
Representations of the Other in the Works of Jhumpa Lahiri

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Abstract

In her novels and stories Jhumpa Lahiri explores various issues regarding Indian American people, living both home and abroad, who lost their struggle with confusion about their identity and a sense of displacement. Her works are centered on several characters in three different locations: India, America and England. Her works problematize both the protagonists' self-perception, as well as the points of view of Americans who see immigrants as the Other, shunning them because of their origins. The perspectives as well as the images of India and the West are always in juxtaposition and this conflict between the two worlds is one of the main themes in Lahiri's oeuvre. In this respect, the paper will focus on the experiences of characters who are seen as the Other and are often discriminated against, which causes identity crises. The themes of split identity and the sense of loss of the protagonists, which prevail in Lahiri's works, will be seen through the lens of migration and the quest for the Self in the postmodern and post-colonial period. By addressing several viewpoints, primarily the one in Orientalism by Edward Said, this paper will particularly explore the attitudes and representations of India by the West, as well as the effects that they have on the characters of the novel.

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