland.

Furthermore,Paul Gilroy (1993) highlights the paths rather than the origins of cultural creation ,challenging essentialist conceptions of diasporic identity . Gilroy illustrates how diasporic cultures are new, hybrid formations formed by mobility , trade, and transformation across many regions and historical contexts rather than merely transplanted imitations of an initial culture through his concept of the Black Atlantic.

These theoritical concepts are powerfully expressed in jhumpa Lahiri’s work within the setting of South Asian diaspora literature . Her characters constantly inhabit the liminal area described by Hall , Brah,and Gilroy suspended between a new world that requires assimilation and adaptation and a homeland preserved in memory and tradition . The South Asian diaspora , according to Mishra (2007) , is marked by a conflict between preserving cultural continuity and confronting the challenges of assimilation into western countries.diasporic writers give expression to the identity problems faced by individuals crossing between many cultural areas by using writing to analyse the contradictions between nostalgia and adaptation.

While exile , migration and diaspora each reflect unique contexts of journeys,they all linked by how a person feels about home, identity, and belonging , which are key concerns in Jhumpa Lahiri’s literary works.

2.1 Section 2

Belonging is a multifaceted and complex concept that connects a person to society through social processes as well as personal experiences, according to Marco Antonsich(2010), belonging includes both a societal and discursive component that defines inclusion and exclusion within social and spatial structures and a personal and deep sense of being ‘at home’ in a place. This implies that belonging is a state influenced by social limits and power dynamics in addition to being an emotional bond. As argued by Vanessa May’s (2011),related viewpoint, belonging is a dynamic process that links the individual to the social world and is constantly transformed by daily activities and experiences .instead of beig fixed, It illustrates how social institutions, and individual freedom continue to interact , especially in situations of social change where identities are continually negotiated. When combined, these viewpoints demonstrate that belonging is a dynamic process that includes social interactions,physical pressure,and emotional connection rather than a fixed condition.

Avtar Brah (1996) emphasizes the significance of feeling "at home" in a particular cultural or community setting by explaining that belonging includes both emotional attachment and social inclusion. Similarly, according to Stuart Hall (1990), people constantly create and negotiate their sense of identity and belonging, especially in diasporic settings where they have to deal with several cultural ties. According to this viewpoint, belonging is not a static state but rather a dynamic process.

For the purpose of this study belonging is defined as the emotional and cultural attachment individuals form to a location or community, as well as their capacity or incapacity to feel welcomed and at home there

1.2.1 Belonging

Belonging is frequently felt as a full or absoluteemotion,particularly for displaced and diasporic people who move between several cultural spheres at once, The idea of belonging is not just ‘’on-off’’ switch but a sliding scale ,it is not just about ‘’in’’ or ‘’out’’ it is more complicated especially for people who leave their homes.The majority of them fall somewhere in the middle of the range of belonging,which ranges from total exclusion to complete inclusion.According to Yuval Davis(2006), belonging functions on several levels at once,including emotional,social,cultural;and political,these levels do not always match up causing complicated and sometimes opposing notions of belonging.

Individuals who are displaced frequently experience what Brah (1996) refers to as multi locationality,or the simultaneous sense of belonging to various locations.Diasporic people move between several cultural areas instead of having a single,fixed commitment to a particular home,creating varied layers,sometimes opposing feelings of belonging that mirror the complexity of their lived experience.

Belonging is never a neutral experience , it is always shaped by power relations,inclusion,and exclusion.as Sara Ahmed (2004) argues that,social and cultural process determine who is made to feel welcome and who is made to feel out of place, therefore belonging is not just an inner sensation.belonging is shaped by cultural and social process that cause emotions to move and stick to a particular bodies and settings shape who is created as out of place and who is made as out of place and who is made to feel at home . As a result, the sense of belonging for displaced and diasporic people is always negotiated and incomplete,influenced by both their own cultural identity and the attitudes of the host community.

1.2.2 Forms of Belonging

Scholars have found different ways that people feel they belong after moving to a new country.Avtar Brah (1996) describes two main types. The first is ‘provisional belonging’ this

is when a person builds a sense of home through their daily habits and new friendship. It is not perfect but is allows them to create a comfortable life without forgetting where they come from .

The second type is ‘failed belonging’ this happens when a person cannot adjust to their new life . Edward Said (2000) calls thi state of a ‘permanent exile’’ in this case, the person feels stuck between two worlds the old one and the new one and never feels at home in either.these two ideas are clearly seen in Jhumpa Lahiri’s stories,where different chaaracters show these two different experiences.

1.2.3 Belonging in Diasporic and Postcolonial literature

In postcolonial literature, particularly in narratives shaped by colonial history, migration, and diaspora, belonging is frequently represented as unstable and contested. Characters are often depicted as experiencing divided loyalties between their homeland and the host society,resulting in a fragmented or hybrid sense of identity that reflects broader historical realities of colonial disruption and forced migration (Bhabha,1994).

The fluidity of belonging in postcolonial narratives can be explained through Hall's (1990) contention that identity is constantly created rather than fixed. Diasporic individuals live acrooss multiple cultural spaces,meaning their sense of home is negotiated rather than granted.Belonging therefore emerges as a continuous process shaped by memory, displacement and cross cutural interaction (Brah, 1996).

Characters who occupy liminal positions between two or more cultures and are unable to fully claim membership in either are frequently used in postcolonial fiction to examinenthe issue of belonging.Boehmer (2005) observes that postcolonial writers regularly employ

narrative to challenge the idea of belonging itself , revealing it as a cntested and produced state as opposed to a given or natural one.

1.2.4 Home as a Symbolic Space

As Brah (1996) argues, Home is considered as a space for preserving cultural roots , immigrants turn their home space into a place where they preserve their identity from being dissolved into the new society , Home is not only a place its a feeling , a memory ,they use it to rebuild their tradition and the familial responsibilities that provide the individuals the feeling of safety and a connection to his original country . Thus home is represented as a site for preserving cultural legacy in facing the challenges of the host country .

The domestic space is essentialin the experience of displaced individuals as it becomes a place where they preserve and maintain cultural identity , According to Miller (2008) , simple objects that people have at home act as a psychological protection from feeling strange or uncomfortable in a new place , these objects are not only constant but they carry cultural memory and identity for example a migrant woman for her daily routine of preparing traditional food become act of cultural ritual by making a new or strange place feel familiar and connected to one's culture (Brah, 1996). In this context, home becomes not only a location but a place of resistance and cultural persistence , where migrants preserve thier roots against the pressure of integration (hooks, 1990).

Pechurina(2016), demonstrate that material objects carried by migrants function as what she called 'diasporic objects' that incorporate the complex relationship between their past and present home , this objects works as 'connections and detachment' in same time because it relate the migrant with his past but also it reminds him that he is far away from his homecountry. As Pechurina argues , the presence of certain foods and household items

reflects a deep meanings of belonging ,serving physical symbols which assist immigrants in navigating the sense of being ‘inbetween’ various cultural environment .

1.3 Section 3 : Memory and Nostalgia

1.3.1 Memory as a Tool for Reconstructing Identity

Memory plays a crucial role in life of migrants individuals , it is a link between their past and their present , it is not just a memory box .According to Ricoeur (2004) ,Memory is an active process that helps people create and preserve a cohesive sense of identity across time , rather than just a passive recall of past events . when familiar signs of home, language, and community are no longer physically available , memory becomes even more important for those who have been uprooted from their country since it is the main way that cultural identity is continues to exist. When migrants move to a new society memory acts as a ‘reservoir’ that preserve their identity when they remember ancient events , stories and traditions , a displaced person make sure that he does not forget who he is , even if he lives in a completly strange place .it is the tool that prevents him from gettin lost in his new identity Ricoeur (2004).

1.3.2 Memory in Diasporic Experience

Memory is frequently depicted in diasporic literature as being closely linked to items,locations,and sensory experiences that inspire the memories of homeland .

Hirsch (2012) presents the idea of ‘postmeemory’’ to explain how memories of loss and displacement are passed through across generations, influencing the identities of those who were not present at the initial dislocation .However, memory is immidiate and ‘visceral’’ it is not just a thinking of the past , but a powerful physical emotional response that occurs the moment they face something that reminds them of their homeland. for first

generation immigrants such us Lahiri's protagonists, it is deeply rooted in the sound of mother tongue , when migrant hear his mother tongue immidiately they feel belonging and feeling of safety the touch of familiar items , as strong anchors of cultural identity in a foreign setting , Smell is one of the most powerful senses asociated with memory, the smell of particular dish can mentally bring an immigrant back into his family's kitchen in seconds.all of this objects protect them from feeling lost in the new world .

1.3.3 Nostalgia and the Longing for Home

In the context of diaspora ,individuals who lives outside their home nostalgia isn't just 'missing home'' but it is a part of how they build their identity .Boym (2001) believes that what really the migrant miss is not just the real location , but it is an image drawn by imagination . over time and distance from home , the mind begins to filter out memories ,by deleting the negatives and keeps only the positives , until 'homeland' in memory becomes an ideal place that does not exist in reality . for migrants or exiled individuals , nostalgia is the way the mind deals with the trauma like a defense mechanism, of separation from the roots .it is a response to the 'gap' that has occurred in a person's life , the expatriate feels that a thread has been cut between his current identity and the place where he grew up, and this separation cannot be completly repaired , Nostalgia is not just toward home as a physical or tangible walls , but rather it is a longing for a state of safety and a past time that the migrant believes he has lives , even though that time has become impossible to recover .

Boym (2001) distinguishes between two completly different responses that a persson shows when he feels the loss of his homeland. The first is 'Restorative Nostalgia'it is characterized by the desire of rebuilding the lost home as it was,the person refuse to accept the idea that going back is impossible , and he believes that he can get back everything

,this leads to cultural rigidity , as the immigrant closes and isolate himself,refuse to adapt the host culture .The second is ‘Reflective Nostalgia’ it is the one that accepts that loss cannot be fixed or recovered ,he indulge in longing itself without trying to rebuild the past.while restorative nostalgia lead to cultural rigidity and the inability to adapt the new environment , reflective nostalgia gives the opportunity to maintain a creative and productive relationship with theircultural memory . These two types of nostalgia ,which will be explained in the analysis chapters,help us understand the different experiences of feeling out of place and feeling at home in the works of Jhumpa Lahiri.

1.3.4 Material Culture as Memory Anchors

Food plays a crucial role in memories of individuals living abroad ,because it helps them remember their country and their origin it is a strong sensory reminder that helps reconnect with their cultural roots, David E.Sutton (2001) claims that food is an efficient way of preserving cultural memory because it interacts with multiple senses at the same time ,including Taste ,smell,texture,and sight , The creates a full and deep experience of remembering .For migrants, cooking and eating traditional dishes becomes a meaningful ritual , it helps them keep their culture alive and exist ,especially when they cannot return to it.

Besides Food , every day objects also play a significant role in keeping cultural memory alive for people living away from their homeland . As Hoskins (1998) argues, objects are not just ordinary things, they carry personal meaning they are connected to a person’s life , memories ,flashbacks and experiences.For migrants the valuable things brought from homeland become what Hoskins calls ‘’biographical objects’’.these objects depict their memories and help them keep a sense of who they are in a new and infamiliar place . in this way , such objects and items connect their past life with their present one .

In addition to food and objects , rituals are also important in preserving cultural memory and identity among displaced people.Bell (1992) defines rituals as the practices through which communities build and stregthen their cultural identity over time .

For Migrants performing cultural rituals such as religious practices,cooking traditions, or daily routines is a conscious way to keep their culture alive , even when they are far from their homeland. As Fortier (2000) explains , these repeated actions create what she calls ‘’cultures of relatedness’’ , meaning that a sense of belonging is actively created and maintained through everyday practices , rather than simply coming from a fixed place of origin.

Section 4 Literary Representation of Displaceement

4.1 Contemporary Diasporic Literature

Modern diasporic literature is rised by the experience of of displacement ,migration,and cultural dislocation ,which gives literary voice to the complex negotiations of identity and belonging that shape the lives of displaced individuals. Boehmer (2005) ,describes postcolonial and diasporic literature as writing that intentionally adresses colonialism’s legacy and the experience of cultural displacement , exploring how people and communities create identities beyond national and cultural borders . This body of literature is mainly concerned with ideas such as home,memory,loss, and cultural hybridity.these themes reflect the real experiences of migrants and diasporic communities as they move between two or more different cultures.

South Asian diasporic writing, which reflects the experiences of communities uprooted by the effect of British colonialism and the pressures of globalization, holds a particularly

important position within this literary tradition..As Mishra (2007) observes ,South Asian diasporic literature shows a contrast between two types of diaspora the ‘’old diaspora’’ and the ‘’new diaspora’’ which comes from voluntary migration . Both create different but connected experiences ,where people try to adopt to new cultures and build their identities.Jhumpa Lahiri’s writing must be interpreted in this light, as a literary analysis of the Bengali American diasporic experience that adresses universal issues of displacement,memory,and belonging.

4.2 Narrative Identity

For displaced individuals who must constantly navigate between several cultural conteexts,Narrative is essential to the formation of identity.Paul Ricoeur (1988) argues that identity is not fixed but a narrative construction , individuals understand themselves and their position in the world through the stories they tell about their lives .He introduces the concept of ‘’narrative identity’’ to describe the way that identity is shaped through the act of storytelling, combining together present realities, past experiences and future expectations into a stable sense of selfhood . For displaced subjects ,this narrative reconstruction of identity becomes significant as it provides a tool to preserve continuity from the disruption of migration and cultural dislocation.

In the context of displacement narrative serves as a tool for cultural resistance and preservation ,in addition to helping individuals establish their identities.Bhabha (1994) claimed that marginalized and displaced people use narrative as an effective tool for restoring cultural agency since it allows them to express different account of histories and identites that go against dominant cultural narratives.Moreover, writing about displacement itself becomes a means of negotiating belonging, diasporic writers apply

storyteling to recreate a sense of home that has been lost due to physical displacement, turning collective and individual memory into literary form.

4.3 The Short Story as a Form

In diasporic and postcolonial literature , the short story holds a special place as a literary form , it offers a useful way to explore the broken and fragmented experiences of displaced people . Frank O'Connor (1963) asserts that , the short story has historically served as a literary form for what he refers to as ''submerged population groups,'' which are marginalized groups and the people who live on the margins of dominant society.in contrast to the novel,which follows a characte's development over time.

The short story is especially appropriate to depict the sense of displacement and cultural in betweenness because of its formal qualities , which include its brevity,focus on a single event, and hesitation to resolve issues.As noted by Head (1992), the short narrative form reflects the state of the displaced subjects, both are marked by fragmentation ,and the absence of a fixed centre.The short story's hesitation to a logical conclusion mirrors the reality of living in a diasporic community,where issues of identity and belonging are constantly open and challenged rather than fully resolved. For authors like Jhumpa Lahiri, whose characters live in a world or cultural ambiguity and unresolved belonging,the short story is the appropriate literary device as a result of this formal aspect.

4.4 Narrative Techniques

Jhumpa Lahiri's narrative style is characterized by restraint, quality, and a quiet intensity that captures the emotional complexity of the diasporic experiences of her characters.Her writing is distinguished by her careful attention to the ordinary details,such as household objects ,kitchen,clothing, and gestures ,which she uses to delve deeper into

topics of cultural displacement ,identity,and belonging.As Brada Williams (2004) stated that , Lahiri creates a strong tension between what is stated and whatt is left unsaid in her stories by using a minimalist narrative style that permits the heaviness of dislocation and cultural alienation to emerge through suggestion and finding rather than clear statement

Lahiri's use of a detached,observant narrative perspective ,where puts her characters as both inside and beyond the cultures they live in ,is a defining characteristic of her story telling method. The diasporic individual's state of constant observation and never fully belonging is reflected in this narrative detachment.in the view of Nelson (2007) Lahiri's narrative voice embodies the hybridity it defines , being halfway between South Asian and American literary traditions without completly assimiliating into either.Also,Said's idea of ''contrapuntal consciousness'' the displaced people's capacity to simultaneously maintain different cultural perspectives, is reflected in her frequent use of retrospective narration,in which characters look back across time.

Conclusion

The theoritical frameworks disscussed in this chapter serve as the conceptual basis for the examination of Jhumpa Lahiri's short stories that follows,this chapter has examined the various ways that displacement affects identity,belonging,and cultural experience, starting with the diverse character of displacement from its physical and geographical expressions to its psychological,emotional,and cultural dimensions.it has been shown that displacement is never merely a geographical condition but rather a profound psychological experience that completly alters the individual's relationship to identity,culture,and home through the lens of important theoritical concepts like cultural hybridity and the Third space ,liminality,exile,migration,diaspora.In addition, rather than being a passive experience of loss , the search for home among displaced people is an

engaged,creative,and continuous process of negotiation,as shown by the research for belonging,cultural norms,memory,and nostalgia.Further more, the distinction between reflective and restorative nostalgia has shown that displaced people react to cultural loss in different ways,this distinction will be crucial to the following comparative research.

Lastly,the analysis of modern diasporic literature and Lahiri's distinctive storytelling style has placed her works in a larger literary and theoritical framework, establishing the foundation for the following chapters examination of her portrayal of displacement and belonging.in the next chapters,these frameworks collectively offer a thorough analytical lens through which Lahiri's depiction of displacement and belonging will be analyzed

Chapter two : A comparative theoretical Analysis of Lahiri's Short stories

Introduction

This chapter provides a practical application od the theoritical framework established in chapter one , by examining Jhumpa Lahiri's *Mrs.Sen's'*and *Third and Final continent*, it explores the diverging paths of the immigrant experience .while both protagonists encounter significant spatial and psychological displacement ,their individual strategies for negotiating identity lead to vastly different outcomes , one of tragic alienation and one of successful cultural hybridity .Both stories are part of the literary history of the South Asian diaspora, which Mishra (2007) describes as being marked by a basic conflict between the expectations of assimilation into westerns societies and cultural continuity. This chapter adopts a thematic comparative analysis approach through a postcolonial lens, examining both stories across key themes of spatial displacement,cultural alienation,material culture,nostalgia and belonging. while both protagonists encounter significant spatial and psychological displacement, their individual strategies for negotiating identity lead to vastly different outcomes one of tragic alienation and faailure to belong, and one of successful cultural hybridity and provisional belonging.

2.1 Plot overview of Mrs.Sen and Third and Final Continent

Mrs. Sen's is a short story from Jhumpa Lahiri's collection *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999).these short stories delves into themes of identity ,displacement . she depict the life of indian migrants in America it reveals the tension between the original identity and the new one , through her simple and her sensitivity of depicting migration,she gained international recognition as a new voice in diasporic literature .*Mrs. Sen's* , a young indian woman living in America while her husband works as a professor at a local university.she works as a babysitter forr a young boy named Eliot ,his mother leaves him

in her care each afternoon . The main character of the story face a sense of cultural isolation and a deep feeling for india her home country,She spends most of her time indoors preserving Indian cooking practices and rituals as she tries to adjust to American society .Her general incapacity to assimilate into American society is reflected in her difficulty to drive. Her baby sitting position is ended by a car accident at the end of the story ,symbolizing her final failure to fit in with her new life.on the other hand,While *Mrs.Sen's* depicts the challenges of adaptation and the persistence of dislocation

Third and Final continent offers a different experience of progressive integration and effective adaptation.It narrates about the experience of an Indian Man who travels from india to England before settling in the United States,which he refers to as his 'third and final continent'. He feels alienated and cut off from the culture when he first arrives . he rents a room from an elderly woman named Mrs.Croft,who exposes him to elements of American Culture.

After an arranged marriage,the protagonist brings his wife,Mala,from India as the story goes on . Despite the initial distance from one another,their relationship eventually grows into a solid and encouraging partnership, The narrator in *Third anf Final Continent* effectively adjusts to his new life by being patient and making small changes. He achieves stability and a sense of belonging by the story's conclusion, demonstrating a fruitful integration process.

2.2 Spatial and Psychological Displacement

Lahiri presents *Mrs.Sen's* apartment as a place of isolation and loneliness . according to said (2000), exile results in a significant emotional separation that completly transforms the individual's relationship to place and belonging in addition to physical dislocation. She is unable to engage in American life and spends the most of her time indoors, isolated

from outside world.she does not have friends or social life Her confinement to home is aa reflection of her incapacity to assimilate or adopt the cultural norms of her new society rather than a personal decision .Her isolaation inside home is not just a desire for privacy, it shows resistance to the new environment it reflects her rejection of the outside world which represents a strange culture that she neither understand nor belongs to.

Her original roots, belonging for her depends on being exposed to her family and neighbors.as she used to that in India, their absence made her live in a state of voluntary exile.this reflects her feelings of emptiness and loneliness.Even though she has physically moved to a new country,her mind and heart are still in Calcutta.Her isolation is a way to protect her identity from melting into the new society.

The primary metaphor for *Mrs Sen's* spatial displacement is her inability to drive .as stated by Bhabha (1994), the displaced people is stuck between two realities without completly inhabiting either, resulting in a state of in betweenness This state is represented in *Mrs Sen's* anxiety of driving « Ihate it.i hate driving.i won't go on » (Lahiri,1999, p.131) this shows her fear of driving that reflects her incapacitiy to adopt , the open road stands for American freedom and independence, this clearly appears when she « dreaded the roar of the ignition » and « placed her hands over her ears to block out the sound, » (jhumpa Lahiri,1999,p.119) this response indicates her anxiety instead of just discomfort, the car becomes a source of insecuritiy , she appears to be overwhelmed but this strange behavior ,as seen by her body language ,which increases her feeling of loneliness.Displacement is not just an idea, it is the pain that appears on the body « her knuckles pale,her wrists tremble » (Lahiri, 1999.p.121) these are physical signs of the stress that she feels while driving the car that represents American progress.Her hands shaking, proves that she has completly lost control .her driving scene is the complete opposite of her scene cutting vegetables with a knife (The blade), in the kitchen her hands

are strong and confident that she dont even afraid of it, but in the car her hands shake,because the kitchen is her private space and compfortable space to which she belongs by doing Indian traditions, while the car is the public space in which she feels strange and fear.

Moreover, *Mrs sen's* dependence on Eliot highlights her weakness,as « Eliot knew she wanted him sitting beside her because she was afraid. » Her inability to function freely in the host culture and her lack of confidence are showed by her need for assurance.in this situation , driving is more than just a skill, it is a cultural expectation that she finds challenging to accept .Additionally, when she was talking to Eliot about driving she said « could i drive all the way to Calcutta ? »(Lahiri,1999,p.119), this question hides pain and missing homeland , like hoping to return in the same time expresses her awareness of its not going to happen .

Beyond her physical confinement, psychological displacement is the core of her character,which is shown in her mental and emotional refuse to accept being in a new culture.her every day actions represent her connection to home, every day she sits on news papers on the floor to peel and cut vegetables , this is her way of showing her connection to her country , by recreating the vibes of Bengali kitchen.she is trying to fix the emptiness that she feels in America. She is physically in there but mentally in India.which supports the idea of Stuart Hall (1999) diasporic identity, defined by an ongoing sense of fragmentation ,the exiled individuals feels neither wholly connected to their homeland nor fully a part of the host culture.Mrs Sen's every day life is clearly fragmented ,even normal activities can cause her to feel anxious and alienated . her isolation is not just physically it is also mentally,reflecting the internal instability that displacement causes in people who are unable to connect their current reality with their previous identity . as she received letter from India with full happiness and excitment because she is always waiting for

Emails from them, as she find out « My sister had a baby girl… by the time i see her she will be three years old, her aunt will be a stranger » (Lahiri, 1999, p.122) this reflects her feeling that life in India continues while she is stuck in a strange environment the sentence « will be a stranger » highlights her fear of losing her place in her family's hearts,which means losing the final belonging.

In contrast, *Third and final continent* presents a different response to displacement. Although the narrator also experience displacemnt,he moved from Calcutta to England then to Boston as a final continent this illustrates the idea of Hall's notion of identity as a process of transformation, his movement accross three continents shows a progressive adaptation.,indicating a significant shift in his life. The sentence « i had enough money to go by plane » (Lahiri, 1999, p.1) symbolizes economic stability and progression,but it also reflects the fact that migration is dependent on financial limitations.this shows physical displacement, but not as a traumatic experience,rather as a planned ,natural movement driven by opportunity.

His adaptation showed when he said « in a week i had adjusted..i ate cornflakes and milk morning and night.. so that i would grow familiar with things » (Lahiri, 1999, p.2)
« adjusted » here is the key word,while *Mrs.Sen* refuse American culture, the narrator accept cornflakes as a tool of adaptation. He uses body language and mind language
« reading the Boston globe » to get along with the place as he always carry guidebook in his pocket this is symbolize security and logic. While *Mrs.Sen* is psychologically lost, the narrator carries with him a map it means that he is ready to learn and integrate new rules he does not imagine it to be India, but rather he tries to integrate .this shows that belonging begins with curiousity about the new place rather than resistance he wants to become familiar with his surrounding, his psychological reaction is identified by calmness and gradual adaptation rather than fear.his position as an observer , while describing reactions

of American people « people cheering » « someone shouting God bless America ! » « a woman praying » (Lahiri, 1999, p.2) this depict that he is physically present, but not yet emotionally integrated.

Unlike *Mrs.Sen*,who remains stuck in anxiety, he successfully integrates into his new culture .showing that displacement can lead to belonging rather than alienation. The narrator of *The Third and Final Continent* experiences displacement as a journey of succeeded adaptation across three continents, as Said argues that the displaced people developed a contrapuntal conciousness , the ability to hold multiple cultural perspectives simultaneously.The narrator integrated successfuly, He carried his Bengali identity from Calcutta to London, then to Boston , he is cautious and curious about American culture without forgetting his origins, as he said in the begining when he was in England « all struggling to educate and establish ourselves abroad » (Lahiri,1999, p.1) this shows that he is facing new culture but he resist and he did not give up and try to adopt the host culture with patience and calmness ,as he reads « the student guide to North America » even though he is no longer a student it shows his humbleness, this also reflects the idea of Stuart Hall (1990) , the fact that his identity is flexible and not fixed as he uses whatever resources are availabale to adapt , he is not concerned wwith place, but with integration and adaptation.this illustrates identity as constructed through action ,not something fixed.

The narrator's experience with completly opposing reactions to dislocation is reflected in the contrast between *Mrs.Sen's* pshysical confinement and his geographical freedom. The narrator ,who embodies Bhabha's (1994) concept of the hybrid subject who lives the Third space creatively rather than being stuck by it,travels easily through American spaces whereas *Mrs.Sen* stays imprisoned within her apartment ,unable to drive or engage in American life.

The narrator is not just in a new place his body feels the difference, his confession highlight the profound effects of the strange urban settin and implies that dislocation is both physically and psychologically felt, in addition to supporting Homi k bhabha's idea of in betweenness where subject lives a condition of discomfort between cultures and stuarthall's theory that identity is shaped through lived experience, this response indicates his sense of alienation. He actively adjusts to American culture,yet when settling here,he also feels deeply dislocated psychologically . He is profoundly affected by the strange sounds and routines of American society , according to Lahiri, « the noise was constantly distracting, at times overwhelming. » « Deep in my ribs,i sensed it » (Lahiri, 1999, p. 2). This emotional reaction shows that displacement is a deeply psychological situation rather than just a physical one, supporting Hall's (1990) claim that diasporic identity is characterized by a lasting sense of alienation and fragmentation .However, the narrator recognize his feeling and gradually gains control over it , in contrast to *Mrs.Sen*, who never survives this psychological rupture.

His emotional and psychological displacement is also depicted when he sits alone,watches from the window ,cannot sleep, he is physically in America but socially disconnected.

Mrs.Sen and the Narrator, when they arrive in America, both feel physically and psychologically dislocated , but their reactions are very different. *Mrs.Sen's* apartment turns into a prison rather than a home , and her fear of driving is a reflection of her whole incapacity to deal with American society, As a result,she is permanently stuck.In contrast, the narrator is aware of his discomfort but actively confronts it, and slowly adjusting to every new situation, The narrator transforms his displacement into a voyage of a gradual adaptation,and discovering himself, while Mrs.Sen struggles to deal with her in between

situation. This contrast mirrors Bhabha's (1994) distinction between individuals who are trapped by the Third space and those who engage with it effectively .

The narrator's everyday actions illustrates that identity is negotiated,he « buys milk and cornflakes » « opens a bank account » these small actions are very meaningful in shaping identity , he is dealing with the host culture in a positive way unlike Mrs.Sen that she failed to do simple actions of American culture, identity is being rebuilt through daily routines.which supports the idea of Stuart Hall 'identity is a process of becoming'.

The narrator's experience reflects what Castles and Miller (2009) defines as voluntary migration as an intentional act of movement that nevertheless results in significant cultural and psychological transformation.his movement across three continent from Calcutta to London to Boston represents a significant process of self improvement rather than just a change of adress . According to Lahiri, the narrator acknowledges that, after years of achievement, the narrator expresses his profound transformation by stating that : « there are times i am bewildered by each mile i have travelled » (Lahiri, 1999, p.19) this 'bewilderment' proves that even when migration is a choice made for advancement, the psychological effects are yet profound since the person must always balance his identity. The narrator between the reality of the continent he currently lives on and the memory of the home he left behind.

Mrs.Croft, always tell him « a flag on the moon..say splendid ! » he was surprised by this than he get used to it , she represents the bridge that connects him to the old American identity.he sees her age as a miracle for continuity, he started worrying that will something happen to her, while *Mrs.Sen* sees strangers as a threat, he sees this old lady as a source of inspiration.this is the beginning of emotional belonging, he began to respect the history of the land on which he stands

While *Mrs.Sen* ended with a tragic accident , failure of adaptation, the narrator's ended with a successful adaptation, bewilderement with calmness, this contradiction is what shows that voluntary migration may lead to completly different outcomes based on an individual's ability to psychologically transform.

2.3 Cultural and Linguistic Alienation

One of the most painful aspects of *Mrs. Sen's* migration is cultural and linguistic separation , in the view of Ngugi and Thiong'o (1986), language is a carrier of cultural identity as well as a means of communication ,displaced people feel a deep sense of cultural loss when they cannot use their mother tongue , they feel deeply denied of their culture , *Mrs Sen's* relationship with language is a clear example of this , her formal and limited English creates an invisible barrier between her and American culture. The sentence « her English falter »(Lahiri, 1999. P.121) it shows that her English get stuck when she gets stressed. This reflects that for an immigrant,language is the first thing that breaks down when he feels insecure. English here represents the tool with which you try to adapt ,proving that she remains an outsider who cannot master the langugae of the host culture.

Her sense of cultural isolation is built by her incapacty to interact with strangers and neuighbors in a natural way which keeps her on the margins of American society . as stated by Ashcroft et Al (2002) that in postcolonial contexts langugae becomes a site of cultural conflict. Mrs.Sen linguistic displacement becomes a physical reality.when she confront the policeman in the accident,her inability to communicate highlights her total alienation from American society by repeating « Mr.Sen teaches mathematics at the university » (Lahiri, 1999, p.134) in an effort to hide her fragility, she tries to adopt her

husband's institutional identity. This language failure demonstrates that she is unable to live as an independent citizen in her new environment.

Beyond language , *Mrs sen's* cultural alienation covers a more general failure to relate to Americaan culture . as stated by Bhabha (1994), this state is known as 'unhomeliness'', when the displaced persons feels alienated even in their own home,*Mrs Sen* lives in exactly this situation ,surrounding by American culture yet she cannot engage with it
.Eliot, a little child, is the only person she interact with,which illustrates how socially isolated she is . her inability to connect with the adult Americans in her environment serves to reinforce her status as a cultural outsider.

The degree of *Mrs. Sen's* social alienation is further demonstrated by her urgent attempts to stay in touch with India. What Said (2000) describes as the exiled subject's ongoing conflict between the reality of the present and the memory of the lost homeland is reflected in her practice of replaying cassettes of voices from home and listetning to them speaking her language as a comfort zone to hear something connect her to her country and anxiously waiting for letters,these communication acts are survival strategies,techniques of preserving cultural identity in the face of a strange environment that does not recognize her identity or her origins , rather than just expressions of melancholy. While she was driving the car she said « In India the driver sat on the right side, not the left » (Lahiri, 1999, p.120) here is showed that it is not just a technical information, but she wanted to say that our way is the origin and that American system is confusing to her ,she refuses to integrate because the rules of the new culture contradict her old logic.

In contrast ,*Third and final continent* presents a different response to cultural and linguistic alienation although the narrator is exposed to unfamiliar traditions and linguistic differences , vocabulary and social norms, he does not resist them. Instead he observes and

gradually adapts to these changes with curiousity . unlike *Mrs.Sen*, whose attachment to her native culture reflect her sense of alienationn the narrator's desire to engage with the new environment helps him to overcome cultural and linguistic barriers.

Before coming to the country , the narrator in *Third and Final Continent* read useful manuals on American culture, showing a desire to learn about the country he is going to visit, which *Mrs Sen* never showed this, Lahiri captures this when the narrator says that « Americans called a lift an elevator and an engaged phone busy » (Lahiri, 1999, p. 2) it is simple detail but important cultural distinctions that he recognize and adjusts to rather than rejects.cultural displacement is shown through everyday language and habits, not big dramatic conflicts,this reflects how migration affects daily life,not just identity . As Ngugi (1986) implies, Language is a carrier of cultural identity , but for the narrator , language serves as a tool for navigating his new surroundings rather than a source of alienation.

Two completly different reaction to cultural alienation are revealed by contrasting *Mrs.Sen's* language rigidity with the narrator's active cultural adaptation . The narrator intentionally picks up the codes of his new cultural environment while *Mrs.Sen* is still unable to interact effectively with the Americans around her due to her language barrier.The narrator eventually creates a hybrid cultural identity that connects his Bengali roots with his American present,while *Mrs.Sen* rejects this negotiation,reflecting Hall's (1990) claim that diasporic identity is continuously negotiated.

2.4 Liminality ,Hybridity , Third Space

The narrator of *Third and Final Continent* and *Mrs.Sen* both live in what Turner (1969) refers to as 'liminal space' , which are states of ongoing inbetweenness,suspended between two cultural realms without fully inhabiting either. Their views of this liminality,howerver are essentially different .according to Bhabha (1994) depending on

how the displaced people reacts, The third spac, the ambiguous area between two cultures can either paralyze of free them.Mrs.Sen's unstable situation paralyzes her, her apartment becomes into a barrier that keeps her stuck between India and America.In contrast, the narrator intentionally moves through his liminal locations « i spent my first night at the Y.M.C.A. in central squar » (Lahiri, 1999, p.2),crossing each border with calmness as he travel from Calcutta to London to Boston . Additionally, Bhabha (1994) argues that this negotiation of the Third space gives rise to hybridity,whereas Mrs.Sen rejects hybridity and moves away into cultural isolation , the narrator welcomes it and progressively creates a hybrid identity that connects his Bengali roots and his American present.

2.4 Material culture and domestic space

Mrs Sen's diasporic experience focuses on food ,which serves as an effective means of preserving cultural memory and identity. As argued by Sutton (2001), food is one of the most powerful triggers of cultural memory for displaced people since it communicates to several senses at once . Mrs sen's obsessive quest for fresh fish , an essential component of Bengali food that she cannot find in America ,Her frustration reaches beyond just a desire, as shown by her statement that « it very frustrating, » « to live so close to the water and not to have so much fish » (Lahiri,1999, p131) , in other statement she said : « In the supermarket i can feed a cat thirty two dinners from one thirty two tins,but i caan never find a single fish i like, never a single ». this are the two things that make her happy their , fish and waiting for letters from home.Her entire cultural universe,uncluding her family,her homeland,and her sense of self ,is represented by fish , and its absence symbolizes the cultural loss that results from displacement.

Beyond food,as stated by Pechurina (2016), items brought by migrants serve as ''diasporic objects'' material representations of cultural memory that fill the gap between

the homeland and the adopted country and are also essential anchors of cultural identity The role is shown by *Mrs sen's* daily application of the « scarlet powder »,the traditional indian powder worn by married ladies , her belief that « i must wear the powder everyday…for the rest of the days im married » (Lahiri, 1999, p.117) shows that this is an intentional act of cultural preservation rather than just a habit . the powder (scarlet powder) becomes the most visible expression of her identity in a foreign setting that does not recognize her cultural identity . another thing, her Sari is represented as a form of cultural identity preservation of her roots in a foreign environment « a different pattern each day » (Lahiri, 1999, p.119) when she was near the beach she said « each wave resembled a sari drying on a clothesline » (Lahiri, 1999, p. 129) she sees water as Sari this means that her min dis completly programmed for her homeland. She cannot see America as it is she sees it through an Indian lens this reflects that her sense of belonging to the past is strongerthan her current reality. The repeated movement of waves reminds her of movement of the wind as she used to see her washed clothes in her home India. This depictio turns waves into familiar home scene.Linking it to her Sari means that homeland for her is an ocean that surrounds her in her imagination, but in reality it is very far away. The wet sari that dries symbolizes the process of waiting and the passage of time that *Mrs.Sen* experiences dreams of coming back. she stubbornly tries to keep her inner visual world Indian.

In order to preserve Indian customs in the face of the demands of American life, *Mrs sen* turns her apartment into a cultural refuge . as mentioned by Miller (2008), the home's familiar things act as a psychological barrier against the pressure of host culture .Mrs Sen's main place of cultural resistence is the kitchen, where she prepares indian food ,cuts fish and vegetables with the way they cut it in india ,using the blade that she brings with her from her country,this blade is available in every house in India ,it is very different

from the western knives it is a symbole of cultural identity, as it mentioned « a blade that curved like the prow of a Viking ship » (Lahiri, 1999, p. 114) it represents her strong attachment to her country as she refuse to use American kitchen tools,and keeps using her blade, this a strong act of resistance , and also the way she sits and use it « she sat on newspapers on the living room floor » (Lahiri, 1999, p. 114) she recreates the Indian practices ,while she uses it,these acts becomes a link to home , she create the environment that she wants to feel safe through these blade , through this she maintain the traditions that connect her to her native country . As suggested by Hooks (1990) for displaced people, home becomes a location of resistence where cultural identity can be restored within the dominant culture .

In contrast, *The third and final continent* presents material culture and domestic space as a space of successful adaptation rather than resistence . The narrator shows a completly different connection to food and material culture than Mrs.Sen,whose craving search for fish represents her incapacity to adjust American culture . Instead of being immobilized by the lack of familiar food, he actively looks for cultural ties in his new surroundings .When the narrator learns that « a man named bill sold fresh fish on Prospect street » (Lahiri, 1999, p.18), Lahiri captures this indicating that he finds means in the end to preserve cultural continuity without being overcome by longing. Food serves as an effective means for cultural memory, as Sutton (2001) asserts, yet for the narrator ,food becomes a bridge rather than a barrier.

In the story , while Americaans celebrate landing on the moon while he was in the Plane,the narrator is quietly navigating his own personal migration

The narrator’s diasporic experience similarly heavily depends on material items,but in a very different way than Mrs.Sen .at first when his wife comes he was not excited for her

« the arrival of Mala..something inevitable but meaningless at the time » but after he realized i twas his duty to to take care of her. Belonging is not complete without the presence of family when he began to protect her and care about her America went from exile to home. They made a little India within America and that is the essence of hybrid identity. And this is a completly different to *Mrs.Sen*, he becomes responsable for his wife and made a family in a strange environment without feeling alienation unlike *Mrs.Sen*. the story ended with isolation and failure while 'Third and Final continent' ended with successful assimilation his journey ended with peace, he views life as a miracle of survival and adaptation « in my son's eyes i see the ambition that had first hurled me across the world » « whenever he is discouraged, i tell him that if i can survive on three continents,then there is no obstacle he cannot conquer »(Lahiri, 1999, p. 19) this shows that he encourage his son this serves as a powerful symbol of integrated belonging.Unlike *Mrs.Sen* who could not offer a sense of security to the child in her care when she made an accident. His pride in his son's attendance at Harvard University signifies the completion of the immigrant journey moving from the struggle fro survival to the achievement of social mobility,the father redefines displacement not as a loss of home,but as the ability to make a home anywhere.In contrast to *Mrs.Sen* that she was scaring Eliot with her sadness (accident scene) conveying to him that the outside world is dangerous.but the narrator gives his son confidence.

Mala brings obvious signs of her indian cultural identification with her when she comes to America.According to Lahiri, « she had worn an iron bangle on her wrist,and applied vermillion powder to the part on her hair » (Lahiri, 1999, p.13).in contrast to *Mrs.Sen*,whose cultural objects maintain her loneliness,Mala's belonging slowly assimilate into her new existence .According to Pechurina (2016), diasporic items serve as

both cultural negotiating tools and links to the past ,this is exactly what they do for the narrator and Mala as they construct their lives between two different cultural realms.

The narrator create routine same food , reading news papers ,observing others , when he said « in a week i had adjusted,more or less » (Lahiri, 1999, p.2) this sentence shows his gradual adaptation , and that it is not just emotional at first but practical.However integration still not complete, even after adaptation, he still cannot sleep,noise disturbs him ,milk spoils, it is a small failure of managing new life .

Two essentially different reactions to displacement are revealed by contrasting the narrator's and *Mrs.sen's* relationship to material culture. In the end. Mrs.sen's isolation is reinforced by the objects she uses as a hopeless anchors of cultural resistence ,such as her sindoor,fish,blade,cassettes,and food traditions.in contrast the narrator and his wife Mala preserve their cultural items while interacting with American material culture .they represent what Bhabha (1994) refers to as a hybrid identity, which is neither entirely indian nor entirely American but creatively balances the two cultures .The narrator's belonging allow him to go on while connecting him to his roots , but *Mrs.Sen's* belonging trap her in the past.

2.5 Nostalgia and Belonging

2.5.1 Restorative Nostalgia and Failure of belonging

A key aspect of *Mrs. Sen's* diasporic experience is nostalgia, which shapes her ties to both her own country and her new one ,Boym (2001) makes a distinction between reflective nostalgia,which confronts loss and finds creative ways to deal with it, and restorative nostalgia,which is defined by the wish to bring back the lost home just as it was.*Mrs Sen* is a prime example of restorative nostalgia , her request on preserving Indian

cooking traditions, her incapacity to adjust to American culture ,and her emotional emptiness all show a strong desire to recreate home that is only a memory.She is forever caught between two words because she refuses to accept the impossibility of returning.

Mrs. Sen's restorative nostalgia keeps her from feeling like she belongs in America .as stated by Brah (1996), diasporic persons have a 'homing desire,'' which is a craving for a sense of belonging that does not always end up to go back home.in this case she represent a strong longing fr India that it keeps her prevented from a temporary sense of belonging in America. Her question « what picture can i send ? » because they write for her to send pictures they write : « send pictures of your new life » « they think i live the ife of a queen,Eliot » « they think i live in a palace » (Lahiri, 1999,p.125). Because she has never really lived in America , she fails to share her American existence with people bach home, She embodies Bhabha's (1994) idea of third space ,permanently stuck between two cultures and exist in neither space completly.it effectively conveys this failure because she has never really loved America, she is unable to show her life to people back home .The story's last car accident represent the highest level of her failure , her migration ends in complete separation and isolation rather thaan adaptability.

her connection te her home is showed also when she asked Eliot, the boy that she babysit, « if i began to scream right now at the top of my lungs,would someone come ? » (Lahiri, 1999, p. 116) Eliot was confused about what she think , but then understand that she means home India, « at home that is all you have to do ,not every body has telephone , you just raise your voice a bit,an all neighborhood come , to help , share news.. » (Lahiri, 1999 ,p.116) This quote shows the emotional nostalgia of *Mrs.Sen* and the strong representation of alienation ,her question is not just about help, it is a declaration of invisibility In America she feels like she lives in emptiness where no one hears her or cares about her existence, the scream here represents the desire to prove existence in a

place that makes her feel nothing. In India raising voice,is a natural way to communicate and get support .in America she does not have social life, the walls seperate people. This contradiction highlights cultural migration,she cannot understand how people can live next door without feeling for each other, there is no connections th at make her feel visible, silence make her feel she lives in a cemetery,which increases her desire to scream to make sure she still alive. Lahiri's depiction of *Mrs.Sen* everyday routines draws attention to her psychological dependence on her country. As Eliot noticed that one of the things that make her happy,is « the arrival of a letter from her family »(Lahiri, 1999, P.121) this dependence on letters implies that Mrs.Sen's sense of identity continues by a paper bridge to India rather than her present physical location. « her custom to check the mailbox »(Lahiri, 1999, p.121) this reflects her position as a displaced person who lives for a world hundreds of kilometers away and represents a state of endless waiting.

Mrs.Sen's emotional isolation within her own marriage reinforces her lack of belonging.Mr.sen provides driving lessons but he is emotionally detached from his wife's pain and difficulty of coexisting, despite being physically present he is unable to understand the deeper cultural and psychological aspects of her exile.As Brah (1996) believes that emotional and social inclusion are necessary for belonging, *Mrs.Sen* finds neither in her marriage nor in American society, leaving her complelty alone. Her situation of total and cultural and emotional exile is reinforced by her seeking for phone calls to India instead of seeking comfort from her partner,which highlights the deep emotional gap between them and this showed when Eliot takes a picture with camera, he waited for them to get closer but they didn't « They didn't hold hands or put their arms around each other's waists » (Lahiri, 1999, p.130) this shows their emotional distance .

In contrast, In *Third and Final Continent* the narrator's growing connection with Mala serves as a vital sense of temporary belonging, he sees Mala setting up her Sari in front of

Mrs.Croft.Lahiri writes that « for the first time since her arrival i felt sympathy » (Lahiri, 1999, p.17) a sincere emotional exchange that begins their relationship.what Gilroy (1993) refers to as a collective diasporic identity is created by this shared experience of displacement, together, they overcome the difficulties of American life , unlike *Mrs.Sen*.they encouraging one another despite cultural differences .The narrator's temporary sense of belonging is eventually based on their marriage,which changes from a arranged to a true partnership.

As Yuval Davis (2006) stated that belonging is a spectrum rather than a set condition, the narrator and Mrs.Sen are at opposing ends of this spectrum,with the narrator gradually moving toward temporary inclusion and acceptance while Mrs.Sen experiences total exclusion

In the conclusion of the story which is depicting *Mrs. Sen's* inability to fit in ,is the car accident that conclude the story. Throughout the narrative,her fear of driving has served a metaphor for her larger incapacity to handle American life on her own it is depicted when her husband tell her to drive but she refused « how do you expect to pass the test if you refuse to drive on a road with other cars » she said « not today,another day » (Lahiri, 1999, p.126) Lahiri indicates that the sresses of diplacement have totally dominated her when she finally tries driving by herself and gets into an accident.*Mrs.Sen's* story supports Said's (2000) claim that exile results in an permanent sense of loss,since her dislocation causes her to become more isolated and finally isolate rather than adapt or fit in. Mrs.S just vanishes from Eliot's life at the story's conclusion,leaving only the memories of her cultural difference and her unfulfilled yearning for home.

2.5.2 Memory and Nostalgia

Memory plays a crucial role in both character's negotiations of displacement .according to Ricoeur (2004),memory is an active process that helps displaced people build a consistent sense of identity, throughout time rather than a passive one. *Mrs.Sen's* memory is painful,her intense memories of India keep her from interacting with her American present.

For the narrator in *Third and Final Continent* memory is enriching and uses it to create a cohesive story of survival and adaptation across three countries, because he uses his past as a source of strength rather than a burden.In Mrs.Sen memory is a prison that prevents the character from progressing, she is stuck in her home country as she always remembers India to fix the emptiness and alienation that she feels in America,memory makes her refuse to adapt the new culture according to her it is the real place that she belongs to not the real place which highlight the fact that she lives with her memory in Calcutta while her body is in America,while in *Third and Final Continent* memory is a bridge that helps stability

The narrator of *The third and final continent* illustrates what Boym (2001) refers to as reflective nostalgia,which is different from *Mrs.Sen's* restorative nostalgia.it is an acceptance of loss that allows him to continue having a fruitful and creative relationship with his cultural memory, He accepts the distance from his roots while going forward ,as opposed to trying to recreate his Indian existence in America. his nostalgia enriches him, In the end , the narrator's introspective melancholy allows him to create what Brah (1996) refers to as a temporary but true sense of belonging. The narrator in *Third and Final Continent* gradually creates a life that connects his Bengali roots with his American present, in contrast to *Mrs.Sen*,who never feels like she belongs in America.Lahiri effectively conveys this in the story's tragic last lines , as the narrator observes that « I am not the only man to seek his fortune far from home » (Lahiri, 1999,p.19), a profoundly

accepting moment that turns his dislocation into a universal human experience .His ability to survive on three continents turns into source of pride and strength rather than trauma .his words to his son « if i can survive on three continents then there is no obstacle he cannot conquer » (Lahiri, 1999,p.19.)

As Ricoeur (2004) stated that memory is an active process that helps people create a consistent sense of who they are across time. The narrator illustrate this by showing how his memories of Mrs.Croft and India enrich him rather than cage him. When the narrator thinks « each time im here i return instantly to those six weeks as if they were only the other day » (Lahiri, 1999,p.19). Lahiri captures this, her remembers clearly yet is not imprisoned by memory.

The main point of this study is the contrast between the narrator of Third *and Final Continent* thoughtful nostalgia and *Mrs.Sen's* healing nostalgia. Despite experiencing displacement, cultural alienation and a yearning for home, the protagonists reactions result in essentially different ends.*Mrs.Sen* experiences loneliness , immobility and eventual failure as a result of her inability to accept the impossibility of return. Temporary belonging , cultural hybridity , and personal strengh result from the narrator's acceptance of loss and slow adaptation, according to Said (2000), exile can result in both catastrophic loss and critical insghit. Portraying displacement as a deeply human condition that leads to various reactions based on an individual's relationship to memory,adaptation,and cultural identity rather than as a fixed experience.

This comparative thematic analysis of *Mrs.Sen's* and *The third and Final continent'*has shown that belonging and displacement are complex conditions that result in

essentailly varied reactions rather than equal experiences.Lahiri uses the opposing characters of *Mrs.Sen* and the narrator to highlight the differences between cultural

resistance and adaptation, as well as between restorative and reflective nostalgia and between the failure and gradual creation of belonging.The theoritical frameworks developed in chapter one have been useful analytical tools for analyzing these themes ,demonstrating that the individual's relationship to memory,cultural identity , and the feeling of belonging always shapes displacement in modern diasporic literature.

The narrator's tone is calm,controlled,detached he narrates everything with a neutral tone unlike *Mrs Sen*, with no excitment,no fear,just observation, this reflects his personality as calm and controlled ,it also reflects the immigrant condition with careful adaptation rather than emotional expression.

2.6 Narrative Style and The Short Story Form

Lahiri's narrative techniques are central to understanding displacement and belonging are represented in her fiction, her choice of form, style, and perspective all contribute to the construction of meaning in her stories.

In her depiction of displacement and belonging , the use of the short story form is noteworthy and significant, in and of herself, According to O'Connor (1963), the short story has always served as a literary tool for marginalized people who live on the edge of dominating society.*Third and Final Continent* and *Mrs.Sen* are both examples of displaced people whose experiences of desire and cultural dislocation go opposed to the grat narratives of success and integration.Additionally, Head (1992) contends that the short story's formal qualities,its simplicity,its focus on a single moment and its opposition to a tidy conclusion reflect the displaced subject's situation.For Lahiri's characters,belonging is unresolved and unclear, just as the short story rejects closure

A key component of Lahiri's depiction of relocation is her simple storytelling approach. Brada Williams (2004) notes that she adresses deeper themes of cultural displacement and belonging through her writing, which is marked by meticulous and careful attention to common home details including objects,food,clothing,and gestures.This minimalism is itself significant, the gaps and silences that define the diasporic experience are reflected in what is spoken and what is left unsaid. Lahiri's precise representation of household customs in *Mrs.Sen*, the fish cutting,the powder, the calls from home, all carry the burden of culturaal loss and longing.The narror's truthful descriptions of adaptation : cornflakes, bank account,Mrs Croft's home' in the third and final continent shows the same limits, expressing a sense of belonging through a collection of ordinary facts.

Lahiri's use of narrative viewpoint in each story also underscores the themes of identity and displacement .According to Ricoeur (1988), people form their identities through narrartive,using the stories they tell about their life to explain who they are.this retrospective narration is important because it indicates that narrative becomes possible by belonging,as the narrator can only share his story of displacement from a position of achieved belonging .in contrast, *Mrs.Sen* lacks a narrative voice of her own, she is constantly seen through Eliot's eyes and never heard directly,which reflects her inability to develop a deep sense of identity in America

Lahiri employs a third person point of view in *Mrs.Sen's* through Eliot's perspective.*Mrs.Sen* is constantly seen from the outsider,implying that she is uncapable to express her own displacement. In contrast *The third and final continent*, on the other hand, is told in the first person retrospective,with the narrator reflecting on his entire journey from a place of accomplished belonging. His reflecting nostalgia is reflected in this narrative distance having successfully navigated his dislocation,he can now make meaning of it.According to Bhabha(1994),narrative serves as a powerful tool for displaced people

to restore cultural identity and create new identities that resist the dominant culture's erasure of their origins. Also her use of marriage relationship as a narrative technique to represent belonging *Mrs.Sen's* marriage failure of belonging, narrator's marriage achived belonging.

The shift in narrative view point is itself deeply meaningful. *Mrs.Sen's* lack of a clear narrative voice is a reflection of her larger state of cultural silence , she is unable to control or express her own story in the same way that she is unable to integrate into American culture.In contrast, the narrator's first person retrospective voice represents his sense of accomplishment, speaking from a place of resolve, he can now make sense of his trip across three continents, turning displacement int a coherent story of adaptation and survival.

2.7 Success and Failure of Integration

The story's conclusion attests to the immigrant subject's successful adaptation. In contrast to *Mrs.Sen's* ongoing separation,*Third and Final Continent* the narrator in this instance achieves what refers to as a hybrid identity (Bhabha). Moving from living in rented rooms (YMCA) to owning a private home reflects financial stability, but what is most important is emotional stability with Mala 'together we explored the city and met other Bangalis' ' we bought a camera with which to document our life together'' (Lahiri, 1999, p.18) here gradual adaptation was not only individual, but a familial, which their traditional wedding turned from duty to a real partner ship that supported their integration into American society.

The son's arrival at prestigious university means that the narrator succeeded in transferring his son's educational background, and that he was able to protect the new generation from the fragmented identity that he suffered from . This is the positive

psychological transformation that Castles and Miller (2009) mentioned that the journy ends with establishing new roots in the land of exile.

Gradual adaptaion does not mean forgetting the past, but rather the ability to integrate all experiences (India,London,Boston) into one cohesive identity. His reaction to Mrs.Croft's death marks the final stage of his successful adaptation.Although their relationship was professional,his sincere sadness shows a strong emotional bond with his new surroundings. It is evident that he has fully experienced psychological change when he says that he was affected by her passing away.'Mrs.Croft's was the first death i mourned in America'' (Lahiri,1999, p.18). He now sees America as someone who has powerful,almost familial roots rather than as a distant stranger. He is strongly attached to 'third continent' by this moment of loss,which turns it from a temporary residence into a permanent home full of shared memories and personal history.

While '*third and final continent'* is an expression of the success of the deliberate act of migration, with his flexibility and emotional attachment to America .In contrast , *Mrs.Sen* represents the failure of this success. Her tragic isolation was caused by her inability to disconnect from her lost home in India and her resistance to American symbols of independence,like driving lead to her tragic isolation.Despitee the narrator's efforts to create a third space of belonging ,*Mrs.Sen* is stuck in a permanent state of displacement, demonstrating that successful integration requires psychological transformation.

Conclusion

This thematic comparative analysis or *Mrs.Sen's* and *The Third and Final continent* has demonstrated that displacement and belonging are not uniform experiences but complex circumstances that result in essentially varied reactions rather than uniform experiences. Lahiri emphasizes the difference between cultural resistance and adaptation,between the

faailure and the progressive development of belonging, and between restorative and reflective nostalgia through the opposing characters of *Mrs.sen* and the narrator. Lahiri's use of first person and third person viewpoint, her minimalist style, and the short story form are all important narrative devices in illustrating these different experiences of displacement and belonging.when taken as a whole,these results support the theoritical frameworks presented in chapter one and show that modern diasporic literature provides an effective medium for examining the intricacies of cultural identity and belonging in displacement situations.

General Conclusion

This dissertation has examined the representation of displacement and belonging in contemporary diasporic fiction through a comparative thematic analysis of two short stories by Jhumpa Lahiri Mrs.Sen and Third and final continent published in her Pulitzer Prize winning collection Interpreter of Maladies (1999). The study has examined how Lahiri depicts the experience of displacement and the search for belonging through her unique narrative techniques, drawing on postcolonial and cultural theoritical frame works. It has shown that displacement leads to fundametally different responses depending on the idnividual's relationship to cultural memory and adaptation.

The conceptual foundation for the analysis was provided by theoritical framework developed in chapter one. The chapter explored displacement as a complex and multifaceted experience with physical, psychological and cultural dimensions, drawing on the work of important postcolonial and cultural theorists such as Bhabha (1994), Said (2000), Hall (1990), Brah (1996), and Boym (2001). In order to show that displaced individuals inhabit complex in between posistions that significantly impact their sense of identity and belonging, key concepts such as cultural hybridity, the third space, liminality, exile, migration, and diaspora were examined. The chapter also looked at how displaced people negotiate their cultural identity through important processes like belonging, material culture, memory, and nostalgia.Lastly, the examination of Lahiri's narrative strategies and current diasporicliterature placed her novels in a larger literary and theortical framework.

In chapter two, a comparative thematic analysis of both stories was conducted using these theoriticaal frameworks. The research showed that although in *Third and Final Continent* the narrator and *Mrs.Sen* both feel significant psychological and spatial displacement after

arriving in America. Their reactions are essentially different. What Boym (2001) refers to as restorative nostalgia a terrible desire to restore a home that exists only in memory is reflected in *Mrs.Sen's* cultural and linguistic isolation, her obsessive attachment to Indian objects and rituals, and her incapacity to adjust to American life. In contrast, the narrator intentionally controls his displacement, progressively adjusting to each new cultural setting while preserving his Bengali identity. This allows him to embody reflective nostalgia and, in the end, create a temporary sense of belonging. Lahiri's contrasting use of first person and third person perspectives mirrors these thematic differences, according to the analysis of narrative techniques. *Mrs.Sen's* lack of narrative voice reflects her cultural silencing, while the *narrator's* retrospective first person narration reflects his achieved belonging.

The comparison analysis has supported the study's claaim, which is that displacement results in essentially different reactions based on an individual's relationship to cultural memory and adaptation. Two opposing forms of the diasporic experience are represented by *Mrs.Sen* and the narrator in *Third and Final Continent* one is marked by cultural negotiation, reflective nostalgia, and the progressive development of provisional belonging, the other is characterized by cultural resistance, restorative nostalgiaa, and final failure to belong. When taaken as a whole, these two tales show how displacement is portrayed in Lahiri's writing as a complicated human experience that can result in both failure and survival, paralysis and resilience.

In a number of ways, this study adds to the body of knowledge on Lahiri's work as well as displacement and belonging in current diasporic writing. It has been shown that reading these two stories together enhances our comprehension of Lahiri's perspective on the diasporic state by using a comparative theme analysis approach. Addditionally, by linking close readings of Lahiri's narrative strategies to postcolonial theories of nostalgia, memory, and belonging, the work has added to an expanding corpus of research that explores the

connection between literary form and the portayal of diasporic experience. The study also demonstrate that postcolonial theortical frameworks wre still useful and productive for examining modern diasporic fiction.

This research has significant restrictions, just like any academic study. Lahiri's novels and her later book Unaccustomed Earth (2008) have not been included in the study instead, it has only focused on two short stories from her first collection. Further more, the study has mostly ignored issues of second generation diasporic identity that are also common in Lahiri's literature in favor of conecntrating on the experiences of first generation migrants. These limitations point towards possible paths for further studies that could effectively expand upon the results of this study.

Future studies might compare Lahiri's short fiction with her books The Namesake (2003) and The Lowland (2013) or examine additionalstories from interpreter of maladies using the same comparative methodology . researchers may also look at how Lahiri's fiction depicts second generation diasporic identity or compare her writing to other South Asian diasporic authors like Salman Rushdie or Monica Ali. The sensation of displacement and belonging in Lahiri's literature is influenced by gender this aspect is discussed in this study through the divergent perspectives of *Mrs.Sen* and the narrator, but it merits a more thorough examination.

Jhumpa Lahiri's work serves as a reminder that displacement is a fundamental human experience that profoundly and permanently alters affects identity, memory, and belonging. She illustrates that there is no one way to expreience displacement through the opposing characters of *Mrs.Sen* and the narrator, some people discover strengh, creativity, and finally a sense of belonging in displacement, while others are paralyzed by loss. In society that is becoming more and more influenced by migration, globalization, and cultural displacement,

Lahiri's stories provide a profound reflection on what it means to look for home in a foreign land as well as a strong literary portayal of the diasporic existence.

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