

## **Cultural Perspective in Jhumpa Lahiri's "Interpreter of Maladies"**

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**Abstract**

*Florian Znanieck in his Cultural Reality stated that cultural studies were an ontological and epistemological approach aiming to eliminate dualism such as the belief that nature and culture are opposite realities. World interconnectedness and the facility of borders are highly popular. Lahiri's Interpreter of Maladies shows the difference relating to different cultures. The below study reveals the influence of culture in the short story.*

**Key Words:** *culture, Indian, American*

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**Introduction:**

“Culture shock is often felt sharply at the borders between countries, but sometimes it doesn't hit fully until you have been in a place for a long time”

**Henri Cartier Bresson**

Nilanjana Sudeshna Jhumpa Lahiri was a great writer. Her works are the representation of Indian culture and society. Lahiri reveals a society in the process of change, which was happened in India that Indians who were alien to their own culture, adopted and influenced the new cultures. The same situation was prevailing all over the world. She stated that the Interpreter of Maladies is a reflection of her own experiences as well as those of her parents and their Indian immigrant friends.

Mr.Kapasi was an Indian tour guide who took the Indian American family to Sun temple at Konarak. The family includes a young couple named Mr. and Mrs. Das and their three children. Mr. and Mrs. Das failed to be a good mother and father especially Mrs.Das refused to take care of her own children. They both behaved like an older brother and sister, not parents; it was hard to believe they were regularly responsible for anything other than themselves. Mrs.Das refused to hold the qualities of a good Indian mother. It expressed the influence of other cultures than the native.

Mr.Kapasi stated his life while driving, by hearing his second profession as interpreter for the doctor. Mrs.Das said “But so romantic” which smacks of exoticism. After sometime Mrs.Das shared her untold secret with Mr.Kapasi, Mr.Kapasi was shocked to hear that one of her children was not born for Mr.Das. Mr.Kapasi was shocked to hear the words from Mrs.Das. She indirectly states that she was refused to share her truth due to the customs and traditions in her native country. Mrs.Das said,

“We married when we were still in college. We were in high school when he proposed. We went to the same college, of course. Back then we couldn't stand the thought of being separated, not for a day, not for a minute. Our parents were best friends who lived in the same town. My entire life I saw him every weekend, either at our house or theirs. We were sent upstairs to play together

while our parents joked about our marriage. Imagine! They never caught us at anything, though in a way I think it was all more or less a setup”.

The words showed how the daughter’s next phase of life (choosing a life partner) was decided by the parents and family without consideration at the time of minor. The situation quite differed from western culture. Mrs. Das hated her present life. Mr. Kapasi and Mrs. Das felt an affair but they refused to share due to their traditions and customs in their respective culture.

### **Conclusion**

The culture is also rife with representations of thematic and narrative points. Mahatma Gandhi quoted that “A nation’s culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people”. Culture reveals the instinct of the people, but the culture was not satisfied the needs of every soul in the country.

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