

REGIONAL PORTRAYALS IN NON-NATIVE AND DIASPORIC LITERATURE: STUDIES IN K R MEERA AND JHUMPA LAHIRI

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Abstract:

The study entitled 'Regional Portrayals in Non-native and Diasporic Literature: Studies in K R Meera and JhumpaLahiri' is a study based on the regional literature from the perspective of an alienated culture. The non-native and diasporic communities are taken as the two different challenging fields in literature. This paper is based on two pieces of literature which are taken as representative writings of each field. The non-native literature is studied on the basis of the novel Hangwoman by K R Meera. And the book The Namesake by JhumpaLahiri is taken as the source material for the study of the diasporic literature. The research deals with the characteristic features of the regional literature, the icons of Indian regional literature, the historical reference of the authors and their works. And also draw a detailed comparison and an examination of the considered novels to the extent of regional literature. The thesis concluded that the non-native and diasporic writings are successfully gained the regional portrayal as the native writings.

Key Words: *Regional literature, alienated culture, non-native, diasporic literature.*

Literature is a strong detergent that can cleanse the dry thoughts of human minds. Sometimes it acts as a reagent that helps to characterize the knowledge or the familiarity gained by experience. A text will always exhibit a reflection of author's life, especially in the branch of regional literature. The cultural familiarity of an author enhances his native identity. Cultural identity is not a fixed essence. It has its histories having their real, material and symbolic effects. And it is always constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth. The architect of everyone's identity is the culture that we experienced in our life. These cultural identities reflect the common historical feelings and shared cultural codes from generation to generation. But there are some exceptional cases which go beyond these common shared feelings and codes. Non-natives and Diasporic communities are included in the exceptional cases. Non-native writers are the group of people which are born in a culture and intentionally write about another culture. They are not supposed to being owners of a native figure. Diaspora is a scattered population whose origin lies within a smaller geographical locale. They keep very strong attachment with their homeland and always have a desire to return. These two alien groups create a significant role in literature. They mostly write to make a native cultural identity as their own from the alienated culture. So their scripts always follow the genre of regional literature. But their works are not considered as pure regional works even now. The main intention of this study is a search about the power of non-native and diasporic writers to create a successful native identity in regional literature.

K R Meera is a prominent figure in Malayalam literature. Her epic novel *Hangwoman (Aarachar)* received a lot of prestigious prizes like Kerala Sahithya Academy award and Vayalar award. It is the story of a twenty two year old girl ChetnaGruddhaMullick, who takes up service as the first woman executioner in India. Meera sets the story in the background of Bengal. Completely non-native to Bengali culture, she tried her maximum to present the Bengal hanging family within the backdrop of her inborn Kerala culture.

The American Bengali writer JhumpaLahiri is considered as the diasporic writer. She was born in London to Bengali parents and grew up in Rhode Island. Her novel *The Namesake* is an actual portrayal of rootlessness and search for identity in the central character Gogol's life. Lahiri's strong desire to return to

her homeland is reflected in the character Ashima. She could not get any more chance to live in Bengal but she tries to absorb its essence to the possible maximum.

Regional Portrayal in Literature

Literature is a signature of an author, his experience of life, both emotional and practical. We may survive in every place, but we can live only in our native land. A person has always an inherent attachment to his own culture and traditions. Always we cherish the memories of family, home, roads, childhood, surprising folktales and myths. According to Richard Brodhead, "Regionalism's representation of vernacular cultures as enclaves of tradition insulated from larger cultural contact are palpably a fiction... its public function was not just to mourn lost cultures but to purvey a certain story of contemporary cultures and of the relations among them." Regional literature or Local color is the fiction and poetry that focus on the characters, dialects, customs, topography and other features particular to a specific region. It particularizes each fact of the nature and human environment peculiar to the selected locale. Local color and dialects are the two significant features of regional literature. Regionalism grew during the late 1800's, after Civil War, when the United States expanded rapidly. A lot of immigrants entered the field of literature and the writers sought to record, celebrate and mythologize the diversity of landscape and people. A sense of vastness of the continent and of the cultural diversity gave impulse to the regional writings. Local color includes realistic delineation of all sensory perceptions of the geographic and social milieu including mores, folklore, and the economic life of the region. It also focuses on the modification of environment and the impact of the several classes of society upon each other. Dialect, a feature that varies from region to region becomes a linguistic determinant of regional idiosyncrasy.

Regional writings have a unique nature to create a native identity in literature. The regional novels emphasized not merely as local color, but as important conditions affecting the temperament of the characters and their ways of thinking, feeling and interacting. These stories tend to be concerned with the character of the district or region rather than with the individual: quaint or stereotypical. Old ways, dialects and particular personality traits central to the region are adored in them. Even though the characters are from a working or middle class origin, they are very adhering to traditional, gender, ethnic and socio-economic roles. But in some regional novels people of these classes may be absent, and it may focus on the family or lineage and its connection with landscape or history. The portrayal of settings in regional novels also tries to keep a variant in literature. The emphasis is frequently on nature and the limitations it imposes; settings are frequently remote and inaccessible. Sometimes it becomes a character in itself. Emily Bronte's novel *Wuthering Heights* set in the harsh and isolated Yorkshire moors in Northern England. It reflects the moods of major character and their actions, while contributing to its overall atmosphere. *Wuthering Heights* practically makes a character out of its geography. The American writer Frank Norris's *Octopus* and Booker.T.Washington's *Up from Slavery* are the novels which discuss the economic and geographic relation between region and world. The plot in regional literature mainly includes a lot of story-telling revolving around the community and its rituals. The rich flavour of myths, folktale, and superstitions highlights the plot with powerful scenario. These elements appear in the stories as a piece of cultural identity. The famous Indian writer O.V.Vijayan is one of the best examples for story telling in this area. In his work *The Legends of Khasak*, he opens the windows into the mystic essence of existence through the myths of Khasak. It is a place where a separate village life is created with its own strange myths and legends to portray a wild collage of life in which everything falls apart. Regional literature has a special zone in the selection of theme too. Sometimes it deeply followed the nostalgia for an always past golden age. For instance, Afghan writer Khaleed Hosseini's novel *The Kite Runner* is the story of Amir, a Sunni Muslim, who struggles to find his place in the world because of the after effects and fallout from a series of traumatic childhood events. When he reached into his adulthood, the novel flashes back to Amir's childhood in Afghanistan. His close relationship with his father and other characters in the story evokes a nostalgic theme as usual. *Verukal* by Malayattoor Ramakrishnan tells the story of a Tamil speaking Iyers

who settled in Kerala. The central character Raghu returns to his native village after a long gap of years. In the village, he meets his sister and others among whom he grew up. Here a current flow of memories portrays the novel as nostalgic in its soul. Many poems also emerged in the field of regional literature, associated with the poet's intense love towards culture. Thomas Martin wrote the poem *Nancy* about the memories of a girl's childhood life. He tried to evoke a lost and nostalgic feeling in it. Barry Tebb's long Poem *Bridge over the aire book1* is also included in this literary category. The tension or conflict between urban ways and old fashioned rural values is often symbolized by the intrusion of an outsider or interloper who seeks something from the community.

In the regional novel, the protagonist lived in the village or factory in his own unique regional culture. He always tends to survive in the realistic background and not in the fictitious world. The dreams of a community or society are related to their homeland. The narrator and the techniques which he used also have a special significance in the portrayal of literature. The narrator seems to be an educated observer from the world beyond who learns something from the characters while preserving a sometimes sympathetic, sometimes ironic distance from them. He or she serves as mediator between the rural folk of the tale and the urban audience to whom the tale is directed. They used the dialect to establish credibility and authenticity of regional characters. Instead of giving a brief description, sometimes they give a detailed sketch especially of small, seemingly insignificant details central to an understanding of the region. And the frequent use of frame stories made the stuff more powerful. It will show the depth of the interrelation between the author and the region.

Icons of Indian Regional Literature

India is one of the most linguistically diverse countries in the world. The eighth schedule of the Constitution of India recognizes eighteen regional languages in India with a developed script and literary tradition. This study considers some of the richest of such cultures in literature. Certain concepts can be very flexible in one language and rigid in another, but writers try to make sure that the sense of the original is retained even when translated. Indian regional literature offers plenty of collections to appeal to a world audience in a wide range through stories, poems, novels or folktales. A strong characteristic of Indian regional literature is the sublime influence of regional fables, stories and myths, which developed as a distinct genre and was termed as the regional literature. Bengali literature has followed in fast footsteps and in some instance, has even preceded the medieval Indian literary scenario into the ancient age. The prolific writer Mahasweta Devi tried to focus the poor social background of Bengal. It can be seen in the novel *Andharmanik (Jewel in darkness)*, which dealt with the upheaval in Bengal's social life caused by the Maratha cavalry raids during the mid-eighteenth century. Another renowned Bengali novelist Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay, author of *Pather Panchali*, also wrote most of his works about people belonging to rural Bengal. Vaikom Muhammad Bhasheer was one of the prominent figures who revolutionized Malayalam regional literature. He portrays exactly the Indian independence struggle, experience and conditions that existed in Kerala, particularly in the neighbourhood of his home and among the Muslim community. Also he tries to copy the cultural background and social problems in the society like dowry (*Balyakalasakhi*), superstitious practices (*Ntuppuppakoranendarnnu*), political issues (*Mathilukal*), religious conservatism (*Premalekhanam*) etc. M T Vasudevan Nair used the Valluvanadan dialect in most of his writings like *Nalukettu*, *Manju* etc. He traces all of the vernacular possibilities successfully in his writings. Another offspring of regional novel is the fantastic creation of Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things*. It deals with the disturbance of life and at the same time it discusses the nostalgia of past history. Other than novels, there are also many short stories that portray the cultural practices in literature. In the Punjabi short story of Amrita Pritam, *The Weed* she strongly questioned the patriarchal views that existed in Punjab. And the popular Assamese writer Atulananda Goswami's famous story *The Tiffin Box* also speaks about the familial attachment that focuses on parental grief.

In India, regional literatures are rich in producing great literature, beginning with creators like

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Rabindranath Tagore, Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay, Munshi Premchand, Subramanian Bharathi, Sadat Hasan Manto etc. And even now it flourishes among the literature in the huge background of the richest regional creations, the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharatha*.

The writers and the works under consideration

In literature, there are a lot of powerful women's voices that mark history. Once upon a time, the area of literature was banned for women. She has not a room or space of her own. She was free to imagine but she had not the right to express. If she gets a chance to express it, the society thought that it should be limited to the beautiful and softest things in the world like flowers, love and butterflies. But she never minds the contempt of the patriarchal world. She weaves stories around history, romance, politics, wars and all kinds of sensations in life.

K R Meera is one of the prominent writers in contemporary Malayalam literature. She was born in Sasthamkotta, Kollam district in Kerala. Her parents are K N Ramachandran Pillai and A G Amruthakumari. She did her graduation in the University of Kerala and post-graduation in Gandhigram Rural Institute. Meera started out as a journalist in 1998. She has since published short stories, novels, and essays, and has been recognized with some of the most prestigious prizes for literary writing in Malayalam including the Kerala Sahitya Academi Award (*Aave Maria*), Oodakuzhal Award, Geethahiran Award, Lalithambika Andharjanam Award, Anganam Award, Thoppil Ravi Smaraka Award, P. Padmarajan Smaraka Award, V.P. Sivakumar Smaraka Award, Nooranad Haneefa Award and Vayalar Award (*Aarachar*). She wrote many stories like *Mohamanja*, *Ormayudenjarambu* and *Kadhakal* and the novels are *Meerasadhu*, *Aa Maratheyum Marannu Marannu Njan*, *Maalagayude Marugu- Karineela*, *Aarachar* and *Meerayude Novellakal*. Her stories are translated to English and Tamil. Now she lives in Kottayam with her husband, Dileep and daughter Sruthy. Her novel *Aarachar* is translated by the bilingual feminist scholar J. Devika into English, under the title *Hangwoman*. All of the writings of Meera have emerged from a feministic perspective. Her novel *Meerasadhu* tells the story of an IIT graduate abandoned at a Krishna temple after going through some torrid times in her married life. And the short story *Ormayudenjarambukal* discuss about the miserable life of an old woman. The main issue that evokes in it is patriarchy and gender problem. In all these works, Meera tries to concentrate on the universal concerns faced by women.

Hangwoman, widely regarded as her master piece, was originally serialized in Madhyamam weekly and was published as a book by DC Books in 2012. The novel is set in Bengal. It tells the story of a family of executioners with a long lineage, beginning in the fourth century BC. The protagonist of the novel, twenty-two-year-old Chetna Grddha Mullick, is appointed as the first woman executioner in India, assistant and successor to her father, Phanibhushan Mullick. And she is committed through a tender contract with Sanjeev Kumar Mitra, representative of CNC Channel whereby all rights towards transmitting and publishing interviews related to an imminent execution is only with him. Until twenty fourth June, which is the date when Jatindranath Banerjee is to be executed as announced by the Government of India. Normally, her life explodes under the harsh lights of television cameras. Chetna is a strong and tenacious woman who struggles to inherit this profession. She is portrayed as a symbol of strength and self-respect for women, but in reality, she is just as a cog in the machinations of the men around her. In the sensational world, Chetna stared in front of her own awakening sexuality which is as same as a perfect noose. She flounders at first, but then slowly extricates herself; and takes charge of her own life, which finally leads to a perfectly executed conclusion. Meera tries to spin the culture of Bengal within her limited non-native context. She can absorb both the emotional and practical life of the Bengali culture in the scenario of Mullick family. In a sense, sometimes Meera used the central character Chetna to reveal herself. For instance, she says "Man's love is different from woman's. A man can love only the woman who gives him pleasure. But a woman is capable of loving even those who hurt her" (Meera 110). A woman alone can see another woman's heart. Even if she tries her maximum to be only a writer, sometimes

it naturally breaks from within her and she flowers herself as the character within her. In certain points she changes the moods of the novel into a philosophical level from the indoors of the story narration. She says “on this earth, only love is more uncertain than death” (Meera 11). Like these in many places she takes a shift into an actual philosopher within her mind. Here Meera puts her soul and body into ChetnaGrddhaMullick, the strong eyewitness figure of hanging that has shaped the history of the subcontinent. And she made Chetna into a meticulous character as ever in the literature.

JhumpaLahiri is another key figure of contemporary literature. Her actual name is NilanjanaSudeshnaLahiri. She was born in London of Bengali parents, and grew up in Rhode Island, USA. Her father Amar Lahiri works as a librarian. Her mother wanted her children to grow up knowing their Bengali heritage, and her family often visited relatives in Kolkata. Her stories have appeared in many American journals and her first collections, *Interpreter of Maladies*, won the Pulitzer Prize (2000) for fiction and the others are the New Yorker prize for best first book, the PEN/Hemingway Award, Addison Metcalf Award, Asian American literary Award, DSC Prize for South Asian Literature and National Humanities Medal. She graduated from Barnard College, then she received multiple degrees from Boston University. And Lahiri is currently a professor of creative writing at Princeton University. Her major works are *Interpreter of Maladies*, *Unaccustomed Earth*, and *The Lowland*. Now she lives with her husband Alberto Vourvoulis and her two sons Octavio and Noor.

Most of her writings tell the story of immigrants and their sufferings. The novel, *Interpreter of Maladies* deals with the sensitive dilemmas in the lives of Indians or Indian immigrants, with themes such as marital difficulties, miscarriages and the disconnection between first and second generation United States immigrants. Until *Unaccustomed Earth*, she focused mostly on the immigrants and their efforts to keep their children acquainted with Indian culture and traditions. Also they try to keep the children close even after they have grown up in order to hang on to the Indian tradition of a joint family, in which the parents, their children and the children's families live under the same roof. But *Unaccustomed Earth* departs from this earlier original ethos, as Lahiri's characters embark on new stages of development. These stories scrutinize the fate of the second and third generation. As succeeding generations become increasingly assimilated into American culture and are comfortable in constructing perspectives outside of their country of origin. Her fiction shifts to the needs of the individual. She shows how later generations depart from the constraints of their immigrant parents, who are often devoted to their community and their responsibility to their immigrants. Lahiri's another novel *The Lowland* is autobiographical and frequently draws upon her own experience as well as those of her parents, friends, acquaintances and others in the Bengali communities with which she is familiar. She examines her character's struggles, anxieties and biases to chronicle the nuances and details of immigrant psychology and behaviour.

The Namesake is an extraordinary story of a tiny ordinary family making the voyage between two worlds, Asia and America. This was first published in Great Britain in 2003 by Flamingo. After an arranged marriage, Ashoke and AshimaGanguli leave Kolkata to settle in Cambridge, Massachusetts. With extraordinary effective economy, the author analyses the conflicting attractions of the American way of life and tug of tradition. They named their son Gogol after Ashoke's favourite Russian author Nikolai Gogol. But growing up in an Indian background, the boy begins to hate his name Gogol and felt so embarrassed by it. To live far away from his parents, Gogol sets off on his own path only to discover that the search for identity depends on much more than a name. He had not a constant identity both in India and America. This novel explores the concepts of cultural identity, of rootlessness, of tradition and familial expectation. This identity crisis is not only the problem of Gogol but also all of the characters experienced in a way or other in the novel. The parents Ashima and Ashoke are very happy to visit Kolkata frequently. They want to imbibe the native cultures and values by their children. But Gogol and Sonia get reluctant to accept and enjoy the Indian backwater in the background of American Ocean. Exactly, Gogol is mixed with the Lahiri's blood because in Rhode Island her teacher calls her Jhumpa. It is easier to pronounce.

Lahiri recalled, "I always felt so embarrassed by name... you feel like you are causing someone pain just by being who you are." Lahiri's ambivalence over her identity was the inspiration for the ambivalence of Gogol. However, The Indian American Bengali author Jhumpa Lahiri powerfully reveals her vision and attitude towards the society as best of from her heart.

Both the writers K R Meera and Jhumpa Lahiri wrote the novels from a perspective of nationality. The only difference is the selection of the themes which they used to portray the novels. In the novel *Hangwoman* Meera explores the issues of woman's identity as a means of national concern. But in the novel *The Namesake* Lahiri focused on the regional identity as a universal means.

Portrayal of Regional in Meera and Lahiri

According to the Oxford Companion to American Literature, "in local color literature one finds the dual influence of romanticism and realism, since the author frequently looks away from ordinary life to distant lands, strange customs or exotic scenes, but retains through minute detail a sense of fidelity and accuracy of description." Here, as non-native and diasporic writers, K R Meera and Jhumpa Lahiri tried to make sure the presence of greenery in their works as to produce a successful regional credibility.

Non-native is referred to a person who lives in a place that is not the region where he or she is originally born. As per this criterion, non-natives are supposed to face a lot of challenges in their lives. Culture, language, history and lineage are always a questionnaire in front of the non-natives. So normally their works are not considered as regional works, because they could not attain the physical or mental flexibility of an alienated culture. Diasporic writers are another group of people who felt the same identity crisis in literature. They regard their ancestral homeland as their true home to which they will eventually return. So even though they show a deep fondness to their native culture, they could not gain the full integrity of the homeland.

In *Hangwoman* K R Meera is completely shifted into a Bengali native both as a writer and a woman. She connects the novel with past and present events. We can see all of the aspects of the regional literature in it. The characters are very much adored with the old ways, customs and traditions. The central character Chetna is the only one who protests against the harassment made by the society. But the other female characters such as Ma, Thakuma and Kakima are the representatives of illiterates who keep a highly traditionalistic way of life. Thakuma acts as the thread which connected the old generation to the new generation by passing the long lineage stories of the Mullick family. Chetna grew up in the context of myths and folktales told by her grandma. Thakuma had given her the basic details of executions. For instance, she described the story of Kadhambari who was hanged by the grandfather Mosh (Meera 210). Here Meera tries to give the authentic historical evidences through these stories. So many myths and folktales enrich the novel as a means of attaining local knowledge. Meera weaves the novel with the historical references of Kolkata in a successful way.

Lahiri's *The Namesake* also followed the narration of past and present life which connects the novel. It is not in a path of chronological order and the novel started from Massachusetts then occasionally moved in to their homeland, Kolkata. Lahiri combines the scenes and portrays it in a very simple and informative manner. The characters Ashima Ganguli and Ashoke Ganguli are closely inherent to their native culture. They are strictly tied up with rituals, family and tradition. It is evidently clear in the beginning of the novel where Ashima prepared an Indian spicy dish mixed with rice krispies and planters peanuts, chopped red onion and adds some salt, lemon juice, thin slices of green chilli pepper, mustard oil etc. (Lahiri 1). This will show the Indianisms in the blood of the immigrants family. Ashima is always in an unhappy mood because of her homesickness. They constantly compare the life in America with India. So here, dissatisfaction comes as a main theme in the novel. All of the characters experienced the same situation in a way or other. Jhumpa Lahiri effectively portrays the struggles faced by her characters. In *Hangwoman* there are many subplots coming with different characters as heroines and heroes. But in the, *The Namesake* sometimes Ashima became the heroine of her own subplot and Ashoke became the hero of his own subplot. Both of them narrate their own past life.

Meera sees the novel as a means of realistic as well as romantic portrayals. She defines Chetna as a character of woman power. All of the members in the novel struggle to live in the harsh lights of the new world. In addition to this, the novel receives a sympathetic nature around the whole plot. The scene of the debate with Protima Ghosh, mother of Rameshchandra Ghosh, the last convict who was hanged at the gallows is a tragic sequence of sympathized narration (Meera 126). Sanjeev Kumar Mitra exploits her tears for the rating of the CNC channel. In a way all of the characters are responsible for the sympathy raised here. Here Meera portrays the realities of life through her creativity. Like these, Lahiri's characters are also highly sympathetic in nature. The central character Gogol has a problem regarding his identity. Gogol and his sister Sonia often feel foreign in both India and America. For the children of Indian parents, homeland often appears backward and unfamiliar. They feel like tourists, they have no chance of home coming. They are not fit in a constant identity. It starts from the cultural differences that set them apart from everybody else. All of the characters feels isolated and alienated from both Indian and mainstream American culture. Gogol had not only the problem of cultural identity but also he suffered by his strange name. Gogol is named after the Russian novelist Nikolai Gogol. Some call him as Nikhil and some as Gogol. At last Gogol feels comfortable with his Indian American identity when he reconnects with his long-time friend Moushumi Mazoomdar and marries her. But that relation carried him to a disappointed one. Because she has an affair with a guy named Dimitri Desjardins. And Gogol divorced Moushumi. Here Lahiri portrayed the Gogol's sympathetic psyche as usual in regional narration. The characters of Meera and Lahiri deserve the emotion of sympathy in a high altitude. And sometimes they are more palpable with the thematic references such as nostalgia also. K R Meera specified the nostalgic thoughts in *Hangwoman* through the portrayal of subplots. Kaku looked back in to his life and said with a sigh, "you don't know, chetu, those were strange times. Thinking back now, I don't know if it was really as who did all that..." (Meera 352) and he painfully recollects the story of Jyotirmayi in Terai village. Kaku ends up the story with tears in his right eye. Meera connects the nostalgia with romance and death. Chetna's romance with Sanjeev Kumar Mitra is not a sincere one at glance. Because many times, he tried to satisfy his sexual desire through Chetna. But even when she did not like him and his attitudes, her submission to him was a reflection of the awakening 'Id' in her. Gradually it turns into a revenge that finally brought the romance to death. After all Chetna changed to become the representative of woman power in India. The novel exactly explores the nostalgic path of pasts in the platform of long hierarchy. In the novel *The Namesake*, Lahiri vividly portrays the nostalgic theme as a whole in nature. It is mainly seen in the characters of Ashima and Ashoke Ganguli. They come from a middle class Bengali family. Their customs, traditions, family are all tightly connected with them. Even when they could follow a comfortable life in America, the memories of Indian life pull them back to the homeland. But she mostly feels the nostalgia through the letters which are sent by her grandmother. Lahiri says it very beautifully in the words that, "The letters are filled with every possible blessing and good wish, composed in an alphabet they have seen all around them for most of their lives, on billboards and newspapers and awnings, but which they see now only in these precious, pale blue missives" (Lahiri 36). Ashima always wait for the arrival of post man and she keep her ear trained for his footsteps on the porch, followed by the soft click of the mail slot in the door. She feels that it is a kind of satisfaction gained through a recall of nostalgic events.

Meera and Lahiri also make an attempt to use the vernacular possibilities in the novels. Meera confidently portrayed the Bengali language and dialects overall in the story. She is almost done with the local places in Kolkata like Kalighat, Alipore, Neemthalaghat, Daakurpadi etc. And she also used the narrative part occasionally in Bengali language. Chetna often hummed the song "Chhalanachaturiaashehridayebishaadobaashe" (Meera 314). It increases the originality of the character to reveal the intense feelings. And the character portrayal also maintains the native style through expressions like ma, sanjubabu, kakima, chetu di, phoni da, ramu da, protima di etc. Meera intensely defines the Bengali dialect in the *Hangwoman*. But Lahiri does not use the native language instead She just only mentions that the Bengal language is familiar for them by giving some clues. She says that, "Bengali

conversation fills the cabin.” (Lahiri 81), and adds that “To put him to sleep, she sings him the Bengali songs her mother had sung to her.” (Lahiri 35). But she refers the more specific terms of Bengali family that is mashi and pishi, mama and maima, kaku and jethu. Instances like these give credibility of vernacular quality in Lahiri's novel. The two novels clearly show that K R Meera and Jhumpa Lahiri have efficiently collected the minute details of an alienate culture such as myths, folktales, histories, localities, language, customs and tradition.

The novel *Hangwoman* and *The Namesake* are very much similar in nature. As a means of the non-native and diasporic, Meera and Lahiri can create a vibrant effect in the world of regional literature.

Regional literature always seeks for the odour of locality and the colour of familiarity. It tells about all of the smaller peculiarities of the local environment such as bird's arrival, seasonal changes, religious emotions, plants, flowers, tiny buds and so on. It means, regional literature requires that much of interaction with the selected locale. A typical regional writing needs some characteristic features in order to consider it in the regional category. The characters should be free of stereotyping, the plot should deal in-depth with individuals, and there should be some lessons of universal truth. If we compare these notions with the non-native novel *Hangwoman* and the diasporic novel *The Namesake*, there can be nothing to see that they are different from the regional novel. Both the novels acquire all of the aspects of regional portrayal as in all contexts like setting, characters, narrator, story elements, plot and theme. The description of minute details such as climatic changes, the long history, special recipes and vernacular narrations strongly support the credibility of the regional characteristics in the novels. Meera and Lahiri completely shifted into the local native individuals through this works. Non-native and diasporic writers are grouped in a special category of literature. They always show the local colour and are not considered as an alienate group. The identity crisis felt by their characters are felt by themselves as well. Here K. R Meera and Jhumpa Lahiri attain all of the regional identity through their works, because they successfully explain even the dialects of the central and high lightened place Kolkata. This is one of the similarities of the *Hangwoman* and *The Namesake* that, both the authors try to acquire the native identity of Bengal. Through these novels we can get a clear cut image of Kolkata and its culture.

And it is very hard to write about a regional portrayal without knowing the specific details. Or in the other hand it is impossible to write a regional novel without living in the selected locale. But Meera and Lahiri never had a long exposure of Bengal. Even then they could successfully attain a unique place in regional literature. K R Meera and Jhumpa Lahiri successfully possess the realm of regional literature and cultural identity. So, here we can evidently say that non-native and diasporic writers are not inferior to native writers in successfully rendering regional portraits.

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