



CULTURAL HYBRIDITY IN ZADIE SMITH'S *WHITE TEETH* AND JHUMPA LAHIRI'S *THE NAMESAKE*

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Abstract:

This paper offers a comparative analysis of Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* and Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* through the lens of cultural hybridity. It examines how first- and second-generation immigrant characters negotiate tension between their inherited mother culture and the foreign culture of their host societies, focusing on Ashoke, Ashima, and Gogol in Lahiri's novel, and Samad, Alsana, Magid, Millat, and Irie in Smith's. The importance of this paper lies in its examination of the hybrid space that emerges from blending these two cultural poles and the strategies immigrants adopt to reconcile dual identities. This study is grounded in Homi Bhabha's conceptualization of the "Third Space" and Stuart Hall's theory of "Becoming" and "Being," which illuminate the unfixed nature of cultural identity and immigrants' simultaneous adherence to their original heritage and adoption of the diaspora's culture. Through textual analysis supported by quotations from both novels, the paper shows how first-generation characters largely resist assimilation while their children pursue divergent paths of assimilation, reassertion of origin, or hybrid negotiation. The comparative approach highlights parallel patterns of alienation, displacement, and identity crisis across the two texts, revealing how each author envisions hybridity as a productive space of negotiation, underscoring the fluid, evolving nature of postcolonial immigrant identity.

Keywords: Bhabha, Lahiri, Smith, cultural hybridity, third space, *The Namesake*, *White Teeth*

1. Introduction

Culture is the invisible thread that binds different individuals into a cohesive whole; it conveys to each person that they belong. Functioning in both small and comprehensive domains of life, it contains all the characteristics of human agency transmitted through language, art, ritual, and manufactured tools that mark the generations. This complex system is comprised of others' stored knowledge, their carried beliefs, the moral

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frameworks, customary practices, and the recurring patterns of daily actions that newcomers absorb without effort and revisit, from birth to death. Culture continuously provides the human mind with frameworks through which every emotional experience and every moral calculus receive a particular interpretation and form. Consequently, it both inculcates and sifts attitudes, modifying and redefining perspectives across the life span in every society and subset of society. The expression of culture and the formation of human identity proceed along parallel trajectories.

Stuart Hall states that cultural identity holds a central position in every postcolonial struggle, the legacy of which is interpreted in wholly different archives and incommensurate accents. Such a reality, having rejected the single authoritative narrative, redistributes the cultural stage that now invites diverse voices, one following the last, without temporal separation. Like deconstruction, post-coloniality is involved in the contradiction of double writing. On the one hand, it organizes itself as if nationalism were desirable, but on the other, it questions the very authority of the Eurocentrism inherent in nationalism. Like deconstruction, it also looks for other and different options.

2. Theoretical Framework: Bhabha's "Third Space" and Hall's "Becoming" and "Being"

Hybridity is the outcome of mixing humans and cultures from several areas of the globe. The concept has roots in the experience of colonization. The term hybridity is connected with the work of Homi K. Bhabha. Bhabha holds that "*all cultural statements and systems are constructed in a space that is the "third space of enunciation"*" (118). In cultural theory, meanings have been broadened to embrace the hybrid or hyphenated identities of people or ethnic groups. Addressing the challenge of hybridity, Bhabha states that hybridity represents the notion and belief of colonial identities in that the dominant identity may be reproduced.

The word "*hybridity*" stands for the emergence of new trans-cultural patterns inside the contact region generated through colonization. In agriculture, hybridity means the hybridization of two different species through grafting or cross-fertilization to produce a "*third*" (Ashcroft *et al.*, 118). It involves several different disciplines, like the field of linguistic politics, culture, and others. Cultural hybridity refers to the coexistence of immigrants belonging to different cultures, which requires acceptance and adaptation to each other's cultures. While integrating into multicultural societies, immigrants face the crisis of losing their original identities as a result of adopting the culture of the host country, so they struggle to balance the two cultures. This balancing process leads to the formation of a new third culture, which is a mixture of the two cultures; that is what Homi Bhabha called "*third space*" or "*hybridity*". This space is between the first space (the original culture) and the second space (the host culture). Bhabha describes hybridity as "*new, neither the one nor the other*" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 25).

The third space theory challenges others' ideas because the hybrid personality is new and unique and cannot be distinguished easily because it does not belong to a fixed cultural space. Bhabha (1994) argues that:

"All forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity that displaces the histories that constitute it and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiative. The process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation" (p. 211).

In the same way, Stuart Hall explains that cultural identity is not historical and is subject to change, and there are no fixed determinants of its qualities. It is described as a non-stop process of being and becoming. It depends on continuous negotiation and generates diversity and contradiction. Hall (2020) said:

"Cultural identity, in this second sense, is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something that already exists, transcending place, time, history, and culture" (p. 225).

3. Cultural Hybridity in *The Namesake*

3.1. First-Generation Immigrants: Ashoke and Ashima

The Namesake by Jhumpa Lahiri addresses more complicated ethnic and cultural concerns as it presents the lives and challenges of immigrants in their new homes, with an emphasis on Indo-American cultural connections. The text portrays the Gangulis' suffering and cultural issues in the United States over 30 years, addressing two generations. The psychopathology of diversity is prominent in the story of Gogol. Ashoka, the first generation of migrants, and his spouse, Ashima, have a further entrenched attachment to their roots and heritage.

Ashoke craves to learn everything new and loves to explore other cultures because he considers them to be sources that nourish his personality. Also, he liked the English language and mastered it, which made him excel in his studies and obtain a professor position at MIT. So, he does not feel alienated despite the long distance from his motherland. Although Ashoke was easily assimilated into American culture, he remained attached to his roots and maintained his original identity as a Hindu from India. At home, he eats spicy Indian food and wears traditional Indian clothes. *"Ashoke [is] accustomed to wearing tailor-made pants and shirts all his life"* (Lahiri, 2003, p. 65).

When his wife Ashima gave birth to a male child, Ashok followed the Bengali tradition to name him and chose two names for him *"Nakhil"* and *"Gogol"*. The name Nikhil seems well attached to the old. It is a highly respected Bengali name. It has a fulfilling connection to Nikolai, the former name of the Russian Gogol (Lahiri, 2003, p. 51). So, Ashoke succeeded in building an identity that can be considered cross-cultural. He wished that his son Gogol would follow his example because he realizes that he can only succeed in his life by embracing American culture and respecting his mother's culture. When he was walking with Gogol on the Cape Cod beach, and they reached the last point of the rocks that align with the sea, Ashoke said: *"Remember that you and I made this journey, that we went together to a place where there was nowhere left to go"* (Lahiri, 2003, p. 187).

Ashima, the main character, strongly represents this process as she navigates her journey from India to America. Ashima discusses her experience of displacement, asserting that "*She is not the same, and she does not have to be*" (Lahiri, 2003, p. 131). This quote indicates a sense of becoming as Ashima accepts changes and adapts to an entirely new culture while remaining proud of her Indian origin. It reflects the changing nature of cultural identity and the dynamic engagement between the two places.

At the beginning of the novel, Ashimi suffered a lot from loneliness and homesickness.

Her only consolation was her memories in India, which helped her not to separate from her roots. She always reads a "*tattered copy of Desh magazine that she brought to read on her plane ride to Boston and still cannot bring herself to throw away*" (Lahiri, 2003, p. 4). Ashima realized that she did not belong to this strange place and this liberal society, which is governed by appearances and lacks family ties. For Ashima, America is "*leafless trees with ice-covered branches [...]. Not a soul on the street*" (Lahiri, 2003, p. 30). She is different from American women who wear bikinis and skirts and hold their husbands' hands in public and are "*lying on top of each other on the Cambridge Common*" (Lahiri, 2003, p. 3).

At first, Ashima refuses to embrace American culture and its contradictory values with Indian values. She adheres to her religious rituals in Pujos, and she is used to "*wear nothing but saris and sandals from Bata*" (Lahiri, 2003, p. 65). She speaks Hindi with her children to preserve their mother tongue and prepares them spicy Indian food like Jhal Muri, which she prepares by using American ingredients. This snack reminds her of India and the street vendors there. Moreover, it reminds her of the advice of her close relatives who had come to bid her farewell in Bengal, "*not to eat beef or wear skirts or cut off her hair and forget the family the moment she landed in Boston*" (Lahiri, 2003, p. 37). The toughest challenge to Ashima in America is "*motherhood in a foreign land*" (Lahiri, 2003, p. 6). "*Raising a child in a country where she is related to no one, where she knows so little, where life seems so tentative and spare*" (Lahiri, 2003, p. 6). She feels pity for her children because they were born in a strange land, far from relatives and loved ones, and deprived of the family atmosphere.

Bengali culture was a reference that Ashima relied on in determining what could be applied and what could not be applied from American culture. Therefore, the gap between the two cultures was wide, and so far, Ashima's hybrid identity has not been completed because she did not easily accept the new world in the first years she spent in America. Over time, Ashima became more aware of her new situation. She realized that the destiny of her American-born children, Gogol and Sonia, is to be closer to Americans because they could not be separated from this social environment. She did not object to her children's birthday celebration even though she knew that they "*look forward to far more than the worship of Durga and Saraswati*" (Lahiri, 2003, p. 64).

Ashima and her husband, Ashoke, allow Gogol and Sonia to buy whatever they want from American products, as long as it isn't expensive. Ashima prepares American meals for them one day a week, and on Thanksgiving, she cooks turkeys for them, but she adds Indian spices to them. "*They learn to roast turkeys, albeit rubbed with garlic and cumin and cayenne, at Thanksgiving. For the sake of Gogol and Sonia they celebrate*" (Lahiri,

2003, p. 58). Gradually, Ashima began to integrate into the Western way of life. She got a job as a librarian and made many friends from different cultures. Ashima has become the epitome of the ideal cultural hybrid. She sticks to her traditions and accepts Western traditions. For example, she participates in the religious rituals of the Bengalis and also sends the Christians cards on the occasion of Christmas. After Ashok's death, Ashima's hybrid identity became more prominent. She followed the Hindu rituals of the funeral that the wife must take into account. She now manages the house, pays the bills, and drives the car. She devotes part of her time to her family and relatives in India. Ashima formed her "*third space*" between the Bengali and European cultures, and as a result, "*she will be without borders, without a home of her own, a resident everywhere and nowhere*" (Lahiri, 2003, p. 276).

3.2 Second-Generation Immigrant: Gogol/Nikhil

Differentiated by generational perspectives, *The Namesake* depicts globalization through the lens of interculturality, linguistics, and ethnicity. One aspect of cultural character development in the novel manifests as feelings of existential angst and alienation. From the older perspective, Ashima and Ashoke, who live in America and want to cling to their ways as long as they can, contrast with Gogol, Sonia, and Moushumi, the younger generation, who want to entirely assimilate into American society. The novel traces the struggle of Gogol between cultural identities, for he belongs wholly to neither India nor America but rather an in-between space. His name itself, Gogol, shows this hybridity in that it is neither Indian nor American but Russian. In that sense, hybridity denotes a mixing, crossing-over of distinct cultures that creates a new hybrid identity.

In *The Namesake*, the character of Gogol/Nikhil embodies the struggle of negotiating multiple identities. He grapples with the weight of his Indian heritage and his desire to assimilate into American society. As Gogol reflects on his name, he remarks, "*He hates his name. It's absurd, the way his parents still cling to India*" (Lahiri, 2003, p. 35). This quote encapsulates Gogol's conflict, where his name becomes a symbol of his cultural heritage that he simultaneously rejects and embraces. It exemplifies the complex negotiation of identity and the tension between the mother culture and the foreign culture. *The Namesake* vividly depicts the cultural interplay that shapes the characters' identity formation. Lahiri captures this interplay through Gogol's struggle to reconcile his given name, Nikhil, with his inherited name, Gogol. As Gogol contemplates changing his name legally, he muses, "*He wonders if by incorporating his good name into his legal name he can somehow alter his fate*" (Lahiri, 2003, p. 57). This quote underscores Gogol's desire to integrate his Indian heritage with his American identity. It exemplifies the intricate process of identity formation within a hybrid space, where cultural influences intertwine and shape an individual's sense of self.

According to "*Third Space*" and "*Hybridity*", Homi Bhabha's concept of the "*Third Space*" provides a framework for understanding the hybridity present in *The Namesake*. When Gogol visits India, Lahiri depicts his experience as a clash of cultures, as he feels like an outsider in both India and America. Gogol reflects, "*In America, they have no idea what to make of his parents, his background, his name... In India, he is a foreigner*" (Lahiri, 2003,

p. 183). This quote highlights the formation of a Third Space, where Gogol inhabits a liminal space that blurs the boundaries of cultural belonging. Lahiri's portrayal of the characters in *The Namesake* meets Homi Bhabha's concept of the "Third Space", an area of cultural intertwining. Gogol explores his immigrant experience; he confronts a space that overcomes societal norms of belonging. Lahiri portrayed this transformative process: "*He does not want to be anyone's son. And not just because he realizes that at some point soon, he will have to give up being a son and start being a father*" (Lahiri, 2003, p. 173). The quotation reveals Gogol's ambition for independence and autonomy, indicating his transition into the "Third Space", where he starts to shape his own cultural identity by combining elements of his heritage with the culture of his adopted homeland.

The Namesake examines the immigrants' devotion to their own roots while accepting aspects of the diaspora's culture. Lahiri portrays the importance of rituals and traditions in maintaining a connection to one's roots. Ashima, during her pregnancy, seeks solace in Indian customs, emphasizing her attachment to her mother's culture. Lahiri writes, "*She had been woken up with rice pudding rubbed on her cheeks, her forehead, her bosom*" (Lahiri, 2003, p. 49). This quotation exemplifies the characters' commitment to preserving their traditions amidst the foreignness of their surroundings. Finally, he was able to bring his American part and his Indian part to a third space to be an example of the second hybrid generation in the novel. Asha Choubey (2013) states that Gogol "*lives like a pendulum till he finally attains maturity to self-realization*" (p. 4).

After the death of his father, Gogol, he began to feel responsible for his family and became more attached to them. He said to his girlfriend Maxine when she advised him to stay away from home: "*I don't want to get away.*" (Lahiri, 2003, p. 152). Now he loves his name, which he was ashamed of because he feels that if he loses it, he will lose his loved ones who call him by that name. Although Gogol reconciled with his past and origin and returned to the arms of his mother culture, he did not deny American culture because he was subconsciously influenced by his Western surroundings. During his wedding ceremony to Moushumi, he followed Hindu teachings. He invited many Bengalis who congratulated Gogol, "*asking him to pose for photographs, to wrap his arms around families and smile*" and "*Shenai music plays on a boom box*" (Lahiri, 2003, p. 185). However, he could not ignore American traditions, so he cut the wedding cake. "*A cake is wheeled out, 'Nikhil Weds Moushumi' piped across its surface.*" (Lahiri, 2003, p. 186).

4. Cultural Hybridity in *White Teeth*

4.1. First-Generation Immigrants: Alsana and Samad

In *White Teeth*, Smith made the characters of the first generation of immigrants swing between the past, which represents their mother culture, and the present, which represents British culture; if they like the present, they are rooted in the past. They have a leg on each side, and as a result, there is a third space in which their hybrid culture is born. Smith said: "*That's the other thing about immigrants... they can no more escape their history than you can lose your own shadow*" (Smith, 2000, p. 466).

Alsana, Samad's wife, like other Asian female immigrants to Europe, collides with the culture of the host country that she is unfamiliar with. Alsana managed to balance this culture with that of her motherland. As an Indian woman, she's proud of her country and condemns the negative aspects of British society. She says: "*I come from the land of tea to this godforsaken land, and then I can't even afford a proper cup of it.*" (Smith, 2000, p. 440), and she adds: "*The English are the only people (...) who want to teach you and steal from you at the same time.*" (Smith, 2000, p. 365). Alsana believes and abides by the teachings of her religion, Islam. The clearest evidence of this is her dialogue with her niece; Alsana snapped, "*We are never out of the Creator's sight*" (Smith, 2001, p. 64).

At home, Alsana maintains the traditions and the Bengali language and does not allow her children to speak English. When her son, Magid, called her "*Mum*" instead of "*Amma*", she got angry and cried. "*Yes, M-M-Mark,*" said Alsana, close to tears at this last snub, the substitution of "*Mum*" for "*Amma*" (Smith, 2001, p. 143). She is worried about her son's marriage to a British woman; in this case, their kids will lose their Bengali genes, and this, for her, is "*both the most irrational and natural feeling in the world*" (Smith, 2001, p. 327). Alsana realizes that it is not possible to separate their children from their roots and past, despite their presence in distant countries governed by different customs and laws. Commenting on her simultaneous pregnancy with that of her Jamaican friend, Clara, Alsana said, referring to their children: "*The past is made up of more than words, dear... These bumps*" - Alsana pats them both - "*will always have daddy-long-legs for fathers. One leg in the present, one in the past. Their roots will always be tangled*" (Smith, 2001, p. 68).

Nevertheless, Alsana is open-minded, unlike her husband Samad. She declared, "*But I am not like Samad Iqbal. I restrain myself. I live. I let live*" (Smith, 2001, p. 235). Alsana thinks that her sons are different from her because they grew up in a different society and are exposed to great pressure from the environment where they found themselves, although it wasn't their fault. Thus, she debated with Samad, stressing that hybridity is an inevitable fact, which must be accepted and coexisted with. She argued: "*Do you think anybody is English? Really English? It's a fairy tale!*" (Smith, 2001, p. 196). Alsana opposed Samad's decision to send Magid to India on the pretext of preserving his traditions and religion. When Samad insisted on his decision, the punishment for Samad, during the period that Magid spent in India, was to answer all of Samad's questions with this sentence: "*Maybe, Samad Miah, maybe not.*" (Smith, 2001, p. 203). Alsana despises her niece, Neena, and calls her a "*Niece-of-Shame*" because she was a lesbian. However, she feels that there are ties that bring her together with Neena, so she asks for Neena's help to reveal the plan of Chalfens against her son, Millat.

The Indian immigrant Samad, who works as a waiter in London, has a character that combines contradictions. At the same time, he feels love and hate for Indian culture as well as for British culture. He is proud to be Muslim and Indian. He did his best to stick to his religious faith, but he failed to resist the temptations in London, so we see him drinking wine and having sex with women. While working, he wears a sign that reads, "*I am a Muslim, but I'm not sure if Allah has abandoned me or if I have abandoned Allah. I have a friend named Archie, as well as others. Even though I am 49 years old, women still turn in the street. On occasion*" (Smith, 2001, p. 58).

Samad is obsessed with Indian history and the glories of his ancestors. He claims that his grandfather, Panda, fired the first shot in the Indian Revolution in 1857. Samad said: "*My great-grandfather Mangal Pande,*" he continued, looking around for the recognition the name deserved but finding only blank, pancake English faces, "*was the great hero of the Indian Mutiny!*" (Smith, 2001, p. 82). In another scene, Samad expresses his hatred for India and disgust that he was an Indian soldier and blames the army of India for the paralysis of his hand. Samad states: "*This fucking hand the useless Indian army gave me for my troubles...Never go to India... it is a place for fools and worse than fools*" (Smith, 2001, pp. 87-88). Samad admires Mrs. Poppy, his children's British school. He finds himself facing the difficult test of not violating the instructions of Islam and resisting Poppy's Beauty. "*Samad realized that he desired her more than any woman he had met in the previous ten years.*" (Smith, 2001, p. 125). He acquiesces and has a sexual relationship with her. Ironically, he criticizes the moral corruption of British society and blames it for his failure as a Muslim, so he decides to send his son Magid to India to be a pure Muslim. He believes that the culture and lifestyle in London have a negative impact on children, and this was what he observed in Alsana's nephews who grew up in Britain. Samad describes them: "*They refuse to go to the mosque, they dress strangely, and they eat garbage. There is no regard for tradition. When it comes to corruption, it is referred to as assimilation*" (Smith, 2001, p. 190).

4.2. Second-Generation Immigrants: Magid, Millat, and Irie

The second generation, who were born and raised in Britain, are attracted to the luster of civilization and the freedom enjoyed by English society, and they are influenced by the colonial thoughts which call for Britishness Superiority. Magid, Samad's son, is embarrassed by his name, which reflects his Asian culture, so he changed it to Mark Smith. He wanted to belong to British society. "*Magid wished to be a member of another family.... He wanted his mother to make cello music, not sewing machine music, and he wanted his father to be a doctor, not a one-handed waiter*" (Smith, 2001, p. 151). When his father forced him to go to Bengal under the pretext of preserving his religious values, Magid rebelled against his father's rejection of the idea of Hybridization. He clings more to the British part of his identity to the extent that upon his return from India, he became "*more English than the English.*" (Smith, 2001, p. 365). When Samad invited him to a restaurant, Magid ordered a pork sandwich, which is forbidden by Muslims. "*I'd like a bacon sandwich. Yes, that's it. I'd like a juicy but well-done bacon sandwich topped with tomato ketchup. On brown*" (Smith, 2001, p. 421).

Millat, Magid's twin brother, is trying to assimilate all the cultures he comes into contact with; this makes him a good example of assimilation. He is a good negotiator of the hybrid identity he has acquired. However, there is a hybrid conflict in Millat's unconscious because all these cultures are parts of his personality, and no part was prominent enough to reflect his desired identity. For the Bengalis, he is excessively English, and for Englishmen, he is Paki or "Other". Millat wanted to adapt to the community where he lives, so he is used to sleeping with white women and drinking. Simultaneously, he is looking for his origin, so he joined an extremist Islamic group called

KEVI. He thought that this group would give him a sense of belonging to his original culture, so he got angry when Magid asked him to leave it. "*Then he gets irritated about Magid. He vents all of his rage on me. And he'd like me to stop hanging out with KEVIN. I'm a bigger fucking Muslim than he is*" (Smith, 2001, p. 317). Undoubtedly, the backfiring of Samad's predictions about his twin, Magid, who became a first-rate Englishman, and Mulla, who became a radical Muslim, is an instance of the hybridization that occurred to the second generation of immigrants who depict "*an ambivalent attitude toward the two cultures they are caught up in*" (Graaf, 2012, p. 15).

Irie, the black girl, is another character, employed by Smith to depict the cultural Hybridity of the second generation. She is the daughter of white Briton Archie and Black Jamaican Clara. She is the meeting point of black-and-white culture. Whenever she is asked about her origin, she answers: "*Half Jamaican. Half English*" (Smith, 2001, p. 257). Irie's Jamaican physical features, such as black skin, coarse hair, and big breasts and buttocks, are an embarrassment to her because such features do not meet the standards of beauty in white culture. Furthermore, British society looks down on those who have these physical traits, so Irie feels alienated in this nation. She said sadly: "*There was England, a gigantic mirror, and there was Irie, without a reflection. 'A stranger in a strange land'*" (Smith, 2001, p. 222).

Irie struggles to reduce the variation between her and British girls to the extent that she burns her scalp with ammonia to straighten her hair. Although Irie is obsessed with Western culture, she did not abandon black culture, so she traveled to her grandmother in Jamaica to find her roots. At the moment of arrival, "*Jamaica appeared to Irie as if it had just been created. She, like Columbus, created it simply by discovering it.*) *This well-forested and watered area. Where...could a young white captain meet a young black girl without complications?*" (Smith, 2001, p. 379). After she had slept with Magid and Mulla, Irie gave birth to a baby girl whose father is not known because Magid and Mulla are twins; for this reason, genetic tests failed to determine the father of the baby. This child is a mixture of Jamaican, Bangladeshi, and British roots, so she is free from the polarity imposed by her parental roots. This child is "*free like Pinocchio, a puppet clipped of paternal strings*" (Smith, 2001, p. 488). She does not have a fixed identity and represents Smith's vision of hybrid genealogy and cultural hybridity.

5. Comparative Analysis: Hybrid Identities Across Two Generations and Two Cultures

The Namesake and *White Teeth* serve as a powerful exploration of cultural hybridity and the immigrant experience. Throughout the journeys of the characters, Lahiri explores the complexities of negotiating identity, the formation of a hybrid space, and the association between the mother culture and the new culture. Based on Bhabha's concept of the "*Third Space*" and Hall's theories of "*Becoming*" and "*Being*", the novel highlights the cultural interweaving and the immigrants' simultaneous adherence to their backgrounds and adoption of the diaspora's culture. Thus, by presenting quotations from the novel, we have noticed the internal struggles of characters such as Gogol and Nikhil when they try to navigate their dual identities. Lahiri addresses the clash of cultures, the feeling of

displacement, and the seeking of belonging that shape their experiences. In these quotations, we witness the profound impact of cultural hybridity on the lives of the characters, stressing the nuanced exploration of identity formation and cultural negotiation.

The novels show the ongoing process of cultural transformation and the flexibility of cultural identity. Jhumpa Lahiri portrayed characters such as Ashima, who accept the transformation and adapt to a new culture while preserving their Indian norms. The emergence of norms and customs stresses the characters' devotion to their native culture, even as they accept characteristics of the culture of the diaspora. This depiction strengthens the dynamic nature of cultural hybridity and the importance of recognizing and preserving cultural heritage. *The Namesake* and *White Teeth* appear as remarkable literary works that explore the complexities of cultural hybridity within the immigrant experience. In their depiction of the characters' journeys, the novels offer insights into the formation of a hybrid space, the negotiation of identities, and the interplay between different cultural spaces. By drawing upon quotes from these novels and utilizing theoretical frameworks, this article has provided a deeper understanding of the themes of cultural hybridity and the immigrants' adherence to their heritage in *The Namesake* and *White Teeth*.

6. Conclusion

The Namesake and *White Teeth* are contemporary voices whispering in the reader's ear many issues that help in understanding the clash of cultures and its impact on immigrant identities that sometimes succumb to the attraction of other cultures, what Hall called "becoming," and at other times search for their roots, which he termed "being". This process of constant push and pull constitutes cultural hybridity, the third space in Bhabha's conceptualization, which is a significant manifestation of multiculturalism in cosmopolitan countries.

The Namesake by Jhumpa Lahiri is a dramatic representation in which notable individuals become sufferers of cultural hybridity. Hybridity stands for the formation of new transcultural styles within the contact region created by colonization. Cultural, social, political, and race-based hybridization, alongside linguistic hybridization, occurs. It addresses several aspects such as isolation, diaspora, displacement, immigration, globalization, marginality, ethnic background, the crisis of identity, and so forth. Crises of identity and isolation are strong manifestations of cultural hybridity. As a result, this story illustrates the antagonism between first- and second-generation immigrants. The prior generation sought to maintain its cultural legacy and tradition, but the new generation denies it and wants to be integrated into contemporary American society. Nonetheless, they are stuck between two societies and engage in culturally hybrid lives. *The Namesake* represents a powerful exploration of cultural hybridity, revealing the complex interplay between the mother culture and the foreign culture within the immigrant experience. Through the lens of characters like Gogol/Nikhil and Ashima, Lahiri examines the negotiation of identity, the formation of a hybrid space, and the

simultaneous adherence to heritage and adoption of the diaspora's culture. Concentrating upon Bhabha's concept of the "*Third Space*" and Hall's theories of "*Becoming*" and "*Being*," the novel underscores the dynamic and fluid nature of cultural identity, inviting readers to appreciate the richness that emerges from the blending of diverse cultural influences. *The Namesake* represents a poignant testament to the ongoing process of cultural negotiation and transformation, emphasizing the importance of recognizing and celebrating cultural diversity.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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