

I. A Journey From Pain to Establishment Within Diaspora

This research paper, especially, scrutinizes Jhumpa Lahiri's a major international best-seller, *The Namesake* published in the year 2003, to prove how Lahiri has presented the possibilities of diasporic condition. Generally, we believe that a person only gets pain and suffering in such a situation. But the novel draws our attention to the positive aspect of shifting of Non-Western immigrants to the West. The first generation immigrants of India, Ashoke and Ashima, after migrating to America, are leading high class life there. Gogol does not find any difficulty in adjusting himself in American society and lives the life as American people are living. The job is everything Ashoke has ever dreamed of. He has always hoped to teach in a university rather than work for a corporation. What a thrill, he thinks, to lecturing before a roomful of American students. What a sense of accomplishment it gives him to see his name printed under "faculty" directory. So, the novel calls out our attention to the positive aspect of diaspora through the story of Ganguli family.

Jhumpa Lahiri was born in 1967 in London, England of Bangali parents and was raised in Rhode Island, USA. Her stories have appeared in many American journals and her first collection, *Interpreter of Maladies*, won the Pulitzer Prize 2000 for fiction, the New Yorker prize for Best First Book, the PEN/Hemingway award and was short listed for Los Angeles Award. Though born in London, Jhumpa Lahiri moved to Rhode Island when she was three.

Jhumpa masterfully explores the theme of the complexities of the immigrant experience and foreignness, cultural disorientation, the conflicts of assimilation, and the tangled ties between generations and paints a portrait of an Indian family torn between the pull of respecting family traditions, and the American way of life.

The namesake takes the Ganguli family from their tradition-bound life in Calcutta through their fraught transformation into Americans. On the heels of their arranged weddings, Ashoke and Ashima Ganguli settle together in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Ashoke, an engineer by training, adapts and resists all things American. Ashima, during her pregnancy gets all the facilities in the hospital. In India, Ashima thinks to herself, women go home to their parents to give birth, away from husbands and in-laws and household cares, retreating briefly to childhood when the baby arrives. But it is in America, she is getting help by a nurse, who offers to fold up sari. A tray holding warm apple juice, jell-O, ice cream, and cold baked chicken is brought to her side by nurse named Patty. Dr. Ashley inspires her saying “No need to worry, everything is looking perfectly normal delivery, Mrs. Ganguli”. This shows how she is being assisted in the condition of diaspora. After the birth of the baby, the baby is brought up in a well manner. He is given the name Gogol by his father because he loves Russian literature and especially the writer Nicolai Gogol. Despite his parents’ efforts to keep him “Indianized”, he starts behaving like his American friends and doing the same thing they do. He gets good grade, and gets into Yale University.

It is obvious that the story revolves around Ashoke, Ashima and their children Gogol and Sonia. The way they have shifted from a highly restricted Bengali culture cannot be seen being tortured by American culture. Though, Ashima sometimes has difficulty in adjustment in America, it is rather because she is alone in the apartment. She is satisfied with the status Ashoke gets in American office and the way they are spending a very sophisticated life. After two years in an overheated university-subsidized apartment, Ashoke and Ashima are ready to purchase a home. They do not look in the historic district, where the chairman of Ashoke’s department lives, in an

eighteenth-century mansion to which he and Ashima and Gogol are invited once a year for Boaxing Day tea. Even it is his room at Yale where Gogol feels most comfortable. More than that, the most Americanized way of life can be seen in the second generation, especially Gogol.

A few years pass, and Gogol becomes an architect and falls in love with an American girl called Maxine. He starts to live with her family and becomes closer to them. This is the adjustment in American society he has made. When they had made their returning to Calcutta, Gogol and Sonia both get terribly ill. It is the air, the rice, the wind, their relatives casually remarks; they were not made to survive in a poor country, they say. Though they are at home, they are disconnected by the space, by the uncompromising silence that surrounds them. They still feel somehow in transit, still disconnected from their lives, bound up in an alternate schedule, an intimacy only the four of them share in India.

Since the publication of *The Namesake* in 2003, it has been analyzed from various perspectives. Amardeep Singh analyses the novel from the perspective of the character's struggle with the sense of namelessness. Commenting on the novel, he says:

The second generation protagonist, Gogol Ganguli struggles with a sense of namelessness on the one hand and what might he thought of as nominal over determination. On the other Gogol's struggle with naming, I argue, might be seen as emblematic of the crisis that prevails in the diasporic community to his which he belongs. (13)

Singh talks about the struggle of protagonist, Gogol Ganguli who has become nameless. This struggle is for the crisis of naming faced by Gogol in diasporic condition. He faces the problem as he is there in diasporic community of America.

Rani Sinha, as Asian American immigrant, feels Jhumpa has lent voice to her own feelings. In her review on *The Namesake* Sinha, as Somdatta Madel comments:

Jhumpa is sensational because of her manner, which is anything about sensationalist in describing the psyche of Bengalis who have settled into North American culture. Unlike the prosperity of recent purveyors of “ethnic exotica”, and I mean writers like Bharati Mukkharjee of Chitra Divakarani to aspire to florid excess in describing acculturation’s aches and pains, Lahiri writes with a depth and honesty which require no melodrama (Jhumpa Lahiri: The master storyteller 29).

Sinha says Jhumpa is sensational in her manner. As a result, she expresses the psyche of Bengalis who live in America. Lahiri honestly expresses that in the process of acculturation, these people get pain and suffering.

Commenting on the novel, as Lahiri’s expression, David H. Lynn says:

Her ambition is to play in the literary big leagues, with the Gogol’s and the Tolstoy-the Russian so praised by Indian professors [...] Gogol’s “the overcoat” plays a recurring role throughout *The Namesake* even beyond staking out Lahiri’s literary ambition. From first to last, literary it serves as a structural element, and at times that feels a bit forced. The epigraph, for example, concerns the naming of Akaky Akakyvitch, the Russian story’s central figure. (160-161)

In Lynn’s view Gogol and Tolstoy are the Russian writers, who have been praised by Indian professors but in *The Namesake* Lahiri has brought the reference of these writers to make her own literary writing a great. Perhaps, she might have her own literary ambition but it is beyond that ambition.

Similarly, talking about Lahiri's novel *The Namesake*, CJ Gillen finds it to be highly influenced by Jan Vermeer (17th century painter). Gillen says:

Something about Jhumpa Lahiri's new novel, *The Namesake*, reminds me of a Vermeer painting. She writes in quiet language that neither calls attention to itself nor invites the reader to wrestle with it, yet her eye for details and precise descriptions draw us into an almost tactile experience of her settings. Far from being a literary virtual reality ride, or a voyeuristic zoo-train view of an exotic subculture, however, these sensory experiences, like the surface patterns of a rivulet, suggest the contours of what lies below and behind the flow of her narrative, making our empathy for her characters more palpable.

Gillen talks about the resemblance between *The Namesake* and Vermeer's painting. According to Gillen, it is not her use of quiet language that draws the attention of the reader rather her novel presents vivid descriptions and details of settings which draw the attention of her readers. Thus, she is able to draw the empathy of her readers to her characters with the use of description.

However, Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* can be taken as a novel, which deals with the possibilities of diasporic condition. In this post-colonial era, the immigrants do not get the problems of diasporic pain, identity crisis and other problems rather the blend of cultures gives birth to the hybridity and transnational identity. In this context, the notion of third space and hybridity in immigrant writer's work has drawn the attention of many critics and has become an imperative subject to explore. However, rarely have critics tried to find nexus between all the immigrant writers. They have largely overlooked common grounds, a space upon which the immigrants share and create their transnational identities. This research paper, then

attempts to answer my central question: To what extent does it stabilize the possibilities in diasporic condition? It is likely that the immigrants live in a land of nowhere, resulting from their attempt to overcome cultural issues and negotiate diverse racial identities. The conflict between rootedness, constituting a tie to their past, and uprootedness, living in the present, disrupts their lives. Then what is the common meeting ground between these worlds? Do contemporary immigrant writers still explore the themes of dislocation, displacement and uprootedness? Or do they attempt to negotiate the difference and form fluid identities in their works? As this research will show, contemporary immigrant writers no longer cling to the themes of dislocation, displacement, uprootedness and the identity crisis. Because they are affected by the notions of globalization and transnationalism. They locate and stabilize their identities in the new territories.

This research paper discusses the concept of possibilities in the diasporic condition in relation to transnationalism associated with the concepts such as hybridity, transculturation and migration. The theoretical modality of this research work is heavily set on the concepts like hybridity, formation of transnational identity, in-between space and third space. The theories especially follow post colonial theorists like Homi K. Bhabha's concept of formation of hybrid transnational identity and third space and Arjun Appadurai's concept of nationalism which believes that nationalism is not limited to a certain geographical boundary rather it crosses the national boundary and constructs transnational imaginary identity.

Thus, with the passage of time and birth of post colonial theorists, the meaning and the definition of diaspora has been changed. The concept, especially which talked about negative meaning is no longer there. These theorists believe that in the age of globalization, people come in contact with each other with various

objectives. As a result their languages, cultures, religious norms and values get mixed up with one another which ultimately lead to the birth of hybridity. It is something very new, having its own importance that is similar to Bhabha's Third Space. This space is the common ground for negotiation and transformation which is neither assimilation nor otherness but represents the history of coalition building and the transnational and cultural diasporic connection. Thus, this connection created by immigrants people can be taken as the possibilities of diasporic situation as it is in *The Namesake* with Ganguli Family.

This dissertation has been divided into three chapters to alleviate the study of possibilities of diasporic condition with respect to the Ganguli family. The first chapter includes the general introduction to the study and it also presents the hypothesis, elaboration of the statement of the problem against the backdrop of the different critics' commentaries on the novel. The second chapter combines the methodology and the textual analysis. That is, it elucidates the theoretical tool applied for the study of the text by locating plenty of textual evidences from the novel. It basically reveals how a person can get positive aspect even in diasporic situation. And at last it reaches the conclusion that possibilities are achieved even from diasporic condition. It concludes the research with a brief recounting observation of the work affirming the hypothesis. Finally, all the chapters will attempt to revolve around what is the possibility in diasporic condition and how it can be achieved.

II. Diasporic Possibilities in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*

Before analyzing the experience and problems of the diasporas presented in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*, an attempt is being made here to define the term "diaspora". Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur, in their book *Theorizing Diaspora*, define diaspora in relation to its historical to the present meaning. According to them, etymologically the term diaspora is derived from the Greek term '*diasperien*'. Here, the word is divided as '*dia*' and '*sperien*', where the former refers to 'across' and the later 'to sow or scatter seeds'. In this sense, the word diaspora obviously refers to something that is beyond the border of a certain geographical locality. So the dislocation and the displacement from the native land are always there in the diasporic situation. In this sense, Braziel and Mannur also take diaspora which is associated with "displaced communities of people who have been dislocated from their native homeland through the movements of migrants, immigrants, or exile" (1). First used in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures explicitly intended for the Hellenic Jews communities in Alexandria (circa 3rd century BCE) to describe the Jews living in exile from the homeland of Palestine, diaspora suggests a dislocation from the nation-state or geographical location of origin and a relocation in one or more nation-states, territories, or countries. The term "diaspora" then, has religious significance and pervaded medieval rabbinical writings on the Jewish diaspora, to describe the plight of Jews living outside of Palestine.

Further, if we look the historical definition of the term we get the concept of migration as central. But the migration had taken place by the forceful banishment or exile from the native land. And the political and the religious reasons were at the heart of banishment. Thus, the migration, resulting the diasporic situation, was not the voluntary act rather it was the compulsion. In relation to drawing the political and

religious significance to the diaspora, Braziel and Mannur talk about the Hellenic and Jews communities in Alexandria. According to them, these Jews communities, as recorded in Hebrew scriptures, were “living in exile from the homeland of Palestine” (1). It confirms the religious and political effect in Jews diaspora by showing the “plight of Jews living outside Palestine” (1). However, in the present condition of globalization the essence and the condition of diaspora are drastically changed. With the starting of the nineteenth century, and especially after the colonial rule, the vast migration took place for the sake of opportunity. That is, in the present time the essence of diaspora is drastically changed in the sense that it is no more a forceful banishment rather an intentional and deliberate relocation for upgrading the social, personal, political and economic condition.

Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake* explores the idea of diasporic possibilities of Non-Western immigrants in the West, the United States, with reference to the concepts such as transnationalism characterized by immigration, hybridity, transculturation and in-between space. Obviously, in the process of migration, one gets pain and suffering until and unless they are capable of adjusting in the new surroundings. But slowly and gradually with the passage of time one gets influenced by the culture, language, environment and the people surrounding them. Lahiri depicts the condition of Non-Western immigrants, especially those who are in the process of the formation of transnational identity, in the United States. Lahiri’s characters identify the space between different cultural and national borders as liminal space in which they diverge and intersect. This is the process through which they ultimately form hybrid transnational identities.

In the novel, Lahiri shows the formation of identity in two generations. Ashoke and Ashima Ganguli, the first generation of immigrants, has certainly

difficulty to hybridize in the foreign land. Their hybridity was more dominated by their native Bengali Indian culture. But Gogol, their son, who represents the second generation obviously longs towards American way of life style. There is hybridity in him, but is dominated by American culture. However, the question of identity is a matter of fact for both the generations. So, they at last create their own identity. Lahiri shows the changing condition of diaspora in the age of globalization. During their stay in new country and interaction with the present native culture, the subjectivities and the modes of thinking and diaspora also changed. They too intervene in the cultural discourse of the dominant culture. So ultimately there comes a considerable change in the outlook and identities of diasporas with the changed global, economic, political and cultural scenario. That is, at last, Ashoke and Ashima turn towards American hybridized culture and Gogol turns towards Indian hybridized culture. So they give birth to a new kind of transnational identity that is the identity of Third Space, which is the very personal identity of Third World immigrants to America.

Lahiri's main target is to show the possibilities by constructing transnational identities of immigrants, while locating and stabilizing them in foreign land, United States. Portraying the nature of mobility of people and their cultures across nation, she deterritorializes the definite national and cultural identities. And by doing so, Lahiri intends that an individual cannot confine himself/herself within the narrow concept of national and cultural identities in the age of globalization. Similar concept was discussed by Arjun Appadurai in the context of mobilization of people. Appadurai, has said that nativeness and native places have become very complex as more and more people identify themselves to deterritorialized homelands, cultures, origins. In fact when people are no longer bound to a single place, a "woof of human motion" occurs and they deal with realities of having to move or the fantasies of wanting to

move (Disjuncture and Difference in Global Cultural Economy-34). Arjun Appadurai, speaking on the mobilization of the people, says that people are no longer bound to a single place. As they are not able to feel at home in the new territory, they develop a sense of inhabiting imaginary homelands. While they live in the present experience of new cultures, they also inherit and practice parts of their cultures of origin, which is a process of hybrid identity formation. That is, nativeness and native places have become very complex as more and more people identify themselves to deterritorialize homelands, cultures, origins. Thus, people are no longer bound to a single place.

And in the tradition of moving from one locality to another the concept of identity becomes a most important factor. The new locality directly affects a person's identity, so they ultimately have to create transnational identity. In other words, the very concept of transnationalism is associated with hybridity, transculturation and migration. It is the concept of third space which is a common ground for negotiation and transformation which is neither assimilation nor otherness but representation of history of coliation building and transnational and cultural diasporic connection.

Immigrants in diasporic situation live in a land of nowhere, resulting from the attempt to overcome cultural issues and negotiate diverse racial identities. The conflict between rootedness constituting a tie to their past and uprootedness, living in the present, disrupt their life. Lahiri by taking departure from traditional theme of diaspora explores the third space where her characters create their own transnational identity. Similar concept is discussed by Bhabha. Bhabha takes hybridity as an important factor for formation of transnational identity. He defines hybridity as “the intersubjectivities and collective experience of nationness, community interest or cultural values are negotiated” without “an assumed or imposed hierarchy” (2-4). Thus, hybridity is the intercultural space of in-betweenness and liminality where

identity is formed through the negotiation between different cultures. So, the concept of nationality is important for the creation of identity. Without the existence of nation the identity could not be guaranteed.

In Lahiri's novel too, the characters create their transnational identity on the basis of their home in America and kinship with white people. But it is another thing that they take long time to reach that ultimate stage. The novel is about an Indian Bengali family settled in America. The story starts with Ashoke Ganguli, who as a young student in India decides to further his education in the United States. The way Ashoke came in America implies the immense tendency of migration of non-western people to western countries. Ashoke remembers the motive behind his coming to America. In his trip to Jameshedpur to meet his grandparents, Ashoke met a middle aged Bengali businessman, Ghosh, who appeals to Ashoke to travel the other world where opportunities can be achieved: "Before it is too late, without thinking too much about it first, pack a pillow and a blanket and see as much of the world as you can. You will not regret it. One day it will be too late" (16). Here, like the ideas of David Ludden, in "Presidential Address: Maps in the Mind of the Mobility of Asia", Ghosh too believes mobility is important for civilization, culture and betterment of life.

In the meantime, "Ashoke, a doctoral candidate in electrical engineering at MIT, went back to India to marry an Indian girl" (2). There he married Ashima, who belongs to traditional Bengali family. At first, Ashima has some difficulties in adjusting her life in new country. Generally, when peoples' language, religion and custom are different, they face cultural shock and their cultural practices are mocked at and there is a threat to their ethnic and cultural identity. They stand bewildered and confused, nostalgic and homesick and show resistance also to the discourse of power in various forms. They live in the condition of in-between. Salman Rushdie in his

essay “Imaginary Homelands” expresses the same concept. He says this living in-between condition is very painful and marginalizing for the diaspora. There is yearning for “home,” to go back to “the lost origin” and “imaginary homelands” (9-21). These are created from the fragmentary and partial memories of the homelands. But in the following generations these confusions, problems and yearnings become less intense as they get influenced by the culture of that country and also adopt themselves to it. For example, Ashima during her pregnancy gets help in the hospital. Patty, the nurse helps her “out of bed, tucks her feet one by one into slippers, drapes a second night gown around her shoulders, just think, Patty says as Ashima struggles to stand. In a day or two you will be half the size. Patty takes Ashima’s arm as they step out of the room, into the hallway when Ashima is not able to walk, she says I cannot but Patty helps and says you can squeeze my hand, squeeze as tight as you like” (6). It shows that she gets not only pain and suffering rather she is being assisted even in the land of America. The yearnings to her home country become less as she is used to living with the surroundings and getting opportunities.

However, Ashima along with her husband has the problem of purity of their Bengali tradition. That is, they want to hybridize their culture, provided that in their hybridity Bengali tradition and culture must be kept in the upper position. With the birth of the new baby, there was the chance of first potent danger in their purity. The American trend in hospital becomes the first site of resistance to the family and the community practice adapted by Bengali. They wait for a letter from Ashima’s grandmother that will carry the name of a new born baby. Since the letter did not come on time of releasing the baby from the hospital, they must name him for birth certificate. But it was not Bengali tradition, they believe that only the senior person could name their grandchildren, and it takes time. So naming is a longer process in

Bengali family. Here, Lahiri says: “names can wait. In India parents take their time. It was not unusual for years to pass before the name, the best possible name was determined” (25). At this time, the Gangulis are in dilemma, for the first time they realize that American culture intervening the very Bengali culture.

Their hesitation to keep their culture pure could not stop them to be in contact with American families. They want to sustain themselves in foreign land utilizing the condition of diaspora. When they move to the small university town outside Boston, Ashoke was particularly aggregating to the academic space and through it the national space. “Asoke has been hired as an assistant professor of electrical engineering at the university. In exchange for teaching five classes, he earns sixteen thousand dollars a year. He is given his own office, with his name etched onto a strip of black plastic by the door. What a sense of accomplishment it gives him to see his name printed under “Faculty” in the university directory” (48-49). These things are obviously the sign of progress for Ganguli’s. Further, their longing towards hybridity becomes clear with their decision of buying a house at the Pemberton Road among white neighbors. To accept the white as their neighbor is their will to be in contact with the American way of life. Lahiri describes the situation of buying the house as: “in the end they decide on a singled two-story colonial in a recently built development, a house previously occupied by no one, erected on a quarter acre of land. This is the small patch of America to which they lay claim” (51).

So, their decision of purchasing the house is an attempt to guarantee their belongingness in America and getting possibilities. Similarly, to have the relationship with the white American is an attempt to create an imaginary community on the basis of their belongingness. Unlike other post-colonial critic, Homi K. Bhabha focuses on the chance of possibilities or opportunities in the diasporic condition. Bhabha does not

believe that, in the present age of mobilization, the diaspora should only be taken as the pain oriented condition. He believes that the colonized immigrants' location in the West, bring them in contact with completely new culture, tradition, place, language and life style. And this interaction with new scenario obviously brings change in their longing for the native culture. That is, people's performing new culture ultimately "brings a process of signification that must erase any prior or originary presence" (145).

So they became close to American lifestyle on the basis of imagined community. With the passage of time, Ashoke and Ashima become habitual in their American life. Especially, Ashima is the prototype of the hybridization and the creation of transnational identity. She accepts the American life style in her acculturation. And her acculturation at one stage makes her join a library as a part time job. So their ties with India begin to weaken. Lahiri describes the situation of hybridization as: "their lives in New England swell with fellow Bengali friends, the members of that other, former life, those who know Ashima and Asoke not by their good names but by Monu and Mithu, slowly dwindle" (63). It clarifies that Ashoke and Ashima now distance themselves from the Indian community and their longing to home country. They slowly but surely allow themselves to move toward hybrid cultural location. Here, understanding Bhabha's notion of cultural contacts obviously hints towards the effect in the immigrants' life. Here, the time factor is important. That is, with the passage of time, their interaction with foreign culture emerge the innovative possibility. Bhabha, in the same book quotes Bakhtin, who believes that "repeated attempt to read the national space achieved only in the fullness of time" (144). Implying this concept of time factor, Bhabha means to say that "the borderline

work of culture demands an encounter with newness” (7). This encounter with newness is the birth to hybridity which makes people independent, doing things alone.

This step towards independence brings “pride in doing it alone, in devising a routine” (34). When Ashima retrieves all her shopping items at “the MBTA lost and found... [and] not a teaspoon [is] missing”(42), she begins to trust the American system and to feel “connected to Cambridge in a way she has not previously thought possible”(43). She learns to do a lot of American things. She starts inviting non-Indian friends to her home, American women who also become her shopping companions. She also learns about other women living alone because “they are divorced and dating in middle age” (162). This is the same Ashima who always had feared her children turning into Americans, who used to cook Indian foods, and who for the first time had felt a touch of a man by putting her feet into the American made shoes of Ashoke at the age of nineteen. She was against Gogol’s affair with a white American girl. But now she becomes positive about an intercultural love affair and marriage: “from time to time Ashima asks Gogol if he has a new girlfriend. In the past she broached the topic defensively, but now she often asks one day whether it is possible to patch things up with Maxine”(191).

It is her understanding of cultures and her living in different social relations that make Ashima become tolerant of her children’s Americanization. Supporting this idea Bhabha clarifies that “in the stage of collaboration and contestation between the cultures, the immigrant finds himself in the in-between position” (2). But this stage is the stage of ambiguity, at first sight. Later, the person becomes habitual of it with the hope of getting something new from it. In this stage, slowly and gradually his habit to singular class and culture move away. That is, he tries to be “aware of the subject positions” (1). This awareness in the side of immigrants is the good sign or the sign of

hope for his future. And this hope, at last, gives him the sense of “identity in the modern world” (1).

Such changes in attitude, an attempt to be released from the confinement of narrow national identity, can be seen in other characters too. Like Ashima, Moushumi’s mother is also a typical example of an Indian wife. She is almost ignorant of the outer world. Although Moushumi’s mother lived abroad for thirty-two years, in England and now in America, “she does not know how to drive, does not have a job, and does not know the difference between a checking and a savings account. And yet she is a perfectly intelligent woman, was an honors student in philology at Presidency College before she was married off at twenty-two” (247).

In the same way, Bhabha, in *The Location of Culture*, suggests that in the in-between space of the cultural border land is a place of cultural transformation and change where fixed and essential identities are deconstructed. For this reason he accepts that “the borderline work of culture demands an encounter with newness that is not part of the continuum of past and present. It creates a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation” (7). Bhabha argues that such borderline culture innovates the performance of present by renewing the past, “refiguring it as a contingent in-between space” (7). Reading from the frame work of Bhabha’s notion of borderland culture, Lahiri’s characters can be seen dwelling between different cultures and engaging in transcultural conversations. One of the important techniques that Lahiri uses in the novel to liberate her character from the narrow confinement of national boundaries is her attempt to contrast between the initial and later attitudes and behavior of characters. In the beginning, the characters are seen holding strictly to their cultural roots but later they go through different changes. They go towards forming their identities as hybrid and transnational.

However, here Lahiri's concern is not to emphasize the ancestral cultural values that her characters hold in America. Rather, by juxtaposing the immigrants' initial experiences and practices in America with their recent adoption and immersion into American culture, she suggests the transient nature of identity, pushing the characters towards inhabiting transnational space on American soil. As Lahiri's immigrant characters live in the liminal space by attempting to adhere to the old values and negating U.S. culture, something new begins to emerge. In this regard, their immigrant experience reflects to what Bhabha suggests: "The negating activity is, indeed, the intervention of the beyond that establishes a boundary: a bridge, where presencing begins because it captures something of the estranging sense of the relocation of the home and the world" (9). Bhabha's concern about cross-cultural initiations is particularly evident in Ashima. Although she resists U.S. culture in the beginning, later she starts to adapt it. A sense of relocation replaces her earlier feelings of homelessness in the United States.

Furthermore, Moushami's parents accept an American guy named Graham as their son-in-law. When she brings him home in New Jersey, to her enormous surprise, her parents welcome him. Like American parents, they think that Moushami is old enough to decide her life so "it did not matter to them that he was an American. Enough of their friends' children had married Americans, had produced pale, dark-haired, half-American grandchildren, and none of it was as terrible as they had feared"(216). As Lahiri's immigrant's characters live in the liminal space by attempting to adhere to the world values and negating United State's culture, something new begins to emerge. Although she resists United State's culture in the beginning, later she starts to adopt it. A sense of relocation replaces her earlier feeling of homelessness in the United States. Moreover, for Bhabha to become habituated in

the so called modern world (that is West) one should forget his original or native old culture. That is, without cultural difference the chance of progress to any individual would be difficult. So, to get the new possibility or new process one should focus on those moments and processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural difference. That is, the in-between position or the “cultural differences” are necessary to get the sign of progress even If one is far away from his native land and culture (1).

Likewise, it also seems quite acceptable for Ashoke too. He is an enthusiastic reader not only of “Charles Dickens, Graham Greene and Somerset Maugham, but also of eminent Russian writers like Dostoyesvsky and Tolstoy” (12-13). He looks to the West for inspiration or self-liberation, believing that the West is a more fortunate place. A chance encountered by Ashoke in a train with a fellow Bengali, Ghosh, reiterates the rhetoric of the West/America as the place of prosperity. Given his willingness to depart and to prosper, he begins “to envision another sort of future.....walking away, as far as he could from the place in which he was born and in which he had merely died” (20). Influenced by prosperity, he slides more easily into the process of Americanization when he arrives in the United States. The “fountain pen” which is a marker of high status for Indian intellectuals, a custom most probably borrowed from the English tradition, gives way to the American “ballpoint” (65). He “stops wearing jackets and ties to the university” despite being a turned full professor, because he does not want to appear different from his American Colleagues (65). More than that, there is also the sign of the development of the selfhood and evolution of new identity there in the in-between position. That is, despite shared history and the values, the in-between position, the possibility of collaboration. At the same time, there is also the chance of contestation. But this contestation, here, with the interaction with collaborative force struggles for the development of identity and

selfhood both in the level of society and individual. Clarifying these possibilities in the in-between spaces, Bhabha writes “these in-between spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood-singular or communal- that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sights of collaboration and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself” (1-2).

Furthermore, purchase of a house for his family in the New English neighborhood “appears no different from their neighbors”, except for “the name on the mailbox, and apart from the issues of Indian Abroad and Sangbad Bichitra that are delivered there”(64). Later, this house becomes a place where frequent gatherings of the Bengali community take place and even debate intensely “about politics of America, a country in which none of them is eligible to vote” (38). But this indicates their allegiance to their American space. Similarly, Bhabha says that cultural differences or the in-between space develops the communitarian value among the marginal people that is third world immigrants. It has the capacity to negotiate cultural value. However, this cultural difference does not reflect any stream of culture totally. Rather it has the capacity to synthesize two cultures (but this synthesizing creates much possibility for the marginal people). So this stage of “synthesis must not hastily be read as the reflection of pre-given ethnic or cultural traits set in the fixed tablet of tradition”. And this representation of the marginal people is possible because of the “on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities” (2).

Thus, Lahiri’s characters can be seen dwelling between different cultures and engaging in transcultural conversations. The interaction between her characters and the host groups slowly opens up the space for cultural transformation that characterizes the in-between space as a third element. One of the most important techniques that Lahiri uses in the novel to liberate her characters from the narrowed

confinement of national boundaries is her contrast between the initial and later attitudes and behavior of the characters. In the beginning Lahri's characters are seen holding strictly to their cultural roots. But later they go through changes in their demeanor. However, cultural transformation does not take place at once in *The Namesake*. It becomes a process that shuttles the characters towards forming their identities as hybrid and transnational. This process, for example, can be seen in Ashima by contrasting her character in different stages of her life in the United States. When she first comes to America, she feels completely lonely in the foreign land. She is shocked to find people who live detached from one another. When the time comes to give birth to her first child, she is "terrified to raise a child in a country where she is related to no one, where she knows so little, where life seems so tentative and spare"(6). She remembers her home country where most of the relatives and elders gather for blessing when a baby is born. In contrast, she finds no one surrounding her and her child in America except "Nandis and Dr. Gupta, who are only the substitutes for the people who really ought to be surrounding them" (24). This is a common experience of immigrants unaccustomed to new cultures of the new land.

Although the immigrants are immersed to the cultures of the United States, the deterritorialization of their identities becomes profound as they adopt and preserve their cultures in modified forms. Although they live physically in the U.S., they also live emotionally in their land of origin. As such, the immigrants live in between two different cultural lines, negotiating the different worlds and adopting hybrid identities through transnational exchange. By between the lines, it refers to the unarticulated space between two cultures where cultural transformation takes place. This in between space is, thus, a place of hybridity and negotiation. Bhabha argues that the intercultural space where hybrid identity is formed is a space of "in-betweenness and

liminality” (37). He also recognizes the liminal space as the “Third Space” characterized by “discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew” (37). This third space ideally exists where people of different cultures accept and blend their practices and values without one dominating the other, but it can also exist where there is a dominant culture, as usually happens in the experiences of immigrants in America. Thus, this liminal space between the cultures of immigrants and the host societies causes individuals to go through a process that deconstructs the fixed notion of identity.

What appears to be most suitable for these Bengali families is that they all come from Calcutta and are Bengalis. All of which turns into a common terrain for speaking the Bengali language and other similar practices, for instance, Gogol’s baptism, “the annaprasan, his rice ceremony” (38), which symbolizes “the Bengali staff of life” (39). It is the first big event that brings these Bengali families to the Ganguli’s place; the Nandis, the Mitras, the Benarjees. It is a shared culture that prompts them to get together to celebrate each ceremony and festival in the United States. The gathering of the Bengali families at the Ganguli’s house as the basis for shared cultural identities is seen to be more pertinent when Ashoke passes away. At this difficult time all the friends of the family come to Ganguli’s house from six different states lining up their cars the whole of Pemberton Road, and take care of them. For the first week, they are never alone. No longer a family of four, they become a household of ten, sometimes twenty, friends coming by to sit with them quietly in the living room, their heads bent, drinking cups of tea, a cluster of people attempting to make up for his father’s loss”(179).

Occasionally, the Gangulis also make a few summer visits to other places in America and Canada, “where they had other Bengali friends” (155), and their Indian lifestyle would be replicated in feats such as having a big group of people handled in a rented van, or they would rent a single room that would accommodate more than one family. Gogol remembers that once they went to “a Christmas party at Moushumi’s parents’ home. He and Sonia had not wanted to go; Christmas was supposed to be spent with just family” (200). Brought up in the U.S. culture, Gogol and Sonia know that such festivals are meant to be celebrated in their own home among the family members. But their parents believe that “In America Bengali friends were the closest thing they had to family and they instruct them to respect the Bengali people” (201). Further, this process of cultural negotiation leads marginal people to the moments of historical transformation. That is, to gain the possibility in the cultural level, the contradiction is necessary. Bhabha believes that there is no possibility of the development of new culture and new possibility in the mere repetition of the old tradition and values. That is, the power to tradition could be reinscribed through the condition of contingencies and contradictoriness. So that it could attend upon the lives of minority people. Thus, the recognition of the tradition is only the partial form of identification. In reference to this notion of cultural difference and contradictoriness for the establishment of marginal peoples’ identity, Bhabha writes, Rene Green: Green reflects the need to “understand cultural difference as the production of minority identities” (3). That is, to have the cultural difference a person must go outside to have the cultural interaction with other culture. Further clarifying the statement, Green says that, “it requires a person to step outside of him/herself to actually see what he/she is doing” (3).

However, Lahiri illustrates these Indian immigrants are estranged from their birth country and have adopted some specific characteristics of the new cultures over them. “They learn to roast turkeys, albeit rubbed with garlic and cumin and cayenne, at Thanksgiving, to nail a wreath to their door in December, to wrap woolen scarves around snowmen, to color boiled eggs violet and pink at Easter” (64). Although these are Christian celebrations, these characters practice them the way they prepare for the Hindu celebration of festivities associated with “goddesses Durga and Saraswati” (64). Turkey at Thanksgiving is a U.S. cultural tradition, but they prepare turkey the way they used to roast chicken back in India; “rubbed with garlic and cumin and cayenne” (64). Similarly like Durga pooja, one of the greatest festivals in Hinduism, which is celebrated among the people of the same community, they celebrate Indian festivities and customs and maintain their cultural ideologies, but also to observe Christian celebrations, yet in evolving way. They have made Christian holidays part of their own cultural tradition even though they are not Christian. In this regard, Lahiri’s characters’ behavior and attitudes are related to Bhabha’s idea of cultures. He points out that “cultures are never unitary in themselves, nor simply dualistic in the relation of self to other” (36). Bhabha means to say that a national culture can never be holistic and pure because its meaning, like other products of language, is open to ambivalence, open to interpretations by the audience which is different from the originator’s intent.

Lahiri projects immigrant characters into such an imaginary landscapes, where they must negotiate between different identities and re-root themselves between the newly acquired US space and Indian cultural practices. Consequently, Lahiri questions the social and cultural implications of Indian immigrants as part of a minority that thrives in the United States and highlights a new American identity for

them. Lahiri concentrates on the reciprocity relationship and transnational exchange between the two cultural groups. Her characters are the transmigrants who develop and maintain multiple relationships. Lahiri emphasizes not only the situation of migrants who leave somewhere called home to make a new home in the United States, but also the endless process of comings and goings that create familial, cultural, linguistic and economic ties across national borders. These back and forth movements by immigrants are associated with transnationalism, which is a stage when people live dual lives, speak two languages and have two homes in two countries. After her husband's death and her children's settlement, Ashima decides to return to India, "his mother is leaving not to forget them" (286). Rather, "Ashima has decided to spend six months of her life in India, six months in the States. It is solitary, somewhat premature version of the future. She and her husband had planned when he was alive. In spring and summer she will return to the Northeast, dividing her time among her son, her daughter, and her close Bengali friends. True to the meaning of her name, she will be without borders, without a home of her own, a resident everywhere and nowhere" (275-76). This decision implies that she is going to find her roots, her place in India. However, it is remarkable that she does not abandon the United States. Rather she plans to divide her time equally between India and America. Similar to this Bhabha says "to live in the unhomely world, to find its ambivalencies and ambiguities enacted in the house of fiction, or its sundering and splitting performed in the work of art, is also to affirm a profound desire for social solidarity" (18). Thus, Bhabha has introduced a dialectic model of ambivalence which describes the process of creating culture along the clash of two cultures. He has also depoliticised postmodern theory such that disparate sides of the argument can meet on neutral ground.

More than that, Lahiri means to say that her characters will have their own transnational identity neither completely belonging to one nation nor to the other. Rather their own that is in-between space will be created which is similar to Bhabha's "Third Space" (36). "For thirty-three years she missed her life in India. Now she will miss her job at the library, the women with whom she's worked. She will miss throwing parties. She will miss living with her daughter, the surprising companionship they have formed, going into Cambridge together to see old movies at the Brattle, teaching her to cook the food Sonia had complained of eating as a child. She will miss the opportunity to drive, as she sometimes does on her way home from the library, to the university, past the engineering building where her husband once worked. She will miss the country in which she had grown to know and love her husband" (279).

Towards the end of the novel Ashima's change can be seen more vividly. "She has learned to do things on her own, and though she still wears saris, still puts her long hair in a bun, she is not the same Ashima who had once lived in Calcutta. She will return to India with an American passport. In her wallet will remain her Massachusetts driver's license, her social card" (276). It is therefore, a long journey for people like Ashima who encounter difficulties in different spaces and undergo transformation of identities. Being in a contact with the global culture and broad economic possibilities, it ultimately leads to the immigrants to take step with the adjustment in that global culture. That is, now they attempt towards the synthesizing of both native and global cultural aspects and lifestyle. This synthesizing which results out of the merging of the good aspects of both cultures is the state of hybridity. An individual needs to negotiate instead of negate the differences between their culture and other culture in order to recognize a great number of cultures from

different societies around the world. In reference with this Bhabha says “the social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation” (2). Furthermore, Bhabha says hybridity is the intercultural space of in-betweenness where identity is formed through the negotiation between different cultures. Infact, Bhabha’s notion of third space comes from his interest in the way in which power and authority function in the symbolic and subjectifying discourses of the colonial moment without “an assumed or imposed hierarchy” (4). With such progress in attitude the stranglehold on the children is slackened and Gogol and Sonia as individuals in the family space feel much more integrated to the family unit.

Thus, Lahiri’s idea in *The namesake* is that the immigrant characters like Ashoke and Ashima appear to be both the carriers of Indian cultural and national identities, and the transnational agents who constantly attempt to consolidate two different worlds and create a new place in America. To put this idea in another way, Lahiri suggests that transnationalism insists on the continuing significance of borders states policies and national identities. For this reason, Lahiri’s characters practice both Indian and American cultural values on the American soil and create imagined worlds. As they live in or connect with different worlds, their identities are not limited by the location. Instead, their identities become fluid and flexible in a new space. They become hybrid. Hybridity is a dual culture and also implies a syncretic view of the world in which the notion of fixity or essentiality of identity is continually contested. The concept of hybridity dismantles the notion of heterogeneity, difference. Thus, hybridity opens the door for cultural emergence. It is related to what Bhabah says “the inter subjective and collective experiences of nationness, community

interest, or cultural value are negotiated” (2). Lahiri’s own national and cultural background lends legitimacy to the novel’s construction of hybrid transnational identity. While the focus of the novel is on second generation immigrants’ struggle to balance the two worlds (India and America). The integral part of the novel is first-generation immigrants’ construction of transnational identity through transformation after arriving in the United States which involves the issues of immigration, race and class. In so doing, Lahiri rejects and casts off India’s Third World status as the other and validates Indian immigrants’ presence in the United States.

Therefore, her characters are not only the higher ranks of academics, but also the upper-middle class Indian immigrants who have achieved university degrees from Yale, MIT or Brown, have prestigious jobs and earn big paychecks. When Gogol turns eighteen, “like the rest of their Bengali friends, his parents expect him to be, if not an engineer, then a doctor, a lawyer, an economist at the very last. These are fields that brought them to the United States, his father repeatedly reminds him, the professions that have earned them security and respect” (105). As a result Gogol attends the prestigious institution of Yale and later a graduate “from the architecture program in Columbia” (125). Like him, Moushumi is a Brown University alumnus and later a graduate student in French Literature at NYU (195). Her father “is a renowned chemist with a patent to his name” (192).

Lahiri’s depiction of the privileged class characters-“teachers, researchers, engineer”-represent the transmigrants of a changing U.S. identity. By doing so, Lahiri does not imply that the possibilities are there only to the privileged class immigrants. Rather, she creates a transnational space and locates and stabilizes South Asian immigrants in America. This idea is similar to what Bhabha says “the move away from the singularities of class, or gender as primary conceptual and organizational

categories has resulted in an awareness of the subject positions of race, gender, generation, institutional location, geopolitical locale, sexual orientation that inhabit any claim to identity in the modern world” (1-2). Thus, her characters, estranged in the conflict to balance two different worlds, enable us to understand the complexities and existential confusion of the immigrants in the new land of settlement. Yet, Lahiri emphasizes the necessity of creating a transnational identity to overcome these complexities. Therefore, her characters confront immigrant experiences in America and, constantly negotiate between different aspects of their lives, recreating a third space that transcends the definite cultural and national boundaries.

But the sense of identity and hybridity is different in second generation. The children too, unlike their parents, hybridize their culture but by prioritizing American lifestyle. That is, their hybridity is tilted toward American way of life. Gogol and Sonia become all-American kids which become obvious when they go to Calcutta for eight months for a visit and only live with relatives in their already crowded flats, they yearn for their American home where they each have a room only for themselves. They are the odd ones out in India whereas their parents perk up, the problems between first and second generation immigrants are shown convincingly. Gogol, Ashoke and Ashima’s son, resents his parent culture and rue his name Gogol that sounds unfamiliar to others, especially to his American friends. Though at times, this kind of tendency seems unusual to American Indian families but it, on the other hand, gives new possibilities to modern culture where an individual can change his name if he does not like it. So, new kind of individualism is exercised by Gogol by changing his name. He does not like his name. “As a young boy Gogol does not mind his name. It all seems perfectly normal. He has been told that he was named after a famous

Russian author, born in a previous century. That the author's name, and therefore his, is known throughout the world and will live on forever" (66). But now, he does not like his name. He has learned "PLENTY OF PEOPLE changed their names: actors, writers, revolutionaries, transvestites. European immigrants had their names changed at Ellis Island; the slaves renamed themselves once they were emancipated" (97). So, he changes his name as Nikhil. He says: "I am Nikhil", for the first time in his life (96). Further Ashoke's reply is interesting when Gogol asks permissions for changing his name. Ashoke says: "then change it" simply and quietly "in America anything is possible. Do as you wish" (100).

More than that, his protest against Bengali tradition can also be seen when he slowly and gradually turns towards American way of life. "It is Nikhil that he loses his virginity at a party at Ezra Stiles, with a girl wearing a plaid woolen skirt and combat boots and mustard tights. By the time he wakes up, hung over, at there in the morning, she has vanished from the room, and he is unable to recall her name" (105). He had short affair with Ruth, a white girl. Both of them have fallen in love but "his parents have expressed no curiosity about his girlfriend. His relationship with her is one of the accomplishments in his life about which they are not in the least bit proud or pleased" (116). Next attempt that he makes in American society is by spending "his nights with Maxine, his next girlfriend, sleeping under the same roof as her parents, a thing Ashima refuses to admit to her Bengali friends" (166). Maxine takes him to her house and introduces him with her parents "this is my mother Lydia" (131). Similar to this, Bhabha concentrates on describing and explaining the process of cultural discourse when two seemingly simple, opposing groups clash and articulate their differences from each other. The boundary where the two groups clash, the "in-between spaces", is created. A culture which is a hybrid of the two

opposing cultures. Thus, Bhabha's body of work speaks of the process of creating culture from the perspective of the in-between spaces, a liminal or "interstitial perspective" (1-2).

Furthermore, she pulls him towards American way of life; she "pours him a glass of wine, not asking if perhaps he might prefer something else. Quickly, simultaneously, he falls in love with Maxine, the house, and Gerald and Lydia's manner of living, for to know her and love her is to know and love all of these things" (137). Gogol is totally influenced by the American culture and her parents. "He cannot imagine his parents sitting in Lydia and Gerald's table, enjoying Lydia's table, cooking, appreciating Gerald's selection of wine" (141). However, he has a fight with Maxine and breaks up with her. He has realized that he should do what his parents had always wanted him to do, and marry a Bengali girl. A few months later, his mother refers to him, a Bengali girl called Moushumi, who he starts going out with. After a year, he asks her to marry him, and she says yes. Gogol lives with Moushumi for a while, happy that he has done what his parents had always wanted him to, and married an Indian girl. One day, he finds out that Moushumi is having an affair with another man, and he divorces her. This brings him to a conclusion that, just because he is Bengali, it does not mean that he is going to find happiness in just a Bengali girl, and that he can marry anyone. The novel ends, with him thinking that he is now free to do what he pleases without having to worry about a trouble in his life. Such kind of Gogol's activity shows that he is in the process of establishing himself as an American guy. In other words Gogol has created his identity as Third Space in America which according to Bhabha "challenges our sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenizing, unifying force, authenticated by the originary past" (37).

Likewise by contrasting the lifestyles between Gogol's parents and Maxine's parents, Lahiri suggests that the immigrant children are fascinated to adopt the American lifestyle. Gogol's immersion into his girlfriend's life is an indication of a second generation immigrant child's realization that an identity far from their own cultural roots is a necessity to live happily in the multicultural United States. It is Gogol's ability to understand the difference between the lives of his parents and Maxine's that prompts him to desire Maxine's lifestyle. He is surprised to find the warm welcome from Maxine's parents. At the dinner table, he is impressed with their style-an opportunity to compare between his parents' way of serving dinner with Maxine's parents. "A bowl of small, round, roasted red potatoes is passed around, and afterward a salad. They eat appreciatively, commenting on the tenderness of the meat, the freshness of the beans. His own mother would never have served so few dishes to a guest. She would have kept her eyes trained on Maxine's plate, insisting she have seconds and then thirds. The table would have been lined with a row of serving bowls so that the people could help themselves. But Lydia pays no attention to Gogol's plate. She makes no announcement indicating that there is more" (133). Further Bhabha, supporting the idea that the immigrant children are fascinated to adopt the American lifestyle, states that it happens "when we understand that all cultural statements and systems are constructed in this contradictory and ambivalence space of enunciation, that we begin to understand about demonstration of their hybridity" (37).

Gogol finds a sense of freedom and independence even in the dinner table at Maxine's house. Insisting someone empty the plate or requesting to eat more, which is common practice in Indian culture, is something that irritates Gogol. On the contrary, he finds no obligation to eat more at Maxine's house. Though, the passage is

simply a description of a dinner table, Lahiri's use of delicate language reveals a sense of freedom at the American dinner table. It is this freedom and individualism that instigate a desire for U.S. way of life in Gogol. Although Gogol is unaccustomed to such U.S. table manners, "this sort of talk at mealtimes, to the indulgent ritual of the lingering meal, and the pleasant aftermath of bottle and crumbs and empty glasses that clutter the table" (134). "He learns to love the food Maxine and her parents eat, the polenta and risotto, the bouillabaisse and osso buco, the meat baked in parchment paper" (137). Not only Gogol's affection for Maxine suggests his adoption of interracial dating and love, but also the adoption of most of the American demeanor because for him "to know her and love her is to know and love all of these things" (137). In fact, Gogol's love for her is a result of his strong desire for everything she possesses-the individual lifestyle of Maxine who has "no sense of obligation," and "unlike his parents her parents pressure her to do nothing, and yet she lives faithfully, happily, at their side" (138). In other words, Gogol's cultural identity formation is highly affected. Gogol's position emphasizes the necessity of the formation of transnational identity which requires negotiation of the cultural borderlands between America and India. For this reason, Lahiri's characters practice both Indian and U.S. cultural values on the U.S. soil and create what Appadurai calls "imagined worlds" (25). As they live in or connect with different worlds, their identities are not limited by the location. Instead, their identities become fluid and flexible in a new space.

Thus, Gogol lives an American life. Lahiri presents him as a prototypical transnational agent living between two different worlds getting possibilities and creating multiple identities. He worked in different organizations creating high class profile as American people. After his father's death he will get "a new job related to architectural practice, producing his own designs. There is a possibility, eventually, of

becoming an associate, of the form incorporating his name. And in that case Nikhil will live on, publicly celebrated” (289-90). As Gogol is able to get opportunities so does Sonia. Sonia made a foreigner as her boy friend without any sense of hesitation. Even her parents did not mind it rather at the final stage, she met “Ben, half-Jewish, half-Chinese, raised in Newton, close to where Gogol and Sonia grew up. He is an editor at the globe. They met by chance, at a cafe on Newbury Street” (270). “Now that Sonia is going to be married. The wedding will be in Calcutta, a little over a year from now, on an auspicious January day. Her mother Ashima tells Sonia will be happy with this boy-this young man. He has brought happiness to her daughter” (276). In one hand she is going to marry a foreigner, who will keep her happy as she has chosen him herself. On the other hand, she too becomes hybrid American Indian. She has got the good position “attorney now, working in an office in the Hancock building. Her hair is cut to her jaw. And yet there is a new maturity in her face” (284). Thus, Lahiri has tried to present all the possibilities of immigrants in the U.S. and she believes that one becomes hybrid and creates his/her own transnational identity.

Gogol’s meeting with Pamela, a white woman, at Maxine’s parent’s lake house is interesting in this concern. Pamela takes Gogol as an Indian, despite Gogol’s response that he is from Boston. Although, Gogol is a naturalized citizen of United States, he encounters the question, “where do you come from” (156). Maxine’s mother corrects Pamela asserting that Gogol is American, but in the end she even hesitates asking him if he actually born in the United States (157). Thus, even Gogol’s United State’s citizenship does not guarantee his identity as American.

So, for Gogol the notion of home country is very complicated. He is baffled to answer whether he is from India or the United States. However, Gogol does not think India as his country, he sees himself as purely American. Though Gogol considers

himself as American, he is brought up between two diametrically different countries, similar to Bhabha's "in-between space where people can, to a certain extent, move and negotiate within their worlds" (1-2). He is both Indian and American. He belongs to Indian parent on a different geographical space than India and is acculturated as an Indian at home. But outside the home he is American. He thinks India as a foreign country far away from home, both physically and psychologically. He struggles to reconcile his dual culture. On the one hand, he is fascinated with free and happy life style of Maxine. On the other hand, he feels a sense of obligation towards his parents. Like a typical immigrant child, Gogol's real challenge is to secure an identity in the midst of differences.

Gogol's decision of changing his name is an attempt to forget his past or cultural roots and desire for living in the present, America. Although he attempts to escape from the past by denouncing his cultural roots and changing his name, he is somehow connected to his roots. He is uncomfortable with his name that has so many connections with his past. Although Gogol believes that by switching his name to Nikhil he will get rid of his past, his parent's obstinate insistence on calling him by his original name symbolizes that a simple name change does not alter the fabric of a person. It is a symbol of something that he learns later through his father that his name Gogol is connected to his father's past life. Ashoke tells Gogol "the story of the train he had ridden twenty-eight years ago, in October 1961...about the night that had nearly taken his life, and the book that had saved him, and about the year afterward when he had been unable to move" (123). Through the story of his father and the train accident, Gogol learns that the significance of his name is so strongly associated with his father's unforgettable past that he cannot escape so easily. Ashoke survived the accident because he was reading Gogol's "The Overcoat" when the accident occurred

near two hundred and nine kilometers away from Calcutta “killing the passengers in their sleep” (17). Gogol realizes how his life has been interwoven between the past and present. So Gogol is living in the in-between space and struggling to balance the two different worlds, he still longs to escape from cultural roots and venture in Maxine’s life. Thus, Gogol’s immersion in to his girlfriend’s life is an indication of a second generation immigrant child’s realization that identity far from own cultural roots is a necessity to live happily in the multicultural world. Similar to this Bhabha suggests that the in-between space of the cultural borderland is a place of transformation and change where fixed and essential identities are deconstructed.

However, Gogol too, at last, turns towards his family. He realizes that his own identity is intricately linked with the history of his family. For Gogol, the process of his identity is rather long. Later, he also realizes that he cannot, after all, resist the pull of the family. Despite his hate for his name and his adoption of a new name, he “fails to reinvent himself fully to break from that mismatched name” (287). That is why, he at last, opens the pages of the book that his father once gifted him and that remained unread so long. For this reason, Bhabha asserts that “the borderline work of culture demands an encounter with “newness” that is not part of continuum of past and present. It creates a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation” (7). Bhabha argues that such borderline culture innovates the performance of present by renewing the past, “refiguring it as a contingent in-between space” (7).

Read from the framework of Bhabha’s notion of borderline culture, Lahiri’s characters can be seen dwelling between different cultures and engaging in transcultural conversations. One of the most important techniques that Lahiri uses in the novel to liberate her characters from the narrowed confinement of national boundaries are her attempt to contrast between the initial and later attitudes and

behavior of characters. In the beginning, the characters are seen holding strictly to their cultural roots but later they go through different changes. They go towards forming their identities as hybrid and transnational.

However, Lahiri's concern is not to emphasize the ancestral cultural values that her characters hold in the United States. Rather by juxtaposing the immigrant's experiences and practices in the United States with their later adoption and immersion in to the United States culture, she suggests the transient nature of identity, posing the characters towards inhabiting transnational space in United States. As Lahiri's immigrant's characters live in the liminal space by attempting to adhere to the world values and negating United State's culture, something new begins to emerge. Although she resists United State's culture in the beginning, later she starts to adapt it. A sense of relocation replaces her earlier feeling of homelessness in the United States. So, Lahiri's character behavior and attitudes are related to the idea of transnational imagery landscapes. Lahiri projects her imaginary characters into such an imaginary landscape, where they must negotiate between different identities and re-root themselves between the newly acquired American space and Indian cultural practices. Consequently, Lahiri questions the social and cultural implications of Indian immigrants as part of a minority that thrives in the United States and highlights a new American identity for them.

Thus, the major concern of Jhumpa Lahiri is the issue of diasporic possibilities through hybridity and the formation of transnational identity. And in the process of identity formation, though Lahiri's characters suffer in their initial stage, ultimately able themselves to recognize in the multicultural country. On one side, the first generation compromises to their traditional values, while on the other, the second generation compromises their American life style. At last, they create the identity of

third space through the process of hybridization and acculturation. Third space is a place where we negotiate between different identities. Negotiation becomes a process where people of different cultures accept and blend their cultures in a society without one culture dominating the other. This co- existence of different cultures ultimately produces a hybrid culture which Bhabha posits as “the, inter- the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in- between space-that carries the burden of the meaning of culture” (38). Thus, Lahiri, through the means of her characters establishing the transnational identity, clears the fact that transnational identity does not negate the notion of nation or national borders. Thus, constructing a transnational identity means making a connection between different nations and their people by crossing boundaries. In this same line, it also clarifies the notion of identity as always shifting into hybrid and transnational identities. *The Namesake* also proves the reality that identities are becoming more transnational and global due to the development of technologies and increased global connection of people which can be taken as the positive aspect of the diasporic people.

Thus, the globalization of the world and the technological changes affect Lahiri’s characters’ identity formation, paving a way to the endless process of comings and goings that create familial, cultural, and economic ties across national borders. These new technologies, especially cheap commercial flights, accelerate cultural exchange and intensify Bhabha’s concept of Third Space. In *The Namesake* the process of transformation occurs sooner and easier among the first- generation immigrants like Ashoke and Ashima. As a result, Lahiri’s characters are able to form their hybrid transnational identity.

III. Formation of Hybrid Transnational Identity

Thus, Jhumpa Lahiri in her novel, *The Namesake* shows the possibilities of diasporas, creating hybrid, in-between and transnational identity of her characters. Lahiri's characters are the immigrants in the land of America who create their own hybrid and transnational identity. Possibilities lie there, where there are more challenges in the life. Possibility does not take place at once in *The Namesake* rather it comes slowly and gradually as the characters go through the difficult situations in every walk of their life. For instance, Ashima faces the problem of adjustment in hospital as well as in that American community. Lahiri's both the generations face the problem of identity crisis but with the passage of time Ashima becomes more American adjusting herself and creating possibilities in her life. Likewise, Ashoke as well as Gogol too become successful in getting the opportunities. During their stay in America, they come in contact and interaction with the native people and their culture opens the path to the possibilities as Lahiri's characters in *The Namesake* get. In the era of globalization, they fight with the situation. As a result, they create their hybrid transnational identity.

The hybrid identity which is neither completely American nor completely Indian. Rather, it is the blend of two cultures and languages. This hybrid identity, which is constructed in both the generations of the immigrants in the novel. The first generation immigrant Ashoke and Ashima too are hybridized in their culture and the way of living. The way Indian culture collides with the American culture, it gives birth to a new culture creating new identity that is the transnational identity. Thus, this is the possibility for immigrants to create their own identity. So Lahiri in *The Namesake* attempts to reverse these notions by representing the borderland as a third space where the mobility of people and culture take place, and multiple identities are

negotiated. That is, at last Ashoke and Ashima turn toward American hybridize culture and Gogol turns toward Indian hybridize culture. Furthermore, Ashima becomes ready to accept all the things American which had earlier created more problems. It is simply because she sees more possibilities in her life in the condition of diaspora. The cultural conversation between two cultures (American and Indian) opens up the possibility of emerging hybrid identities. Similarly, it provides a fascinating representation of the ways in which the first generation immigrant, Ashoke and Ashima and the second generation immigrant, Gogol negotiate different identities through cultural conversation, and overcome the cultural issues in America.

In this way, *The Namesake* reveals the changing attitude and the condition of Ashoke, Ashima and their son, Gogol. In the age of globalization, these characters' stay in America and the interaction with native people and their culture brings changes in their outlook and identities. For instance, Ashoke Ganguli is able to be a full professor in American university and he does not want to be different from his American colleagues. Like Ashoke, Ashima also works in a library as a part time job and she learns to do a lot of American things like driving, shopping and inviting friends. These are all the possibilities that they get in America as immigrants. Though new locality directly affects a person's identity, it ultimately leads to the formation of transnational identity which is hybrid identity. However, all the characters in *The Namesake* are able to create their transnational identity on the basis of their home in America and kinship with American people. In the process of formation of transnational identity they have to face many problems but they are sure to allow themselves to the formation of hybrid identity. Through this hybrid identity the immigrants get more and more opportunities.

When they allow themselves to move toward hybrid cultural location it opens up the space for cultural transformation. Thus, this cultural transformation can be taken as the in-between space or a third element. This in-between space is occupied by Gogol though he lives in America being the son of Indian American parents. In the process of this cultural transformation it takes time but it becomes a process for instance, Ashima faces many stages of her life in America. But finally she can transfer herself in American culture and the way of living in that community creating possibilities of life. They make Christian holidays as part of their own cultural practices even though they are not Christian. They celebrate Thanksgiving which is also not the part of Indian Bengali culture. So, formation of transnational identity does not negate the notion of nation or national borders. Rather, constructing a transnational identity means making a connection between different nations and their people by crossing boundaries as Ashoke, Ashima and Gogol have crossed in the novel.

Thus, Lahiri, in *The Namesake* tries to show the possibilities of diasporas by creating her characters' identity as hybrid, in-between and transnational. Here, Lahiri demonstrates herself as an immigrant writer who positions herself geo-politically within America. She also shows that identities of her characters are becoming more positive due to the development of technologies and increased global connection between people. As a consequence of globalization, technological development and mass media, today it is not only the process of negotiation and transformational identity, but also the people from the host societies and countries that are adopting multiplicities of identity and immigrants too are getting possibilities in diasporic situation.